

Howman: More OOC Testing by NADOs Complementing AIU's Work

18 DECEMBER 2025, MONACO: The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) has lauded the continued increase in out-of-competition (OOO) testing by National Anti-Doping Organisations (NADOs) in the sport of athletics.

An overview of testing trends in the lead-up to the recent World Athletics Championships shows the overall OOC testing of competing athletes, prior to WCH Tokyo 2025, jumped by 49 per cent compared to OOC testing of competing athletes prior to WCH London 2017, from 4,146 to 6,193 OOC tests. However, the bigger eye-opener is that testing performed by NADOs on competing athletes has rocketed from 2,296 to 3,940 OOC tests in the eight-year period – an increase of 71 per cent.

A comparison of the two most recent championships – WCH Budapest 2023 and this summer's spectacle in Tokyo – has shown this trend continuing, with NADO-led OOC testing rising by 19 per cent from 3,300 OOC tests pre-Budapest to 3,940 OOC tests pre-Tokyo. There was a 12-per cent improvement in total OOC testing (from 5,542 to 6,193 OOC tests), with AIU OOC testing remaining steady.

The unique World Athletics Anti-Doping Rules place obligations on Member Federations in relation to anti-doping matters, including the requirement that the teams they bring to major championships must have a reasonable amount of testing. This rule is enforced by the AIU which works closely with Member Federations and the relevant NADOs to ensure that both quantity and quality of the domestic testing programmes are appropriate.

"These statistics tell a great story, reflecting a key objective of the World Athletics Anti-Doping Rules – to strengthen domestic testing programmes to complement the AIU's international testing framework," noted AIU Chair David Howman.

"These increased domestic testing levels allow the AIU to focus on what it does best, intelligence-led testing on the elite athletes of the sport, with the goal of protecting the podium by testing the right athlete, with the right test, at the right time."

World Championships OOC Testing Statistics - London 2017 to Tokyo 2025 Comparisons & Pre-Tokyo 2025 OOC Testing Statistics

First World Championships with Most Athletes Having '3+ OOC Tests' in Lead-Up

Announcing OOC testing statistics in the 10-month lead-up to Tokyo, Howman further revealed fewer athletes arrived in Japan with no OOC tests while there was a seven-percent jump in athletes having more than three OOC tests in the official lead-up period (8 November 2024 to 7 September 2025) to the competition.

“Only 20.6 per cent of athletes had zero OOC tests leading up to Tokyo, the lowest in the AIU’s reporting history. Meanwhile, 52.9 per cent received three or more OOC tests, making Tokyo the first Championships where most athletes were subject to 3 or more OOC tests,” he disclosed.

Comparing Tokyo to the previous two World Championships, Howman indicated that in Eugene 2022, a third of the athletes (33 per cent) arrived with no OOC testing. By Budapest 2023, this dropped to 27 per cent..

The statistics, which also assessed the testing figures for Top-8 athletes (**excluding relay participants**), illuminated the fact that Top-8 finishers recorded the highest overall testing to date. Many had six to eight OOC tests compared to 5.54 in Budapest and 4.8 in Eugene. When totalled with IC testing, many finalists had nine to 12 tests (OOC + IC) in the lead-up.

In the lead-up period, 6,193 OOC tests were conducted on athletes who participated in Tokyo: A total of 2,006 athletes competed in Tokyo, almost identical to Budapest 2023 (2,004) but notably higher than Eugene 2022 (1,719). Beyond team size, however, the Tokyo figures demonstrate a clear three-cycle progression in the distribution, depth, and targeting of OOC testing.

Implemented in January 2019 to reduce the risk of doping, Rule 15 of the World Athletics Anti-Doping Rules governs National Federation Anti-Doping Obligations, making National Federations accountable for ensuring appropriate anti-doping measures are in place in their respective jurisdictions. Among other things, the Rule sets out minimum requirements for testing of the ‘Category A’ National Federations which are deemed to have the highest doping risk and are considered a threat to the overall integrity of the sport.

The AIU remains responsible for testing elite international-level athletes in its Registered Testing Pool (RTP), particularly those in the Top 10 of their events who are most likely to reach finals or secure medals at major global competitions. In parallel, the AIU works closely with NADOs, encouraging them to focus their domestic RTPs on the next tier of athletes, those rising quickly through the rankings, capable of producing breakthrough performances, or emerging from deep pools of national talent. This two-layered approach ensures that the pinnacle of the competition remains well protected from athletes who may otherwise escape targeted testing. The Tokyo data reflects the impact of this collaborative model at scale.

Howman said that in keeping with the AIU’s avowed policy of transparency and global anti-doping accountability, the organisation is sharing data reflecting all testing conducted on national teams (with 10 athletes or more) in the full pre-Championships lead-up.

The AIU has the authority to issue corrective action notices to National Federations deemed to have inadequate testing levels and ultimately to impose minimum-testing requirements for future World Athletics events, if necessary.

HIGHLIGHTS AND COMPARISONS

National Teams Testing Levels (8 November 2024 to 7 September 2025)

Lead-Up Period to World Athletics Championships Tokyo 2025

National Teams Testing Levels Tokyo 2025

- **Significant Reduction in Athletes with Zero OOC Tests:**

Just 414 athletes (20.6%) had zero OOC tests prior to Tokyo, compared to 27% in Budapest and 33% in Eugene, a continued and substantial improvement across three championship cycles.

- **Increase in Athletes Receiving 1-2 OOC Tests:**

Tokyo saw 530 athletes (26.4%) fall within this bracket, broadly consistent with Budapest (28%) and Eugene (28%), showing a stable middle tier of testing exposure.

- **Major Rise in Athletes with 3+ OOC Tests:**

A total of 1,062 athletes (52.9%) had three or more OOC tests before Tokyo, up from 45% in Budapest and 39% in Eugene. Tokyo is the first Championship where the majority of athletes received 3+ OOC tests.

- **Sharp Decline in Athletes with Zero OOC Across Cycles:**

From 33% in Eugene to 27% in Budapest to 20.6% in Tokyo, demonstrating progressively stronger identification and testing of athletes for OOC testing.

- **Finalists Continue to Show Deep Testing Levels:**

Similar to Budapest, the number of Tokyo finalists (Top-8 athletes) with zero OOC tests remains extremely low (2%). Most finalists underwent multi-test OOC programmes.

- **OOC Testing for Top-8 Finishers Maintained High Levels Yet:**

Finalists at Tokyo were tested an **average of 5.67 times out-of-competition**, higher than Budapest (5.54) and Eugene (4.8), sustaining strong testing coverage for medal-contending athletes.

- **High Combined OOC + IC Testing for Finalists:**

At Tokyo 2025, **17 federations recorded an average of 9 or more out-of-competition (OOO) and in-competition (IC) tests** for their Top-8 athletes. Across all federations, **finalists averaged 8.21 combined tests**, showing strong pre-event and event-period testing.

ABOUT THE ATHLETICS INTEGRITY UNIT

Link: [HTTPS://WWW.ATHLETICSINTEGRITY.ORG](https://www.athleticsintegrity.org)

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.



ATHLETICS INTEGRITY UNIT

E: media@athleticsintegrity.org

Athletics Integrity Unit, 1st Floor, 6 Quai Antoine 1er, MC 98007 Monaco