AFL PLAYERS SAY ‘NO’ TO DRUGS

AFL PLAYERS SAY NO TO DRUGS.COM.AU
These changes have been made after extensive consultation and feedback from experts in the field of drug and alcohol prevention, the wider football industry, AFL Players, and the Federal Government.

The AFL has two drugs policies: The Anti-Doping Code, established in 1990, tests under protocols established by the World Anti-Doping Authority (WADA), and targets performance-enhancing drugs.

The AFL’s Illicit Drugs Policy (IDP) has been operational since 2005. It is over and above the WADA match day testing and tests out of competition for illicit drugs.

The AFL was the first sport in Australia to run a competition-wide policy that tests out-of-competition for illicit drugs, and is one of only three Australian sports to have such a policy. The Illicit Drugs Policy, a voluntary policy created in conjunction with the AFL Players’ Association is based on a medical model – one that focuses on education, counselling and treatment.

The AFL and the AFL Players’ Association now have a total of five years’ experience in testing for illicit drugs (two years of statistical testing, three years of the IDP) and the rate of failed tests has reduced each year.

That experience confirmed the model and showed our system is working.

The evidence has led to the enhancements and variations outlined in this document, including an increase in sanctions, and ongoing research into the development of a Responsible Alcohol Policy.

The AFL, and the AFL Players are committed to the policy because we recognise that:

- The use of illicit drugs is a community-wide problem and AFL Players are subject to the same pressures as all young Australians;
- The health and welfare of AFL Players is of paramount importance;
- All members of the community must do whatever is possible to fight the problem of illicit drug use;
- Young people can be influenced by the behaviour of high profile sports people. AFL Players have volunteered to be at the forefront of the fight against the use of illicit drugs; their message is strong and clear: “Say ‘No’ To Drugs”.

The Players’ support of the Illicit Drugs Policy, and of the enhancements outlined in this document is to be commended, and we thank our Players for their commitment to the Policy, and to our Anti-Doping Code.

Andrew Demetriou
Chief Executive Officer, AFL

Brendon Gale
Chief Executive Officer, AFLPA

As AFL Players we support being tested out of competition and holiday hair testing because we want to make sure there is an effective intervention if a player makes a poor decision to experiment with illicit drugs. And we want to send a message to all young people that it’s not OK. That’s why I support the AFL’s Illicit Drugs Policy.

JOEL BOWDEN
Richmond player and President of the AFL Player’s Association

JOEL BOWDEN SAYS ‘NO’ TO DRUGS

PLUGLYERS SUPPORT THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS

The AFL, in partnership with the AFL Players’ Association, has made significant enhancements to its Illicit Drugs Policy.

JOEL BOWDEN
Richmond player and President of the AFL Player’s Association

‘NO’
THE AIMS OF THE AFL’S ILlicit Drugs POLICY

The AFL has two drug policies, the Illicit Drugs Policy and the AFL’s Anti-Doping Code.

As part of the revised Illicit Drugs Policy, Players have now volunteered to participate in a two-year hair testing trial following their holiday period.

The aims of the policy are clear:

- to educate Players about the serious danger of using illicit drugs;
- to identify any Player who has made the poor choice to use drugs, and to direct them immediately into appropriate counselling and treatment programs;
- to provide the necessary intervention and support to change behaviour of those identified;

Any Player who does not respond to counselling and treatment programs – and who has failed a test for a third time – is subject to a financial sanction of $5000 and a suspension of up to 18 matches.

A Player under suspension will still be supported by counselling, and be given the full support of the system to ensure the best chances of changing behaviour.

There is no doubt that the AFL Illicit Drugs Policy is an effective medical approach that - in partnership with the players - acts to promote the long term health of players by reducing the usage and the harm caused by illicit drugs.

AFL players are taking a strong and active leadership position on what is a community-wide issue.

Professor Rob Moodie, Professor of Global Health Nossal Institute for Global Health, former CEO, VicHealth, former Chair of the Premier’s Drug Prevention Council.

‘NO’

Health is everything. I don’t experiment with my health and I don’t believe others should either. Playing sport, at any level, does not last for a lifetime, and how you treat your body when you are young can have long-term impacts on your health.

Say ‘NO’ to drugs.

TOM HARLEY
Captain, Geelong
THE POLICY IN DETAIL

AFL players are the first Australian sports people to volunteer to undertake holiday hair testing.

As a result of the evidence, there will be a significant increase in the number of tests in the post and pre-season periods. Drugs that are tested include ecstasy, marijuana, cocaine, meth-amphetamine and now GBH, and Ketamine.

The use of drugs is a problem throughout society and impacts tens of thousands of Australian families across all socio-economic levels.

The AFL should be applauded for its work in tackling what is a broad community problem. The AFL is extremely proactive in tackling the problem, with policy and structure in place to raise awareness and educate Players and providing credible information on the insidious nature and dangers of drugs and their potential impact on mental and physical health.

The AFL’s Illicit Drugs Policy is designed around harm minimisation and is an effective attack on drugs. It sends a strong “anti-drugs” message that reinforces illicit drugs are dangerous.

Det-Inspt (Ret.) Jim O’Brien, former Officer in Charge of the Victoria Police Parana Taskforce.

The AFL’s Illicit Drugs Policy includes an annual education program for all Players.

The program, conducted by experts in the field, outlines the dangers of taking illicit drugs, the implications on Players and society of taking illicit drugs, and describes the AFL’s testing procedure.

The AFL has more than doubled the number of out-of-competition tests under the Illicit Drugs Policy to more than 1200; the regime of testing is widespread and up to 1500 tests will be conducted in 2009. Every AFL player will be tested out-of-competition at least once every year and the timing of the tests are unknown to any Player or Club official.

From the end of the 2008 season, a trial of hair testing will be used as a preventative measure to determine whether Players have used illicit drugs over the holiday period.

Hair testing can detect drug use for up to three months, and Players who fail a hair test following their holidays will be referred to education and counselling and be target tested. No sanction will apply for a failed hair test.

Although out-of-competition testing results in 2007 showed the policy is working and resulted in a further decrease in the rate of use of illicit drugs by AFL Players, the results also demonstrated the holiday period as being a higher risk period for illicit drug use.

WHEN A PLAYER FAILS A TEST

Immediate action is taken whenever a player records a failed out-of-competition illicit drug test.

Failing two tests

If an AFL Player fails an out-of-competition illicit drug test a second time, he will be immediately referred by the AFL Medical Commissioners to more intense program of education, counselling and treatment. The Player’s Club Medical Officer is also advised. A suspended sanction of six matches is also applied. The Player will again face ongoing target testing.

Failing three tests

If an AFL Player fails an out-of-competition illicit drug test for a third time, he must appear before the AFL Tribunal, and faces a suspension of up to 12 matches, PLUS the six-match suspended sentence from the second failed test. The total suspension can be up to 18 matches. The suspended sanction of $5000 from the first failed test also applies.

Players who have failed an out-of-competition illicit drug tests will continue to be target-tested.

A failed out-of-competition illicit drug test lapses after a period of four years. Any AFL Player can be target-tested.

I support the AFL’s Illicit Drugs Policy because it not only sends a strong message not to use drugs but is consistent with this approach of offering counselling and treatment that provides an opportunity for Players who do make poor choices to change their behaviour.

Professor Margaret Hamilton, Executive Member, National Council on Drugs
CHANGES IN THE ILLICIT DRUGS POLICY

More out-of-competition testing and greater sanctions now apply.

- A financial sanction of $5000 will now apply to the first failed test and a six-match sanction will apply for a second failed test.
- Both sanctions are suspended and will be activated immediately upon a third failed test.
- For a failed third test, the total suspension has been increased from a maximum of 12 matches to a maximum of 18 matches, including the activation of the six-match suspended sanction for a second failed test.
- The suspension for a failed test for marijuana has been increased to a maximum of 12 weeks in line with the other illicit drugs. This follows advice from experts of marijuana’s increasingly harmful impact on mental health. The suspension for failed tests showing marijuana use was previously for a maximum of six matches.
- Testing has again been increased with up to 1500 illicit drug tests to be conducted over a 12-month period.
- Every AFL Player will be tested at least once every year.
- Greater target testing of Players returning to the Club out of season will take place from the end of 2008. This follows the evidence provided by 2007 testing that showed the holiday period to be a time of greater potential risk.

LEARNING FROM OUR EXPERIENCE

The evidence shows our Illicit Drugs Policy is working to change behaviour.

The AFL now has a total of five years’ experience in testing for illicit drugs (two years of statistical testing, three years of the IDP) and the rate of failed tests has reduced each year.

The evidence shows our Illicit Drugs Policy is working.

The AFL and AFLPA, after independent research on the use of alcohol by AFL Players, has now taken steps to develop Responsible Alcohol Policy Framing Guidelines to assist AFL Clubs in;

- The development of approaches for responsible consumption,
- The development of effective pathways for treatment of alcohol-related problems,
- The creation of responsible drinking cultures and
- The use of Player welfare-oriented and education-based approaches to promote responsible alcohol consumption.

Examples of how our experiences have influenced policy include:

Holiday Hair Testing

In 2007 testing was significantly increased post-season and – despite the overall rate dropping – the results showed almost half of the failed tests took place in this period. With this period being noted as a higher risk period for illicit drug use the Players agreed to volunteer for a trial of hair testing following holidays.

Responsible Alcohol Policy

The evidence from the AFL Medical Commissioners is that in almost all examples of failed Illicit Drugs Policy tests, irresponsible use of alcohol has been a precursor to the use of drugs.

The AFL and the AFLPA, after independent research on the use of alcohol by AFL Players, has now taken steps to develop Responsible Alcohol Policy Framing Guidelines to assist AFL Clubs in;

- The development of approaches for responsible consumption,
- The development of effective pathways for treatment of alcohol-related problems,
- The creation of responsible drinking cultures and
- The use of Player welfare-oriented and education-based approaches to promote responsible alcohol consumption.

More than 30 Australian drug and alcohol agencies and individual experts in the field of alcohol and drug prevention have provided feedback on the AFL Alcohol Policy. The policy will be finalised later in the year.

Marijuana

In discussions with medical experts, the issue of marijuana and the continuing evidence of its impact on the mental health of young people was raised.

Based on that expert advice, the AFL and AFLPA have decided to treat marijuana the same as other illicit drugs and bring the sanction for a failed third test for marijuana DISCUSS into line with all other illicit drugs.

Gary Moorhead, CEO,
Sports Medicine Australia.

It is argued before me that bearing in mind that the IDP(Illicit Drugs Policy) imposes a regime upon Players over and above the World Anti-Doping Agency compliant Anti-Doping Code, the IDP reflected “a ground-breaking, innovative and co-operative initiative between a major sporting administration body and a Player representative body directed at proactively addressing illicit drug use in a manner designed to protect the health and welfare of Players and others whilst simultaneously condemning or possession of illicit drugs.” I accept that argument.

Justice Murray Kellam,
Supreme Court of Victoria.
AFL PLAYERS SAY ‘NO’ TO DRUGS

THE AFL’S ANTI-DOPING CODE

In more than 6000 tests only one player has tested positive for performance enhancing drugs.

The AFL has two drug codes:
- the AFL Illicit Drugs Policy, the out of competition testing regime for illicit drugs and
- the AFL Anti-Doping Code, which was introduced in 1990 to protect the AFL from performance-enhancing drugs. Anti-Doping Code tests can take place 365 days of the year.

The Anti-Doping Code is administered in partnership with the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) and is compliant with the World Anti-Doping Authority (WADA) standards.

The AFL reviews its policy each year with ASADA and has a policy of taking up any new testing technology and methodology recommended by ASADA. The AFL is one of only a few sports in Australia that uses blood testing to further widen the range of scrutiny for banned substances, including EPO.

More than 6000 Anti-Doping Code tests have been conducted in and out of competition since 1990. In 2007 no player recorded a positive result for performance enhancing drugs.

Only one AFL player has ever tested positive for performance enhancing drug use.

Highlights of the AFL Anti-Doping Code

- ASADA conducts a year round anti-doping program for performance enhancing drugs under contract from the AFL. ASADA can test AFL Players 365 days a year.
- The Anti-Doping Code follows the WADA international standard for testing and consists of:
  - a thorough education program involving ASADA staff for first time listed players at the Induction Camp and at each Club during pre-season
  - testing for all performance enhancing drugs listed on the WADA schedule in and out of competition.
- Under the WADA code, if a player tests positive for illicit drugs on match-day, they face a ban of up to two years.
- Approximately 500 tests are conducted each year under the Anti-Doping Code and are a combination of urine, blood and EPO testing.
- ASADA selects players at random on match day for performance enhancing drug tests. Players are tested at the conclusion of matches and cannot leave the tester’s presence until providing a sample.
- ASADA selects players at random for out of competition testing for performance enhancing drugs.
- ASADA also targets players including:
  - testing of all first time AFL-listed players and promoted rookies.
  - High performance testing – the top 3 players in Club Best and Fairest Awards and All-Australians.
  - Long-term injury testing.
  - Holiday testing of players from different Clubs.
  - testing for those Clubs that organise training overseas and
  - random and target testing as determined by ASADA.
  - Any player who has not been tested in the previous two years.
  - Club-listed rookies pressing for promotion due to a long-term injury.

ASADA also has a world’s best practice anti-doping program and was the leader among Australian Sports to adopt a comprehensive blood-testing program. It has a significant financial and operational commitment to anti-doping and is working in partnership with ASADA to maintain a leadership role in this critical area of sport.

Richard Ings, Chairman, Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA)

COMPARISON WITH AUSTRALIAN SPORTS

Below is a table that demonstrates the testing for illicit drugs for Australia’s major sports.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPORTS / CODE</th>
<th>IN COMPETITION TESTING WADA</th>
<th>OUT OF COMPETITION ENHANCING TESTING WADA</th>
<th>OUT OF COMPETITION ILLICIT DRUG TESTING</th>
<th>LEAVE PERIOD ILLICIT DRUG HAIR TESTING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFL</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARU</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATHLETICS</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASKETBALL</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRICKET AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CYCLING</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFA</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRL</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWIMMING</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TENNIS</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WADA defines in competition for AFL, NRL, ARU, SOCCER, Basketball etc as “match day”

The AFL has developed a rigorous year-round out of competition illicit drug testing program which provides an immediate medical response for ANY and ALL positive drug tests.

The current AFL policy also clearly reinforces the Australian Government’s message to young people and their families across Australia: no-one should use drugs, but if you do have a problem or get into difficulties it is a health issue, and confidential, non-judgemental treatment is available, it works, and families should seek help as early as possible.

Professor Jon Currie, chair of the Victorian Drug and Alcohol Prevention Council and Director, Addiction Medicine and Mental Health, St Vincent’s Hospital.
AFL PLAYERS SAY NO TO DRUGS.COM.AU