

Date: 27/10/2022

## INSIGHTS REPORT: Practices around calling athletes within the final five (5) minutes of the 60-minute testing time slot

In the iNADO Basecamp Testing Expert Group there have been many discussions about the practices around the final five (5) minutes left within the 60-minute time slot to call athletes from the Registered Testing Pool (RTP) during out-of-competition (OCC) testing.

In the [World Anti-Doping Code International Standards for Testing and Investigations \(ISTI\)](#) p. 34 under “Comment to 4.8.8.5(d)” it states:

*“Where an Athlete has not been located despite the DCO’s reasonable efforts, and there are **only five (5) minutes left within the 60-minute time slot**, then as a **last resort the DCO may (but does not have to) telephone the Athlete** (assuming they have provided their telephone number in their Whereabouts Filing) to see if they are at the specified location.”*

To better understand the global practice around this among our members, we sought your feedback in the form of a survey. The results of the survey are described further below in this Insights Report.

### How widespread is the practice of calling athletes and under what circumstances?

Out of 26 NADOs and RADOs that responded to our survey, 22 ADOs (85%) reported they call athletes in the last five (5) minutes of the 60-minute testing time slot. Most ADOs pointed out that when they did not find the athletes at their designated whereabouts location, and after several attempts of knocking on the door or ringing the doorbells regularly within 50 to 55 minutes, they proceeded to call the athlete as a last resort. A further reason for some ADOs to call athletes is the presumption that the athlete is actually in the designated location (e.g., a car or dog is visible). If the property is in a gated community or athletes report that they are in a hotel, but there is no room number information, the ADO may resort to making the call to gain access.

On the contrary, those four (4) ADOs (15%) that do not carry out the practice of calling athletes under any circumstance, highlight the importance of No Advance Notice Testing. As one (1) of our members rightly points out, calling athletes is not a requirement by the ISTI, but should be used only in exceptional and justified circumstances which do not include, not being able to locate the athlete. These ADOs

Date: 27/10/2022

argue that sample collections that take place with no advance warning to athletes are fundamental to an effective, unpredictable testing program. One of them states that in addition to eliminating the element of surprise necessary for out-of-competition (OOC) doping controls, the athletes should not be dependent on DCOs calling them, and therefore no longer provide adequate information about their whereabouts. Another one of our members states that No Advance Notice Testing promotes discipline in the fulfillment of athletes' duties. Finally, as there is no requirement to do so, one of these four (4) ADOs does not even provide the athlete's contact details to DCOs.

### **Reporting calls**

Regarding the reporting of these calls, of the 26 NADOs and RADOs that responded to the survey, 16 (62%) stated that they reported making the call to the athlete, mostly through the DCO report form. ADOs document the call in several different ways. The most common practice (six (6) ADOs) implies making a screenshot of the DCO's mobile phone to substantiate the time of the call in the subsequent DCO report. Another NADO stated that an oral notification by the DCO to the NADO is conducted. Only three (3) ADOs stated to include call details in the report only if the test attempt was unsuccessful. The most widespread practice seems to be to include these details in the report regardless of the outcome of the test attempt.

### **Who has the authority to call?**

Seven (7) (27%) ADOs explicitly stated that it is the DCO who decides whether or not to call athletes. One (1) of our members stated that the DCO is never responsible for making calls to the athletes, but rather a 24/7 call operator employed by the NADO. Three (3) (12%) ADOs require prior authorization before the call can be made. This authorization can be given by the NADO to the DCO by means of a call or by means of the mission order. Although the rest of the NADOs (15.58%) do not explicitly say so, it is inferred from their phrasing that the responsibility for the decision of whether or not to call the athlete lies with the DCO in charge of the mission.

Date: 27/10/2022

### **Modifications for athletes with a disability**

Regarding the modifications of the protocols for athletes with a disability when they are called in the last five (5) minutes of the 60-minute time slot, none of the NADOs manifested a differentiated treatment. The same procedure is followed.

### **Percentage of tests performed within the 60 minutes**

NADOs and RADOS also shared some statistics to understand the recurrence of calling the athletes to locate them and the dimension of the problem. Three (3) ADOs (12%) claimed that less than 20% of their OOC tests occur within the 60-minute time frame. Two (2) ADOs reported that between only 20% and 40% of their tests occur within this period of 60-minutes. On the other hand, Four (4) ADOs report that the OOC test figures during the 60-minutes range between 40-60%. Seven (7) NADOs report a success rate in the 60-minute window greater than 70%.

### **Need to share best practices and harmonize protocols**

The evidence presented in the survey should compel all ADOs to revise global practices and if needed, further refine the protocols for calling athletes during OOC testing procedures and harmonize practices. The ISTI purposely allows calling athletes to locate them to complete sample collection, but it is unclear if the concept of “as a last resort” is being applied with acceptable uniformity. Defining what may constitute a justified reason to call an athlete would be an important element in working towards excellence in anti-doping practice especially for athletes who are tested in international contexts by different testing authorities.

From iNADO we believe that sharing these global practises contributes to our Strategic Priority, “Improving Practise Everywhere”, as well as Guiding Principle 5, “Quality of Delivery & Innovation”. ADOs must ensure doping control practices are aligned and standardized. Athletes deserve to have a similar experience whether they are tested nationally or internationally, and athletes should rest assured that other athletes who they compete against are tested according to the same standards.