



WADA Independent Observer Report

2nd Gulf Cooperation Council Games, 12-26 October 2015
Dammam, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

1. Background

The Independent Observer (IO) program in Dammam adopted a cooperative approach which saw WADA partner with the Local Organizing Committee of the 2nd Gulf Cooperation Games (LOC) to optimize anti-doping efforts at the 2nd GCC Games. The IO team worked with the LOC and its Medical and Anti-Doping Committee (MADC) to review and improve the doping control program at the Games. This collaborative approach included communication in advance of the Games between WADA, the MADC and the Saudi Arabian Anti-Doping Committee (SAADC), who were asked by the LOC to manage the doping control program for the Games.

While taking note of general compliance with rules and procedures, the IO team was primarily engaged in looking at the implementation of doping control policy to see that plans were developed and carried out effectively, and that they optimized available human and financial resources in support of clean athletes participating in the event. Prior to the Games, the IO team reviewed the Games' Anti-Doping Rules, test distribution plan and provided feedback on specific program challenges. For the Games, the IO team arrived in Dammam on 10th October and observed the Games anti-doping operations through to 19th October.

The IO team comprised of Mr Michal Rynkowski, Chief Executive of the Polish Anti-Doping Agency and Mr Tom May, WADA's Deputy Director of NADO/RADO Relations. The IO team sincerely thanks the Gulf Cooperation Council, the 2nd GCC Games LOC, the MADC and the SAADC for the invitation to this event. In particular we sincerely appreciate the cooperation of the MADC, including its Chairman, Dr Mohammed Saleh Konbaz, and Vice-Chairman, Mr Abdulaziz Almasaed.

2. Program Overview

The overall anti-doping program of the 2nd GCC Games comprised 215 samples – 206 urine samples and 9 blood samples. Testing was spread across 12 sports and 191 athletes from all 5 participating countries were tested. This represented approximately 25% of the athletes competing in the Games.

As of 4 December, all results have been reported. Two adverse analytical findings (AAF) and four Atypical Findings (ATF) were reported by the WADA-accredited laboratory in Doha, Qatar.

The doping control program was supervised by the MADC of the Games. Daily morning meetings took place to review the previous day's activities and discuss the plans for the coming day. There was excellent coordination between the medical personnel and the anti-doping personnel of the Games. Information on processes, Therapeutic Use Exemptions, prohibited substances and methods was shared and provided to the team delegations as needed.

The MADC invited all GCC countries to send Doping Control Officers (DCOs) to the Games, The doping control workforce as a whole was comprised of 18 DCOs (15 from Saudi Arabia, 1 from Kuwait, 1 from Bahrain and 1 from Oman), 4 Blood Collection Officers and 8 Chaperones. The MADC held a briefing session with all of the doping control personnel prior to the start of the Games in addition to daily meetings throughout the event. The IO team was impressed with the level of professionalism and commitment of the doping control personnel. The IO team also appreciated the fact that all suggestions provided to the MADC to possibly improve the doping control process were immediately implemented by the doping control personnel.

3. Doping Control Program

a. Anti-Doping Rules

The 2nd GCC Games is not a signatory to the World Anti-Doping Code. However, they implemented a doping control program in line with the Code. Their anti-doping rules were based on the Model Rules for Major Event Organizers and were approved by WADA.

b. Test Distribution Planning

The MADC developed a Test Distribution Plan (TDP) through a detailed risk assessment. An initial meeting took place between the IO team and the MADC, resulting in a few suggested changes being incorporated into the TDP. The TDP was constantly adjusted due to continual changes in the event schedule, including the last minute withdrawal of Team Kuwait.

The MADC could not fully implement the Technical Document for Sport Specific Analysis (TDSSA). While the ESA requirements of the TDSSA were followed, it was difficult for the MADC to also incorporate the GH / GHRF requirements. This was mainly due to the lack of capacity at the WADA-accredited laboratory in Qatar to conduct the necessary analysis for GH (blood) and GHRF (urine).

c. Doping Control

The doping control process observed by the IO team was efficient, effective and in accordance with international standards. The IO team witnessed the following parts of the process – athlete selection, athlete notification and chaperoning, sample processing, post-test administration and chain of custody (between venue and MADC Office). Throughout the entire process the rights of the athletes were observed and protected.

Samples were transported to the Qatar laboratory by an SAADC employee by car once every couple of days.

ADAMS (Anti-Doping Administration and Management System) was used to manage the doping control documentation. Doping control forms were inputted on a daily basis and the IO team was provided with access to be able to monitor the results.

d. Therapeutic Use Exemptions

The MADC created a Therapeutic Use Exemption Committee (TUEC) for the Games. Only one previously approved TUE was submitted to the MADC. No new applications were received during the course of the Games.

e. Results Management

The MADC engaged the Results Management Committee of the Gulf States and Yemen Regional Anti-Doping Organization (GSY RADO) for any possible anti-doping rule violations. As of 4 December two adverse analytical findings (AAF) were reported. These AAFs were reported after the completion of the Games. The results management process has been initiated, with official notification letters being sent to the athlete, respective country's NADO, etc. The process will continue to be monitored by the WADA Legal Department as per their regular monitoring role. The respective NADOs for the reported ATFs have also been informed.

f. Education

The MADC, through the SAADC implemented an Awareness Campaign throughout the 2nd GCC Games. This included an Athlete Outreach Booth at one of the main athlete hotels; visiting the various venues to distribute materials and information to athletes, officials and spectators; and equipping the doping control stations with booklets, posters and information.

During the Games it was evident that it was the first time many of the athletes were exposed to doping control. The IO team recommends that the participating countries ensure their athletes and athlete support personnel are educated on anti-doping prior to participating at future events.

4. Recommendations

Based on its observations and experiences, the IO team would like to make the following recommendations for future editions of the GCC Games:

- Future Games Organizers should engage the Gulf States and Yemen Regional Anti-Doping Organization (RADO) in the planning and implementation of the doping control program for the Games. This will assist with the knowledge transfer from the previous editions of the Games and ensure the appropriate expertise is utilized.
- The strong network of RADO Doping Control Officers from throughout the region should be utilized. Future Organizing Committees should budget and plan for a minimum of one DCO from each participating country.
- Future Test Distribution Plans should build on the program, and level of financial commitment, implemented at the 2nd GCC Games in Saudi Arabia.
- Future editions of the GCC Games should fully implement the Technical Document for Sport Specific Analysis (TDSSA) through both blood and urine collection.
- Pre-competition testing, either at athlete hotels or training venues, should be considered.

- Future Games should continue to conduct an Athlete Outreach Program during the event.
- Future Games Organizers should encourage the participating countries to educate their athletes and athlete support personnel in advance of the Games. This can be done through the RADO and each country's NADO.

5. Conclusions and Recommended next steps

The 2nd GCC Games Local Organizing Committee, the Medical and Anti-Doping Committee and the Saudi Arabian Anti-Doping Committee are congratulated for the implementation of an effective anti-doping program at the 2nd GCC Games in Dammam. Although this was a relatively small event compared to most IO missions, the IO team was impressed with the commitment and professionalism of all those involved in the implementation of the doping control program during the Games. We encourage future editions of the event to build on what was implemented in Dammam and continue to implement programs that focus on protecting the rights of the clean athletes.