

MEAL Program Report

II Junior Panamerican Games, Asunción
2025

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A. Acknowledgments

The WADA team tasked with overseeing the support provided to the II Junior Panamerican Games (Asunción 2025 or the Games) in the context of the Major Events Anti-Doping Legacy (MEAL) Program was composed of Juan Manuel Lauria, Senior Manager, Latin American and Caribbean Office and Edna Serra, Office Manager, Latin American and Caribbean Office. The team would like to thank the Panam Sports Organization (PASO), the Local Organizing Committee of the Games (ASU 2025), the Paraguay National Anti-Doping Organization (Paraguay NADO), and the Pan-American Regional Anti-Doping Organization (PAN RADO) for their dedication, warm welcome, and the high quality of their work.

Special thanks to José Veloso (Head of PASO Anti-Doping Unit) for his strong cooperation and commitment throughout the program. Our gratitude is extended to other members of the Pre-Games Coordination Committee: Andrés Gonzalez (Testing Coordinator PASO AD Unit), Manuel Villalobos (PAN RADO) and Cristina Sanchez (Perú NADO) for their invaluable commitment and collaborative spirit. We also extend our appreciation to the various members of the Sample Collection Personnel (SCP) team, the Athlete Engagement team composed of Susan Egoavil (Perú), Makeba Alcide (Saint Lucia), Adriana Escobar (El Salvador) and Maria José Arruba (Paraguay), Mariam Darby, Head of Digital Marketing, WADA and the volunteers for their effort, dedication, and creativity in fulfilling all their responsibilities during the Games.

Finally, the team would like to thank PASO management for their support in implementing this MEAL program.

B. Executive Summary

Through the MEAL Program (the Program), WADA's Latin American and Caribbean Office (LACO) provided support to the Anti-Doping program of the II Junior Panamerican Games (the Games) held in Asunción, Paraguay, from August 9 to 23, 2025. This major event involved over 4,000 athletes across 28 sports from 41 National Olympic Committees (NOCs).

The Program was initiated following a formal tripartite agreement—in late 2024—between WADA, the Panam Sports Organization (PASO), and the Local Organizing Committee of the Games (ASU 2025), where the signatory parties agreed to make available all their efforts, resources, and expertise to implement the Program for the Games.

The Program intervention provided strategic coordination to encourage the development and implementation of a Code-Compliant Anti-Doping program of the Games, while prioritizing the creation of a sustainable local and regional legacy. The key outcomes of the MEAL program were as follows:

- **Program Implementation:** Provided high-level support in the development, implementation, and coordination of core functional areas, including testing operations, Therapeutic Use Exemptions (TUE), Results Management (RM), Education and WADA's Athlete Engagement Program¹.
- **Strategic Capacity Building:** Delivered specialized training through the WADA Global Learning & Development Framework (GLDF) program to PASO AD Unit staff and enhanced regional capabilities by training Caribbean and local Doping Control Officers (DCOs).
- **National Legacy:** Supported the Paraguay NADO in strengthening its operational independence—achieved through national legislative efforts—while integrating NADO staff directly into the Games' testing program (in coordination with PAN RADO) and providing hands-on experience running the Athlete Engagement initiative.
- **Regional Legacy:** Furthermore, the program aimed to facilitate the transfer of best practices, trained personnel, and the MEAL methodology between Asunción 2025 and XX Pan American Games Lima 2027.

To accomplish this, a dedicated **Coordination Committee (the Committee)** was created four months in before the Games began, composed of representatives from the PASO Anti-Doping Unit² (**AD Unit**),

¹ The Athlete Engagement Program involvement in the Pan American Junior Games provided WADA an opportunity to engage a younger generation of athletes about clean sport and leverage regional athlete representatives to lead this activity as ambassadors. The objective of WADA's program is to create engagement activities that promote clean sport and build athlete relationships that ensure greater awareness about WADA's Athlete Council, the Ombuds and WADA. It is equally important for WADA to have an opportunity to listen and learn from athletes from the region.

² It is worth noting that PASO has established this specific Anti-Doping Unit for the Games following the recommendations from the Independent Observers report from "Santiago 2023".

ASU 2025, Paraguay NADO (Games' host NADO), the **PAN RADO** (acting as the Sample Collection Authority of the Games), **Peru NADO** (external advisor for the MEAL Program and linked to the preparations for the "XX Pan American Games Lima 2027"), and the **LACO** in an advisory capacity.

Furthermore, the Committee agreed to extend the scope of the cooperation beyond the pre-games activities by hosting an advisory team during the Games comprising the same representatives to oversee the running of the Anti-Doping program.

In the spirit of making progress for future events and Lima Games 2027, the team has shared some recommendations based on the challenges they encountered during the Junior Panamerican Games which can be consulted in the following pages including a summary of the program support, achievements, and recommendations.

C. Summary of Program Support, Achievements and Legacy

The work of the Coordination Committee was effective with meetings every two weeks (between April and August 2025) and the setting-up of regular channels of communication (e.g., WhatsApp group, ShareFile folder). The areas covered by the Coordination Committee's support and guidance are as follows:

➤ **Local Legacy: Strengthening Paraguay NADO's Operational Independence**

- A core component of the MEAL Program was to benefit from the event taking place in Paraguay to design a local legacy focused on enhancing the operational independence of the hosting NADO, Paraguay NADO.
- To do so, the MEAL team developed a structured development project plan for capacity building, focusing on high-level political engagement to discuss ways of strengthening the operational independence of the Paraguay NADO. During the Games, key meetings were facilitated and attended by WADA's Head of Compliance Unit and the LACO Manager with both the Paraguay National Olympic Committee (NOC) and the Secretary of Sports (SoS).
- This coordinated effort successfully culminated in the finalization and adoption of a national legislation specifically designed to strengthen and secure NADO's operational independence.

We sincerely commend the collaborative efforts of Camilo Perez, the NOC President, and César Ramirez Caje, the Secretary of Sport, for achieving this crucial milestone, which represents a significant and lasting step forward for the fight for clean sport in Paraguay.

➤ **Rules and Regulations**

- Following Committee discussions and guidance, PASO Anti-Doping (AD) Rules of the Games adopted for Santiago 2023 were confirmed to be in force for the Junior Panamerican Games, Asunción 2025, alongside the AD Guidelines for this Games edition.

➤ Testing

- Through the Coordination Committee's guidance and oversight, crucial agreements with the WADA-accredited laboratory in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and with the sample collection kits provider and courier were successfully signed well in advance of the Games.
- The Committee facilitated the review and finalization of the Risk Assessment (RA) and the Test Distribution Plan (TDP) elaborated by the PASO AD Unit and reviewed by WADA well in advance of the Games, which significantly facilitated subsequent testing operations. A total of 783 urine samples were collected (495 in-competition, 288 tests out-of-competition) and 35 blood samples (22 in-competition, 13 tests out-of-competition). No Athlete Biological Passport (ABP) blood samples were collected at these Games.
- A Doping Control Command Centre (DCCC) was established and located at the Games venue. All anti-doping operations were centralized and directed by the DCCC. The operations managed by the DCCC included: testing strategy, test planning, ADAMS administration, intelligence gathering and analysis, staff & volunteers scheduling and management, logistics, transports, delivery of samples from all testing venues, and shipping of the samples to the WADA-accredited laboratory. The DCCC was effectively led by Andrés Gonzalez, with operational support from full-time staff and volunteers from PAN RADO and Paraguay NADO.

The Committee successfully initiated an intelligence-led testing approach. This involved strategic exchanges with relevant International Federations (IFs) through the International Testing Agency (ITA) and some NADOs via the PAN RADO. All mission orders were prepared and finalized prior to the starting of the Games, with out-of-competition testing updated based on intelligence received from during Games time.

Under the Committee's coordination, an ADAMS module account for the Games was established, utilizing PASO's existing ADAMS account for all data management.

- The Doping Control Stations (DCS) were prepared according to Committee's guidance and were deemed appropriate, requiring only minor changes. However, the DCS signages to guide the location of the DCS in the venues were not finally installed.
- The SCP staffing plan was also refined after discussions at the Committee level to increase the legacy for the region, by including a strong regional presence with 30 local DCOs and 15 international DCOs³.

➤ Education

- The Coordination Committee guided the elaboration of an Educational Plan for the Games, which included pre-Games education for athletes and their support personnel. Given that this was the first Major Event for most athletes, prioritizing education and awareness was a key focus of Committee discussions.
- Following Committee guidance, PASO obtained Power User status to monitor their participants' education completion on ADEL. NOCs were contacted to encourage that athlete and support

³ DCO's nationalities included: Panamá, Chile, Perú, México, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Colombia, and Puerto Rico.

personnel completes the relevant courses available to the different roles and levels on the ADEL platform. A total of 30% of athletes and support personnel completed relevant courses, obtaining ADEL's certification prior to participating at the Games.

➤ **Therapeutic Use Exemptions (TUE)**

- Through Committee discussions, a TUE application form and process were developed, reviewed, and declared in-line with the Code and the International Standard for Therapeutic Use Exemptions (ISTUE) by WADA. This information was subsequently published on PASO's official website.
- The establishment of the TUE Committee (TUEC) and the Appeal panel for the Games was achieved with the Committee's oversight. Furthermore, training sessions were delivered by WADA to the TUEC Chair.
- A key achievement discussed and supported by the Committee was the successful introduction of a TUE Administrator to provide essential support to the TUEC, noted as a significant positive addition to the team during the Games.

➤ **Results Management**

- The Committee oversaw the establishment of the Results Management (RM) hearing panel, responsible for taking decisions based on WADC articles 9 and 10.1. The RM procedure was developed and reviewed under the Committee's guidance.

➤ **WADA's Athlete Engagement Program**

- The strategic location of the WADA Athlete Engagement booth was determined through Committee discussions, specifically deciding to locate it in the competition venue, adjacent to the athlete's dining rooms, given the absence of a centralized Athlete Village. Furthermore, the Athlete Engagement team proactively reached out to athletes by visiting them at their hotel dinners.
- The programme operated over six days of the event, August 9 – 14 attracting a total of 1,450 participants, most of whom were athletes from across the continent, along with some coaches and support staff. WADA's Athlete Engagement team was composed of Adriana Escobar (El Salvador), Rowing, Member of the WADA Athlete Council; Susan Egoavil, Peru (Volleyball); María José Arrúa, Paraguay (swimmer); Makeba Alcide, St Lucia (Track and Field), Chair, NOC AC and Comm Games AC.

D. Recommendation for Future Editions

Building on the strong foundation and organizational structures established by the Coordination Committee, the following recommendations represent opportunities for future PASO Games, in particular Lima 2027 Panamerican Games, to optimize operational efficiency, enhance athlete communication, and further strengthen Code compliance.

➤ **Continued Coordination Model**

We strongly recommend that PASO continues the methodology of working with a Coordination Committee well in advance of future events, even beyond the direct involvement of the WADA MEAL program. To ensure maximum efficiency and adherence to timelines for Lima 2027, we further recommend that PASO use the collaborative structure of this Committee to build a detailed, integrated timeline of actions based on all preparatory elements discussed in this MEAL program.

➤ **Rules and Regulations**

To ensure optimal athlete awareness, ensure tailor and update the anti-doping Guidelines for each Games edition well in advance of the Games. We recommend submitting the draft to WADA for review ensuring the final and approved version is published well in advance on the official Games website.

➤ **Testing**

- We recommend maintaining the established high standards and effective practices implemented by the DCCC and the entire testing operation.
- Ensure the DCCC is situated in a location that offers enhanced isolation and security from general traffic.
- Formalize a mandatory checklist and sign-off procedure to verify that all essential DCS signage is properly installed and clearly visible at venues before they open. This will significantly improve the experience for athletes and Athlete Support Personnel.
- Evaluate the feasibility of implementing a paperless sample collection system to further streamline administrative processes, increase collection efficiency, and potentially enhance process security.
- Establish and implement a clear reporting line to facilitate the timely collection, evaluation, and secure processing of all relevant intelligence received during the Games, ensuring a robust and intelligence-led testing program.
- Acknowledging the logistical challenge of operating without a centralized Athletes' Village, it is recommended to develop a whereabouts system in which clear requirements for the NOCs are set, including deadlines to provide accurate and comprehensive whereabouts information, training activities, etc.
- Standardize the collaboration process with relevant International Federations (IFs) and NADOs by having clear timelines and ways of communication in place prior to the Games. This is necessary to: i) Develop and adopt a clear, Code-compliant sample retention strategy aligned with the WADA International Standard for Testing and Investigations (ISTI); ii) Establish an efficient Athlete Biological Passport (ABP) program by formalizing the ways of sharing recommendations by the Athlete Passport Management Unit (APMU) for future PASO's main events.

➤ **Education⁴**

- Prioritize the development and finalization of the Education Program and annual Education Plan at least six months in advance. The Education Program should define the overall strategy, including identification of the Education Pool (participating athletes and Athlete Support Personnel), while the Education Plan should outline the specific activities, timelines, and delivery methods. Early planning will enable the MEO to fully leverage pre-Games/Event opportunities, maximize engagement and awareness-raising among participants, and address the common challenges of late and reactive education delivery.
- Establish well in advance any event-specific education requirements (completing a pre-event eLearning course on ADEL as an example) and communicate these requirements clearly. Consideration should be given to providing links to access any event-specific education activities in the pre-Games/Event period through the communication protocols associated with registering for the event.
- Refine the Educational Plan to clearly specify the target population (including participating athletes and accredited ASP), define specific, relevant activities for pre-event education and event-based education, and collaborate with other Signatories to maximize the effectiveness of carrying out such activities.
- Formalize and initiate communication with NOCs and NADOs, at least when the long list of athletes participating in the Games becomes available. This proactive approach will ensure the support of the NOCs in instructing the athletes to complete the relevant education activities (e.g. ADEL courses), thereby guaranteeing a high rate of completion with any pre-Games/Event education requirements upon arrival.
- Ensure that all education activities are effectively monitored, and the education program is evaluated. This includes documenting the education activities delivered, recording the number of participants reached, learning outcomes etc. The evaluation process would help identify areas for improvement and inform future education plans ensuring continuous enhancement of the positive impact. In addition, education records must also be maintained in line with the ISE and the International Standard for Data Protection.
- Fully adapt to the responsibility and requirements of event-specific education in line with the 2027 ISE, ensuring that such event-specific education is focused on providing education that is directly related to the event's anti-doping rules and associated program, including contextual information about where the event is held, including unintentional doping risks. A much greater emphasis to be placed on pre-event to ensure that participants receive education ahead of coming to the Games/Event.

⁴ In light of the recommendations below, please also note that under the new 2027 International Standard for Education, MEOs will only be responsible for event-specific education, not general education.

➤ **WADA's Athlete Engagement Program**

To maximize participation and impact, ensure the Athlete Engagement booth is strategically located in high-traffic, accessible areas (such as main dining halls or central athlete hubs) to effectively reach the widest possible number of athletes.

➤ **TUE and Results Management (RM)**

- We strongly recommend maintaining the role of the TUEC administrator to facilitate the workload of the TUEC, prior and during the Games.
- Establish the TUE process and select your TUEC and TUE administrator several months before the Games. This proactive step allows sufficient time to complete all necessary steps, e.g. automatic recognition of TUEs in ADAMS prior to the Games.
- Ensure submitting RM procedures to WADA well in advance of the Games for its review.
- Ensure all the information, including the Prohibited List, AD Rules, TUE application process including TUE forms, TUE recognition policy, TUE appeals process and RM procedures, is published on the official Games website.

E. Conclusions

The MEAL Program proved effective and valuable in delivering the strategic coordination required to implement the Anti-Doping program for the II Junior Panamerican Games in line with the Code. The collective efforts of the Coordination Committee resulted in significant organizational progress and several key achievements. These include the successful execution of core testing operations, securing essential external agreements (laboratory and courier). Furthermore, the program fostered a lasting legacy for the hosting NADO by facilitating high-level political engagement that strengthened the operational independence of the Paraguay NADO through national legislation and established a strong regional legacy by transferring the MEAL methodology and best practices to the organizing teams for the XX Pan American Games Lima 2027.

While the operational success of the Games' anti-doping program was robust, the review suggests that continuous improvement would be achieved by formalizing structural organization. We strongly recommend that PASO formalize the establishment of its dedicated Anti-Doping Unit with a clear, enduring mandate. This step would enhance the ability to consistently, early, and sustainably implement all anti-doping processes—from rules publication to education—for all future Games.

By building on this successful foundation and integrating this crucial structural formalization with the lessons learned—particularly prioritizing mandatory pre-Games education and the use of the official Games website as the single authoritative source—PASO and Lima 2027 will be positioned to deliver a high-quality program that supports clean sport and enhances the athlete experience.
