
Decision of the Athletics Integrity Unit in the Case of Ms Zinah Senbeta

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 Zinah Senbeta ("the **Athlete**") is a 27-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 the Anti-Doping Rule Violations:

"2.1 Presence of a Prohibited Substance or its Metabolites or Markers in an Athlete's Sample

[...]

¹ <https://worldathletics.org/athletes/ethiopia/zinah-senbeta-14802773>

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

5. On 22 October 2023, the Athlete provided a urine Sample In-Competition at the ‘27th Ljubljana Marathon’ held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, pursuant to Testing conducted under the Testing Authority of World Athletics-AIU which was given code 7152883 (the “**First Sample**”).
6. On 24 October 2023, the Athlete provided a urine Sample Out-of-Competition in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, pursuant to Testing conducted under the Testing Authority of World Athletics-AIU which was given code 7199204 (the “**Second Sample**”).
7. The First Sample was originally analysed and reported as negative for the presence of any Prohibited Substances on 3 November 2023 by the World Anti-Doping Agency (“**WADA**”) accredited laboratory in Seibersdorf, Austria (the “**Seibersdorf Laboratory**”).
8. However, the AIU requested further analysis of the First Sample, and on 9 March 2026, the Seibersdorf Laboratory confirmed that the further analysis of the First Sample had revealed the presence of Metabolites of Testosterone, Androsterone, Etiocholanolone, 5 α Adiol and 5 β Adiol, consistent with exogenous origin (the “**First Adverse Analytical Finding**”).
9. The Second Sample was originally analysed and reported as negative for the presence of any Prohibited Substances on 28 November 2023 by the WADA-accredited laboratory in Lausanne, Switzerland (the “**Lausanne Laboratory**”).
10. However, the AIU requested further analysis of the Second Sample, and on 26 February 2026, the Lausanne Laboratory confirmed that the further analysis of the Second Sample had also revealed the presence of Metabolites of Testosterone, Androsterone, Etiocholanolone, 5 α Adiol and 5 β Adiol, consistent with exogenous origin (the “**Second Adverse Analytical Finding**”).
11. The AIU reviewed the Adverse Analytical Findings in accordance with Article 5 of the International Standard for Results Management (“**ISRM**”) and determined that:
 - 11.1. the Athlete did not have a Therapeutic Use Exemption (“**TUE**”) that had been granted for the Metabolites of Testosterone consistent with exogenous origin found in the Samples; and
 - 11.2. 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.
12. On 10 March 2026, the AIU notified the Athlete of the Adverse Analytical Findings in accordance with Article 5.1.2.1 of the ISRM, including that the Adverse Analytical Findings may result in Anti-Doping Rule Violations pursuant to Rule 2.1 ADR and/or Rule 2.2 ADR and the imposition of an immediate Provisional Suspension.
13. The Athlete was invited to provide an explanation for the Adverse Analytical Findings by attending an interview with AIU representatives. She was also informed of her rights, *inter alia*, to request the analysis of the B Samples, to request copies of the laboratory documentation

supporting the Adverse Analytical Findings, to provide a written explanation, and to admit the Anti-Doping Rule Violations and potentially benefit from a one-year reduction of the period of Ineligibility pursuant to Rule 10.8.1 ADR, by no later than 17 March 2026.

14. On 24 March 2026, the Athlete attended an interview with an AIU representative and provided explanations regarding the Adverse Analytical Findings. In summary, the Athlete stated that she had suffered from headaches and knee pain in 2023 and had visited a clinic or pharmacy in Addis Ababa. However, she was unable to identify the medical facility(ies), their location(s), the practitioner(s) consulted, or any medication prescribed. She also indicated that she had suffered from Typhoid fever in 2023 and had, at that time, no knowledge of doping, Prohibited Substances, or the Anti-Doping Rules.
15. Having failed to request the analysis of the B Samples, on 30 March 2026, the AIU informed the Athlete in writing that she was deemed to have irrevocably waived her right to their analyses (in accordance with Article 5.1.2.1(c) of the ISRM). The Athlete was also invited to submit any additional information for the Adverse Analytical Findings to the AIU beyond the explanation and information provided in interview by no later than 3 April 2026.
16. On 2 April 2026, the Athlete provided further information. In summary, she stated that she had consulted a doctor for headaches and knee pain and had taken over-the-counter painkillers purchased from local pharmacies or small medical facilities, without prescription, to treat minor sickness. She explained that she would use such medication as needed, including after training or at home, in order to relieve pain. She indicated that these painkillers might have contained Testosterone, although she was unaware of their composition at the time and used them solely for health purposes.
17. The Athlete further explained that she was unable to identify the specific pharmacies or clinics she had visited due to frequent changes of residence, the passage of time, and the possibility that some of these establishments no longer existed. She added that her knowledge of the Anti-Doping Rules in 2023 was limited and largely informal. She denied any intention to cheat or gain an unfair advantage, expressed regret, and stated that she had learned from the situation and would exercise greater caution in the future.
18. Following a review of the Athlete's explanations, the AIU remained satisfied that Anti-Doping Rule Violations had been committed and, accordingly, issued a Notice of Charge on 21 April 2026 pursuant to Rule 8.5.1 ADR and Article 7.1 ISRM, inviting the Athlete to indicate how she wished to proceed.
19. The Notice of Charge also specified that information available to the AIU indicated that the Athlete had participated in the 'Seoul Marathon' held in Seoul, South Korea, on 15 March 2026 (the "**Race**") in breach of the Provisional Suspension imposed upon her on 10 March 2026 and that the Athlete would therefore not be given any credit for the period of Provisional Suspension against any period of Ineligibility in accordance with Rule 10.13.2(a) ADR².

² 10.13.2 *Credit for Provisional Suspension or period of Ineligibility served*

20. On 1 May 2026, the Athlete provided an explanation regarding her apparent breach of the Provisional Suspension. In summary, whilst she acknowledged receipt of the email dated 10 March 2026 that notified her of the Adverse Analytical Findings and the imposition of the Provisional Suspension, she asserted that she did not fully understand the contents due to a language barrier and believed that she was only under investigation. She explained that she was focused on preparing for the Race, did not properly review her emails before her departure, and only became aware of the message at the airport without being able to understand or translate it.
21. The Athlete maintained that her participation in the Race in breach of the Provisional Suspension was not intentional, and that it was the result of a lack of understanding and experience, and expressed regret.
22. On the same day, the AIU received an Admission of Anti-Doping Rule Violations and Acceptance of Consequences Form signed by the Athlete confirming that she admitted the Anti-Doping Rule Violations and accepted the Consequences specified in the Notice of Charge issued on 21 April 2026.

Consequences

23. This is the Athlete's first Anti-Doping Rule Violation.³
24. Rule 10.2 ADR specifies that the period of Ineligibility for an Anti-Doping Rule Violation under Rule 2.1 ADR or 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..."*

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- (a) If a Provisional Suspension is respected by the Athlete or other Person, then the Athlete or other Person will receive a credit for such period of Provisional Suspension against any period of Ineligibility that may ultimately be imposed. **If the Athlete or other Person does not respect a Provisional Suspension, they will receive no credit for any period of Provisional Suspension served.***

³ In accordance with Rule 10.9.3(a) ADR the Anti-Doping Rule Violations arising from the Adverse Analytical Findings shall be considered together as one single first violation.

25. Testosterone and its Metabolites are Prohibited Substances under the WADA 2023 Prohibited List under the category S1.1. Anabolic Androgenic Steroids. They are Non-Specified Substances prohibited at all times.
26. 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.
27. The Athlete has not demonstrated that the Anti-Doping Rule Violations were not intentional. Therefore, the mandatory period of Ineligibility to be imposed is a period of four (4) years.
28. 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.”

29. A Notice of Charge was issued to the Athlete on 21 April 2026. On 1 May 2026, the Athlete confirmed that she admitted the Anti-Doping Rule Violations and accepted the asserted period of Ineligibility of four (4) years.
30. The Athlete shall therefore receive a one (1) year reduction in the asserted period of Ineligibility pursuant to Rule 10.8.1 ADR based on an early admission and acceptance of sanction.
31. 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 by application of Rule 10.8.1 ADR and Rule 10.7.1 ADR, the AIU confirms by this decision the following Consequences for a first Anti-Doping Rule Violation:
 - 31.1. a period of Ineligibility of three (3) years commencing on 1 May 2026⁴ and expiring on 30 April 2029; and

⁴ In accordance with Rule 10.13 ADR, the period of Ineligibility will start on the date Ineligibility is accepted where a hearing is waived or there is no hearing. The Athlete accepted the period of Ineligibility on 1 May 2026.

- 31.2. disqualification of the Athlete's results on and since 22 October 2023 with all resulting Consequences, including the forfeiture of any medals, titles, awards, points, prizes, prize money and appearance money⁵.
32. 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

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

Rights of Appeal

34. This decision constitutes the final decision of the AIU pursuant to Rule 8.5.6 ADR.
35. Further to Rule 13.2.3 ADR, WADA and the Ethiopian Anti-Doping Authority ("**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.
36. 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 May 2026

⁵ For the avoidance of any doubt, this includes all competitive results obtained by the Athlete between 22 October 2023 and 1 May 2026 in accordance with Rule 10.10 ADR, including the Athlete's result obtained in the Race on 15 March 2026.