

# **ADVICE ON ANTI-DOPING FOR COMPETITORS**

**Revised:** 10<sup>th</sup> October 2011

## **INTRODUCTION**

Under Article 1 of the Irish Anti-Doping Rules, National Governing Bodies of each sport adopted and agreed to abide by the spirit and terms of the National Anti-Doping Programme and the Irish Anti-Doping Rules. Motorsport Ireland has since incorporated these rules into its own rules. These notes are merely an overview of the anti-doping rules; the full text of the rules can be obtained from the Irish Sports Council or viewed and downloaded from their website – [www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/anti-doping](http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/anti-doping).

## **WHY TEST?**

Thankfully, Motor sport has escaped the blight of drug taking which has affected some other sports; this is mainly due to the fact that compounds that might enhance performance in other sports will make little difference in motor sport. Why then do we have to submit to the drug testing at races, rallies etc, which has been going on for a number of years? The answer is firstly, that we cannot be expected to be treated differently to other sports and secondly; we receive very substantial amounts of money from the Irish Sports Council – it would be unreasonable to sign up, take their money but refuse to abide by their rules!

## **ALCOHOL**

Those of you who have already been tested will know that we differ from the majority of sports by testing competitors for the presence of alcohol *prior* to the competition (by breathalyser). We are not alone in this – archery has similar procedures. It is a credit to our competitors that all tests carried out to date, bar one, have been negative. However, be careful – allow 12 hours at *minimum* for alcohol to be cleared from the body. As the alcohol testing is done early in the morning, the best advice is not to drink alcohol the day before the event.

## **“ACCIDENTAL” TAKING OF A BANNED SUBSTANCE**

In the early days of testing, my concern as Doping Control Officer was that competitors would inadvertently take a banned substance, which might have been present in something innocent such as a cough bottle or medicines bought over the counter. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) annually produces updated lists of prohibited substances. These are of two types, Prohibited Substances and Prohibited Substances that are on the “Specified List”. WADA recognises that the latter (on the “Specified List”), while prohibited, could be taken inadvertently and a less severe penalty could be applied to take this into account - *but there are still penalties*. To avoid the risk of taking a banned substance inadvertently, ask your chemist or doctor to check whether or not the medicine is okay to take – it can be easily checked in a booklet called MIMS, which every doctor and chemist in the country gets each month.

In relation to the former (Prohibited Substances), these are completely banned – an example would be Anabolic Steroids or their derivatives. A most serious view is taken if these are found to be present in a competitor's urine. It is important to understand that these can be detected in urine samples for periods of up to 18 - 24 months after a person has stopped taking the substance and the Disciplinary Panel will not accept the defence that the substance was taken many months previously, even before getting a competition licence.

The Irish Sports Council strongly advises all competitors to avoid taking food supplements/ complementary medicines or herbal remedies, as up to 20% of such substances contain steroids.

The Sports Council wants to ensure that nobody should be barred from a sport because of illness; if you have an illness for which you need to take a banned substance as part of your treatment (asthma being a good example); it is possible in certain circumstances to get what is called a Therapeutic Use Exemption in advance. If you feel you are in this category, please contact myself by writing to me at Motorsport Ireland or by phone – 087 673 7074.

## **RECREATIONAL DRUGS**

The list of Prohibited Substances includes illegal drugs, such as cannabis, amphetamines, heroin etc. Please be aware that some of these substances can be detected in the body for a long time after it was last taken, in the case of cannabis, up to six weeks afterwards.

## **REGISTERED POOL COMPETITORS**

In common with other sports, Motorsport Ireland is obliged to identify to the Sports Council a number of competitors who are considered to be international level competitors. These high-profile competitors may be subjected to “out of competition” testing, i.e. spot checks to ensure they are drug free.

## **SUMMARY**

We are subject to a set of rules by which we must abide. Motorsport Ireland wants to do everything possible to help competitors in this regard; there is no intention on our part to “trap” competitors – quite the contrary. However, competitors also have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with these rules and, if in any doubt, contact myself at Motorsport Ireland.

### **Further Information:**

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Irish Sports Council Website –  
[www.irishsportscouncil.ie/anti-doping](http://www.irishsportscouncil.ie/anti-doping)