
Decision of the Athletics Integrity Unit in the Case of Mr Wesam Alfarsi

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 Wesam Alfarsi ("the **Athlete**"), is a 26-year-old middle/long distance runner from Saudi Arabia¹.
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 an Anti-Doping Rule Violation

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"

¹ <https://worldathletics.org/athletes/saudi-arabia/wesam-alfarsi-15056479>

5. On 29 September 2023, the Athlete provided a urine Sample given code 7158587 (the "**Urine Sample**") and a blood Sample given code 973302 (the "**Blood Sample**") Out-of-Competition in Hangzhou, China, pursuant to Testing conducted by the Olympic Council of Asia ("**OCA**") in accordance with the OCA 2023 Anti-Doping Rules applicable to the 19th Hangzhou Asian Games 2022 held from 23 September 2023 to 8 October 2023 (the "**OCA ADR**").
6. On 4 October 2023, the World Anti-Doping Agency ("**WADA**") accredited laboratory in Beijing, China (the "**Laboratory**") reported that analysis of the Urine Sample had revealed the presence of darbepoetin ("**dEPO**") (the "**First Adverse Analytical Finding**").
7. On 8 October 2023, the Laboratory reported that analysis of the Blood Sample had revealed the presence of methoxy polyethylene glycol-epoetin beta ("**CERA**") (the "**Second Adverse Analytical Finding**").
8. dEPO and CERA are Prohibited Substances under the WADA 2023 Prohibited List under the category *S2: Peptide Hormones, Growth Factors, Related Substances and Mimetics*. They are Non-Specified Substance prohibited at all times.
9. In accordance with Article 7.1.1 of the OCA ADR, Results Management with respect to the Adverse Analytical Findings was conducted by the International Testing Authority ("**ITA**") on behalf of the OCA.
10. In that respect, the ITA reviewed the Adverse Analytical Findings in accordance with Article 5 of the International Standard for Results Management ("**ISRM**") and determined that:
 - 10.1. the Athlete did not have a Therapeutic Use Exemption ("**TUE**") that had been granted (or that would be granted) for either the dEPO or the CERA found in the respective Samples; and
 - 10.2. 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 Findings.
11. On 5 October 2023, the ITA notified the Athlete of the First Adverse Analytical Finding in accordance with Article 7.2.2 of the OCA ADR and imposed a Provisional Suspension upon him (effective immediately) in accordance with Article 7.5.1 of the OCA ADR (the "**ITA Notification**").
12. On 10 October 2023, the AIU issued the Athlete with a Notice of Provisional Suspension and Public Disclosure based on the First Adverse Analytical Finding and informed him, *inter alia*, that the First Adverse Analytical Finding was being brought forward as an apparent Anti-Doping Rule Violation under Article 2.1 and/or Article 2.2 of the OCA ADR by the ITA, which was responsible (in accordance with Article 7.1.1 of the OCA ADR) for determining, on behalf of the OCA (i) whether an Anti-Doping Rule Violation had been committed and (ii) the applicable Consequences related to the 19th Hangzhou Asian Games 2022.
13. The AIU also informed the Athlete that, following the determination of the above, the ITA would refer the determination of (further) Consequences for any Anti-Doping Rule Violations

beyond the 19th Hangzhou Asian Games 2022 to the AIU on behalf of World Athletics (if applicable).

14. On 19 October 2023, the ITA notified the Athlete of the Second Adverse Analytical Finding.
15. On 31 October 2023, the AIU issued the Athlete with a Notice of Provisional Suspension and Public Disclosure based on the Second Adverse Analytical Finding and informed him, *inter alia*, that the Second Adverse Analytical Finding was also being brought forward as an apparent Anti-Doping Rule Violation under Article 2.1 and/or Article 2.2 of the OCA ADR by the ITA.
16. Pursuant to Article 8.1.1 of the OCA ADR, on 15 December 2023, the OCA (through the ITA on its behalf), submitted the determination of any Anti-Doping Rule Violations based on the presence of dEPO and CERA in the respective Samples to the Court of Arbitration for Sport Anti-Doping Division ("**CAS ADD**").
17. Following written exchanges that occurred between 15 December 2023 and 1 March 2024, on 7 March 2024, the CAS ADD confirmed to the parties that a hearing would proceed on 25 March 2024.
18. On 25 March 2024 a hearing took place via video conference before the CAS ADD.
19. On 26 April 2024, the CAS ADD provided World Athletics with a copy of the Award issued by the Sole Arbitrator of the CAS ADD concerning Anti-Doping Rule Violations and Consequences imposed upon the Athlete under the OCA ADR ("the **CAS Award**"). The CAS Award confirmed that:
 - 19.1. the Athlete had committed an Anti-Doping Rule Violation pursuant to Article 2.1 of the OCA ADR; and
 - 19.2. the Athlete's competitive results obtained at the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games were disqualified.
20. No appeal was filed against the CAS Award within the applicable deadline.
21. Therefore, on 27 September 2024, the AIU issued the Athlete with a Notice of Charge in relation to the (additional) Consequences to be imposed pursuant to the ADR following referral of the case to the AIU in accordance with Article 10.2.2 of the OCA ADR.
22. The Notice of Charge confirmed that the CAS Award, including that the Athlete had committed an Anti-Doping Rule Violation pursuant to Article 2.1 of the OCA ADR, constituted irrefutable evidence against him in accordance with Rule 3.2.5 ADR and that the AIU would seek Consequences including the following:

- 22.1. a period of Ineligibility of six (6) years² effective from the date of the final decision in this matter, with credit for the period of Provisional Suspension (provided that this had been effectively served); and
- 22.2. Disqualification of the Athlete's results with all resulting consequences including forfeiture of any medals, titles, points, prize money and prizes since 29 September 2023³.
23. The Athlete was also informed of his rights, *inter alia*, to request a hearing to determine the further Consequences to be imposed upon him in accordance with the ADR or to potentially benefit from a one-year reduction in the period of Ineligibility pursuant to Rule 10.8.1 ADR.
24. On 10 October 2024, the AIU received an Acceptance of Consequences Form signed by the Athlete.

Consequences

25. Rule 10.2 ADR specifies that the period of Ineligibility for an Anti-Doping Rule Violation under Rule 2.1 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."*

26. The CAS Award constitutes irrefutable evidence that the Athlete committed an Anti-Doping Rule Violation pursuant to Article 2.1 of the OCA ADR in accordance with Rule 3.2.5 ADR.
27. dEPO and CERA are Prohibited Substances under the WADA 2023 Prohibited List under the category *S2: Peptide Hormones, Growth Factors, Related Substances and Mimetics*. They are Non-Specified Substance prohibited at all times.
28. The period of Ineligibility to be imposed is therefore a period of four (4) years, unless the Athlete demonstrates that the Anti-Doping Rule Violation was not intentional.
29. The Athlete has not demonstrated that the Anti-Doping Rule Violation was not intentional. Therefore, the mandatory period of Ineligibility is a period of Ineligibility of four (4) years.

² See the section on Consequences.

³ To the extent that any results from 29 September 2023 were not disqualified by virtue of the CAS Award.

30. However, Rule 10.4 ADR specifies that the period of Ineligibility for an Anti-Doping Rule Violation may be greater than the standard sanction when it is established that Aggravating Circumstances are present:

“10.4 Aggravating Circumstances that may increase the period of Ineligibility

If the Integrity Unit or other prosecuting authority establishes in an individual case involving an anti-doping rule violation [...] that Aggravating Circumstances are present which justify the imposition of a period of Ineligibility greater than the standard sanction, then the period of Ineligibility otherwise applicable will be increased by an additional period of Ineligibility of up to two (2) years depending on the seriousness of the violation and the nature of the Aggravating Circumstances, unless the Athlete or other Person can establish that they did not knowingly commit the anti-doping rule violation.”

31. Aggravating Circumstances are defined in the ADR as follows:

*“**Aggravating Circumstances:** Circumstances involving, or actions by, an Athlete or other Person which may justify the imposition of a period of Ineligibility greater than the standard sanction. Such circumstances and actions shall include, but are not limited to: the Athlete or other Person Used or Possessed multiple Prohibited Substances or Prohibited Methods, Used or Possessed a Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method on multiple occasions or committed multiple other anti-doping rule violations; a normal individual would be likely to enjoy the performance-enhancing effects of the anti-doping rule violation(s) beyond the otherwise applicable period of Ineligibility; the Athlete or Person engaged in deceptive or obstructive conduct to avoid the detection or adjudication of an anti-doping rule violation; or the Athlete or other Person engaged in Tampering during Results Management. For the avoidance of doubt, the examples of circumstances and conduct described herein are not exclusive and other similar circumstances or conduct may also justify the imposition of a longer period of Ineligibility.”*

32. The Adverse Analytical Findings provide clear and compelling evidence of the Athlete's Use of multiple Prohibited Substances (dEPO and CERA). The Use of multiple Prohibited Substances is expressly identified in the definition of Aggravating Circumstances. Moreover, the AIU considers that the Athlete's Use of these substances in connection with the Asian Games (a major continental competition and International Event according to the definition in the ADR) is a further aggravating feature in the Athlete's case. These factors justify an increase of the period of Ineligibility, unless the Athlete can establish that he did not knowingly commit the Anti-Doping Rule Violation.
33. The Athlete has failed to establish that he did not knowingly commit the Anti-Doping Rule Violation. Therefore, based on the seriousness of the Athlete's Anti-Doping Rule Violation and the nature of the Aggravating Circumstances present, the AIU considers the period of Ineligibility to be imposed is a period of six (6) years.

34. However, Rule 10.8.1 ADR provides that an athlete potentially subject to an asserted period of Ineligibility of four (4) or more years may benefit from a one (1)-year reduction in the period of Ineligibility based on an early admission and acceptance of sanction:

“10.8.1 One year reduction for certain anti-doping rule violations based on early admission and acceptance of sanction.

Where the Integrity Unit notifies an Athlete or other Person of an anti-doping rule violation charge that carries an asserted period of Ineligibility of four (4) or more years (including any period of Ineligibility asserted under Rule 10.4), if the Athlete or other Person admits the violation and accepts the asserted period of Ineligibility no later than 20 days after receiving the Notice of Charge, the Athlete or other Person may receive a one (1) year reduction in the period of Ineligibility asserted by the Integrity Unit. Where the Athlete or other Person receives the one (1) year reduction in the asserted period of Ineligibility under this Rule 10.8.1, no further reduction in the asserted period of Ineligibility will be allowed under any other Rule.”

35. The Athlete was issued with a Notice of Charge informing him of the additional Consequences to be sought pursuant to the ADR on 27 September 2024.
36. On 10 October 2024, the Athlete returned a signed Acceptance of Consequences Form confirming that he accepted the asserted period of Ineligibility proposed by the AIU.
37. The AIU therefore considers that the Athlete shall receive a one (1) year reduction in the period of Ineligibility pursuant to Rule 10.8.1 ADR based on an early acceptance of sanction.
38. On the basis that the Athlete has accepted the Consequences specified by the AIU in accordance with Rule 10.2.1 ADR and Rule 10.4 ADR, and by application of Rule 10.8.1 ADR, the AIU confirms by this decision the following Consequences for a first Anti-Doping Rule Violation:
- 38.1. a period of Ineligibility of five (5) years commencing on 5 October 2023 (the date of Provisional Suspension imposed by the ITA)⁴.
39. The Athlete has accepted the above Consequences and has waived his right to have those Consequences determined by the Disciplinary Tribunal at a hearing.

Publication

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

⁴ The Athlete's results in the period from 29 September 2023 (the date of the Anti-Doping Rule Violation, i.e., the Presence of dEPO in the Urine sample and the Presence of CERA In the Blood Sample) to 5 October 2023 (the date of the Provisional Suspension imposed by the ITA) have already been disqualified by operation of the CAS Award and no further results fall to be disqualified under the ADR.

Rights of Appeal

41. This decision constitutes the final decision of the AIU pursuant to Rule 8.5.6 ADR.
42. Further to Rule 13.2.3 ADR, WADA and the Saudi Arabian Anti-Doping Committee ("**SAADC**") 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.
43. If an appeal is filed against this decision by WADA or the SAADC, the Athlete will be entitled to exercise his right of cross-appeal in accordance with Rule 13.2.4 ADR.

Monaco, 18 June 2025