

WORLD ATHLETICS APPROVES AIU'S REQUEST FOR TOUGHER TESTING FOR FOUR FEDERATIONS

11 MARCH 2024, MONACO: Athletes from Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and Portugal will face more stringent Out-of-Competition (OOC) testing to be eligible for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games following the World Athletics' (WA) Council's approval of a recommendation from the Athletics Integrity Unit's (AIU) Board to impose tougher testing requirements on those federations ahead of the Summer Olympics.

The four federations received clear warnings from the AIU about the insufficiency of their national testing programmes after the World Athletics Championships 2022 in Eugene. All four failed to ensure that there was proportionate OOC testing for their teams at the following World Athletics Championships in Budapest 2023. The Council has subsequently accepted the AIU's call for all four federations to have testing eligibility conditions imposed on their athletes in order to participate in Paris 2024 as follows:

- In the ten months prior to 4 July 2024, each athlete must have undergone at least three no notice out-of-competition tests (urine and blood) including, if they compete in any event from 800m upwards, at least one Athlete Biological Passport test and one EPO test;
- The three no-notice out-of-competition tests have been conducted at least three weeks apart;
- The first of the three no-notice out-of-competition tests has been conducted no later than 19 May 2024.

This mandatory testing will affect athletes who are not part of the AIU's Registered Testing Pool (RTP) and the stipulations are similar to the minimum regulations to which Member Federations in 'Category A' of Rule 15 of the World Athletics' Anti-Doping Rules must adhere. 'Category A' Member Federations are deemed to have the highest doping risk and are considered a threat to the overall integrity of the sport. Under Rule 15, these four Member Federations were in 'Category B' and considered to have less doping risk. However, the AIU Board has taken this unprecedented step due to the federations' failure to improve their OOC testing. By contrast, other federations who received similar warnings following the Eugene World Athletics Championships in 2022 - the Czech Republic and New Zealand - improved their testing dramatically.

"We are pleased with the Council's decision to support the AIU recommendations. This action is tough, but necessary as we did not receive an adequate response from these federations to clear warnings we gave in the lead up to the World Athletics Championships last year," said AIU Chair David Howman.

"In this Olympic year, we trust this will be a reminder to all Member Federations that the AIU and World Athletics are extremely serious about ensuring a level-playing field for athletes. It is up to all Member Federations to work together with their National Anti-Doping Organisations to ensure their team is sufficiently tested prior to Paris 2024 and the AIU will not hesitate to refer any other federation to the Council if we do not see sufficient testing."

AIU UNVEILS TESTING STATISTICS: IMPROVEMENT IN NATIONAL TESTING PRIOR TO BUDAPEST WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

On a brighter note, Howman revealed national-level testing in athletics is improving but needs further strengthening to safeguard the integrity of premium events.

“Overall, national-level testing in our sport is trending in the right direction. There have been some impressive efforts across the board and this data is a lot better than pre-Eugene.”

Unveiling testing statistics for the 49 biggest Member Federation teams in the lead-up to Budapest ([link here](#)), the AIU Chair highlighted key improvements compared to testing prior to the 2022 World Athletics Championships in Eugene. For context, 2,004 athletes competed in Budapest, compared to 1,719 in Eugene (a 17% increase). The testing statistics relate to tests conducted by either the AIU or National Anti-Doping Organisations (NADOs) in the ten months preceding the event and do not include tests conducted on-site before or during the Championships.

HIGHLIGHTS AND COMPARISONS

National Teams Testing Levels Budapest | Athletics Integrity Unit

Testing Statistics - Pre-Budapest 2023

- 5,542 OOC tests were conducted on athletes in the lead-up period to Budapest, compared to 4,235 for Eugene (30% increase).
- 2,924 in-competition tests prior to Budapest compared to 2,124 prior to Eugene (37% increase).
- 8,466 total tests prior to Budapest compared to 6,359 for Eugene (33% increase).
- A decrease of six per cent (from 33% to 27%) in the number of athletes at the Championships with zero OOC tests in the lead-up period.
- A three-per-cent increase (from 81% to 84%) in the number of athletes who finished Top-8 in an individual event with three or more OOC tests.
- Top-8 finishers were tested on average 5.54 times OOC in the lead-up to Budapest, compared with 4.8 times in Eugene.
- Kenya (11.4), China (11.3), Ethiopia (8.9), Morocco (7.1) and USA (6) averaged the highest number of tests per athlete pre-Budapest.

The AIU is responsible for testing elite international-level athletes in its RTP, mainly those in the Top 10 of their discipline, who are likely to win medals or reach finals at major international events. To complement its high-level testing programme the AIU cooperates closely with NADOs, urging them to focus domestic RTPs on the next tier of athletes. This way, the pinnacle of the competition is well protected from athletes who emerge quickly

through the rankings or produce surprise performances, or where the depth of talent means results are unpredictable.

The data published today shows the results of this collaborative approach. An event like the World Athletics Championships is huge, with more than 2,000 competitors, many of whom would not have been in any testing pool and therefore not subject to OOC testing. Consequently, 27 per cent of the 2,004 athletes in Budapest had zero OOC tests in the ten months prior to the event. However, this number drops dramatically to just six per cent for the Top-8 finishers (the finalists) in individual events. Another key finding is that 45 per cent of the athletes had three or more OOC tests, but this number rises to 84 per cent for the Top-8 finishers. In fact, Top-8 athletes averaged 5.54 OOC tests in the lead-up to the World Championships.

“The release of these statistics is in keeping with the AIU’s commitment to greater transparency and accountability to our community and to the public in general,” said Howman. “It is particularly important to release this data at the start of an Olympic year to highlight strengths and weaknesses in national testing programmes and seek appropriate responses.”

EXPLANATORY NOTE:

As part of its responsibilities, the AIU continuously monitors testing at national level, both for (i) ensuring good coordination and no redundancy with its own testing programme and (ii) for monitoring compliance with the testing requirements set out under World Athletics Rule 15.

Under the framework of Rule 15, governing National Federation Anti-Doping Obligations, which came into force in January 2019, National Federations are 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.

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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