

WORLD ANTI-DOPING AGENCY

The Office of the Independent Observer Report

2001 World Swimming Championships

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Independent Observers

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BACKGROUND

The WADA Office of the Independent Observer was present during the 2001 World Swimming Championships in Fukuoka, Japan. Throughout the duration of the games the Office observed all aspects of the doping control process including:

1. Doping Control Facilities
2. Doping Control Equipment
3. Doping Control Personnel
4. Selection Process
5. Athlete Notification / Chaperoning
6. Sample Collection Procedures
7. Chain of Custody
8. Laboratory
9. Results Management.

The success of the Office of the Independent Observer was in part due to the support and cooperation of the International Aquatics Federation (FINA) and their willingness to share all aspects of the doping control process.

The overall doping control process conducted at the championships ensured that the integrity of the doping control process was never compromised and that the rights of the athletes were sufficiently protected.

DOPING CONTROL FACILITIES:

The Host Organizing Committee provided well-equipped doping control facilities for the doping control team. The area was secure and access was restricted and controlled at all times to athletes, coaches and media. The location of the doping control room was within close proximity of the competition area.

A registration area was in place to monitor the flow of all personnel entering the doping control area.

The athlete waiting room was sufficiently large to accommodate the flow of athletes and was equipped with appropriate beverages and closed circuit televisions.

It was noted that some Team Officials used cameras and video equipment. This may compromise the confidentiality within the doping control facilities.

There were two separate lavatories (for men/women), which were adequate in size for the athlete and witness. However, it was noted that more than one athlete and witness entered the lavatory at one time, which didn't completely fulfill the requirements of complete privacy.

It was noted that on several occasions too many people were present at the Doping Control Station.

DOPING CONTROL EQUIPMENT

The Bereg Kit, approved sample collection equipment, was used for the event. Most athletes were familiar with the kits and were confident with security of the equipment.

Doping Control Forms used were developed by FINA. It was observed that the doping control forms require some change, such as: a signature area for the person witnessing the passing of the sample and the athlete's sport discipline should be blocked out on the laboratory form.

DOPING CONTROL PERSONNEL

The number of personnel including; chaperones, witnessed, security and doping control officers was adequate for the event size. All personnel were trained before the event in their related duties. However it was observed that doping control personnel had varying experience. In order to increase athlete confidence, one representative should have been designated by FINA to problem solve and provide clear direction to the doping control staff . Interpreters were available at all time and deemed to be very helpful.

SELECTION OF ATHLETES

The process (draw) for the selection of athletes for doping control was carried out in a very professional manner that ensured an effective and unpredictable process by monitoring and evaluating selection methods on daily basis, which in turn sufficiently protected the rights of athletes and their competitors.

Each day a FINA representative along with the Medical Commission Chair of the Host Organizing Committee was present to conduct the draw of athletes.

ATHLETE NOTIFICATION / CHAPERONING

Athlete notification was carried out in an effective / efficient manner. The Host Organizing Committee had recruited 65 Chaperones for the notification of athletes. The Chaperones were well versed on the importance of the notification process. Before the start of each race, athletes' accreditation was removed by an official and was given back after the race near the media mixed zone. The accreditation of those athletes who had been selected for doping control was given to the doping control chaperones. This made for easy identification of those athletes selected for doping control. Written notification was presented to all athletes and no refusals were observed. The Chaperones remained with the athletes at all time until the doping control process was completed.

SAMPLE COLLECTION PROCESS

The Host Organizing Committee recruited 21 doping control officers varying in experience for the sample collection process. The procedures conducted by the doping control officers ensured the overall rights and security of the athlete's sample was sufficiently protected and intact. The doping control officers were very professional and sensitive to the athletes needs. Translators were available at all times.

It was observed that testing procedures varied from one doping control officer to another creating some confusion among the athletes.

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

The Office witnessed the entire chain of custody process with regard to the handling of samples. The samples were stored at the central doping control station in a locked fridge with 24-hour security. The samples were picked up by an internal courier system each day were transported via air as "carry on luggage". Each day a driver would be waiting at the airport to transport the samples and internal couriers to the laboratory located in Tokyo. The chain of custody was more than adequate and ensured secure and timely delivery of the samples to the laboratory.

LABORATORY

The laboratory was an IOC accredited lab with ISO Guide 25 and ISO 2001 accreditation. The Office of the Independent Observer validated the security and chain of custody of the laboratory as well as the procedures within the laboratory.

RESULTS MANAGEMENT

With the support of FINA, the Office of the Independent Observer received copies of the doping control forms on a daily basis as well as simultaneous receipt of results directly from the laboratory via a secure fax. It was observed that all results were appropriately dealt with in a timely manner.

SUMMARY

The overall doping control process conducted by FINA and the Host Organizing Committee was done in a professional and secure manner and athlete's rights were sufficiently protected throughout the entire process. The FINA representative was at all times cooperative and provided regular updates to ensure transparency and openness. While the overall aspect of doping control process was more than adequate, the Office suggested several recommendations set forth below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That all aspects of the doping control process be in compliance with the International Standards for Doping Control (ISDC). This would enhance the athlete's confidence in the doping control process
- When at all possible athlete notification should be take place away from media mixed zones to ensure the athletes' rights to privacy are sufficiently protected.
- The doping control officers / FINA should have in place a more standardized approach to sample collection in order to prevent any confusion amongst athletes.

- That each lavatory is equipped with one toilet with enough room for the athlete and the doping control official to validate the passing of the sample. It is further recommended that only one athlete at a time shall enter the lavatory with the accompanied doping control official.
- That one lead doping control officer and/or FINA representative, with extensive knowledge of both the doping control process and FINA's Doping Control Regulations, be present at all times to provide clarification to questions that may arise from the doping control officer, athlete and/or athlete's representative.
- That the doping control station have limited access for 2 doping control officials, a FINA representative, athlete, athlete's representative and any one other person designated by FINA to prevent congestion in the doping control room.
- That all doping control staff be required to sign a declaration of confidentiality.
- The use cameras and/or video equipment should not be permitted in the doping control area. It is recommended that this be clearly displayed with signage.
- That the box containing the competitor event is blanked out on the copy of the doping control form being sent to the laboratory to ensure the athlete remains anonymous.
- The minimum volume on the doping control form required for an acceptable sample should be consistent with provisions outlined in the FINA Doping Control Regulations.
- That the doping control official witnessing the passing of the sample be required to sign the doping control form declaring that he/she had an unobstructed view of the passing of the sample.