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forum for anti-doping
in recreational sport

Guidelines for Anti-Doping Education for Coaches, Instructors, and Trainers who are actively engaged in Recreational Sport



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Doping in Recreational Sport

The definition of “recreational” sport can be elusive and vary considerably between countries and organisations, and the recreational sport population is also highly heterogeneous. This must be taken into consideration when setting up education for coaches, trainers and instructors within recreational sport. To reduce ambiguity, the present report is based on the following definition of recreational sport:

“Recreational sport is defined here as sport, exercise and physical activity which takes place in a low-level competitive or non-competitive environment and engages participants/individuals at sport events, fitness centers, sport and leisure clubs, and outdoor-based activities” (FAIR Final Report, 2019)

The guidelines presented here highlight the importance of providing anti-doping education to coaches, instructors, and (personal) trainers in recreational sport. These professionals/practitioners are in frequent contact with large numbers of people doing sport on a regular basis, employed (or volunteer) across different levels of sport (e.g., working with both recreational and elite competitive athletes) and therefore, they may directly or indirectly play an important role in preventing the use of doping substances within recreational sport settings and the society, in general.

They present guidelines were developed to primarily address the learning and education needs of the sport technical entourage (e.g., coaches, trainers, and instructors), but they may also be useful and relevant to coaches, trainers, and instructors in national and elite level sport as well as the sport medical entourage (e.g., medical doctors, physiotherapists, sport nutritionists etc.).

The guidelines can be used by various stakeholders and professional groups who are actively involved in recreational sport, and who have an interest or remit to prevent doping in recreational sport settings by promoting clean sport values and behaviours. Indicatively, the guidelines can be of particular relevance to the following organisations:

- *National Anti-Doping Organisations (NADOs).*
- *National and international sport federations.*
- *National and community sport clubs.*
- *The fitness industry (e.g., national gym partnerships or organisations, gym chains, branch organisations, local independent gyms).*
- *Other key sport stakeholders and groups (e.g., coaches’ federations).*
- *Education providers, particularly in the fields of sport science, coaching, and related disciplines at a vocational qualification and post-secondary education level.*

Clean sport education, therefore, should ideally target the following groups:

- *Students in vocational and post-secondary education or in higher education who study for a coaching qualification or a degree in sport science.*
- *Coaches, instructors, and trainers employed or volunteering in national federations.*

- *Coaches, instructors, and trainers employed or volunteering in local sport clubs.*
- *Coaches, instructors, and trainers, including personal trainers, who are employed or self-employed in the fitness industry.*
- *Others who are actively engaged in recreational sport coaching/training/instruction and are in contact with children, adolescents, and adults involved in recreational sport.*

Clean sport education for recreational sport coaches should ideally focus on developing relevant knowledge, skills, and behaviours. To this end, the following areas can be indicatively addressed by relevant education initiatives:

- *Principles and values associated with clean sport, contextualised in recreational sport settings (e.g., doing sport for fun, joy, and health promotion).*
- *Consequences of doping, for example, on physical and mental health.*
- *Substances and methods on WADA's Prohibited List.*
- *Risk of supplement use.*
- *Coping with high-risk situations (e.g., encounters with athletes who already use doping substances, or athletes at-risk for using).*
- *The role, responsibility, and influence of coaches on athletes' decisions to engage in doping.*
- *The role, responsibility, and influence of coaches in safeguarding and protecting the health of their athletes/exercisers.*
- *Promotion of a clean sport environment locally.*
- *Risk and protective factors for doping use in recreational sport settings.*
- *"Soft skills", such as active listening and communication skills, in order to facilitate discussion with athletes or exercisers with doping-related concerns.*

Determining Education Provision Specifications

Relevant questions

- *Who should offer anti-doping education to coaches in recreational sport? What type of synergies can support this? Who should be responsible for coordinating, monitoring, evaluating, and certifying coaches' training?*
- *What type of education programs would be more feasible to deliver? What mode(s) of delivery should be used?*

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

- *National Anti-doping Organizations (NADOs) could offer clean sport education to recreational sport coaches, instructors, and trainers.*



- *NADOs should consider the development of strategic collaboration and synergies with the key stakeholders (e.g., sport federations, fitness industry, health and education authorities) to plan, develop, communicate, promote, and implement clean sport education for coaches, instructors, and trainers in recreational sport.*

Clean sport education for coaches, instructors, and trainers in recreational sport may incorporate the following features:

- *Be diversified in order to address the educational and training needs of groups at different stages in their career, such as pre-service and in-service coaches, trainers, and instructors.*
- *Provide fundamental knowledge of relevant anti-doping areas (e.g., nutritional supplements and doping; substances and methods of the prohibited list; consequences of doping on health; coping effectively with doping-risk situations) in early career stages (i.e., pre-service).*
- *Provide more in-depth and contextualised, sport-specific anti-doping knowledge through continuing professional development in later career stages (i.e., in-service).*
- *Be contextualised and tailor-made to fit sport-specific needs. A “one-size-fits-all” approach should be avoided because recreational sport includes a diverse and heterogeneous group of sport disciplines and practitioners, thus clean sport education needs may not be universal.*
- *After consulting with the relevant target groups (e.g., coaches, instructors, and/or trainers in certain sports or areas of recreational sport) consider utilising a blended learning approach, incorporating both web-based and face-to-face training and education components.*
- *Where web-based education is provided, ensure that it is easily accessible and that a user-friendly interface is utilised.*
- *Where web-based education is provided, consider using diverse content, ranging from self-instructed/self-directed material that do not require interaction with a specialist (e.g., podcasts, short educational clips), as well as more interactive approaches and tools (e.g., webinars; communities of practice).*
- *Be diversified and include a range of educational resources, such as bite-size learning features, scenario-based learning, case studies, reports, and non-technical reports and articles.*
- *Be versatile and adaptable, so that anti-doping education can be embedded as a “common theme” across different topics, such as sport integrity, safeguarding practices, and protecting the health and well-being of the athlete/exerciser.*

Relevance to WADA’s ISE and Other Frameworks

Relevant Questions

- *How useful is WADA’s ISE as a framework for developing anti-doping education for coaches in recreational sport? If WADA’s ISE is deemed useful, in which ways is it useful? If it is not useful, why? What other frameworks can be useful for this purpose?*

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

- *NADOs may consider the use of different frameworks to develop their clean sport education programs for coaches, instructors, and trainers in recreational sport. This may include a curriculum-based approach that defines specific educational and training needs and relevant learning objectives and outcomes.*
- *Bottom-up, collaborative learning with the active contribution of the target groups (e.g., coaches, trainers, and instructors) as well as key sport stakeholders (e.g., fitness industry, national sport federations) may also be considered as an effective approach to develop contextualised, relevant, and timely educational content.*
- *WADA's International Standard for Education can be used as a generic framework to identify suitable educational and pedagogical approaches, and to develop contextualised and sport-specific educational guidelines, educational content, as well as relevant evaluation and assessment frameworks.*

Barriers and Enablers of Clean Sport Education for Coaches, Instructors, and Trainers in Recreational Sport

Relevant Questions

- *How can anti-doping education programs for coaches in recreational sport be more effectively promoted? What would motivate coaches to attend/complete such programs?*
- *What barriers or other factors could prevent coaches from completing anti-doping education? How could these be realistically resolved?*
- *What should be the role of employers (e.g., fitness industry, sport clubs) in anti-doping education for coaches in recreational sport? How can employers actively support anti-doping education for coaches in recreational sport?*

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

- *Develop synergies with key sport stakeholders (e.g., fitness industry, national sport federations), who may facilitate access to the target group.*
- *Consult with national sport federations about incorporating clean sport education to their national curriculum or training for coaches, instructors, and/or trainers (e.g., embed clean sport education in the national continuing professional development program for coaches).*
- *Utilise existing professional networks (e.g., coach federations or associations) to widely promote and disseminate clean sport education, and attract more coaches, instructors, and trainers in recreational sport.*
- *Consider the use of anti-doping “ambassadors” to promote anti-doping education among different*



- *professional groups. This may involve utilising positive experiences and testimonies from coaches, trainers or instructors who successfully completed anti-doping education, in order to highlight the expected benefits for one's professional career and skill/knowledge acquisition (e.g., a series of short web-based or social media-based clips with "life stories").*
- *Where possible, make clean sport education for recreational sport coaches, trainers, and instructors a mandatory requirement for employment. This may be reflected in the job description of potential employers (e.g., fitness industry), be a required aspect of in-job training for coaches, trainers, and instructors, or be included in the Occupational and/or Professional Standards, depending on the respective regulatory framework of each country, district, or region.*
- *Collaborate with institutional authorities (e.g., ministry of education; sport authorities) to promote clean sport education as part of standard education and training for coaches, trainers, and instructors in recreational sport settings.*
- *Incorporate, where possible, anti-doping education within a broader professional credit-based system, so that completion of anti-doping education programs is rewarded with credits.*
- *Consider the subsidisation of anti-doping education costs by the employer (e.g., national federation, clubs, fitness industry), in order to offer education as part of "paid work" for relevant professional groups (e.g., coaches, fitness trainers or instructors).*

Evaluation of Clean Sport Education

Relevant Questions

- *How should anti-doping education outcomes for coaches in recreational sport be evaluated? What metrics/indicators should be used to assess that learning objectives were met? How often should coaches be educated in anti-doping?*

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

- *NADOs could be responsible for coordinating clean sport education provision, but the monitoring and evaluation of coaches' education can be implemented through strategic collaboration and synergies with local sport stakeholders and expert academics/research centres/higher education institutions with relevant expertise.*
- *Consider a wider approach to evaluation, ranging from the assessment of fulfilling the learning objectives and relevance of the education provision, to addressing broader themes relevant to clean sport education (e.g., changing attitudes to anti-doping, improving self-efficacy and competence to effectively cope with doping situations).*
- *Utilise a mixed methods approach that will incorporate both quantitative and qualitative assessments of clean sport education outcomes. Quantitative evaluation may reflect an assessment of trainees' subjective level of self-efficacy/confidence to effectively cope with doping-risk situations. Qualitative assessments may reflect more in-depth understanding of how clean sport education changed/improved (or not) knowledge, competence, and skills of trainees with regards to clean sport/anti-doping matters.*

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- *Consider the implementation of both short-term and long-term evaluation methods to capture long-term or delayed effects of clean sport education provision on attitudes, self-efficacy/ confidence, skills, and competence of coaches, trainers, and instructors.*
 - *Consider evaluating coaches, trainers, and instructors to ensure that they uphold key principles of anti-doping education in their daily professional practice. This is an important foundation for identifying good and best practices in this area.*



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