

WADA Athlete Council

15 May 2024

Statement regarding Chinese swimming case and invitation to athlete video conference call

As many of you have seen, on 20 April, a story broke regarding a case in 2021 involving 23 Chinese swimmers, which has since generated a lot of media reports. Soon after the story broke, the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA's) Athlete Council (AC) asked to meet with WADA leadership to discuss the facts of the case, which we did shortly thereafter. The AC asked their own questions and also shared questions they had received from other athletes. Specifically, we were presented the chronology of events, the scientific, legal and intelligence & investigations aspects of the case, as well as the rationale for WADA's handling of the case.

The AC is committed to open communication, and welcomes WADA's efforts to communicate the facts behind the case, in providing information and in giving the media, Anti-Doping Organizations, and others the opportunity to ask questions. The AC recognizes that this is a complex matter that has given rise to many questions from the athlete community; and so, welcomes the additional information in WADA's [Fact Sheet / Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) document that was issued on 29 April, which reflects our conversation with them.

We welcome WADA's move to have an independent prosecutor conduct a thorough review of its handling of the matter, and we look forward to having the opportunity to assess the findings of this review and work in partnership with WADA should any areas of improvement be identified.

We acknowledge that the athlete community may feel frustrated by what they are reading and hearing, which could lead to uncertainty about the case and the entire anti-doping framework. As members of the AC, we understand these sentiments, especially for those who have personally experienced the impact of cheating in their sports.

At the same time, we are concerned by the fact that athletes' personal information, including their names and photos, have been leaked to the media. This is a serious breach of athletes' rights, including of minors, which simply cannot be tolerated. As such, we have asked WADA to investigate what led to this information being leaked to the media and whether any adjustments to rules, processes or procedures should be made to limit this risk in the future, while maintaining protection of whistleblowers.

As an AC, tasked with representing, supporting, and promoting the voices of all athletes on anti-doping matters, we take our role very seriously. Athletes deserve to have trust in the system and the organizations that, together, are tasked with protecting them, such as: National Anti-Doping Organizations, International Federations, Major Event Organizations and WADA.

We firmly believe that athletes who dope, which has not been asserted here, must be appropriately sanctioned and that the global anti-doping system must be robust. We equally believe that the presumption of innocence and the right to fair and due process, regardless of an athlete's sport or country, must be at the core of the anti-doping system.

The World Anti-Doping Code (Code) and International Standards are currently under review, which offers a perfect opportunity to look into any lessons learned from this case. As such, we will work closely with WADA to identify any areas for improvements and how the Code and/or any International Standards can be further strengthened. We invite all athletes to participate in this important work and share feedback with WADA. While

information on this update process can be found [here](#), we will work with WADA to identify how we can specifically and proactively reach out to the athlete community to ensure that the athlete voice is heard.

Finally, to offer a platform for athletes to ask questions around this case, the AC suggested to WADA that they organize an athlete-focused video conference call, which they were happy to do. Please note that this Zoom call will take place on **21 May 2024 at 07:30 EDT**.

We encourage athletes to register as soon as possible and no later than 12:00 EDT on 20 May 2024 using the [Zoom link](#).

We hope that you will join us on this call. In the meantime, should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to reach out via: athlete@wada-ama.org.