

## WADA Athlete Council

1 December 2025

### Meeting Outcomes

*Busan, Republic of Korea*

Athlete Council Members	
Ryan Pini, Chair	Gaby Ahrens, Vice-Chair
Adriana Escobar	Ivan Cosic
Humphrey Kayange	Inaki Gomez
Jennifer Harss	Dora Hegyi
Elisabeth Maier	Patrick O-Leary
Yuhan Tan	Emma Terho
Toby Cunliffe-Steel	Maja Wloszczowska
Apologies	
Mona Brorsson	Olumide Oyedeji
Ella Sabljak	Yujiao Tan
Cyrille Tchatchet II	Hong Zhang
Athlete Engagement Team	
Karine Henrie, Director, Athlete Engagement	Stacy Spletzer-Jegen, Senior Manager, Athlete Engagement
WADA Leadership and external guests attending for portions of meeting	
Witold Banka, President	Olivier Niggli, Director General
Yang Yang, Vice-President	Philippe Charpier, SWORD Group
Francisco Leon, Director of the Latin America and Caribbean office	Chaya Ndiaye, Head of Digital Insights, WADA
Prof. Olivier Rabin, Senior Director of Science and Medicine	Audrey Taillefer, Acting Director, Finance and Strategy
Gunter Younger, Director Intelligence and Investigations	

WADA's [Athlete Council](#) (AC) held an in-person meeting on 1 December 2025 in Busan, Republic of Korea. The key outcomes of the discussions are outlined below.

## Welcome

- WADA AC Chair, Ryan Pini welcomed all members to Busan, Republic of Korea for the AC's second in-person meeting of 2025.
- The agenda was sent out prior to the meeting. A minor clarification was noted regarding the Initial Human Rights Assessment agenda item due the timing of the presenter's arrival.
- The Chair reminded members that the outcomes of the last virtual meeting, which took place on 20 September, were circulated via email and were approved as complete and final. As such, they were published on WADA's [website](#).
- The Chair thanked all members who are staying in Busan for WADA's World Conference on Doping in Sport and for those giving interventions and taking part in several different sessions at this important event. He also thanked all members for taking part in the Athlete Engagement activity at the Busan Sports School on 2 December. This activity was supported by the Korean Anti-Doping Agency and included members from the KADA Athlete Committee.
- The Chair then provided a range of updates regarding the upcoming Executive Committee (ExCo) meeting happening on 2 December and Extraordinary Session on 5 December being held in Busan, Republic of Korea. These updates were provided to set context for the Athlete Council's discussions, particularly in light of several athlete-relevant decisions scheduled for consideration later in the week.
  - Update on the Roadmap from the Working group on the Cottier report's implementation and discussion around ADAMS alerts and triage and prioritization framework.
  - The Chair highlighted the significant contribution of the Athlete Council throughout these processes, including the athlete-centered consultation and the development of the Athletes' Anti-Doping Rights Act."
  - This revised version of the AADRA reflects the AC's ongoing commitment to a fair, transparent, and more athlete-centered anti-doping system. As a non-binding yet authoritative reference document, it supports consistent interpretation of athlete rights across the global anti-doping landscape. The hope is that the AADRA will continue to evolve as a robust reference point for both athletes and anti-doping organizations — one that not only upholds minimum standards, but also sets a shared vision for fairness, integrity, and respect across the global anti-doping landscape.
  - As part of the broader Executive Committee context, the Chair also provided an update on WADA's financial outlook.
- The Chair provided an update on behalf of *Snežana Samardžić-Marković*, *Senior Independent Expert*. Ryan provided her overview of the final report on the **Initial Human Rights Impact Assessment** marking the culmination of this work to help WADA better understand how anti-doping regulations, policies, and programs may adversely impact the human rights of athletes (while also highlighting areas of strength). In addition, the report aims to identify potential areas for improvement to better serve the

athlete community. Ryan thanked the AC on Snezana's behalf for their work toward this final report. We will aim to meet with Snezana virtually in the coming months to discuss the final report and next steps.

### **WADA Intelligence and Investigations**

- Gunter Younger, Director, Intelligence and Investigations (I&I) was invited to provide an update to the WADA AC on the work of his Department and to address recent media articles related to "Operation Puncture". He emphasized the growth and sophistication of WADA's investigative capabilities, highlighting partnerships with law enforcement and whistleblower protections.
- Regarding "Operation Puncture" and the recent media articles, Gunter reassured the AC that protecting whistleblowers is a top priority for him and his team and this "operation" is not about chasing whistleblowers.
- Gunter welcomed questions from the group.

### **Athlete Representation in Latin America and the Caribbean**

- Francisco Leon, Director of the Latin America and Caribbean office provided an update on the outcomes of the pilot project around enhancing athlete representation in Latin America and the Caribbean, with some key highlights regarding athlete representation in the region.
- A survey covering 19 Latin American and 15 Caribbean countries revealed 100% of Latin American countries lack athlete representation in anti-doping governance, while only 4 Caribbean countries have NAOs.
- Strong sample of participants and outcomes showed a gap of having athlete representation in anti-doping. A high-level roadmap was established with objectives, criteria, engagement including support and monitoring progress.
- Communication channels between regional athlete reps and the Athlete Council will be strengthened to maintain two-way dialogue and advocacy in order to further develop athlete representation in the region.
- Francisco welcomed questions from the group.

### **Ombuds Program Update**

- Karine Henrie, Director of Athlete Engagement provided an update on the Ombuds Program, in particular the agreement WADA has in place with Ms. Anna Thorstenson. This agreement comes to an end on 31 December 2025 and after careful consideration, is not being renewed beyond December 2025. While WADA is thankful to Anna who supported WADA in establishing this important athlete-centered program, this decision reflects the evolving needs of the Program.
- Karine reinforced that the Ombuds program remains a priority for WADA as it is a critical resource for athletes worldwide. As such, during this transition period, WADA has secured an interim solution and contracted the services of Sport Law – a multi-disciplinary sport management company that specializes in legal services, governance, and strategic planning – to ensure that quality services continue to be delivered to athletes in a seamless manner.
- WADA will evaluate options for the future and will work with the AC as we determine the best way forward which could be to continue to work with an organization that specializes in such services (rather than a specific individual).
- The Athlete Council reaffirmed the Ombuds Program as a cornerstone of athlete protection and welcomed continued engagement in shaping its future direction.

- Karine then opened the floor for questions.

### **The Prohibited List**

- Prof. Olivier Rabin, Senior Director of Science and Medicine gave an update on the process of the Prohibited List including its International Standard as well as discussion of the Ecosystem of the List.
- Following the ExCo approval of the 2026 Prohibited List (the List) on 11 September, the List was published on the WADA website and circulated to WADA's stakeholders on 24 September 2025 and will come into effect on 1 January 2026.
- He also discussed the importance to advocate for more resources to support further research projects.
- Olivier then took time for questions and further discussion.

### **Round Table discussion**

- Updates were provided from the AC members serving on different Committees and Working Groups. Ryan reminded the group that there is a reporting template on SharePoint to ensure the AC is kept up to date on different activities.
- Toby provided an update on the Working Group on Contaminations, noting the group's consensus that meaningful intervention recommendations would need to be multidisciplinary and evidence-led. He advised that the Working Group is planning structured in-person meetings, which would likely invite input from additional subject-matter experts where needed. He also noted the likelihood that the recommendations would include both near-term actions and a longer-term pathway for continued work beyond the group's current mandate that ends with the March ExCo Meeting.
- Elisabeth provided an update on the Working Group on the Operational Independence of NADOs and their next step to create a guidebook and a survey with open questions to help clarify conflict of interest definitions and build trust in testing systems across regions.
- Patrick gave an update on the Prevalence Working Group. Next step is to find an IT solution which will bring additional data in the coming year.
- Yuhuan updated on the Health, Medical and Research Committee which has met three times this year. It included reviewing the research grants and strategic plan around research in the coming years.
- Ivan and Humphrey provided an update on their roles with the Group 3 appointment process and raised areas for consideration for future appointment processes. It was agreed to organize a future and separate discussion on this point to ensure that any lessons learned are documented and considered for future processes.
- Dora discussed the unintentional doping taskforce which covers a wide range of topics including the status of fertility drugs on the Prohibited List and the challenges of environmental contamination. Next steps include expert involvement, communication planning and preparation for the next meeting in February.

### **Current Affairs and Updates from WADA Leadership**

The Chair welcomed and thanked the WADA President, Vice-President, and Director General for joining the Athlete Council meeting:

- The President thanked the AC for inviting them to their meeting once again and discussed the busy days ahead at the World Conference, Executive Committee and Foundation Board including the adoption of the World Anti-Doping Code.
- WADA's leadership provided updates on current affairs and strategic priorities, followed by a constructive exchange with Athlete Council members. The discussion focused on issues of relevance to athletes,

including the athlete experience, trust in the system, and the importance of protecting athlete-facing programs in a challenging operating environment.

### **Athlete Center (Whereabouts)**

- Philippe Charpier, Sword and Chaya Ndiaye, Director of Digital Insights from WADA provided an update and demonstration of WADA's Athlete Center (Whereabouts) APP. AC members were provided a link in advance of the meeting in order for them to be able to go thru the new product and test the system to ask questions.
- Philippe and his team, in collaboration with WADA, have made significant progress since meeting the AC last March including holding dedicated workshops, refining the app strategy and designing the web interface. Today the AC provided more key feedback on the product.
- Regarding work on improvements to the App, a progress update was provided to members. The plan is for a soft launch of the new App in early 2026 with focus on user onboarding and continuous improvement based on athlete feedback.
- The next key milestone is to implement user feedback and to go into a 3<sup>rd</sup> round of user testing and change management system

### **Action Plan**

- The AC's Action Plan is aligned with the WADA Strategic Plan and the Athlete Engagement Department's long-term goals. The Chair opened this interactive session with WHY this Action Plan is important and with a reminder of the Council's purpose and objectives. He shared the outcomes of the survey that was sent to AC members prior to the meeting where members were asked to assess the success of the AC's initial 2024 – 2025 Action Plan, lessons learned and areas to continue to focus on for the future to align the views of the AC's interest and vision for the next three years.
- Audrey Taillefer, Acting Director, Finance and Strategy then took the group thru the discussion of starting the AC's next Action Plan (2026-2028) and presented the rationale for the plan to strengthen athlete-led initiatives in line with the WADA's strategic plan, focusing on accountability, transparency, and athlete-centered work
- Ideas will be collected and summarized and shared with the AC in January 2026. A vote will then be taken to decide which initiatives would create the greatest impact and which fit with their skills, expertise, capacity and interest. A draft action plan will be developed and shared by Feb/March 2026 to discuss with the AC.

### **Concluding Remarks**

- Elections for several positions will take place in early 2026 so AC members were asked to reflect on what they may be interested in going forward. Those positions include Chair, Vice Chair, two Foundation Board members (one being a Para athlete), Health Medical and Research Committee and Finance and Administration Committee. The group then was made aware of the process and deadline to express their interest.
- The 2026 calendar was discussed including upcoming events such as the Olympic, Paralympic and Youth Olympic Games, as well as the AC's next in person meeting in Cairo, Egypt on April 27. Ryan

also provided an overview of the four Regional Symposiums happening in 2026 and how the AC will have a key role at each event.

- Ryan then opened the floor for other business, final comments and feedback from members for discussion. He reminded the group that AC documents are on SharePoint and he encouraged members to review them there.
- Lastly, the Chair took time to celebrate those members leaving the AC at the end of the year and also the first quarter of 2026. The Chair recognized Adriana, Yuhan, Hong and Emma for their work and leadership over the past years encouraging them to keep in touch. Strong governance measures ensure that terms are mandated, but the alumni of the AC will continue to make our clean sport network wide and strong.

The meeting was then adjourned.