

ANTI-DOPING IN DARTS

Dear Player

As part of the DRA's ongoing education and information programme relating to Anti-Doping in the sport of Darts we are updating you on developments in this area for the sport and reminding you of some points useful in approaching Competition and generally.

The DRA runs a continuing Anti-Doping testing regime which involves a programme of random testing every year which function is undertaken via UK Anti-Doping ("UKAD"). As you could be the subject of a test at any time, it is important for you to review your present medical position and any treatments or medications you are currently having or taking.

Some of the key points to note are as follows:-

1. Medication and Therapeutic Use Exemptions

We recognise that from time to time players will need to take medication for legitimate health reasons. The difficulty potentially is that a medication may contain substances that are banned under the World Anti-Doping Association Code known as the "WADA Code". If you are not sure what your medication contains or whether it breaches the Code, then we suggest you contact us with details of your medication and we will attempt to assist you in finding out whether the substances are prohibited or allowed in and out of Competition.

Substances that are strictly banned under the WADA Code may, however, attract the benefit of what is known as a "Therapeutic Use Exemption" ("TUE") if there are good health reasons. A TUE means that you can, if it is approved, legitimately use the medication. It is not necessarily automatic that a TUE will be granted for any particular medication or treatment so it is important that you (a) check the medication first, and (b) apply in good time in advance of playing in Competition.

We can help you complete the relevant forms but they often have to be supported by independent evidence from Medical Practitioners including in some cases Consultants as to why the medication is required and why there is no alternative (that is not banned) that could be used.

The message here is, if you are taking something you are not entirely clear about, first to find out what is it, and then seek to obtain permission through the proper channels to have it approved. You can then safely undergo a drugs test without risk of being banned from playing after an adverse result.

2. Beta Blockers

Due to the history and background of the Sport of Darts, Beta Blockers are not currently banned in our side of the Sport. The DRA recognise, however, that realistically we should be in line with the World Darts Federation position (recognised by WADA) of banning Beta Blockers. Accordingly we are taking steps to implement the relevant procedures to ensure that Beta Blockers are prohibited under the DRA system. This letter is therefore advance notification that Beta Blockers will be banned from a date in the relatively near future and we will send you a further notification as to exactly when this will be. What this means is that if you take Beta Blockers and you do not have a legitimate reason for taking them (see the above section on medication and TUEs) then on testing in the future Beta Blockers may produce an adverse finding. This could lead to proceedings and a formal ban from the Sport and is therefore potentially a very serious matter.

You are urged therefore to review your medical position with regard to Beta Blockers and to analyse your reasons for taking them if you do and be conscious that in the future you may, if you continue to take them, be in violation of the Anti-Doping regulations that we operate.

We will let you know when the Rules have been changed to formalise the banning of Beta Blockers but suggest that you take steps to deal with the potential problems now and not delay.

3. Supplements

We have a number of questions asked of us from time to time on whether Supplements are allowable under the DRA rules and regulations and Anti-Doping provisions. It is often difficult to find out what actually is contained in Supplements. The list of ingredients produced for the items on sale do not necessarily cover all those substances that actually are present in the Supplements.

The clear message here is that the safest course to adopt is not to use Supplements at all unless you are 100% satisfied that you know what the ingredients are and further that none of them are banned. To assist here, I attach a link to a Supplements process which may enable you in any particular case to undertake your own research and provides a guide to how to deal with them. Please note that it is not the function of the DRA to take responsibility for checking your Supplements or authorising you to play with them.

<http://www.lgcgroup.com/services/sport-and-specialised-analytical-services/athletes-and-nutrition/banned-substances-testing-in-supplements/>

4. Summary

The responsibility for checking and monitoring what goes into your body rests primarily and absolutely with you as a Player. While the DRA is committed to helping and assisting players (and their Managers and other support networks) as far as possible in any situation, you cannot transfer the responsibility for this to the DRA. UKAD adopts the same position.

Our aim is to ensure that all players can compete on a level playing field as far as possible and to assist and promote education and assistance where we can. We are also absolutely committed to ensuring the health of the players in the sport and recognise that in certain situations medications are required for your overriding health position. The underlying message, however, is that you must take responsibility for your own medical condition and what is put into your body and simply to refer something to us or UKAD does not absolve you from your continuing responsibility in that regard. This has to be the situation as the DRA (and UKAD) are charged with ensuring that the Sport operates fairly in accordance with all Rules specifically in relation to Anti-Doping and its function is to ensure that happens, not to avoid rules and regulations that provide structure to a modern and evolving Sport. Our emphasis is still, however, in helping you play as far as we can and not the other way round.

We hope that this has been of some assistance to you. Please direct any queries or specific questions to us and we will be happy to address them.

Yours sincerely

Tim Ollerenshaw
DRA