
Decision of the Athletics Integrity Unit in the Case of Ms Alemtsehay Asefa

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. Ms Alemtsehay Asefa ("the **Athlete**") is a 26-year-old marathon runner from Ethiopia.¹
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)."*

Whereabouts Failures

4. Rule 2.4 ADR sets out that the following shall constitute an Anti-Doping Rule Violation:

"2.4 Whereabouts Failures by an Athlete in a Registered Testing Pool

¹ <https://worldathletics.org/athletes/ethiopia/alemtsehay-asefa-14839997>

Any combination of three missed tests and/or filing failures, as defined in the International Standard for Results Management, within a 12-month period by an Athlete in a Registered Testing Pool.”

5. A Missed Test and a Filing Failure are defined in the International Standard for Results Management (“**ISRM**”) respectively as follows:

*“**Missed Test:** A failure by the Athlete to be available for Testing at the location and time specified in the 60-minute time slot identified in their Whereabouts Filing for the day in question, in accordance with Article 4.8 of the International Standard for Testing and Investigations and Annex B.2 of the International Standard for Results Management.*

***Filing Failure:** A failure by the Athlete (or by a third party to whom the Athlete has delegated the task) to make an accurate and complete Whereabouts Filing that enables the Athlete to be located for Testing at the times and locations set out in the Whereabouts Filing or to update that Whereabouts Filing where necessary to ensure that it remains accurate and complete, all in accordance with Article 4.8 of the International Standard for Testing and Investigations and Annex B.2 of the International Standard for Results Management.”*

6. In short, an athlete violates Rule 2.4 of the ADR where he or she has any combination of three Missed Tests and/or Filing Failures within any twelve-month period, that period beginning on the day of the first relevant Missed Test/Filing Failure.

The Athlete’s Commission of an Anti-Doping Rule Violation

7. In this instance, the Athlete has had three Whereabouts Failures in the twelve-month period beginning on 19 February 2023, specifically:

- (i) a Missed Test and/or a Filing Failure on 19 February 2023;
- (ii) a Missed Test and/or a Filing Failure on 25 July 2023; and
- (iii) a Missed Test and/or a Filing Failure on 24 October 2023.

8. The circumstances of each of these Whereabouts Failures are set out in detail below.

I. First Whereabouts Failure – Missed Test/Filing Failure on 19 February 2023

9. In summary, a Doping Control Officer (“**DCO**”) arrived at the address indicated in the Athlete’s Whereabouts information for her 60-minute time slot on 19 February 2023 at 20:00 and was informed by a third party that the Athlete had not been there for two days.
10. The DCO remained at the location until 21:00 but was unable to locate the Athlete for Testing on 19 February 2023 during the 60-minute time slot at the location specified in her Whereabouts information.

11. Therefore, on 28 February 2023, the AIU wrote to the Athlete requesting her explanation for an apparent Missed Test/Filing Failure which occurred on 19 February 2023 by no later than 14 March 2023.
12. No explanation was received by 14 March 2023 (or at all).
13. On 22 March 2023, the AIU therefore wrote to the Athlete and confirmed the Whereabouts Failure on 19 February 2023 against her. The Athlete was afforded the right to request an administrative review of that decision by no later than 5 April 2023 and advised that if she failed to do so the Whereabouts Failure would be considered as a Whereabouts Failure for the purposes of Rule 2.4 ADR.
14. No request for an administrative review was received by 5 April 2023.
15. Therefore, the AIU recorded a Whereabouts Failure² against the Athlete effective 19 February 2023.

II. Second Whereabouts Failure – Missed Test/Filing Failure on 25 July 2023

16. In summary, a DCO arrived at the address indicated in the Athlete's Whereabouts information (the same address as for the First Whereabouts Failure) for her 60-minute time slot on 25 July 2023 at 20:15 and met the Athlete's husband who informed the DCO that the Athlete had gone to Addis Ababa, but that she would be back.
17. The DCO waited in the location for the Athlete to return. At 20:55, the DCO attempted to contact the Athlete by phone since the Athlete had still not returned, but he was not able to reach the Athlete on the phone number included in the Athlete's Whereabouts information. The DCO was given an alternative phone number to contact the Athlete by her husband, but that phone was switched off. The DCO remained at the location until 21:15 but was unable to locate the Athlete for Testing.
18. Therefore, on 31 July 2023, the AIU wrote to the Athlete requesting her explanation for an apparent Missed Test/Filing Failure which occurred on 25 July 2023 by no later than 14 August 2023.
19. No explanation was received by 14 August 2023 (or at all).
20. On 18 August 2023, the AIU therefore wrote to the Athlete and confirmed the Whereabouts Failure on 25 July 2023 against her. The Athlete was afforded the right to request an administrative review of that decision by no later than 1 September 2023 and advised that, if she failed to do so, the Whereabouts Failure would be considered as her second Whereabouts Failure in the twelve-month period beginning on 19 February 2023.
21. No request for an administrative review was received by 1 September 2023.

² This Whereabouts Failure was confirmed as both a Missed Test and a Filing Failure.

22. Therefore, the AIU recorded a Whereabouts Failure³ against the Athlete effective 25 July 2023 as her second Whereabouts Failure in the twelve-month period beginning on 19 February 2023.

III. Third Whereabouts Failure – Missed Test/Filing Failure on 24 October 2023

23. In summary, a DCO arrived at the address indicated in the Athlete's Whereabouts information (the same address as for the First Whereabouts Failure and the Second Whereabouts Failure) for her 60-minute time slot on 22 May 2024 at 19:10, accompanied by a Doping Control Assistance ("**DCA**") and met the Athlete's landlady who informed them that the Athlete had left for the countryside and had not returned.

24. The Athlete's landlady also informed the DCO that the Athlete's phone was not working because she had earlier tried to contact the Athlete by phone. Nevertheless, the DCO attempted to contact the Athlete by phone at 20:54 and at 21:00 but was unable to reach the Athlete.

25. The DCO remained at the location until 21:02 but was unable to locate the Athlete for Testing at the location specified in her Whereabouts information for 24 October 2023.

26. Therefore, on 3 November 2023, the AIU wrote to the Athlete requesting her explanation for an apparent Missed Test/Filing Failure which occurred on 24 October 2023 by no later than 17 November 2023.

27. On 15 November 2023, the AIU received the Athlete's explanation for the apparent Whereabouts Failure on 24 October 2023. In summary, the Athlete stated that she was not in the countryside and that she had trained with other athletes earlier in the day on 24 October 2023.

28. The Athlete explained that she was at the location specified in her Whereabouts information for her 60-minute time slot on 24 October 2023 and alleged that the DCO and the DCA had failed to find her address⁴.

29. Following receipt of the Athlete's explanation for the Third Whereabouts Failure, the AIU conducted additional investigations including with the DCO and the DCA.

30. On 9 February 2024, the AIU wrote to the Athlete and confirmed the Whereabouts Failure on 24 October 2023 against her. The AIU confirmed that, following its further investigation, it remained satisfied that the DCO and the DCA had visited the Athlete's address specified as the location for her 60-minute time slot on 24 October 2023⁵ and, in any event, that the

³ This Whereabouts Failure was confirmed as both a Missed Test and a Filing Failure.

⁴ The Athlete relied upon the photographs submitted by the DCO with the Unsuccessful Attempt Form which showed locations in the vicinity of her address, but not the Athlete's address itself, and alleged that the DCO and the DCA had "*made a mistake*" and "*did not come to the premises of the real address where I [she] live*". The Athlete also enclosed several supporting documents including (in English and Amharic) her statement, and statements from the landlady, her driver, four athletes and two other witnesses.

⁵ The AIU provided detailed Witness Statements from the DCO and the DCA.

information the Athlete had provided was insufficient for the DCO to be able to locate her for Testing. The AIU confirmed the Third Whereabouts Failure against the Athlete effective 24 October 2023 as her third Whereabouts Failure in the twelve-month period beginning on 19 February 2023.⁶

31. The Athlete was afforded the right to request an administrative review of that decision by no later than 23 February 2024 and advised that, if she failed to do so, the Whereabouts Failure would be considered as the Athlete's third Whereabouts Failure in the twelve-month period beginning on 19 February 2023.
32. No request for an administrative review was received by 23 February 2024.
33. However, on 22 February 2024, the AIU received an e-mail from the Athlete in which the Athlete stated the following:

"I understand that I missed the sampling process in these three times because of the address efficient that I filled in myself or the address does not fully disclose my residential address. Therefore I declare that I do not contest and accept the charge brought against me

[...]

"As a result, I admit that I missed all three sample collections due to an address problem and that it was my fault. [...]"

Disciplinary proceedings

34. On 18 March 2024, in accordance with Article B.3.4 and Article 5.3.2 ISRM, the AIU issued the Athlete with a Notice of Allegation of an Anti-Doping Rule Violation and invited the Athlete to provide her detailed written explanation for the Rule 2.4 Anti-Doping Rule Violation alleged against her by no later than 25 March 2024.
35. The Athlete was also informed that the AIU had decided to impose a Provisional Suspension upon her from 18 March 2024 and advised of her right to make a written submission to lift the Provisional Suspension by no later than 25 March 2024.
36. On 25 March 2024 the Athlete provided her explanation for the alleged Anti-Doping Rule Violation of Rule 2.4 of the Rules, which, in summary, alleged that she had not been notified of the First Whereabouts Failure or the Second Whereabouts Failure before the Third Whereabouts Failure occurred because the Athlete's manager/manager's wife had created an e-mail address on the Athlete's behalf because she lacked the understanding to be able to do so herself. The Athlete also alleged that she did not know how to change/update her Whereabouts information and had received no training/education about how to do so and

⁶ This Whereabouts Failure was confirmed as both a Missed Test and a Filing Failure.

maintained that the DCO and the DCA had not visited the correct location that was specified in her Whereabouts information for the Third Whereabouts Failure on 24 October 2023.⁷

37. Following review of the Athlete's response to the Notice of Allegation of an Anti-Doping Rule Violation, the AIU conducted further investigations as summarised below.

AIU Investigation

38. The AIU conducted a detailed investigation into the matters raised in the Athlete's response to the Notice of Charge (as summarised above) including an interview with the Athlete conducted on 26 April 2024 and follow up clarifications/correspondence and interviews with the Athlete's manager and his wife.
39. The key findings from the AIU investigation are summarised below.
- 39.1. the Athlete's manager explained that a Google account was initially opened on the Athlete's behalf on 2 November 2021. However, he also confirmed that from 2022 he began communicating with the Athlete through a different e-mail address at the Athlete's request (which was the same e-mail address to which all correspondence relating to the Athlete's Whereabouts Failures were sent);
 - 39.2. the Athlete's manager then communicated with the Athlete using that e-mail address from 2022 onwards, including to provide the Athlete with information and documents relating to her race entries, embassy appointments and contractual matters⁸;
 - 39.3. in WhatsApp correspondence between the Athlete and the wife of the Athlete's manager in December 2022, the Athlete confirmed that she had direct access to the

⁷ The Athlete filed no submission to lift the Provisional Suspension that had been imposed upon her.

⁸ For example, the Athlete's manager provided evidence to the AIU that he sent several e-mails to this e-mail address, including, without limitation, (i) on 19 June 2022, including an invitation letter to participate in a 10km Label Road Race in Langeux, FRA, on 25 June 2022 and the Athlete's travel ticket for return travel from Ethiopia to France on 23 June 2022 and 27 June 2022 (ii) on 1 August 2022, including an invitation to an appointment for VISA purposes linked to the Athlete's participation in the Sydney marathon, including an invitation letter to participate in the Sydney marathon on 18 September 2022 and her return flight details from Ethiopia to Australia on 13 September 2022 and 19 September 2022, (iii) on 1 September 2022 including the Athlete's booking for return travel from Ethiopia to Sydney on 11 September 2022 and 19 September 2022, (iv) on 2 September 2022, including the aforementioned booking confirmation, together with an invitation letter to participate in the Sydney marathon on 18 September 2022 and confirmation of the Athlete's visa granted by the Australian government, (v) on 5 December 2022 and 7 December 2022, including an invitation letter to participate in the 2022 Taipei marathon on 18 December 2022 and an electronic ticket for the Athlete's return travel from Ethiopia to Taiwan on 9 December 2022 and 18 December 2022 (vi) on 27 December 2022 and 30 December 2022, including copies of a contract between the Athlete and the manager and a Standard Athlete - Athlete's Representative Agreement for the Athlete's signature (vii) on 4 January 2023, including an Athlete Agreement Form and Questionnaire for the Athlete's signature/completion and (viii) on 17 February 2023, including confirmation of the Athlete's appointment at the Netherlands Visa Application Centre in Addis Ababa on 21 February 2023, invitation letter to participate in competitions in the Netherlands on 16 April and 23 April 2023, flight details for return travel to the Netherlands from Ethiopia on 13 April 2023 and 24 April 2023 and a Schengen Visa application form.

e-mail address to which all correspondence relating to the Whereabouts Failures was subsequently sent to;

- 39.4. on 8 February 2023, the Athlete attended an education session help by the Ethiopian Athletics Federation at the Swiss Inn Nexus Hotel in Addis Ababa, which included specific education in relation to Whereabouts requirements; and
 - 39.5. the AIU invited the Athlete to attend an online education session on 17 May 2023, but the Athlete failed to attend. The AIU also sent e-mails to the Athlete from 16 October 2023 inviting her to attend a further online education session on 25 October 2023, but the Athlete also failed to attend. The Athlete was further invited to attend specific education sessions relating to Whereabouts Training (in both English and Amharic) organised for March 2023 and June 2023, but did not attend.
40. Pursuant to the foregoing, the AIU remained satisfied that the Athlete had been notified of the First Whereabouts Failure and the Second Whereabouts Failure before the Third Whereabouts Failure had occurred and that she had committed an Anti-Doping Rule Violation as set out in the Rules.
 41. On 10 March 2025, the AIU therefore issued a Notice of Charge to the Athlete in accordance with Rule 8.5.1 and Article 7.1 ISRM, which charged the Athlete with a Rule 2.4 Anti-Doping Rule Violation and invited the Athlete to confirm how she wished to proceed with the matter.
 42. On 30 March 2025, the AIU received an Admission of Anti-Doping Rule Violation and Acceptance of Consequences Form signed by the Athlete.

Consequences

43. This is the Athlete's first Anti-Doping Rule Violation.
44. On the basis that the Athlete has admitted the Anti-Doping Rule Violation under Rule 2.4 ADR and accepted the Consequences specified by the AIU, in accordance with Rule 10.3.2 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:
 - 44.1. a period of Ineligibility of two (2) years commencing on 18 March 2024 (the date of Provisional Suspension); and
 - 44.2. disqualification of the Athlete's results on and since 24 October 2023, with all resulting Consequences, including the forfeiture of any medals, titles, awards, points, prizes, prize money and appearance money.
45. The Athlete has accepted the above Consequences for her Anti-Doping Rule Violation and has expressly waived her right to have those Consequences determined by the Disciplinary Tribunal at a hearing.

Publication

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

Rights of Appeal

47. This decision constitutes the final decision of the AIU pursuant to Rule 8.5.6 ADR.
48. Further to Rule 13.2.3 ADR, WADA and the Ethiopian National Anti-Doping Organisation 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.
49. If an appeal is filed against this decision by WADA or the Ethiopian National Anti-Doping Organisation, the Athlete will be entitled to exercise her right of cross-appeal in accordance with Rule 13.2.4 ADR.

Monaco, 31 March 2025