

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DOPING CRISIS IN KENYAN ATHLETICS

WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS FOR THE DOPING CRISIS IN KENYAN ATHLETICS?

The cause of this problem is a combination of unique factors which have together provided “an irresistible incentive to dope”.

- Road Running is the most lucrative part of the sport of athletics. There are hundreds of millions of dollars in prize money and appearance fees from hundreds of races all over the world available to professional road runners. These financial rewards are the clear motivational factor behind this doping crisis.
- Kenya has an incredible depth of talented distance runners who are often from poor socio-economic backgrounds. Coupled with this, these athletes (who often support large, extended families/villages) have faced mounting economic pressures in the wake of the pandemic.
- Elite marathon runners can only race in 2-3 marathons per year, therefore the pool of professional runners who can share in the prize money is very large. The competitive pressure is enormous compared to other disciplines. For example, the 100th-ranked marathon runner can earn a large amount of money each year but the 100th-ranked 800-metre runner will not earn much at all.
- While the top professional runners are controlled by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU), there are hundreds below this level who are currently not being tested sufficiently by the Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya (ADAK) due to a lack of funding. This creates a huge risk for doping because the top runners must compete for prize money and their place in lucrative races alongside the up-and-coming runners who today are not tested enough – or at all. The temptation to dope is very high to stay ahead of rival competitors.
- Kenyan doping is not centralised; however, it is becoming increasingly more sophisticated. Because of the financial incentives to dope, there is a free market demand for doping products and methods and many persons are willing to supply the athletes. These transactions range from the very basic supply of products to more sophisticated networks of conspirators coming together to use methodologies to avoid detection.

WHY IS THE KENYAN DOPING CRISIS DIFFERENT FROM RUSSIA’S DOPING CRISIS?

The crisis in Kenya is far different from what has occurred in Russia. In both 2015 and 2020, the Russian Athletics Federation (RAF) was found to be covering up anti-doping rule violations and collaborating in such practices at the highest levels of the sport.

By contrast, the Kenyan authorities – its Government, Athletics Kenya (AK) and ADAK – are collaborating closely with the AIU to uncover doping.

There is a strong platform from which to launch a targeted, robust, intelligence-led anti-doping programme, using the increased funding promised from Kenya's Government. The Kenyan Government will be providing US\$5 million annually for the next five years to fight doping in athletics. Ultimately, we all want the same thing – clean athletes representing Kenya. We are confident that with joint diligent work, our intelligence capabilities, and increased testing and detection, we can reduce the scale of doping in Kenya.

HOW WILL THE US\$5 MILLION BE USED ANNUALLY TO ENHANCE THE ANTI-DOPING FIGHT IN KENYA?

A large proportion of this money will be allocated to strengthening the testing programme, up to an additional 4000 tests annually by ADAK. The remaining funds will be used to bolster the legal, investigations and education resources available to the Kenyan anti-doping authorities.

The plan is to improve Kenya's entire anti-doping infrastructure significantly, with a particular focus on testing to reduce the structural weaknesses that currently exist. AIU covers the top tier of Kenyan athletes but testing of the second tier of professional road runners must be increased significantly to ensure they are operating in a controlled environment. A robust, widescale national testing programme is required for athletes at that level to create a clean environment among all Kenyan athletes.

About the Athletics Integrity Unit

The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) is the independent body created by the World Athletics that manages all integrity issues – both doping and non-doping – for the sport of athletics. The remit of the AIU includes anti-doping, the pursuit of individuals engaged in age or competition results manipulation, investigating fraudulent behaviour with regards to transfers of allegiance, and detecting other misconduct including bribery and breaches of betting rules. It is the AIU's role to drive cheats out of our sport, and to do everything within its power to support honest athletes around the world who dedicate their lives to reaching their sporting goals through dedication and hard work.

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