

IAAF RESPONSE TO ARD / THE SUNDAY TIMES

Introduction

The IAAF notes the serious allegations made by ARD and the Sunday Times over the weekend following the evaluation by two Australian scientists of an unlawfully obtained IAAF Database of historical blood values (in the period 2001-2012).

ARD and the Sunday Times admit in their reports that the scientists' evaluation of the data cannot constitute proof of blood doping – with which the IAAF respectfully agrees – and they have otherwise run a statistical analysis of the likely prevalence of blood doping in Athletics which is not dissimilar to the study which the IAAF conducted itself (and published externally) almost 4 years ago. There is nothing new for the IAAF in any of that. What the IAAF cannot accept under any circumstances from the ARD/Sunday Times, or the scientists whom they have retained, is an accusation that it has breached its primary duty to act in the best interests of the sport of Athletics. The experts have never worked for the IAAF and are therefore in no position to make any comment regarding what the IAAF has done or not done in the development and implementation of its blood and urine target testing program. To do so is simply guess work on their part. The IAAF categorically refutes all allegations made by ARD and the Sunday Times and, specifically, that it failed in its duty to pursue an effective blood testing programme at all times.

The IAAF maintains that it has done everything within its means to implement an effective blood testing programme using the tools put at its disposal by the international anti-doping community and within the regulatory framework imposed by the World Anti-Doping Code. The IAAF notes WADA's statement yesterday that it is "very disturbed by these new allegations" and its decision to refer the matters contained in the ARD documentary to the Independent Commission. The IAAF was surprised by such comments, particularly given how closely it has worked with WADA over the entire period to try to advance the fight against blood doping, notably in assisting in the development and implementation of the Athlete Biological Passport, but at the same time it welcomes the opportunity to present its work again to Independent Commission in an open and transparent way. The existence of the pre-2009 IAAF data was no secret to WADA at the time and, since the introduction of the Athlete Biological Passport, WADA has had full access to the post-2009 IAAF blood data through its ADAMS database. The IAAF looks forward to engaging with the Independent Commission in a further comprehensive and informed review in due course.

The content and significance of the IAAF Database

In order to understand the true content and significance of the IAAF Database that was the subject of the ARD/Sunday Times reporting, it is important to note that it covers two time periods and two different regulatory regimes, namely pre and post the IAAF's introduction of the Athlete Biological Passport in 2009.

The pre-2009 data was collected from 2001 onwards when the first evidence of EPO use manifested itself in Athletics at the 2001 World Championships in Edmonton. Blood samples were collected at the time for regulatory purposes, namely, to identify which urine samples should be targeted for direct EPO analysis but also for building a better understanding of an athlete population that is unique in its global reach, thereby enabling a more effective risk assessment to be undertaken. The pre-2009 blood samples were not consistently collected in accordance with standardised procedures.

The post-2009 data on the other hand was collected as part of the IAAF's implementation of the Athlete Biological Passport programme in Athletics and the blood samples were all collected subject to the strict protocols mandated by the WADA ABP Operating Guidelines.

The IAAF Database covering the period 2001-2012 contains more than 12,000 samples collected from over 5000 athletes.

The Database is not a secret or hidden document in any way but it was a secure document that was never meant to find its way into the public domain. It is first and foremost a working tool containing blood test results compiled by the IAAF exclusively for anti-doping purposes and one to be used only by authorised and competent persons within the IAAF and shared with WADA and/or other anti-doping organisations with relevant authority under the Code.

The IAAF condemns the fact that this Database has now found itself into the unlawful possession of ARD and the Sunday Times and, through them, into the hands of the two Australian scientists. As the scientists would have been acutely aware from their involvement in sitting on other ABP review panels, there can be no doubt that the data constitutes personal sensitive information which is strictly confidential under the World Anti-Doping Code and applicable laws. The Sunday Times is also well aware of the confidentiality of the private data that it holds. The paper sought to make much of the fact that the IAAF had threatened it last week with an injunction against publication of the article before eventually standing down. But the fact is that the IAAF only withdrew its application once the Sunday Times had confirmed that it would not be disclosing the personal sensitive data of unnamed athletes.

The IAAF confirms, following internal investigation, that the Database (2001-2012) was not leaked by an IAAF staff member as indicated in the ARD documentary and that the relevant police authorities have now been notified. According to the intelligence that it has received, the IAAF believes that the Database was obtained illegally by ARD and the Sunday Times and it will pursue all legal means to expose the circumstances of the disclosure and the conduct and motives of the persons involved.

The data review by the ARD/Sunday Times' scientists

The IAAF has serious reservations as to the analysis of the data conducted by the Australian scientists in the following respects:

- The two scientists should never have accepted to review blood data in the first place in circumstances where they knew it was strictly confidential under the World Anti-Doping Code and applicable laws and could only have been obtained and processed unlawfully.
- They sought to draw conclusions on the prevalence of blood doping in Athletics today based on suspicious blood values that were collected up to 14 years ago.
- The data reviewed by the scientists is now outdated. The IAAF has conducted 11,000 blood samples in Athletics for ABP purposes since 2009, a significant proportion of which post-date 2012 and are therefore not included on the Database in the possession of the ARD/Sunday Times and their scientists.
- They sought to raise suspicions of blood doping on the basis of an analysis of the raw data only (including data collected prior to the introduction of the ABP) and in the absence of all the related information that is necessary for a rigorous interpretation of the results.
- It is unscientific in the context of the current ABP system to seek to compare data that has been collected prior to 2009 (from samples that were not collected or analysed in a standardised manner) and data collected after 2009 that is derived from samples collected and analysed in accordance with the strict criteria of the WADA ABP Operating Guidelines.
- There is no clear indication of the number of suspicious profiles reviewed by the scientists that actually resulted in the IAAF concluding Adverse Analytical or Adverse Passport Findings.
- The scientists had no authority to comment on whether or not the IAAF had followed up on suspicious samples because of a lack of knowledge of the IAAF programme and a lack of experience in the field of Athletics generally. It was pure guesswork on their part.

Professor Giuseppe d'Onofrio is one of the world's leading haematologists working as an expert in the field of the Athlete Biological Passport with considerable experience in reviewing approximately 10,000 blood screening profiles since the early 2000s and having given expert evidence in over 25 disciplinary cases before the Court of Arbitration for Sport and national tribunals. As to the dangers of comparing pre and post-2009 data, Professor D'Onofrio commented:

"The Athlete Biological Passport is a new paradigm in the fight against doping, very different to the positive or negative outcome of the traditional detection in urine test. The ABP is a highly technical and complex concept and blood screening data in the context of the ABP must be handled with extreme care, only under a strict regulatory framework and processes established by the World Anti-Doping Agency, failing which it creates a great confusion in the public mind as to what is doping and what is not.

The ABP scientific solidity and effectiveness as an anti-doping tool firmly stands on the collection over years of series of longitudinal data in WADA accredited laboratories and on the identification by experts of particular variations of the athletes' blood picture according to specific patterns that scientists have studied and learnt to recognize in athletes who are manipulating their blood. The process has required several years to be developed. It was possible to start, after several years of meticulous preparation, thanks to the information on doping prevalence that had been scientifically collected in the previous years by IAAF and is currently so solid that not a single athlete has been unfairly accused and sanctioned.

In particular, one should refrain from making any authoritative conclusion on individual cases on the basis of a one-off value, let alone when this value has been collected before the formal introduction of the ABP in 2009, when no harmonised and quality control standards were in place to ensure the reliability of the data and no information was collected to ensure any proper interpretation of this data.

Ethically, I deplore public comments coming from colleagues on blood data that has been obtained and processed outside of the strict regulatory framework established by WADA which is designed to ensure a complete and fair review of ABP profiles. There is no space for shortcuts, simplistic approaches or sensationalism when athletes' careers and reputations are at stake".

Whilst Mr Parisotto was ready to conclude last week that athletes were apparently doping in Athletics based on reference to raw data alone, it seems that he has taken a rather more circumspect approach when advising the ABP position in Cycling: <http://cyclingtips.com.au/2014/08/anti-doping-expert-parisotto-explains-inherent-delays-in-biological-passport-system/>:

Robin: "Perhaps it was only then that the body of knowledge which was accumulated and put together showed that there was a suspicious pattern. Unfortunately that is the way it is with the biological passport. It is not a one-off test, where you may simply test positive and then the case goes ahead. In this case you have to accumulate a great amount of detail. You have to cast your eye over perhaps years of data to see if there is some sort of pattern that is suspicious."

Interviewer: "So multiple data points are needed and to take time to build those up?"

Robin: "Yes, absolutely".

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Robin: "As you can see, it is a very involved, complex and pretty long-winded way of doing things. But because you are not just reliant on one positive test result, but are reliant on a body of knowledge which reveal certain patterns, unfortunately that is the way it is with the passport."

Response to the allegation that the IAAF has failed in its primary duty to conduct an effective blood testing programme to protect the clean athletes

- IAAF introduction of blood testing for EPO: the IAAF was one of the first international sport federations to introduce blood screening tests as part of its anti-doping programme in 2000/1 to tackle the use of EPO in Athletics.
- **The IAAF has conducted more than 19,000 blood screening tests since 2001** which is the most comprehensive and universal blood testing programme implemented amongst all sports federations and national anti-doping agencies.
- Blood screening tests conducted prior to 2009 could only be used as indicators for target testing in urine or for intelligence purposes and not as direct evidence of doping. **Nearly 8,000 blood tests were conducted by the IAAF between 2001 and the end of 2008.**
- The IAAF followed-up systematically on all blood screening results considered as atypical by its experts in accordance with the procedures and protocols then in place. **In particular, more than 8,800 urine EPO tests were conducted in and out-of-competition in the relevant period, notably as a follow-up to atypical blood test results.**
- **141 athletes have tested positive for EPO in Athletics since the first case at the IAAF World Championships in Edmonton in 2001.**
- Limitations of the EPO urine test: The relatively low number of EPO findings (in all sports, not just Athletics) was mainly due to the limitations of the EPO test that was available at the time, including difficulties caused by narrow detection windows, conservative criteria imposed on laboratories for reporting a positive result (to avoid false positive results and legal challenges), the use by athletes of micro-doses of EPO and the use of multiple forms of different EPO-types (CERA, Dynepo...) which the EPO test could not necessarily detect. This situation created significant frustration amongst the few sports organizations such as the IAAF who were conducting testing for intelligence and targeting purposes.
- In 2005, the IAAF declined to introduce a 'no start' rule in Athletics, as other sports had done, due to concerns about its reliability and effectiveness as a deterrent to doping. Unlike the 'no start' rule, the IAAF wanted to ensure that the athletes with abnormal profiles be charged with anti-doping rule violations and face full doping sanctions.
- Development of the Athlete Biological Passport: instead, the IAAF decided in 2005 to work in close cooperation with WADA and the WADA-accredited laboratory in Lausanne, to develop the ABP concept which would bring about a complete change in paradigm, no longer focusing on one-off values (as was the case prior to 2009) but rather on the

monitoring over time of variations in an athlete's profile comprising a series of blood test results. The ultimate objective of this study was to be able to establish the ABP profile as a reliable evidence of doping, following careful and independent scientific review by competent experts.

- The IAAF also set out to ensure that blood test results were (i) reliable and (ii) comparable, and could be used as sole evidence of doping, and in doing so invested significant time and resource, with the partners cited above, to establish strict pre-analytical and analytical requirements, and to better identify and understand the confounding factors and their effects on blood screening tests results. The IAAF Blood Testing Protocol indeed eventually formed the outline basis for the WADA Guidelines which were adopted in 2009.
- In addition to working on developing the ABP concept, the IAAF continued to make best use of the intelligence that it had accumulated from blood test results in order to fine-tune its testing programme based on a risk assessment analysis. Priority groups were created within the IAAF Registered Testing Pool on the basis of the blood test results obtained and no-advance tests were intensified accordingly:
 - The IAAF, using intelligence gathered from blood profiling, spent significant resources in planning no-advance tests in some of the most remote and difficult to access training locations imaginable;
 - Athletes with suspicious profiles faced significantly increased target testing. In one particular case, in the 6 months lead up to the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, a suspicious athlete was tested up to 20 times before finally returning an adverse finding for EPO;
 - Increased attention was paid to the whereabouts patterns of those athletes who were included in the Registered Testing Pool.
- Adopting a Long-Term Storage Policy: in 2005, the IAAF was also the first international federation to adopt a re-testing strategy and to keep the urine samples collected at its World Championships in Helsinki for long term storage and re-analysis at a later point in time. All urine samples collected from athletes registering suspicious blood tests results on-site were kept in priority and later re-analysed using the most up-to-date analytical techniques.
- Commissioning its own prevalence study: as a further illustration of the use of its blood screening results for intelligence purposes, the IAAF engaged in a [study on the prevalence of blood doping in Athletics](#) on the basis of all results contained in its databank between 2001 and 2008. The IAAF study was co-authored by Dr. Pierre-Edouard Sottas, now WADA's ABP Manager and the person ultimately responsible for developing the ABP concept.

- The IAAF was the first and still is to date the only anti-doping organization to have conducted such a wide-scale study. This study resulted in a publication issued in 2011 showing an estimated prevalence of blood doping in the target population of 14%, with significant variations between countries from 1% to 48%. If the top 3 countries, including Russia, are removed from the prevalence data, the estimated average prevalence reduces from 14% to approximately 7%.
- This study assisted the IAAF considerably in identifying the nations, disciplines and individuals who were to be closely monitored under the harmonised ABP framework established by WADA in 2009.
- Samples collected under Athlete Biological Passport: since the introduction of the Athlete Biological Passport in 2009, **the IAAF has collected more than 11,000 blood samples for ABP purposes on more than 5,000 athletes across all disciplines of Athletics**, male and female elite athletes in both junior and senior categories.
- In the same period since 2009, **the IAAF has conducted more than 7,400 urine EPO tests**.
- **All 11,000 blood tests results were systematically recorded on ADAMS** (the online platform proposed by WADA for the administration of anti-doping programmes under the Code) and visible to WADA at all times in full transparency.
- The IAAF is further sharing blood screening results with more than 20 anti-doping agencies for a better coordination of testing.
- All ABP profiles of elite athletes flagged as “atypical” by the statistical model included on ADAMS have been referred to an independent panel of experts for review on an anonymous basis in strict accordance with IAAF Anti-Doping Regulations and WADA Operating Guidelines.
- The independent expert panel put in place to review IAAF cases in 2010 includes the world's leading ABP experts: Professor Yorck Olaf Schumacher, Professor Giuseppe d'Onofrio and Professor Michel Audran. Between them, they have reviewed tens of thousands of ABP profiles (including in Cycling).
- The IAAF launches disciplinary proceedings systematically whenever the independent expert panel unanimously decides that an ABP profile is consistent with doping.
- **Since 2011, approximately 150 ABP profiles have been referred to the Expert Panel and more are to be submitted in the coming weeks.**

- **Since 2011, 63 doping cases have been pursued by the IAAF on the basis of ABP profiles considered as atypical by the independent expert panel (31 of which are from Russia). 39 athletes have already received a sanction, 24 are under proceedings and a number of new proceedings will be initiated shortly.**
- The IAAF has been required to appeal **15 ABP cases to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS)** because the athlete had either been exonerated by his National Federation or national anti-doping agency or because, having found a violation, they failed to impose the correct consequences for it under IAAF Rules. These appeals were all made at very significant cost to the IAAF.
- The IAAF is the only sports federation to date to apply and/or to seek an increased 4 year sanction in the context of ABP cases.

IAAF response on the facts of the cases cited by the Sunday Times and ARD

The IAAF stands accused by ARD/the Sunday Times of failing to follow up on suspicious blood values at the 2005 World Championships and elsewhere, and yet the facts of the cases which they cite tell a completely different story. Very far from turning a blind eye as the journalists would have it, the facts show that the IAAF did everything it possibly could to pursue anti-doping rule violations against the individuals concerned in an attempt to protect the integrity of its competitions and the clean athletes whom it serves.

The Women's 1500m Final at the 2005 World Championships

- In accordance with the regulations in force at the time, the IAAF followed up on the suspicious blood values in Helsinki by taking an immediate urine sample from each of the 4 identified Russian athletes and sending it for EPO analysis. All four samples returned negative results;
- The IAAF therefore placed the 4 athletes as high risk athletes on its Registered Testing Pool and proceeded to target them for no notice out-of-competition tests in the post-Helsinki period. As a result of using innovative DNA analysis techniques, the IAAF was subsequently able to prove that the athletes had been involved in tampering their urine samples in out-of-competition tests and they were all charged with doping violations. The allegations were bitterly fought by the athletes but the IAAF was successful in upholding the violations before the Court of Arbitration for Sport in 2009 and the athletes were all banned for 2 years and 9 months with their results disqualified retrospectively for a further period of 15 months.
- Further, the IAAF had specifically taken steps to place the 4 athletes' samples from the Helsinki World Championships into long-term storage and, in 2012, it went back and re-

analysed certain of them using the most up-to-date EPO analytical techniques. Again, the samples tested negative for EPO.

- Finally, in July 2015, 10 years after the end of the Helsinki World Championships, and taking advantage of the extended statute of limitations period under the 2015 World Code, the IAAF ordered further re-analyses on the remainder of the athletes' urine samples using the most advanced analytical techniques.
- The results of those further re-analyses are expected to be reported imminently and, if need be, the IAAF history books will have to be re-written once again.

The Men's 800m and 1500m Final at the 2005 World Championships

- In accordance with the regulations in force at the time, the IAAF followed up on the suspicious blood values of Rashid Ramzi in Helsinki by taking 5 further samples from him in the course of the World Championships period, 3 for EPO and 2 for Growth Hormone. They all returned negative results.
- Similarly, the IAAF targeted Mr Ramzi in in and out-of-competition testing in the post-Helsinki period and he eventually tested positive for EPO in-competition at the 2008 Olympic Games and was banned by the IAAF for 2 years.
- Not content with banning Mr Ramzi prospectively for 2 years, in 2012, the IAAF submitted the remainder of his 2005 Helsinki urine samples to re-analysis for EPO using the most up-to-date analytical techniques for EPO detection. Again, his samples from Helsinki returned negative results.

Tatyana Chernova

- In 2013, based on suspicious profile data on file for Ms Chernova, the IAAF submitted her 2009 Berlin World Championships sample for a targeted re-analysis and she tested positive for the banned steroid, dehydromethyltestosterone. Ms Chernova was banned by the authorities in Russia for a period of 2 years and her results were disqualified retrospectively for a 2-year period from the date of her Berlin sample in August 2009 thereby allowing her to keep her Gold Medal at the 2011 World Championships in Daegu.
- The IAAF appealed the national federation's decision to CAS and, in May 2015, opened a further disciplinary proceeding against Ms Chernova based on her abnormal Athlete Biological Passport data. The consolidated proceeding in Ms Chernova's case is currently on-going.