

9th All Africa Games, Algiers, 11 – 23 July 2007

Report of the World Anti-Doping Agency Independent Observer Team

I. INTRODUCTION

The 9th All Africa Games welcomed 4793 athletes; there were 22 sports at which doping control was planned; equestrian sport, chess and 3 disability sports were not the object of doping control.

No out-of-competition controls were implemented before the Games; on the other hand, as from the opening of the Games' villages on 4 July, in-competition tests could be conducted. The possibility of blood sample collection provision was in the Rules, but in practice no blood samples were taken.

The Test Distribution Plan for the Games was for 570 urine samples, of which up to 35 from cycling, swimming and athletics would be analysed for EPO. The total of 570 was arrived at taking into account the capacity of the WADA accredited laboratories at Tunis and Paris (for the EPO samples) to analyse the samples during the period of, and immediately after, the Games. The number of planned controls per day varied from 76 to 4 (last day, one sport only), with an average of just under 50 tests per day.

The anti-doping programme for the Games was the responsibility of the Comité d'Organisation pour les Jeux Africains – COJA – Medical Committee's Anti-Doping Sub-Committee¹ (hereinafter ADC), with the assistance of the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa's Medical Commission, and of the Union Africaine de Médecine du Sport (UAMS). Changes to the Games' schedule decided by COJA complicated the task of the doping sub-committee: it was not informed of the earlier (2 days) holding of the tennis finals; and had to reschedule its operations for a similar 2 day bringing forward of the half-marathons and retiming of the finals session in kick-boxing, and also of the 4 football semi-finals and finals.

The 19 Doping Control Officers for the Games were all doctors and volunteers from the host country, Algeria. Those who were not already national programme DCOs were given training at 4 seminars, but did not receive practical "hands on" training. The escorts (c.50 men, 50 women) were also volunteers, mainly students in medical or para-medical disciplines. They did not receive hands-on training.

2. EVALUATION OF THE ANTI-DOPING PROGRAMME

The scope of the planned anti-doping programme for the 9th All Africa Games can be considered to be appropriate.

The number of athletes to be expected was constantly changing, and it was difficult for the ADC to plan for the changing numbers. The number that did finally arrive was not known until after the opening of the Games. If the size of the programme was dictated in the first instance by laboratory capacity, it is also difficult to see how on a practical level the ADC could have implemented any more controls at these Games. At two sports (shooting, tennis) the planned controls were not carried out, and it is not clear whether there were controls at the half-marathon on 23 July. The figure of 512 controls actually conducted (and only 23 of the planned 35 EPO samples) probably reflects, to some extent, the lower number of athletes who

¹ The IO/Audit team would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in these Games with whom we were called upon to work, but particularly the Chair of the COJA Medical Committee, Dr Abdelkader Semid, and the members of the ADC: its Chair, Dr Zaher Belsoltane; Dr Amine Loughraieb; Dr Nabyl Debbak, and Dr Rabia Zeghmi. The welcome given to the team by these five gentlemen, and the cooperation we received from them, was exemplary in all regards.

participated, but this lower number also needs some further explanations by the organising committee. Some of the high-risk sports were allocated a low number of tests: wrestling, football, and volleyball. However, the IO considers that the number of 570 planned controls should be considered as a basic minimum for future editions. A figure of 800+ for the 10th edition would be a reasonable target considering, inter alia, the growing world-class performances being produced by African athletes.

3. OPERATIONAL ASPECTS.

3.1. T.U.E.s

The arrangements made for reception of TUE and aTUE demands, and the manner in which they were examined, were not understood, and therefore could not be followed by delegations/athletes. It is not surprising therefore that this aspect of the Games cannot be considered compliant with the provisions of the Rules for the Games, themselves based on the TUE International Standard. Indeed, for many countries on this continent, it is difficult to see how they could be compliant (absence of lines of communication; last-minute selection of athletes; lack of national TUE experience and structures). The IO was informed that 13 TUEs approved by the relevant IF were in place by day 5 of the Games (none before the Games started). The requirement for 21 days' notice was impractical here. 17 demands for aTUEs were submitted during the Games, of which 5 were refused. 2 requests for standard TUEs were accepted. The South African TUE Committee alone issued 17 aTUEs. The IO was not invited to observe the first meeting of the Games TUE Committee, but did observe two subsequent meetings. From these observations, and from the copies of the documentation which the IO received, the scale of the problem was apparent: wrong forms were used, no supporting clinical evidence was submitted.

It is clear that WADA and others has a huge educational task to bring familiarity with the various TUE processes to this continent and to help put in place the experience and bodies that can help bring compliance in this important part of the "level playing field".

3.2 DOPING CONTROL FACILITIES AND STATIONS

13 Doping Control Stations were set up in various Games' venues (not all), which were spread over 200 kilometres east and west of Algiers city. All the venues were existing ones (some relatively old), and most of them had not been designed with a major international competition in mind. Therefore, with the exception of the Harcha multi-purpose sports hall (used for the basketball finals), and the weightlifting hall at Boulsmaïl, a doping control station had to be improvised in situ by making use of an area containing a toilet. In such circumstances, it was not realistic to anticipate that the International Standard would be applicable to the vast majority of the DCSs. However, the IO pays tribute to the creative energy of the ADC in preparing DCSs for these Games, and in the way it found solutions to such structural problems, such as finding extra space for waiting rooms for the numerous athletes, representatives and escorts needed at athletics, swimming and judo, and arranging for extra sample processing rooms to be set up, at venues/sports where it was clear that the sheer numbers involved threatened to overwhelm the whole process (as it very nearly did on the first night of swimming). Integrated toilets were just not possible at many venues; privacy was not possible either (not that the IO heard any complaints on this issue); there was a considerable amount of background noise in most stations; security was respected by the doping control staff but hardly heeded by other Games officials.

3.3 SELECTION OF ATHLETES

The Test Distribution Plan foresaw doping control on all gold medal athletes; in athletics, cycling, swimming and weightlifting, further controls on a randomly selected medallist and another finalist would be conducted; in fencing and judo an additional control would be conducted on a randomly selected medallist or finalist. The members of the UAMS conducted

the selection, with the ADC, for each day in, eg, athletics, boxing, fencing, swimming, at around midday. The draws were then communicated to the DCOs concerned. In other sports, such as judo, weightlifting and team sports, the representative of the international sports federation and the ADC did the same at the appropriate moment of the match or bout.

3.4 DCOs and ESCORTS

Some of the DCOs were up to the highest standards of professional competence. It was clear to the IO that up to half of the DCOs had no previous real experience, but the vast majority of them soon acquired the competence to cope with the situation and conditions with which they were faced. Only in one station did the IO observe real incompetence. The lack of experience was most visible when it came to dealing with partial or dilute samples: too many DCOs were unaware of the procedures to follow in such cases. In almost every case, no further samples were collected when it was determined that the specific gravity guideline was not met.

With regard to the Escorts, whose task is often more difficult than imagined, the lack of real-time experience was also evident. Athletes without escorts, athletes searching for their escorts, escorts looking for their athletes, athletes left alone in waiting area or toilet, athletes passing samples without a witness or not witnessed properly, notification made only after the medal ceremony, were common observations. Throughout the IO/Audit programme, this matter was frequently discussed with the ADC, and improvements as the Games progressed were evident.

Notifications were made properly in nearly every case (except for two missed notifications on the first night of judo, where a disputed decision had caused considerable spectator upheaval which made the circumstances extremely difficult as well as potentially dangerous. However, on the following night, when part of the crowd just above the notification area did riot, the escorts managed their notifications successfully). The IO also observed from the copies of the notifications forms that there was a good deal of inconsistency with which the escorts filled in the various time boxes on the forms (on one occasion, giving the athlete 2 minutes to report to the DCS.)

The number of escorts available for the various events/controls was well planned.

3.5 DOPING CONTROL PROCEDURES

In many sports (athletics, boxing, judo, rowing, swimming (after the first night), taekwondo, weightlifting) the IO is pleased to report that the vast majority of controls were well and professionally carried out, expeditiously and politely. However, there were a number of DCOs who were unfamiliar with the rules, procedures and standards: some athletes were not allowed out of the DCS to attend a medal ceremony; problems consequent to the delivery of partial or dilute samples have already been mentioned. However, the single most common cause of concern to the IO, and a matter regularly mentioned in the "Daily Reports" and discussed at the ADC/IO daily meeting, was the lack of attention paid by the DCO to the filling in of the doping control form and checking it. Elements could be missing (on one occasion, the entire athlete identification section); some athletes had no gender, some both, some had no date of birth; in many cases, the information was simply unreadable; DCOs often failed to sign the forms. Other elements could be inconsistent (eg, the times recorded on the form; volumes recorded compared to volumes in the two bottles; signatures in wrong places).

Furthermore, the Tunis laboratory could not analyse some samples because of inadequate volumes received (sometimes in the A, sometimes in the B bottle). And according to the Medical Committee's own report, the lab did not analyse 8 received samples because of a variety of irregularities (A and B bottles presenting different aspects, etc). The IO repeatedly expressed concern at the daily meetings that the irregularities thus revealed could put in doubt the possibility of realistically prosecuting a potential anti-doping rule violation should an adverse finding from the laboratory relate to such a record. However, the 3 AAFs returned

during the period of the Games came from weightlifting (2) and swimming, where the IO has already noted the competence of the DCOs involved.

It is inevitable in this kind of report that the “things that have gone wrong” tend to receive more attention than the “things that have gone right” and that is unfortunate: however, the IO would have been happy to have observed and recorded a greater degree of improvement in this area as the Games went on.

3.6 TRANSPORT/CHAIN OF CUSTODY

It is therefore pleasing for the IO to record that the arrangements made to secure the integrity of the samples between doping control and their arrival at the laboratory at Tunis (by personal courier) and to Paris (by DHL) were well thought out, implemented correctly and proved to be as efficient as circumstances permitted (only one daily flight between the two North African cities). The transport forms were meticulously prepared and checked by the DCO at the main doping station each day before the courier took the samples to the laboratories.

3.7 LABORATORY RESULTS

It was not part of this IO/Audit mission to observe the laboratory. There were technical problems which at the beginning meant that the office did not have real-time access to the analytical reports. These started coming in after a week. 48 hours was the agreed turn-around time (72 for the EPO samples); in effect, with the additional 24 hours required for getting the samples from the stations to the laboratory, this meant 72 hours in practice and this was respected (one sample required 96, and another 120 hours, both these being AAFs). One sample does not seem to have been reported at all. It would be appropriate to follow up with the laboratory and communicate the result to the IO team.

3.8 RESULTS MANAGEMENT

Of the 3 AAFs received while the IO/Audit mission was operational, 2 (both received on 20 July) were dealt with on 21 July. The verification meeting and the meeting of the disciplinary commission that same evening were observed and the proceedings were carried out in accordance with the several provisions of the Anti-Doping Rules for these Games. Appropriate Games' sanctions were imposed by the Director General of COJA, neither case being submitted for consideration by the COJA Executive Committee. The IF concerned was informed and requested to take the longer-term sanctions. Verification of the third case was carried out in the morning of 23 July (the last day of the Games), with a meeting of the Disciplinary Committee scheduled for 11am on 24 July, by which time the IO Office had closed.

If the 24 hour time limit for dealing with such cases was exceeded (see Appendix on this question), this could only have worked to the benefit of the athletes, so cannot be considered as a significant departure from the Rules.

An additional 6 AAFs were reported after the end of the Games, making a total of nine in all. One of the AAFs was dismissed based on an approved TUE, and one of them was an elevated T/E. The Medical Committee's report shows the sports, countries, and substances concerned.

4. OVERALL EVALUATION

Considering the various constraints under which the anti-doping programme at the 9th All Africa Games had to operate, it can be considered a success. As ideal conditions did not exist, it cannot be judged by ideal standards, and these doubtless will continue to be inapplicable at the next edition of the Games.

It was certainly the case that some aspects were better or more efficient than others: the planning, preparation, the ability to adapt were all highly praiseworthy. The chain of custody and the result management elements were well executed. The TUE system failed, though it is

possible that its decisions were the correct ones. It was mainly at the "sharp end" in the stations that the IO observed inconsistencies, and deviations from the accepted standards. Some of these deviations cannot unfortunately be classified as "minor deviations". However, the positive aspect of the experience of these Games is that the national anti-doping programme, and the DCOs in particular, have been given some real life training and this can only improve the quality and quality control of that programme. We close by hoping that Algeria will share this experience with its African partners, notably in the run-up to the next All Africa Games (Lusaka, Zambia, 2011).

5. THE IO/AUDIT OFFICE

At their daily morning meeting the IOs² would report on the previous day's observations and discuss the matters which they considered should be brought up at the daily 11 am meeting by the team leader with the ADC. A written "Daily Report" was prepared (12 for the ADC, 2 for the TUEC), which was then discussed verbally. The daily meetings also allowed for the IO to be updated on possible changes to the anti-doping programme, and to ask questions. The reception given to the Daily Reports, even when they contained more "bad" than "good" news, was very constructive and open-minded. Members of the ADC would subsequently telephone the new guidelines to the day's duty DCOs. A member of the ADC would often be present to supervise a busy station.

However, the IO was not aware of any structured system for briefing the DCOs on new guidelines. DCOs were required to return a daily report from the station: this useful channel for getting feedback was not fully exploited, as the few comments that were made were limited in nearly every case to technical matters.

The IO might also occasionally advise a station supervisor/DCO on potential problems before the station started sample collection procedures (such advice was given on positioning the witness; the presence of minors at the event in question; and on the work of the escorts). The IO did not intervene once the control process had started, even when a DCO requested some guidance on a particular matter.

The lack of a briefing system for the DCOs as a whole had a further consequence: quite a few of the questions raised in the IO's Daily Report to the ADC were repeated on several occasions (eg, quantities for bottles; dilute samples' procedure; form completion).

Our experience at these African Games lead us to recommend that the ADC of the next organising committee should have a structure for daily briefings of all DCOs and escorts. Finally, it is imperative that the AAG organizing committee inform the ADC and the IO Chair of any schedule change in a timely manner.

6. SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of our report is focused on the next Games in 2011. The COJA framework for the 9th Games will probably have dissolved by the time this report is published. As far as the IO is aware, the only continuity between the organising committees of the Games is that provided by the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa.

Sport in Africa is in a constantly evolving political situation and the suggestions /recommendations in this report should be read in the context of change (for example, there are ongoing discussions on the possible role of the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa in the All Africa Games). International cooperation is a must for this continent, both within the continent itself, and on a wider level. Lastly, it is, at this stage

² The IO team consisted of George Walker (GBR), leader; Pirjo Krouvila (FIN); and Dr Hans Cooman (BEL), most ably complemented and managed in their observations by Natalie Grenier of WADA Head Office. We here most willingly acknowledge her dedicated efficiency in making this mission so well prepared and organised.

(September 2007), reasonable to assume that Zambia, host of the next edition, will face more of a challenge as far as the anti-doping programme of the 10th Games is concerned, than did Algeria for that of the 9th Games.

However, WADA is already in place to help drive the recommendations forward: both the head office as well, of course, as the regional office for Africa are both active and making progress: witness the programme of educational seminars, or, more concretely, the creation in regional zone 5 of one of Africa's first Regional Anti-Doping Organisations (RADO), which should be operational before the end of 2007. This RADO is for the zone that includes Zambia.

A main recommendation is in the area of pre-Games help and assistance.

Directed to the Organising Committee for the next Games, and its ADC, WADA can help by providing advice on best appropriate practice in at least the following areas:

- Structures
- Rules
- TUE system
- Test Result Management models

In this context of pre-Games advice, it could also be helpful, if an IO/Audit presence is planned for the IO team leader to visit the organising and AD committees 3 or 4 weeks before the event starts, in order to ensure that preparations are well in place and give any advice as appropriate.

Secondly, WADA can provide practical help in raising capacity and skills.

The aim here is to complement the essentially legal framework elements mentioned above with real-time training opportunities and experience for:

- DCOs
- Escorts

(for example, by taking advantage of international competitions in the region and sending potential DCOs and escorts to them, as officials or as observers; seeking partnerships with IFs organising championships in Africa or the zone with the same objective; seeking to have by 2011 enough RADO or IF accredited DCOs and trained escorts for the Games). WADA might also encourage the COJA for the 10th Games to use some experienced DCOs from other African countries.

The same principles but different methods may apply to obtaining the necessary experience in:

- TUEs
- Planning, preparation and provision of the DC stations for the Games

Already existing WADA materials such as the educational pack on preparing for a doping control, and other materials destined for athletes, coaches, officials, DCOs, etc could be widely distributed in the regional zone beforehand, and plastified copies pinned up in waiting rooms; check-lists prepared for station managers and DCOs, etc.

It is realised that these recommendations imply a substantial extra burden for WADA, the regional office and the RADO, but they are, we believe, all in line with existing priorities, and represent merely a request for acceleration and reinforcement, with a precise target and time-line.

APPENDIX 1:

Comparison of the Anti-doping Rules for the Games with Observations on their implementation.

COJA issued a brochure for the 9th All Africa Games entitled "Règles Antidopage/Anti-doping Rules".

There were some discrepancies between the text and practice as observed by the IO Office. In most cases, they were mentioned in one or other of the Daily Reports submitted by the IO/Audit team to the Anti-Doping Commission. Some others were addressed on site at the time.

Article 5.5.1

Provision for No Advance Notice controls.

The COJA ADC did envisage using this provision for:

- 1) shooting (where there was no possibility to erect a DCS) subsequent to the gold medal events, but the IO was unable to obtain information from the ADC on whether the intention was carried out;
- 2) judo, when on the first night two notifications were not successful. The athletes concerned were identified, but the intention was not executed, possibly because by the time they were identified, they had left the Village;
- 3) weightlifting, where the ADC considered that suspicious circumstances would justify a second sample collection from the athlete. However, the athlete was not located.

Article 5.3 *Doping Control Standards*

The remarks falling under this section are made in the section on Appendix 3.

Article 5.5 *Choice of athletes to be tested*

5.5.1.2.2 Team sports: Basketball, Handball and Volleyball were only tested at the respective finals. Football was tested also at the semi-finals.

5.5.1.2.3 World records: a WR in disability athletics was set. No doping controls were in place for the Paralympic disciplines at the Games. No subsequent doping control was conducted on the athlete concerned.

Article 7.2.12 *Time Limit (for Disciplinary Procedures)*.

The time limit of 24 hours was not respected. However, it was not altogether clear from the Rules exactly when the 24 hours started (on receipt of the AAF report from the laboratory?; from the time of the notification of the athlete?).

See Main Report, para 3.8.

APPENDIX 2:

Criteria relating to the International Standard for Testing.

6.2.b Presence of an interpreter during the sample collection session

This right was refused by the DCO on two occasions at which the IO was present.

6.3.3 Criteria for the doping control station

For reasons explained in the main body of this report (para 3.2), it was simply impractical for most of the DCSs to meet the criteria in terms of space and size. However, other than ensuring the area was secured, in some instances, the principles of separate spaces, equipment, etc were respected.

Annexe F

See main report and below under Appendix 3.

APPENDIX 3:

Technical Procedures.

1. Outline

No Blood samples were collected during the Games.

Laboratory Turn Around Times: in effect, samples were reported back within 72/96 (in one case 120) hours, as many samples remained in Algeria for 24 hours before being transported by the daily plane to Tunis. In the case of the EPO samples, 72 hours was the agreed turn-around time (ie, 96 hours minimum).

4. TUEs

See main report.

5.1.1

Not all venues had their own dedicated DCS: shooting (no permanent structure available; mobile facility not realised); tennis (the DCS at the neighbouring Coupole was going to be used); some of the football stadia (where a DCS at another nearby venue was used).

Mobile phones: many DCOs were the worst offenders in allowing to ring, or using, these devices in the processing room. On occasion, their use was helpful in filling in the medications section of the DC form, either by the athlete, coach or athlete representative consulting information on medications stored in the memory; or in enabling an athlete without a representative to consult the team doctor for such information.

5.2 Selection.

See Under Rules 5.1 above.

5.3 Notification.

Language specialists: athletes speaking Arab or French were under no difficulty at the Games. Most of the doping control staff had some basic notions of English, but some English-speaking athletes did experience difficulties, and there were no language specialists to hand. Those athletes speaking none of these three languages had real difficulties.

Escorts usually handled the notification process well. However, the care given to filling in the three time boxes on the form varied enormously. Some athletes were required to report to the DCS before the time the form was filled; or 2, 10, 15 or 30 minutes later. Similarly, the time given for actual reporting showed a lack of attention. On many forms checked by the IO, and on the occasions when the athlete reported after the due time (which happened often, on one occasion 97 minutes later) no reason was given on either the notification or the doping control form. Quite a few of these late arrivals were probably due to medal ceremonies. There is no means of discovering from the documentation whether late reporting was covered under the exceptions provided for in the International Standard.

5.4 Reporting

For times, see the paragraph above.

During the first half of the Games, the IO observed several occasions when the DCO would not allow the athlete to leave the DCS, even when provided for by the International Standard, including medal ceremonies.

It was physically not possible to sign in the athlete prior to entry to the waiting room in the vast majority of stations.

5.5 Procedure

"One athlete at a time" in the processing room was often not possible because of the exiguity of the DCS space, and because an athlete in the queue needed to collect a beaker quickly while another athlete was being processed.

The way in which the "Minimum urine volume" procedures were carried out varied greatly from DCS to DCS. Sometimes, despite the quantity of urine delivered by the athlete, the DCO

asked the athlete only to pour the required minimum volume (and, on occasion less even than that, causing the laboratory not to undertake analysis) into the two bottles, thus causing the discard of useful liquid. Sometimes, even when more than the minimum was poured into the A bottle, the B bottle remained at the minimum, and the rest discarded. This matter was brought to the attention of the ADC by the IO/Audit daily report early on in the Games, and though improvements were observed, the relevant technical procedures were not followed consistently.

Often the residual urine left in the beaker was not discarded in sight of the athlete but rather after the athlete had gone.

No refractometer was observed in use at any station. Dipsticks were used and some DCOs were not consistently able to read the values. Quite often the athlete was encouraged to participate in and agree to the readings.

Athlete representatives or escorts occasionally handled sample collection equipment without this being documented on the doping control form.

Some unauthorized people were allowed to come in the DCS at times.

Minors: several events at these Games (most notably, sailing) had competitors who were minors. They were usually well accompanied by their representative, but on most occasions at which the IO was aware of the age, the minor was asked to sign the DC form, not the representative.

5.6.6 Additional sample required.

On one occasion, the DCO destroyed the first, dilute, sample, and required a second sample. Both samples were not therefore "sent to the laboratory for analysis". On several occasions, a doping control form recorded a specific gravity reading of less than 1.005 (indeed twice a reading of 1.000), but no additional sample was collected.