Athletics Integrity Unit

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Decision of the Athletics Integrity Unit in the Case of Ms Careen Cheptoek

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 Careen Cheptoek ("the **Athlete**") is a 31-year-old marathon runner from Kenya[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)."*

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/kenya/careen-cheptoek-14733005

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

5. On 15 December 2024, the Athlete provided a urine Sample In-Competition at the "Taipei City Marathon" (a World Athletics Gold Label Road Race) in Taiwan, which was given code 1414010 (the "**Sample**").

6. On 27 January 2025, the World Anti-Doping Agency ("**WADA**") accredited laboratory in Tokyo, Japan (the "**Laboratory**") reported an Adverse Analytical Finding in the Sample based on the presence of Methylprednisolone (the "**Adverse Analytical Finding**")[2].

7. Methylprednisolone is a Prohibited Substance under the WADA 2024 Prohibited List under the category S9. Glucocorticoids. It is a Specified Substance prohibited In-Competition when administered by any injectable, oral[3] 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 Methylprednisolone 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. it was not apparent that the Adverse Analytical Finding was caused by an ingestion of the relevant Prohibited Substance through a permitted route.

9. Therefore, on 13 February 2025, 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 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 accept the Consequences specified by the AIU. The AIU also requested that the Athlete provide an explanation for the Adverse Analytical Finding by no later than 20 February 2025.

11. On 14 February 2025, the Athlete responded to the AIU by e-mail stating that she had been taking medicine which she believed had caused the Adverse Analytical Finding. However, following review of the information provided, the AIU informed the Athlete that the medicine that the Athlete had referred to was not Methylprednisolone and that there was no evidence to indicate that it contained Methylprednisolone.

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[2] At an estimated concentration of 52ng/mL (corrected for Specific Gravity).

[3] Including oromucosal (e.g., buccal, gingival, sublingual).

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12. On 16 February 2025, the Athlete submitted a further explanation to the AIU in which she provided details of additional medicines that she recalled taking that could have caused the Adverse Analytical Finding. The AIU reviewed that information and again noted that none of the medicines that the Athlete had referred to in her further explanation was Methylprednisolone and that there was no evidence to indicate that any of them contained Methylprednisolone.

13. On 17 February 2025, the Athlete wrote to the AIU stating, *inter alia*, that she had tried to think of what she could have taken to explain the Adverse Analytical Finding and noted that her training group shared supplement drinks, especially on long runs. The Athlete stated that she would "*accept everything*" and "*sign the papers and wait for your decision*".

14. On 19 February 2025, the AIU received an Admission of an Anti-Doping Rule Violations and Acceptance of Consequences Form signed by the Athlete.

Consequences

15. This is the Athlete's first Anti-Doping Rule Violation.

16. Rule 10.2 ADR specifies that the period of Ineligibility for an Anti-Doping Rule Violation under Rule 2.1 ADR and Rule 2.2 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."*

17. Methylprednisolone is a Prohibited Substance under the WADA 2024 Prohibited List under the category S9. Glucocorticoids. It is a Specified Substance prohibited In-Competition when administered by any injectable, oral or rectal route.

18. The AIU has no evidence that the Anti-Doping Rule Violations were intentional and the period of Ineligibility to be imposed is therefore a period of two (2) years.

19. 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, the AIU confirms by this decision the following Consequences for a first Anti-Doping Rule Violation:

    19.1. a period of Ineligibility of two (2) years commencing on 19 February 2025; and

    19.2. disqualification of the Athlete's results on and since 15 December 2024, with all resulting Consequences, including the forfeiture of any titles, awards, medals, points, prizes and appearance money.

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20. 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

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

Rights of Appeal

22. This decision constitutes the final decision of the AIU pursuant to Rule 8.5.6 ADR.

23. Further to Rule 13.2.3 ADR, WADA and the Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya ("**ADAK**") 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.

24. If an appeal is filed against this decision by WADA or ADAK, the Athlete will be entitled to exercise her right of cross-appeal in accordance with Rule 13.2.4 ADR.

Monaco, 24 February 2025