
Decision of the Athletics Integrity Unit in the Case of Ms Kokebe Abeba Olekeba

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 Kokebe Abeba Olekeba ("the **Athlete**") is an 18-year-old road runner from Ethiopia¹.
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

[...]

¹ <https://worldathletics.org/athletes/ethiopia/kokeb-abera-15143211>

2.2 Use or Attempted Use by an Athlete of a Prohibited Substance or a Prohibited Method

5. On 2 November 2024, the Athlete provided a urine Sample In-Competition at the Changzhou West Taihu Lake Half Marathon in Changzhou, China, which was given code 8044918 (the "**Sample**") pursuant to Testing conducted under the Testing Authority of World Athletics - AIU.
6. On 19 November 2024, the WADA-accredited laboratory in Beijing, China (the "**Laboratory**") reported an Adverse Analytical Finding in the Sample based on the presence of a Metabolite of clostebol (4-chloro-3 α -hydroxy-androst-4-en-17-one)² (the "**Adverse Analytical Finding**") (the "**Adverse Analytical Finding**").
7. The AIU reviewed the Adverse Analytical Finding in accordance with Article 5 of the International Standard for Results Management ("**ISRM**") and determined that:
 - 7.1. the Athlete did not have a Therapeutic Use Exemption ("**TUE**") that had been granted (or that would be granted) for the Metabolite of clostebol found in the Sample; and
 - 7.2. 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.
8. Therefore, on 16 December 2024, 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, and of the imposition of an immediate Provisional Suspension.³
9. The Athlete was also informed of her rights, inter alia, to request the B Sample analysis, to request copies of the laboratory documentation supporting the Adverse Analytical Finding and to admit the Anti-Doping Rule Violations and potentially benefit from a one-year reduction in the period of Ineligibility pursuant to Rule 10.8.1 ADR by 23 December 2024.
10. On 6 January 2025, the Ethiopian Athletics Federation confirmed that the Athlete had been provided with the notification issued by the AIU on 16 December 2024, and that the Athlete had requested the B Sample analysis and provided the AIU with the Athlete's direct contact details.
11. On 7 January 2025, the AIU informed the Athlete of the costs of the B Sample analysis and asked the Athlete to confirm if she wished to proceed with the B Sample analysis by no later than 10 January 2025. The Athlete failed to respond by the stipulated deadline.
12. Therefore, on 22 January 2025, the AIU wrote to the Athlete and confirmed that she had until no later than 24 January 2025 by which to confirm her request for the B Sample analysis and that if she failed to do so, she would be deemed to have irrevocably waived her right to the

² At an estimated concentration of 0.1ng/mL.

³ The Notice of Allegation of Anti-Doping Rule Violations and Provisional Suspension was sent to the Ethiopian Athletics Federation for immediate onward transmission to the Athlete.

B Sample analysis in accordance with Article 5.1.2.1(c) of the ISRM. The Athlete also failed to respond by the extended deadline.

13. Therefore, on 28 January 2025, the AIU wrote to the Athlete and confirmed that she was deemed to have irrevocably waived her right to the B Sample analysis in accordance with Article 5.1.2.1(c) of the ISRM. The AIU informed the Athlete of her right to request the laboratory documentation supporting the Adverse Analytical Finding and to submit a written explanation for the Adverse Analytical Finding to the AIU by no later than 31 January 2025.
14. On 29 January 2025., the Ethiopian Athletics Federation informed the AIU that the Athlete had contacted them by phone noting that she had limited internet access in the area that she lived in Ethiopia and had confirmed her request for the B Sample analysis.
15. On 30 January 2025, the Athlete wrote directly to the AIU by e-mail asking for an extension to request the B Sample analysis and for instructions on how to make payment of the costs.
16. Notwithstanding the Athlete's deemed irrevocable waiver of the B Sample analysis, on 1 February 2025, the AIU wrote to the Athlete and provided her with a final opportunity until no later than 7 February 2025 by which to make full payment of the costs of the B Sample analysis to World Athletics and with the instructions to be able to do so.
17. The AIU informed the Athlete that the B Sample analysis had been scheduled to take place on 14 February 2025 at the Laboratory and of her rights to attend the Laboratory (or to appoint a representative to attend) at her own cost. The Athlete was informed that if she failed to make the full payment for the B Sample analysis by 7 February 2025, then she would be deemed to have irrevocably waived her right to the B Sample analysis pursuant to Article 5.1.2.1(c) of the ISRM.
18. On 5 February 2025, the Athlete wrote to the AIU noting that she had "*never used doping*". The Athlete confirmed that she did not have the money to pay for the B Sample analysis and noted that she had provided evidence of medicines that she had taken to "*the doping investigators*".
19. On 6 February 2025, the AIU acknowledged the Athlete's confirmation that she could not afford the costs of the B Sample analysis and confirmed that she was deemed to have irrevocably waived her right to the B Sample analysis in accordance with Article 5.1.2.1(c) of the ISRM. The AIU asked the Athlete to provide the evidence of medicines that she had taken that she claimed to have provided to doping investigators to the AIU as soon as possible.
20. On 11 February 2025, the Athlete submitted several pictures of packages of medicines and of different medications to the AIU.
21. The AIU immediately reviewed this information and noted that none of the medicines in the pictures was (or provided any evidence that they contained) clostebol. The AIU informed the Athlete of the outcome of its review and noted that without further information or clarification, the Athlete's information did not explain the Adverse Analytical Finding. The AIU invited the Athlete to provide any further information to explain the Adverse Analytical Finding by no later than 14 February 2025.

22. The Athlete failed to provide any additional information to the AIU by the 14 February 2025 deadline.
23. Therefore, on 17 February 2025, the AIU issued the Athlete with a Notice of Charge in accordance with Rule 8.5.1 ADR and Article 7.1 ISRM confirming that she was being charged with Anti-Doping Rule Violations under Rule 2.1 ADR and Rule 2.2 ADR (“the **Charge**”) and that the Consequences included (i) a period of Ineligibility of four (4) years and (ii) disqualification of her results on and since 2 November 2024.
24. The AIU invited the Athlete to respond to the Charge confirming how she wished to proceed by no later than 3 March 2025. The letter confirmed that, should the Athlete fail to challenge the AIU’s assertion of the Anti-Doping Rule Violations or the Consequences, or fail to request a hearing, then she would be deemed to have waived her right to a hearing, admitted the Anti-Doping Rule Violations and accepted the Consequences set out in the Charge in accordance with Rule 8.5.2(f) ADR.
25. On 20 February 2025, the Athlete wrote to the AIU stating, *inter alia*, that she had nothing to say because she did not know anything about doping and had never heard of or knowingly used any banned substances.
26. On 25 February 2025, the AIU acknowledged receipt of the Athlete’s response to the Notice of Charge of 20 February 2025 and reiterated the Athlete’s options for how the matter could proceed (as set out in the Charge). The Athlete was invited to respond with her confirmation by no later than 3 March 2025.
27. On 2 March 2025, the Athlete wrote to the AIU stating, *inter alia*, that she accepted that she was responsible for the metabolite of clostebol found in the Sample, that she had never knowingly used clostebol or other banned performance enhancing substance, that she did not know the cause of the Adverse Analytical Finding and did not act intentionally to enhance her performance. The Athlete reiterated that she could not afford the costs of the B Sample analysis and asked if there was any option to have the B Sample analysed.
28. On 4 March 2025, the AIU acknowledged the Athlete’s e-mail of 2 March 2025 and confirmed that it was not able to assist her with the costs of the B Sample analysis. The AIU also noted that the Athlete had failed to confirm how she wished to proceed with the matter by 3 March 2025 and confirmed that she had until no later than 7 March 2025 to benefit from the application of Rule 10.8.1 to her case by accepting that she had committed the ADRVs and the Consequences specified in the Charge.
29. On 6 March 2025, the AIU received an Admission of Anti-Doping Rule Violations and Acceptance of Consequences Form signed by the Athlete.

Consequences

30. Rule 10.2 ADR specifies that the period of Ineligibility for an Anti-Doping Rule Violation under Rule 2.1 or Rule 2.2 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.”*
31. Clostebol (and its Metabolites) is a Prohibited Substance under the WADA 2024 Prohibited List under the category S1.1 Anabolic Androgenic Steroids. It is a Non-Specified Substance prohibited at all times.
32. The period of Ineligibility to be imposed is therefore a period of four (4) years, unless the Athlete demonstrates that the Anti-Doping Rule Violations were not intentional.
33. The Athlete has not demonstrated that the Anti-Doping Rule Violations were not intentional. Therefore, the mandatory period of Ineligibility is a period of Ineligibility of four (4) years.
34. However, Rule 10.8.1 ADR provides that an athlete potentially subject to an asserted period of Ineligibility of four (4) years or more 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 Notice of Charge was issued to the Athlete on 17 February 2025, and, on 6 March 2025, the Athlete returned a signed Admission of Anti-Doping Rule Violations and Acceptance of Consequences Form confirming that she admitted the Anti-Doping Rule Violations and accepted the asserted period of Ineligibility (i.e., within the deadline of 20 days).
36. The Athlete shall therefore receive a one (1) year reduction in the asserted period of Ineligibility pursuant to Rule 10.8.1 based on an early admission and acceptance of sanction.
37. On the basis that the Athlete has admitted the Anti-Doping Rule Violations under Rule 2.1 ADR and Rule 2.2 ADR, in accordance with Rule 10.2.1 ADR and the application of Rule 10.8.1 ADR, the AIU confirms by this decision the following Consequences for a first Anti-Doping Rule Violation:

- 37.1. a period of Ineligibility of three (3) years commencing on 16 December 2024 (the date of Provisional Suspension); and
 - 37.2. disqualification of the Athlete's results on and since 2 November 2024, with all resulting Consequences, including the forfeiture of any titles, awards, medals, points, prizes and appearance money.
38. The Athlete has accepted the above Consequences for her Anti-Doping Rule Violations and has expressly waived her right to have those Consequences determined by the Disciplinary Tribunal at a hearing.

Publication

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

Rights of Appeal

40. This decision constitutes the final decision of the AIU pursuant to Rule 8.5.6 ADR.
41. Further to Rule 13.2.3 ADR, WADA and the Ethiopian Anti-Doping Agency ("**ETH-ADA**") 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.
42. If an appeal is filed against this decision by WADA or ETH-ADA, the Athlete will be entitled to exercise her right of cross-appeal in accordance with Rule 13.2.4 ADR.

Monaco, 7 March 2025