

DECISION OF THE ATHLETICS INTEGRITY UNIT IN THE CASE OF MRS FARIDA SOLIYEVA

INTRODUCTION

1. World Athletics has established the Athletics Integrity Unit ("**AIU**") whose role is to protect the integrity of the sport of Athletics, including fulfilling World Athletics' obligations as a Signatory to the World Anti-Doping Code ("the "**Code**"). World Athletics has delegated implementation of the World Athletics Anti-Doping Rules ("**ADR**") to the AIU, including but not limited to the following activities in relation to International-Level Athletes: Testing, Investigations, Results Management, Hearings, Sanctions and Appeals.
2. Ms Farida Soliyeva ("the **Athlete**") is a 22-year-old sprinter from Uzbekistan¹.
3. This decision is issued by the AIU pursuant to Rule 8.5.6 ADR, which provides as follows:

"8.5.6 In the event that the Athlete or other Person either (i) admits the violation and accepts the proposed Consequences or (ii) is deemed to have admitted the violation and accepted the Consequences as per Rule 8.5.2(f), the Integrity Unit will promptly:

- (a) issue a decision confirming the commission of the violation(s) and the imposition of the specified Consequences (including, if applicable, a justification for why the maximum potential sanction was not imposed);*
- (b) Publicly Report that decision in accordance with Rule 14;*
- (c) send a copy of the decision to the Athlete or other Person and to any other party that has a right, further to Rule 13, to appeal the decision (and any such party may, within 15 days of receipt, request a copy of the full case file pertaining to the decision)."*

THE ATHLETE'S COMMISSION OF ANTI-DOPING RULE VIOLATIONS

4. Rule 2 ADR sets out that the following shall constitute an anti-doping rule violation:
 - "2.1 Presence of a Prohibited Substance or its Metabolites or Markers in an Athlete's Sample*

[...]
 - 2.2 Use or Attempted Use by an Athlete of a Prohibited Substance or a Prohibited Method"*
5. On 13 July 2023, the Athlete provided a urine Sample In-Competition at the Asian Athletics Championships, held in Bangkok, Thailand, which was given code 1009338 (the "**Sample**").

¹ <https://worldathletics.org/athletes/uzbekistan/farida-soliyeva-14831034>

6. On 8 August 2023, the World Anti-Doping Agency (“WADA”) accredited laboratory in Bangkok, Thailand (the “Laboratory”) reported an Adverse Analytical Finding in the Sample based on the presence of Meldonium (the “Adverse Analytical Finding”).
7. The AIU reviewed the Adverse Analytical Finding in accordance with Article 5 of the International Standard for Results Management (“ISRM”) and determined that:
 - 7.1. the Athlete did not have a Therapeutic Use Exemption (“TUE”) that had been granted (or that would be granted) for the Meldonium found in the Sample; and
 - 7.2. there was no apparent departure from the International Standard for Testing and Investigations (“ISTI”) or from the International Standard for Laboratories (“ISL”) that could reasonably have caused the Adverse Analytical Finding.
8. Therefore, on 13 September 2023, the AIU notified the Athlete of the Adverse Analytical Finding in accordance with Article 5.1.2.1 of the ISRM, including that the Adverse Analytical Finding may result in Anti-Doping Rule Violations pursuant to Rule 2.1 ADR and/or Rule 2.2 ADR and of the imposition of an immediate Provisional Suspension.
9. The Athlete was also informed of her rights, *inter alia*, to request the B Sample analysis, to request copies of the laboratory documentation supporting the Adverse Analytical Finding and to admit the Anti-Doping Rule Violations and potentially benefit from a one-year reduction in the period of Ineligibility pursuant to Rule 10.8.1 ADR.
10. On 9 October 2023, the AIU received the Athlete’s explanation dated 26 September 2023 via the Athletic Federation of Uzbekistan (“AFU”). The AFU also provided the AIU with an English translation, reproduced below:

“In the spring of 2023, I took Riboskin to support my heart muscles. Despite this, I had pain and I turned to a doctor I knew who recommended Ripronate. I didn’t know it contained prohibited substances.”

11. The AIU noted that “Ripronat” appeared to be a pharmaceutical product containing Meldonium according to publicly available information². Therefore, on the same day, 9 October 2023, the AIU asked the Athlete, via the AFU, to provide a more detailed account of her use of Ripronat (including where she bought the medication, the route of administration, dosage, frequency, first and last use, symptoms experienced, doctor’s name etc).
12. On 12 October 2023, the AFU forwarded the Athlete’s reply and its English translation (below) to the AIU³:

“I am writing to inform you that in March 2023, I received the drug “Ripronate” in capsule form 500 ml gram level and took it 2 times a day for 15 days. I bought “Ripronat” without a prescription from one of the pharmacies in Samarkand city for about 90,000 or 100,000 soums.

² See <https://worldmedicine.ua/en/riprionate-is-a-new-drug-meldonium-from-a-european-manufacturer>

³ The Athlete also provided three (3) photos of the medication Ripronat 500mg (packaging and tabs).

I don't have the paycheck today. The purpose of taking the medicine was that I was panting violently with severe pain in my heart. I did not know that the drug "Ripronate" cannot be used by athletes."

13. On 27 October 2024, having reviewed the Athlete's explanation in which she admitted the use of Meldonium (through the medication 'Ripronat')⁴, the AIU invited her to make any further written submissions relating to her intention (viz. Rule 10.2.1(a)) by no later than 8 November 2023.
14. On 4 and 6 November 2023, the Athlete sent the AIU a further (second) explanation including copies of three (3) medical documents in Uzbek. The AIU understands, thanks to the translation of these documents by the National Anti-Doping Agency of Uzbekistan ("UzNADA"), that they relate to two medical consultations on 27 and 29 March 2023 during which the Athlete was prescribed Meldonium (Mildronate or Ripronate) 10.0 ml by intravenous injection for 5 days. The Athlete's explanation included the following English translation:

"I am writing to inform you that in response to your letter written on October 28, I went to the medical institution where I was treated and sent to you, through the archive, a copy of the patient's medical report and a list of diagnoses and medications given to me. Medical I am attaching a copy of the report and a list of the diagnosis and medications given to me".

15. Following investigation by the AIU into the Athlete's (second) explanation and documents submitted,⁵ on 8 March 2024, the AIU issued the Athlete with a Notice of Charge in accordance with Rule 8.5.1 ADR and Article 7.1 ISRM notifying her that she was being charged with Anti-Doping Rule Violations under Rule 2.1 ADR and Rule 2.2 ADR ("the Charge") and that the Consequences sought by the AIU included (i) a period of Ineligibility of four (4) years and (ii) disqualification of her results on and since 13 July 2023.
16. The AIU invited the Athlete to respond to the Charge confirming how she wished to proceed by no later than 22 March 2024.
17. On 9 March 2024, the Athlete wrote to the AIU stating that she admitted and accepted the Consequences for the Anti-Doping Rule Violations. On 12 March 2024, the AIU received an Admission of Anti-Doping Rule Violations and Acceptance of Consequences Form signed by the Athlete.

CONSEQUENCES

18. This is the Athlete's first Anti-Doping Rule Violation.
19. Rule 10.2 ADR specifies that the period of Ineligibility for an Anti-Doping Rule Violation under Rule 2.1 or Rule 2.2 shall be as follows:

"10.2.1 Save where Rule 10.2.4 applies, the period of Ineligibility will be four years where:

⁴ Ripronate (or Ripronat) is a brand name for Meldonium.

⁵ The AIU investigation is ongoing, and the AIU reserves the right to pursue further Anti-Doping Rule Violations against the Athlete in appropriate circumstances.

- (a) *The anti-doping rule violation does not involve a Specified Substance or a Specified Method, unless the Athlete or other Person can establish that the anti-doping rule violation was not intentional.*
- (b) *The anti-doping rule violation involves a Specified Substance or a Specified Method and the Integrity Unit can establish that the anti-doping rule violation was intentional.”*
20. Meldonium is a Prohibited Substance under the WADA 2023 Prohibited List under the category S4.4: Metabolic Modulators. It is a Non-Specified Substance prohibited at all times.
21. The period of Ineligibility to be imposed is therefore a period of four (4) years, unless the Athlete demonstrates that the Anti-Doping Rule Violations were not intentional.
22. The Athlete has not demonstrated that the Anti-Doping Rule Violations were not intentional. Therefore, the mandatory period of Ineligibility is a period of Ineligibility of four (4) years.
23. However, Rule 10.8.1 ADR provides that an athlete potentially subject to an asserted period of Ineligibility of four (4) years may benefit from a one (1)-year reduction in the period of Ineligibility based on an early admission and acceptance of sanction:
- “10.8.1 One year reduction for certain anti-doping rule violations based on early admission and acceptance of sanction.*
- Where the Integrity Unit notifies an Athlete or other Person of an anti-doping rule violation charge that carries an asserted period of Ineligibility of four (4) or more years (including any period of Ineligibility asserted under Rule 10.4), if the Athlete or other Person admits the violation and accepts the asserted period of Ineligibility no later than 20 days after receiving the Notice of Charge, the Athlete or other Person may receive a one (1) year reduction in the period of Ineligibility asserted by the Integrity Unit. Where the Athlete or other Person receives the one (1) year reduction in the asserted period of Ineligibility under this Rule 10.8.1, no further reduction in the asserted period of Ineligibility will be allowed under any other Rule.”*
24. The Charge was issued to the Athlete on 8 March 2024. On 12 March 2024, the AIU received a signed Admission of Anti-Doping Rule Violations and Acceptance of Consequences Form confirming that she admitted the Anti-Doping Rule Violations and accepted the asserted period of Ineligibility.
25. The Athlete shall therefore receive a one (1) year reduction in the asserted period of Ineligibility pursuant to Rule 10.8.1 based on an early admission and acceptance of sanction.
26. On the basis that the Athlete has admitted the Anti-Doping Rule Violations under Rule 2.1 ADR and Rule 2.2 ADR, in accordance with Rule 10.2.1 ADR and the application of Rule 10.8.1 ADR, the AIU confirms by this decision the following Consequences for a first Anti-Doping Rule Violation:
- 26.1. a period of Ineligibility of three (3) years commencing on 13 September 2023 (the date of Provisional Suspension); and

- 26.2. disqualification of the Athlete's results obtained at the 2023 Asian Athletics Championships and since 13 July 2023, with all resulting Consequences, including the forfeiture of any titles, awards, medals, points prizes and appearance money.
27. The Athlete has accepted the above Consequences for her Anti-Doping Rule Violations and has expressly waived her right to have those Consequences determined by the Disciplinary Tribunal at a hearing.

PUBLICATION

28. In accordance with Rule 8.5.6(b) ADR, the AIU shall publicly report this decision on the AIU's website.

RIGHTS OF APPEAL

29. This decision constitutes the final decision of the AIU pursuant to Rule 8.5.6 ADR.
30. Further to Rule 13.2.3 ADR, WADA and UznADA have a right of appeal against this decision to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland, in accordance with the procedure set out at Rule 13.6.1 ADR.
31. If an appeal is filed against this decision by WADA or UznADA, the Athlete will be entitled to exercise her right of cross-appeal in accordance with Rule 13.2.4 ADR.

Monaco, 8 April 2024