

Howman: Improved Testing of ‘High Risk’ Federations Will ‘Protect Olympic Athletics Competition’

30 JULY 2024, MONACO: Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) Chair David Howman says strengthened testing regulations in the sport of athletics means that Member Federations are bringing teams to Paris with improved testing that will further “protect the Olympic Athletics Competition”.

On the eve of the Athletics Competition at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, he highlighted that, since January 2019, Rule 15 of World Athletics’ Anti-Doping Rules has established the National Federation Anti-Doping Obligations and, among other things, outlines the minimum requirements for testing of the national teams of ‘Category A’ Federations deemed to have the highest doping risk and considered as a threat to the overall integrity of athletics. At present, these are: Bahrain, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria and Ukraine. In addition, four other federations (not classified as ‘Category A’ Federations) – Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and Portugal – had the minimum testing requirements imposed on them by the World Athletics Council in February this year.

Based on Rule 15, athletes from all ten federations were subject to very strict minimum testing requirements to be eligible to compete in Paris 2024; being required to have a minimum of three Out-of-Competition (OOC) tests in the ten months leading up to the Olympic Games. Ultimately, more than 97 per cent of the 268 athletics competitors entered for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, from these federations, met the strict standard.

Only seven athletes (three Brazilians, an Ethiopian, a Kenyan and two Ukrainians) did not adhere to the Rule 15 obligations, all of whom subsequently applied for exceptional circumstances to the AIU Board, with the Board accepting both Ukrainians’ applications but rejecting the other five. This was on the basis that only the Ukrainians’ situations – due to the ongoing war with Russia – truly constituted exceptional circumstances. The three Brazilians subsequently had their appeals of the AIU decisions upheld by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS - Ad Hoc Division) and so are now permitted to compete in Paris.

The AIU Chair noted that “despite operating in an extremely challenging environment, the Ukrainian Athletics Federation worked very closely with the Ukrainian Anti-Doping Commission and the AIU to ensure a further increase in testing for more than 70 athletes in the national pool”.

Under Rule 15, National Federations are accountable for ensuring appropriate anti-doping measures are in place in their respective jurisdictions. The key requirement in Rule 15 is that an athlete from a ‘Category A’ country must undergo at least three no-notice OOC tests (urine and blood) conducted no less than three weeks apart in the ten months prior to a major event, including the Olympic Games. Only then do they become eligible to represent their national team at the Olympic Games.

“This requirement is integral to ensuring an acceptable level of scrutiny for athletes coming from countries with high doping risk and it is paramount that the AIU enforces it strictly. The

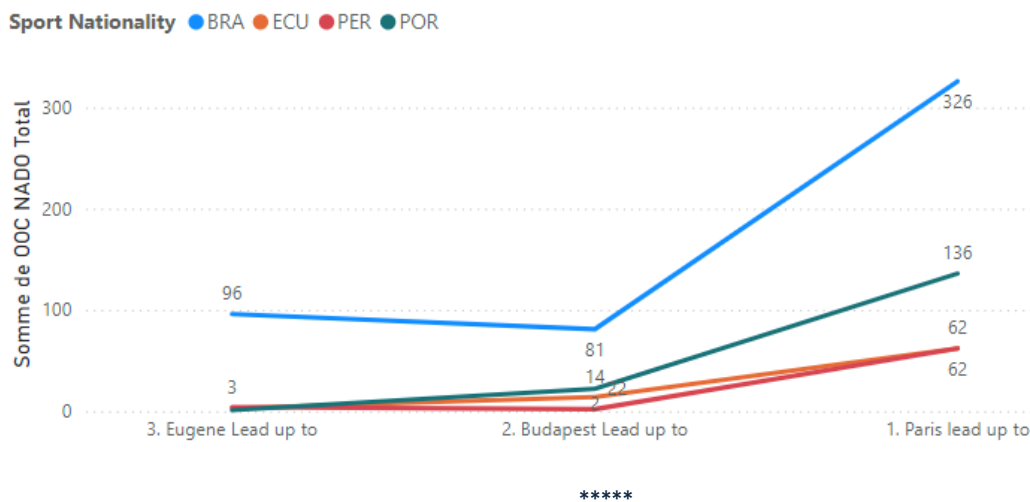
Olympics are the pinnacle of sport and athletics is the showpiece of every Olympic Games,” stressed Howman.

“The AIU has been entrusted to ensure as clean an athletics competition as possible and to safeguard the Olympic podium against doping and we have executed this mandate diligently.”

He added that there has been a great level of commitment from all ten federations, supported by their National Anti-Doping Agencies (NADOs), to meet the testing requirements under World Athletics Rule 15. A total of 3,783 OOC tests were conducted¹ for these federations in the period leading to Paris, with high averages of seven OOC tests per athlete for federations such as Ethiopia and Kenya. These tests resulted in 15 positive cases.

Most notably, there was a significant increase in testing for the four federations – Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and Portugal – whose athletes, for the first time this year, were subjected to the minimum testing requirements. This special **measure was imposed** because of insufficient testing by these countries over several years, with no real improvement in their national testing programmes despite several warnings from the AIU in 2022 and 2023. In Brazil, for example, more than half of the 55 Brazilians who competed at both the World Athletics Championships in Eugene (2022) and in Budapest (2023) had zero OOC tests in the ten months prior to those events. This was a concern for the AIU given the size of the Brazilian teams at the successive World Athletics Championships.

NATIONAL TESTING LEVELS FOR FEDERATIONS SUBJECT TO MINIMUM TESTING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 2024, COMPARED TO PREVIOUS YEARS



NOTE: The ten National Federations currently under ‘minimum testing requirements’ of Rule 15 of the World Athletics Anti-Doping Rules are Bahrain, Brazil, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Peru, Portugal and Ukraine.

¹ Including 1,959 Out-of-Competition tests conducted by the Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya (ADAK)

ABOUT THE ATHLETICS INTEGRITY UNIT

Link: [HTTPS://WWW.ATHLETICSINTEGRITY.ORG](https://www.athleticsintegrity.org)

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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