

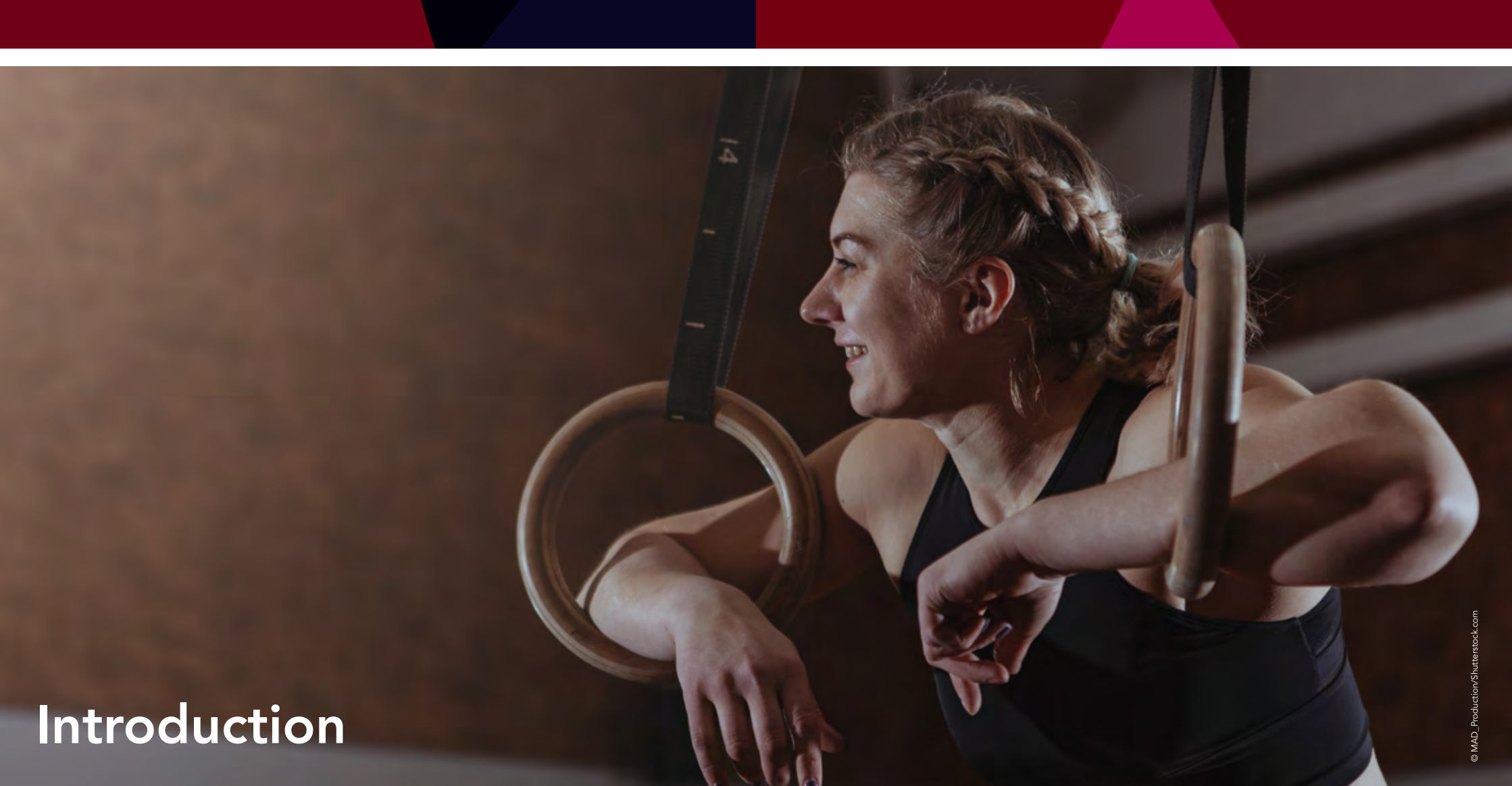
Clean Sport Essentials:

Performance Lifestyle Advisors
and Athlete Support
Personnel



The aim of this guide is to provide an overview of athlete vulnerability within anti-doping and clean sport. We aim to raise awareness of contributing factors and influences that may tempt athletes to dope.

We know that those closest to the athlete are best placed to intervene early. This short guide will provide you, the Performance Lifestyle Advisor (PLA) or support personnel, with the knowledge and confidence to intervene and support your athletes with these challenges. We need your help to protect clean sport.



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Introduction

Doping is one of the biggest threats to sport today. Public interest in doping scandals is heightening with increased media coverage and high-profile cases. It is vital we all work together to help athletes remain clean and protect the integrity of sport. Anybody in an athlete support personnel role will know just how important clean sport is, one team

or individual competing fairly against another in the pursuit of glory. It is our mission at UK Anti-Doping to protect clean sport. With your help we can ensure that athletes have the knowledge and education that will help them continue to make the right decisions to train and compete clean.

Your Role

Every athlete has the right to participate in clean sport. Supporting athletes to understand the importance of what this means, and take pride in being a clean athlete, is the role of the athlete support team, including you. Through education and an informed athlete support network surrounding the athlete, you can help to minimise the risks of unintentional doping and support athletes to compete in line with the anti-doping rules. Whether this be reminders to check medications on Global DRO or supplements on Informed Sport, being educated correctly is key.

We often find that athletes don't like discussing doping, however doping is a highly complex issue that should, and needs to, be openly discussed and not shied away from. By talking openly and honestly with athletes and simplifying the main points and key messages we can help athletes to understand their thoughts and feelings around the area of doping, moments of vulnerability and coping mechanisms.

It is important in your role as a PLA or support personnel to support athletes at every stage of the pathway, ensuring a good balance between their personal identity and everyday lives, so they understand they are more than an athlete. Through achieving a good balance, athletes should have lower levels of stress and be able to cope with pressures in a better way. By helping athletes cope during these times and reinforcing positive decision making you can build their confidence to do the right thing.

This resource is aimed to help you understand why athletes might consider doping, the signs to look out for and who to direct athletes to for specific support.



So, What Is 'Doping'?

Surprisingly the term 'doping' refers to breaking any of the eleven Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRVs) – it is not just a positive test from a Prohibited Substance.

Whilst all eleven of the ADRVs apply to athletes, did you know that seven also apply to athlete support personnel? By knowing them, you are protecting both yourself and the athletes you work with.

The consequences of being found to have committed an ADRV can range from a reprimand to a lifetime ban from sport. This could mean the end of your career in sport.



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Why Might an Athlete Dope?





Artificial Performance Gains

One main reason athletes dope is to gain an unfair advantage over their competitors. Prohibited substances can unnaturally allow athletes to train harder and more frequently whilst minimising the risk of overtraining and injury. These substances can help athletes build body mass, improve muscle and bone strength, increase oxygen delivery to exercising tissues, mask pain, stimulate the body, relax, reduce weight or hide the use of other drugs – all outside of a person’s natural physiological adaptations to training.



Injury

There are two main reasons why athletes who are injured might dope. Firstly, the prohibited substances can help to mask and manage pain which allows the athlete to continue training for longer. Secondly, doping can speed up recovery, enabling athletes to return to sport quicker. An athlete who is unable to train or compete due to injury can be at risk of losing funding, a selection place, contract or wages - the stress and pressure of this can lead to athletes being vulnerable and desperate.



Drive for Fame and Fortune

The financial rewards for being a highly successful athlete are growing at a phenomenal rate. The media, spectators, sponsors, National Governing Bodies and sports agencies want to see records and super human feats every time that athletes step in the sporting arena. With great achievements and records come fame and fortune and a chance for athletes to place themselves in the sporting history books. The desire for glory and external validation can tempt athletes to dope to achieve this status or even to maintain it.

Personality Traits

Research has shown that athletes with certain types of motivational drivers are more vulnerable to doping decisions. Some athletes have a ‘winning is everything’ or results driven mentality, believing they must win. This can often be linked to their sense of self and identity and their personality type. When athletes are results orientated rather than process orientated, doping can be perceived as a tactic or strategy to help them win. They simply don’t regard it as cheating but see it as a necessary, functional act.



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Weight Control

Sports such as judo, taekwondo, weightlifting, bobsleigh, boxing, and rowing all have weight restrictions and therefore the use of diuretics can be used by athletes to manage this. Pressure to gain or drop weight quickly prior to weigh-ins can influence athlete's decisions and how they chose to do this. This is not only breaking the anti-doping rules but in most cases damaging to the athlete's health.

Social and Peer Pressure

Athletes may feel under extreme external pressure from their friends, team mates or even coaches to turn to doping to help them perform. Socially in sport it may be perceived that 'all athletes are doping' and that is somehow accepted. Athletes may self-justify the reasons they dope by externally deflecting the blame or guilt and convincing themselves that doping is the only way to achieve sporting success.



Transition

Athletes mature at different rates and will at points in their careers naturally suffer a performance dip rather than gain. During a transition phase, training loads may increase, they may be placed in a training group or squad of similar level athletes for the first time, or make the leap from academy to first team. Transitions can make athletes vulnerable. If an athlete feels they are underperforming, at risk of not being selected or their position on the team is in jeopardy, then doping could be seen as an option.

Unintentional Doping

Uneducated athletes or those with limited understanding of their anti-doping rights and responsibilities are at great risk of unintentional doping. The anti-doping rules have limited sympathy for carelessness, so athletes who do not understand the meaning of strict liability may make poor decisions resulting in an ADRV. Athletes simply not checking their medication or managing the risks with their supplements can face the unintended consequences of a ban from sport and public shame.



The Media

Reporting of doping stories has increased significantly in recent times. This can help fuel the 'everyone else is doing it' perception, or in more serious cases, damage the credibility of the anti-doping system, meaning athletes believe they will never be caught. Social media creates an environment where there is no place to hide – competition results can be instantly displayed and broadcast to millions in an instant. Then the world can have their view – good or bad. This constant external commentary can be tough for athletes to deal with, as they are often lauded or criticised in the public domain. This very visible comparison only heightens expectation and competitiveness.

Personal Life Change

Throughout an athlete's journey they will face numerous life changes. Sometimes it is these changes, such as careers, loss of family or friends, relocation, relationship break-ups, illness or exams that can be the last 'straw' when coupled with all the demands of training and pressure to perform. Personal life events can equally cause athletes to dope or abuse social drugs to help them cope. Doping behaviours are not always associated with sport-related reasons.



Accessibility

Years ago, if athletes wanted prohibited substances they probably had to ask a friend of a friend. Today, it is possible to order prohibited substances online with next day delivery. Access to prohibited substances has changed, it is much easier and more anonymous. Research shows that some of the decision-making factors for athletes who choose to dope is the cost to benefit ratio and ease of access to the prohibited substance. The risk here is that if we do not know our athletes well enough to spot moments of vulnerability, inability to cope with stress or pressure, then we are even more unlikely to know what they are doing to cope. They may well be ordering prohibited substances over the internet.



Signs of Doping and What to Look Out For





Physical Signs

There are some physical signs and changes in an athlete's appearance that can be an indication of doping. However, it's important to point out that younger athletes going through puberty may exhibit similar changes making it harder to identify in this age group. Some signs can include severe acne, prominent almost see-through veins, bruising easily, sudden weight gain or loss, increase in appetite, increase in body hair, prominent breasts (in men) and baldness.



Increased Stress Levels

Pressures within an athlete's life or sport can lead to increased stress that in turn can affect decision making and increase risky behaviours as a coping mechanism. Therefore, it is important to understand why an athlete is stressed and work around positively managing and coping with that stress together.

Erratic Behaviour

Suspicious or erratic behaviour can occur in many ways and for many different reasons. The key is to spot that something is different. If you know your athlete well, you may have that gut feeling that something is not quite right. Other possible signs of erratic behaviour could include; being withdrawn, heightened anxiety or nervousness, lack of care and sometimes hygiene, being late to training or appointments, changes in body language such as hunching, twitching or a lack of eye contact, changes in ego or bravado and changes in eating habits.



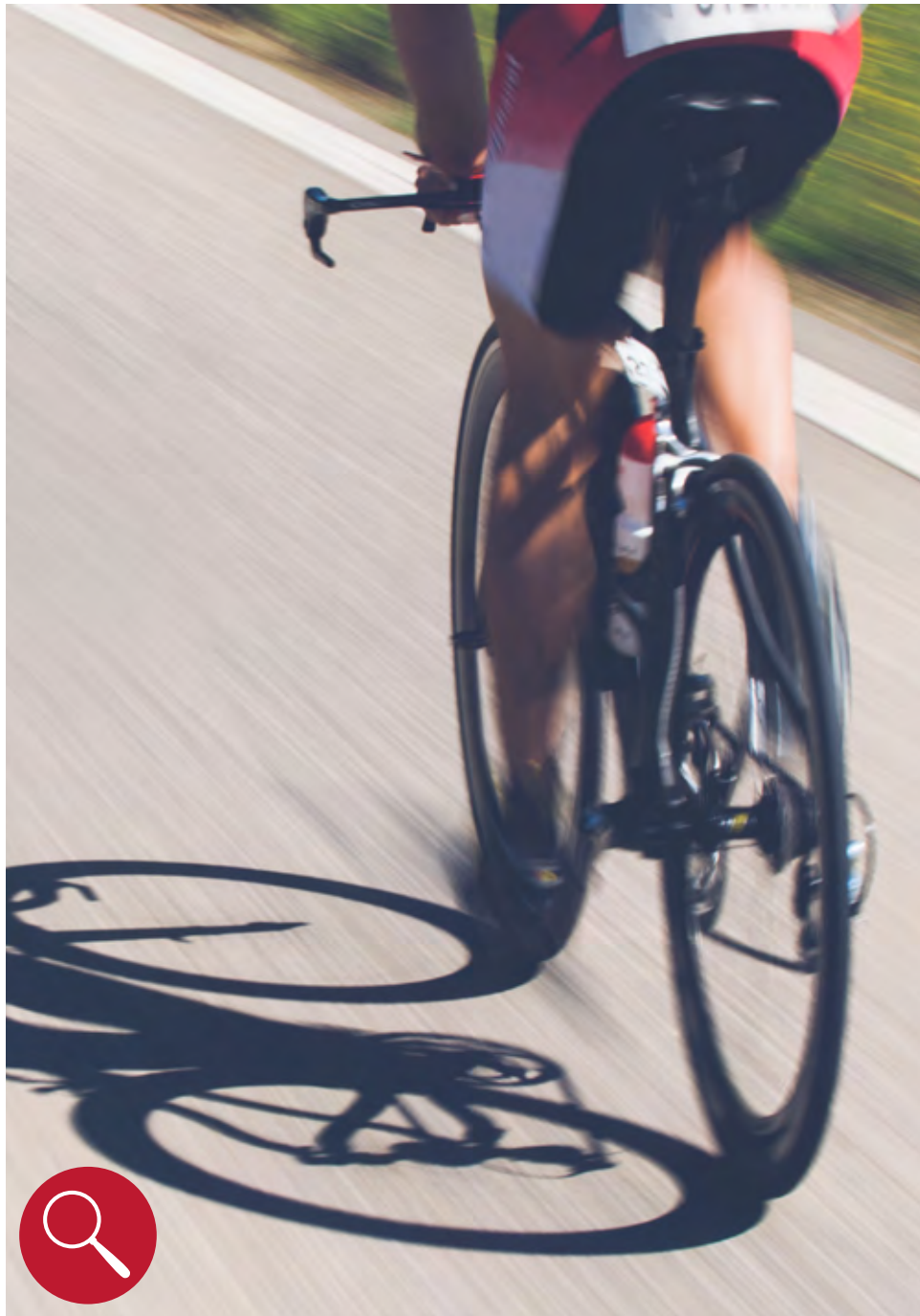
Aggression

Some of the known side effects from certain prohibited substances is increased aggression and agitation. If an athlete has a sudden change in behaviour and becomes aggressive quickly or reacts aggressively to things they would not normally, then this is something to be aware of and act on.

Mood Swings

Every athlete has good and bad days; however, an athlete's mood can be affected physically by certain prohibited substances or even the pressure or guilt of using prohibited substances can cause mood swings too. A sudden change in mood and/or continuous mood swings may be a sign they are using prohibited substances.





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Risky Behaviours

Research has shown that athletes who engage in other risky behaviours are more likely to engage in doping behaviour. Some of these at-risk behaviours include alcohol abuse, social drug use, adrenalin seeking actions, abuse of medication or prescription drugs, thrill-seeking behaviours – these types of behaviours can be associated with personality types that there is evidence to suggest can be more prone to doping decisions.

Changes in Mental Health

Some side effects of substances can be depression and mental health illness or conditions. Although mental health can be affected by many internal or external factors, it is important to understand the typical mental health state of your athlete and if you observe changes to this then speak openly about this.



Inconsistencies in Training and Performances

The beauty of sport is that athletes can achieve the most spectacular of performances at just the right time but on occasion you might see something that leaves you feeling unsure and puzzled. There are often legitimate reasons why a clean athlete is suddenly performing significantly better, however if there is a massive, sudden improvement, then it might raise questions as to whether the performance you have witnessed is authentic.

Who Athletes Associate With

Sport is a community and within each athlete's journey they will have their own sporting family who they associate with. Unfortunately, some athletes get caught up in vulnerable situations or choices where their coaches, peers or friends are doping. Alternatively, the environment they train in such as gyms and fitness centres could host untrustworthy information or a doping culture. Therefore, having a clear understanding of who is in the athlete's circle can indicate whether they are vulnerable, at risk of, or even making bad doping decisions.



A photograph of a coach and a player on a field. The coach, on the right, is wearing a red zip-up jacket and holding a brown football. He is looking down at the player's hands, which are held out in front of him. The player, on the left, is wearing a blue sleeveless athletic shirt and is looking down at his hands. The background is a blurred outdoor field with some trees and a building in the distance.

Preventing Doping Decisions



Help Athletes Cope

Support your athlete in developing skills that will help them to cope with situations that may lead to a doping decision. Encourage athletes to positively work through periods of vulnerability by providing an open and safe environment for them to share their concerns. Your relationship with the athlete is critical to this, as is understanding those around them who influence them – their parents, peers, their coach and what they can do to support too. Understanding the protective factors around an athlete will help reinforce any interventions you introduce. Working with athletes to improve their self-belief and cognitive capability to manage challenging times helps to build resilience. Scenario-based conversations can be a useful technique to help athletes mentally prepare and practise for further challenges. It is important to ensure athletes know that there is a range of external support out there for them.

One of the most important roles you have is helping athletes to be clean and stay clean. Throughout an athlete's career they will be faced with numerous pressures, vulnerable situations and periods where they doubt their ability to perform. It is within these periods that decision making and behaviour can become erratic, usually with little thought as to the future long-term consequences of that decision.

It is important to remember that whether the intention is deliberate or accidental, Strict Liability always applies. Being able to identify the signs of vulnerability or pressure points and understanding the risks to an athlete at these times means you can intervene early and provide support. UKAD can help too, we have a range of information resources and education sessions that we can offer athletes.

So, within your role what can you do?

Strict Liability

Your athlete is completely responsible for any prohibited substance they use, attempt to use or is found in their system, regardless of how it got there or whether they had an intention to cheat or not.

They will face the sanction and the consequences regardless of the circumstances which led to this. You need to understand what this means for you and your athlete's sporting career.



Be Vigilant

Although it is important to be vigilant throughout an athlete's career, it is vital to be extra vigilant through periods of stress, transitional periods and life changes. Understanding the feelings, emotions and pressures the athlete may be facing and encouraging them to talk about this openly, so you can effectively support the athlete, is key. Remember, risk seeking behaviour, changes in habits and mood swings should always be noticed so be vigilant.

Open Discussions

Most athletes will avoid talking about difficult situations or circumstances they are faced with. It is important to develop a relationship with your athlete that has a high-level of trust. They need to feel comfortable they can talk to you, and that you will listen and not judge them. They also need confidence and a belief that you can help them deal with any problems they may face. Where appropriate, ensure you are familiar with the range of external organisations that can provide additional support. Keep up to date with this information.



Understand the Athlete

Each athlete is individual in their personality, attitudes, beliefs and values. Time should be taken to understand what makes an athlete 'tick' – what makes them who they are and what are their values. This is important for two reasons; it enhances your ability to recognise when an athlete is acting out of character and secondly helps to assess where on the vulnerability of a doping decision continuum the athlete may be. Athletes who are more vulnerable may need to be supported differently or be watched over a little closer to ensure they receive the right support. Equally, the athlete will be influenced by their environment and those closest to them – how much do you know about peers and friendship groups, sporting rivalries, parents and carers or sport culture? By understanding the relationship between the individual, influencers and environment you should recognise more acutely their vulnerability to doping decisions.





Education and Knowledge

It is important that athletes feel confident in situations they may be faced with, whether that is financial pressures, life changes or their individual sport system. Making effective ethical decisions in a range of situations is critical to protecting their careers. You can help athletes to recognise where they can access additional information from trusted sources to support their decision-making process. Also, encourage and motivate athletes to participate in education sessions to help them learn strategies to manage the risks of unintentional doping. You too need to be educated and well informed, therefore completing the relevant UKAD eLearning course will support you in this.



Help Athletes to Recognise Symptoms Themselves

Stress and feeling under pressure can be a common occurrence in athletes, yet some athletes will deny they feel any of this. It is important for athletes to understand their own feelings and know the self-management techniques they rely on. Time taken to discuss enhancing an athlete's self-awareness including, reflecting upon the appropriateness of their self-management techniques, can provide useful insight into how athletes cope. You may discover the athlete has addictive tendencies, disengages from training or over trains, perhaps they become insular and withdrawn. Whatever they do to cope, you should be fully aware of. Helping athletes recognise the signs they are not coping increases their chances of seeking help earlier on.



Control the Controllable – Get Athletes Into a Routine

Athletes can lead very busy lives, especially when trying to fit in training around work/study and family life. Equally in sport there will always be times when the future of an athlete's career is out of their control, such as selection and funding decisions. These types of events are 'known knowns' – they will happen to an athlete at some point in their career. Being open and encouraging discussion about this will help athletes prepare for these events. Also, encourage athletes to develop routines and make others around them aware of this routine. This is what is in their control. Routines can act as a coping technique when times become stressful or an athlete faces a period of uncertainty. Routines can help athletes focus and manage possible vulnerability.

Summary

It is important to remember that an athlete will never wake up one day and decide to dope. This decision is rarely an easy one to make and is normally done over a prolonged period of time – deliberate doping still requires a moral mental battle. This means there are opportunities to intervene and prevent doping decisions, and the people best placed to do so are those closest to the athlete. That could be you.



Further Help and Support



Athletes need to receive key clean sport information and education throughout their sporting journey, from the talent pathway to the podium. Athletes receiving the right information at the right time is vital. Strong values and ethical decision making are core protectors of personal integrity. To help athletes effectively you need to take responsibility for your own learning and education in anti-doping. You too have a duty to help protect clean sport.

Within your role as performance lifestyle advisor or athlete support personnel, you should have a reasonable level of clean sport knowledge. We encourage you to take the relevant clean sport eLearning course, if you have not done so already,


as it will help you provide the right advice and guidance to athletes. For more information on UKAD's eLearning and online courses contact the education team at education@ukad.org.uk

UKAD's aim is to develop and instill a culture of clean sport. We are committed to supporting athletes and athlete support personnel to feel confident in their clean sport responsibilities and importantly helping us to protect the integrity of sport within the UK.

**PROTECT
YOUR
SPORT**

**SEARCH:
PROTECT YOUR SPORT**

Speak out when you feel something's wrong, no matter how small. Act in confidence, with confidence.

 08000 32 23 32*

 protectyoursport@reportdoping.com

*If you prefer to remain 100% anonymous you can. Or if you share your details, they will be kept confidential, and may help keep sport clean.

Below is a list of contacts and webpages that may be useful when directing your athlete to more information.

For all UKAD enquiries	UKAD Office	www.ukad.org.uk
		(0)20 7842 3450
For all anti-doping information for athletes	UKAD Athlete Page	www.ukad.org.uk/athletes
For all things Clean Sport	Clean Sport App	Go to your app store, type in "Clean Sport" and download the app to your phone or tablet
For information on TUEs	TUEs	www.ukad.org.uk/medicine
The prohibited list	WADA	www.wada-ama.org
To check your medications	Global Dro	www.globaldro.com/UK/search
To check your supplements	Informed Sport	www.informedsport.com
How can you report doping in sport	Protect Your Sport	www.ukad.org.uk/protect-your-sport
		08000 32 23 32



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