Drugs in Sport

Introduction

This fact sheet is related to drug testing in sport. The information covered is aimed at the knowledge required of a Level 2 coach and will detail:

- why athletes take drugs
- signs of drug abuse
- preventing drug abuse.

Common units link

203.4: Understand how to support participant awareness of drugs in sport
204.2: Understand how to ensure equitable coaching of sport-specific activities
203.4.1: Outline the ethical issues surrounding drug taking in sport
203.4.2: Identify sources of information on drugs in sport
203.4.3: Outline the consequences for participant(s) in taking supplementation or prescription medicines
203.4.4: Identify types of performance-enhancing drugs and illegal substances
203.4.5: Explain how a coach can discourage the use of performance-enhancing drugs and any illegal substances.

Key information

Performance-enhancing drugs and supplements are used to improve an athlete's performance, reduce fatigue and enhance physical development by increasing muscle mass and strength; however, they can also cause serious harm.

Currently the UK Anti-Doping Agency (UKAD) prohibited list contains five classes of substance that are banned at all times and a further four substances that are banned during competition.

Substances banned at all times

- Anabolic steroids, including tetrahydrogestrinone (THG)
- Hormones including:
  - Erythropoietin (EPO)
  - Human growth hormone (hGH)
  - Insulin-like growth factor (IGF-1)
  - Human chorionic gonadotrophin (hCG)
  - Adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH)
- Beta-2-agonists
- Hormone antagonists and modulators
- Diuretics.

Substances banned in competition

- Stimulants including:
  - Amphetamines
  - Ephedra
  - Cocaine
  - Caffeine (currently permitted)
- Narcotics
- Cannabinoids
- Glucocorticosteroids.

Consequences of drug-taking for participants

Physical consequences: severe acne; aggressive behaviours, rage or violence; psychiatric disorders, such as depression; inhibited growth or development; change in personality.

Practical consequences: banned from future competitions; long-term health conditions; stigmatised as being a drugs cheat.

How a coach can discourage the use of performance-enhancing drugs

- Be clear about your expectations as a coach. Deliver workshops on a variety of topics, including drug abuse in sport, and be clear that you do not support the use of performance-enhancing drugs.
- Discuss ethics and correct training. Athletes should compete fairly. Remind your athlete that using a performance-enhancing drug is similar to cheating and, even more importantly, could lead to serious health problems or even death.
- Talk with the athlete’s parents (in the case of a young athlete). Parents can monitor their children’s purchases and look for signs of drug misuse.
- Monitor for signs of drug use. Look for changes in the athlete that may include some of the aforementioned signs.

(Continued overleaf)
Suggested forms of assessment

- Multiple-choice questionnaire
- Role play
- Viva voce (oral questioning)
- Poster or flip chart.

Further reading

- Sport-specific governing body websites
- www.teachpe.com – online sports coaching resource
- www.UKAD.org.uk – UKAD website (100% Me)
- www.wada-ama.org – the world anti-doping agency
  website lists all prohibited supplements.