

## DECISION OF THE ATHLETICS INTEGRITY UNIT IN THE CASE OF MR JOHN HAKIZIMANA

### INTRODUCTION

1. World Athletics has established the Athletics Integrity Unit (“**AIU**”) whose role is to protect the integrity of the sport of Athletics, including fulfilling World Athletics’ obligations as a Signatory to the World Anti-Doping Code (“the “**Code**”). World Athletics has delegated implementation of the World Athletics Anti-Doping Rules (“**ADR**”) to the AIU, including but not limited to the following activities in relation to International-Level Athletes: Testing, Investigations, Results Management, Hearings, Sanctions and Appeals.
2. Mr John Hakizimana (“the **Athlete**”) is a 27-year-old road runner from Rwanda<sup>1</sup>.
3. This decision is issued by the AIU pursuant to Rule 8.5.6 ADR, which provides as follows:

*“8.5.6 In the event that the Athlete or other Person either (i) admits the violation and accepts the proposed Consequences or (ii) is deemed to have admitted the violation and accepted the Consequences as per Rule 8.5.2(f), the Integrity Unit will promptly:*

- (a) issue a decision confirming the commission of the violation(s) and the imposition of the specified Consequences (including, if applicable, a justification for why the maximum potential sanction was not imposed);*
- (b) Publicly Report that decision in accordance with Rule 14;*
- (c) send a copy of the decision to the Athlete or other Person and to any other party that has a right, further to Rule 13, to appeal the decision (and any such party may, within 15 days of receipt, request a copy of the full case file pertaining to the decision).”*

### THE ATHLETE’S COMMISSION OF ANTI-DOPING RULE VIOLATIONS

4. Rule 2 ADR sets out that the following shall constitute an Anti-Doping Rule Violation:

*“2.1 Presence of a Prohibited Substance or its Metabolites or Markers in an Athlete’s Sample”*
5. On 27 August 2023, the Athlete provided a urine Sample In-Competition at the World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary, which was given code 1208882 (the “**Sample**”).
6. On 8 September 2023, the World Anti-Doping Agency (“**WADA**”) accredited laboratory in Seibersdorf, Austria (the “**Laboratory**”) reported an Adverse Analytical Finding in the Sample for the presence of Triamcinolone acetonide (the “**Adverse Analytical Finding**”).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://worldathletics.org/athletes/rwanda/john-hakizimana-14689968>

7. Triamcinolone acetonide is a Prohibited Substance under the WADA 2023 Prohibited List under the category S9 Glucocorticoids. It is a Specified Substance prohibited In-Competition when administered by any injectable, oral<sup>2</sup> or rectal route.
8. The AIU reviewed the Adverse Analytical Finding in accordance with Article 5 of the International Standard for Results Management (“ISRM”) and determined that:
  - 8.1. the Athlete did not have a Therapeutic Use Exemption (“TUE”) that had been granted for the Triamcinolone acetonide found in the Sample;
  - 8.2. there was no apparent departure from the International Standard for Testing and Investigations (“ISTI”) or from the International Standard for Laboratories (“ISL”) that could reasonably have caused the Adverse Analytical Finding; and
  - 8.3. there was no indication that Triamcinolone acetonide had been administered by a permitted route.
9. Therefore, on 13 September 2023, the AIU notified the Athlete of the Adverse Analytical Finding in accordance with Article 5.1.2.1 of the ISRM, including that the Adverse Analytical Finding may result in Anti-Doping Rule Violations pursuant to Rule 2.1 ADR and/or Rule 2.2 ADR.
10. The Athlete was informed of his rights, *inter alia*, to request the B Sample analysis and to request copies of the Laboratory Documentation Package supporting the Adverse Analytical Finding (“LDP”). The AIU also requested that the Athlete provide an explanation for the Adverse Analytical Finding.
11. On 25 September 2023, the Athlete provided his explanation for the Adverse Analytical Finding, which, in summary, set out that he had consumed Triamcinolone acetonide unknowingly and therefore had no intent to violate the ADR. The Athlete also accepted full responsibility and accountability for what he put in his body and confirmed that he was committed to accepting the consequences of his actions. The Athlete also stated a desire to educate others about the risk of dietary supplements and the rigorous diligence required to avoid unintentional Anti-Doping Rule Violations.
12. On 2 October 2023, the AIU asked the Athlete to confirm whether it was his explanation that the Adverse Analytical Finding had been caused by his ingestion of nutritional supplements and, in case his answer to that was affirmative, to provide further information to the AIU.
13. On 12 October 2023, the Athlete submitted two pictures of the packaging of nutritional supplements referred to on his Doping Control Form (“DCF”) to the AIU. These photographs provided no evidence that the nutritional supplements contained Triamcinolone acetonide. Moreover, the Athlete failed to submit any of the additional information requested by the AIU, including to confirm his intention to have his nutritional supplements analysed for the presence of Triamcinolone acetonide.
14. Following a review of the Athlete’s explanation for the Adverse Analytical Finding and the information relating to his nutritional supplements (which did not provide any evidence relating

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<sup>2</sup> Including oromucosal (e.g., buccal, gingival, sublingual).

to Triamcinolone acetonide), the AIU remained satisfied that the Athlete had committed an Anti-Doping Rule Violation as set out in the Rules.

15. Therefore, on 27 October 2023, the AIU issued the Athlete with a Notice of Charge in accordance with Rule 8.5.1 and Article 7.1 ISRM, and informed him, *inter alia*, that the AIU remained satisfied that he had committed an Anti-Doping Rule Violation under Rule 2.1 ADR, that this Anti-Doping Rule Violation warranted a period of Ineligibility of two (2) years pursuant to Rule 10.2.2 ADR, and invited the Athlete to respond confirming how he wished to proceed with the Charge by no later than 10 November 2023. The AIU also notified the Athlete of the imposition of an immediate Provisional Suspension.
16. On 9 November 2023, the Athlete replied to the AIU appealing for clemency. However, the Athlete failed to provide any additional information/explanation to support that request and did not specify how he wished to proceed with the Charge.
17. Therefore, on 13 November 2023, the AIU wrote to the Athlete explaining the options available to him to proceed with the matter and asked him to confirm by 16 November 2023 how he wished to proceed.
18. On 15 November 2023, the Athlete returned an Admission of Anti-Doping Rule Violation and Acceptance of Consequences Form signed to confirm that he admitted the Anti-Doping Rule Violation and accepted the specified Consequences of a period of Ineligibility of two (2) years set out in the Notice of Charge.

## CONSEQUENCES

19. This is the Athlete's first Anti-Doping Rule Violation.
20. Rule 10.2 ADR specifies that the period of Ineligibility for an Anti-Doping Rule Violation under Rule 2.1 ADR shall be as follows:

*“10.2.1 Save where Rule 10.2.4 applies, the period of Ineligibility will be four years where:*

- (a) The anti-doping rule violation does not involve a Specified Substance or a Specified Method, unless the Athlete or other Person can establish that the anti-doping rule violation was not intentional.*
- (b) The anti-doping rule violation involves a Specified Substance or a Specified Method and the Integrity Unit can establish that the anti-doping rule violation was intentional.*

*10.2.2 If Rule 10.2.1 does not apply, then (subject to Rule 10.2.4(a)) the period of Ineligibility will be two years.”*

21. Triamcinolone acetonide is a Prohibited Substance under the WADA 2023 Prohibited List under the category S9 Glucocorticoids. It is a Specified Substance prohibited In-Competition when administered by any injectable, oral<sup>3</sup> or rectal route.

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<sup>3</sup> See footnote 2.

22. The AIU has no evidence that the Anti-Doping Rule Violation was intentional and the period of Ineligibility to be imposed is therefore a period of two (2) years.
23. On the basis that the Athlete has admitted the Anti-Doping Rule Violation under Rule 2.1 ADR, in accordance with Rule 10.2.2 ADR and the application of Rule 8.5.6 ADR, the AIU confirms by this decision the following Consequences for a first Anti-Doping Rule Violation:
- 23.1. a period of Ineligibility of two (2) years commencing on 27 October 2023 (the date of Provisional Suspension); and
  - 23.2. disqualification of the Athlete's results on and since 27 August 2023, with all resulting Consequences, including the forfeiture of any titles, awards, medals, points, prizes and appearance money.
24. The Athlete has accepted the above Consequences for his Anti-Doping Rule Violation and has expressly waived his right to have those Consequences determined by the Disciplinary Tribunal at a hearing.

## PUBLICATION

25. In accordance with Rule 8.5.6(b) ADR, the AIU shall publicly report this decision on the AIU's website.

## RIGHTS OF APPEAL

26. This decision constitutes the final decision of the AIU pursuant to Rule 8.5.6 ADR.
27. Further to Rule 13.2.3 ADR, WADA and the Comité National Olympique et Sportif du Rwanda have a right of appeal against this decision to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland, in accordance with the procedure set out at Rule 13.6.1 ADR.
28. If an appeal is filed against this decision by WADA or the Comité National Olympique et Sportif du Rwanda, the Athlete will be entitled to exercise his right of cross-appeal in accordance with Rule 13.2.4 ADR.

Monaco, 28 November 2023