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# Decision of the Athletics Integrity Unit in the Case of Ms Deborah Sang

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## 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 Deborah Sang ("the **Athlete**") is a 26-year-old road runner from Kenya.<sup>1</sup>

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*

*[...]*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://worldathletics.org/athletes/kenya/deborah-sang-15182420>

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

### • The First Adverse Analytical Finding

5. On 6 April 2025, the Athlete provided a urine Sample In-Competition at the 38th Comtrade Belgrade Marathon held in Belgrade, Serbia, which was given code 8015509 (the “**First Sample**”).
6. On 18 April 2025, the World Anti-Doping Agency (“**WADA**”)-accredited laboratory in Seibersdorf, Austria (the “**Seibersdorf Laboratory**”) reported that the results of its analysis of the First Sample were negative for the presence of Prohibited Substances.
7. On 4 March 2026, following Further Analysis<sup>2</sup> requested by the AIU, the Seibersdorf Laboratory reported, an Adverse Analytical Finding in the First Sample based on the presence of Testosterone and its Metabolite 5 $\beta$ -androstane-3 $\alpha$ ,17 diol (“**5 $\beta$ Adiol**”) consistent with exogenous origin (the “**First Adverse Analytical Finding**”).

### • The Second Adverse Analytical Finding

8. On 31 January 2026, the Athlete provided a urine Sample In-Competition at the Riyadh Marathon held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, which was given code 8471401 (the “**Second Sample**”).
9. On 25 February 2026, the WADA-accredited laboratory in Lausanne, Switzerland (the “**Lausanne Laboratory**”) reported an Adverse Analytical Finding in the Second Sample based on the presence of Prednisone and Prednisolone<sup>3</sup> (the “**Second Adverse Analytical Finding**”).

### • Results Management

10. The AIU 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 the exogenous Testosterone and 5 $\beta$ Adiol detected in the First Sample or for the Prednisone and Prednisolone detected in the Second Sample<sup>4</sup>; and

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<sup>2</sup> As defined in the International Standard for Laboratories (“**ISL**”):

“**Further Analysis:** *Further Analysis, as this term is used in the ISL, occurs when a Laboratory conducts additional analysis on an “A” Sample or a “B” Sample after an analytical result for that “A” Sample or that “B” Sample has been reported by the Laboratory.*”

<sup>3</sup> Prednisone and Prednisolone are metabolites of each other.

<sup>4</sup> The AIU noted that on 13 January 2026, the Athlete submitted a TUE application for the Use of oral prednisolone to the Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya (“**ADAK**”), and on 7 February 2026, the ADAK TUE Committee issued a decision denying that application.

- 10.2. there was no apparent departure from the International Standard for Testing and Investigations (“**ISTI**”) or from the ISL that could reasonably have caused the Adverse Analytical Findings.
11. On 11 March 2026, the AIU notified the Athlete of the Adverse Analytical Findings in accordance with Article 5.1.2.1 of the ISRM (“the **Notice of Allegation**”) 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 of the imposition of an immediate Provisional Suspension. The Athlete 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 and to provide an explanation for the Adverse Analytical Findings.
  12. On 24 March 2026, upon request of the AIU, the Athlete attended an interview with ADAK representatives (acting on behalf of the AIU) in person in Kenya, during which she admitted the Anti-Doping Rule Violations set out in the Notice of Allegation.
  13. On 25 March 2026, the Athlete returned, via ADAK, a signed Admission of Anti-Doping Rule Violations and Acceptance of Consequences Form (dated 24 March 2026) confirming that she admitted the Anti-Doping Rule Violations and accepted the Consequences specified in the Notice of Allegation.

## Consequences

14. In accordance with Rule 10.9.3(a) ADR, the First Adverse Analytical Finding and Second Adverse Analytical Finding shall be considered together as one single Anti-Doping Rule Violation. This is therefore the Athlete’s first Anti-Doping Rule Violation.
15. 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.”*

16. Prednisone and Prednisolone are Prohibited Substances under the WADA 2026 Prohibited List under the category S9. *Glucocorticoids*. They are Specified Substances prohibited In-Competition when administered by any injectable, oral<sup>5</sup> or rectal route.

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<sup>5</sup> Including oromucosal (e.g., buccal, gingival, sublingual).

17. Testosterone (and its Metabolites) is a Prohibited Substance under the WADA 2025 Prohibited List under the category S1.1 Anabolic Androgenic Steroids. It is a Non-Specified Substance prohibited at all times.
18. Rule 10.9.3(a) also provides that the sanction to be imposed shall be based on the violation that carries the more severe sanction, including the application of Aggravating Circumstances.
19. The Anti-Doping Rule Violations arising from the detection of Testosterone and 5 $\beta$ Adiol in the First Sample carry the greatest sanction, (a period of Ineligibility of four (4) years), unless the Athlete demonstrates that the Anti-Doping Rule Violations were not intentional.
20. The Athlete has not demonstrated that the Anti-Doping Rule Violations were not intentional. Therefore, the period of Ineligibility to be imposed is a period of Ineligibility of four (4) years.
21. 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.”*

22. 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.”*

23. The analysis of the First Sample revealed the presence of Testosterone and 5 $\beta$ Adiol, and the analysis of the Second Sample revealed the presence of Prednisone and Prednisolone.
24. This constitutes clear evidence of the Athlete’s use of “*multiple Prohibited Substances*”, which is expressly identified in the definition of Aggravating Circumstances and justifies an increase of the period of Ineligibility, unless the Athlete can establish that she did not knowingly commit the Anti-Doping Rule Violations.
25. The Athlete has failed to establish that she did not knowingly commit the Anti-Doping Rule Violations. Therefore, the period of Ineligibility to be imposed is a period of six (6) years.
26. 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.”*

27. A Notice of Allegation was issued to the Athlete on 11 March 2026. On 24 March 2026, the Athlete confirmed that she admitted the Anti-Doping Rule Violations and accepted the asserted period of Ineligibility of six (6) years.<sup>6</sup>
28. 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.

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<sup>6</sup> The Notice of Allegation of Anti-Doping Rule Violations was issued to the Athlete by the AIU in accordance with Article 5.1.2 of the ISRM, prior to a Notice of Charge issued in accordance with Article 7 of the ISRM. Considering the Athlete’s admission and acceptance of Consequences on 24 March 2026, no Notice of Charge was ever issued.

29. 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 Rule 10.4 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:

- 29.1. a period of Ineligibility of five (5) years commencing on 11 March 2026 (the date of Provisional Suspension); and
- 29.2. disqualification of the Athlete's results on and since 6 April 2025, with all resulting Consequences, including the forfeiture of any medals, titles, awards, points, prizes, prize money and appearance money.

## Publication

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

## Rights of Appeal

31. This decision constitutes the final decision of the AIU pursuant to Rule 8.5.6 ADR.
32. Further to Rule 13.2.3 ADR, WADA and 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.
33. If an appeal is filed against this decision by WADA or ADAK, the Athlete will be entitled to exercise his right of cross-appeal in accordance with Rule 13.2.4 ADR.

Monaco, 21 May 2026