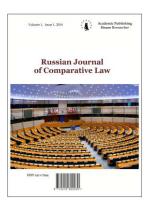
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# The Court of Arbitration for Sport Positions on Fault or Negligence of Anti-Doping Regulation Violations in Football

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### **Abstract**

Scientific researches on the legal regulations of the fight against doping are carried out mainly in the Western doctrine within the framework of International law, Sports law, human rights, and European Union law. In post-Soviet legal science there is an intensive growth in the number of sports research, mainly sectoral (administrative, constitutional, labor, criminal law). However, there is practically no research on FIFA Anti-Doping Regulations. There is a difference between the two forms of anti-doping rule violation: the first form is the presence of a prohibited substance in an athlete's sample, the second form is the use of a prohibited substance by an athlete.

In this study, we will analyze the practice of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (hereinafter – CAS, arbitration) in cases of anti-doping regulation violations on issues of fault or negligence in football and draw conclusions, what facts can be accepted by the arbitration.

**Keywords:** fault or negligence in anti-doping cases, significant fault or negligence anti-doping cases, football anti-doping regulations, FIFA Anti-Doping Regulations, Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), practice of CAS.

### 1. Introduction

According to article 19 of the FIFA Anti-Doping Regulations (hereinafter – the Regulations), an anti-doping rule violation caused by finding a substance that WADA prohibits only during a competition period, is not considered intentional (without fault) if a player can prove that this substance was used outside of sports competition for purposes not related to sports activities (FIFA Anti-Doping Regulations). Not applying or reducing the standard sanction, in accordance with articles 21, 22 of the FIFA Anti-Doping Regulations, is possible only if the player can prove that (1) there was no fault or negligence (not the application of the sanction, article 21), (2) there was no significant fault or negligence (reduction in the size of the sanction, article 22).

Article 3.2 of the WADA Code (hereinafter – the Code) provides that the use of a prohibited substance can be established by any reliable means. Thus, the absence of adverse analytical results in the analysis of the athlete does not prevent the body considering the dispute from relying on any other reliable means to establish a violation of anti-doping rules.

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The difference between the two types of violations and the evidence required to prove each is well illustrated by CAS 2004/O/645, where it was found that the former world-record holder at 100 meters violated the provisions on the availability and use of doping of IAAF Anti-Doping Rules (CAS 2004/O/645). The athlete was not charged with availability – no prohibited substance was found in his "sample". The CAS decision was based on one piece of evidence – an indication of the athlete by another athlete as the person who used such a substance.

Unlike the evidence necessary to establish the presence of a prohibited substance, the use of it can be established by other reliable means, such as

- (1) witness testimony,
- (2) documentary evidence, or
- (3) other analytical information that otherwise does not meet all the requirements for establish the presence of a prohibited substance.

### 2. Material and methods

This study is based on the FIFA Anti-Doping Regulations, WADA Code, and relevant CAS cases on disputes in football, as well as a few researchers of the problem (Chetyrnova, 2017).

In the process of conducting the study, the formally dogmatic method, the problem method, the legal modeling method, and the system method were used, which are not the first time the authors are involved in studying the sports law.

# 3. Discussion

To determine the extent to which a violation affects a sanction, the CAS considers both objective and subjective elements.

With regard to the objective element, the CAS believes that, in theory, almost all anti-doping rule violations related to the consumption of a product containing a prohibited substance can be prevented (CAS 2015/A/4059: para. 153). The athlete should always read the label of the product used or otherwise check the ingredients, compare all the ingredients on the label with the list of prohibited substances, search the Internet, and consult with the relevant specialists on these issues (primarily the club doctor or the national team doctor). Thus, an athlete must exercise "utmost caution" in order to warn himself against anti-doping rule violations.

With respect to the subjective element, arbitration assumes that the athlete cannot always reasonably follow all the above steps in all circumstances. CAS refers to its practice: youth or inexperience of an athlete (CAS 2008/A/1490: para. 38; CAS 2010/A/2107: para. 54); language or other problems faced by an athlete (CAS 2012/A/2924: para. 62), a low level of anti-doping education (CAS 2012/A/2822: paras. 8.21, 8.23), any other personal problems that prevent a person from maintaining an objective element of responsibility (CAS 2011/A/2515: para. 73), stress (CAS 2012/A/2756: para. 8.45), an athlete whose level of awareness has been reduced by a careless but understandable mistake (CAS 2012/A/2756: para. 8.37).

Whilst each case will turn on its own facts, the following examples of matters which can be taken into account in determining the level of subjective fault can be found in CAS jurisprudence.

In CAS 2008/A/1490, arbitration placed substantial weight on factors such as an athlete's lack of experience in doping matters as a national or international athlete, lack of any formalized drug education training at the national or international level, lack of guidance and support from his coaches and others, and lack of any intention to enhance athletic performance in determining the existence of an athlete's significant fault or negligence under the Code article 10.5.2.

In reaching this conclusion, the CAS has noted that at the relevant time a sportsman was relatively young. But the arbitration does not believe that this factor on its own is relevant and this factor does not give rise to any automatic exception. In this case it was a series of factors:

- (1) complete lack of experience in doping matters and as a national or international athlete;
- (2) lack of guidance and support from his coaches or others;
- (3) lack of intention to influence or enhance his performance at the relevant time;
- (4) his relatively young age.

All of mentioned factors taken together in the factual context, which gives rise to the exceptional nature of the case (CAS 2008/A/1490: para. 38). Applying these factors, CAS determined that the subject athlete's period of ineligibility should be no more than 50% of the maximum sanction provided by the applicable Code provisions.

In CAS 2010/A/2107 the arbitration does not agree with USADA's assertion that sportsman's "fault for failing to take adequate steps to ensure that a product marketed as a stimulant does not contain any banned performance enhancing substances" should be considered in determining whether she can prove her lack of an intent to enhance sport performance. Sportsman's "degree of fault" is only relevant in determining whether her period of ineligibility should be reduced (CAS 2010/A/2107: para. 32). Sportsman's degree of fault, in light of her lack of experience in doping matters as a national or international athlete and any formalized drug education training at the national or international level, is less than that of the subject athlete in the prohibited substances cases cited by USADA in support of its argument that the CAS should impose a two-year period of ineligibility on sportsman for ingesting a specified substance (CAS 2010/A/2107: para. 54).

In CAS 2011/A/2515 in the arbitration view, the circumstances favorable to sportsman's position include the following. Firstly, she had already bought products, and received free samples, from the online retailer that provided her with the Supplement and she had used such products and samples in the past over many years without incident or any positive anti-doping control. Secondly, she did not buy the supplement, but received it as a free sample. Thirdly, MHA was directly mentioned on the packaging of the Supplement but only under an associated name. Fourthly, she indicated the use of the Supplement in the doping control form. Sixthly, sportsman's personal history and clean anti-doping record spanning many years shows that she had always paid attention to anti-doping issues (CAS 2011/A/2515: para. 73).

In CAS 2012/A/2822 the arbitration deems it appropriate to reduce the sanction imposed on the appellant for the reason that he never received any education or information in anti-doping matters by his federation or the anti-doping agency of his country. This explains that the appellant's awareness of the dangers of prohibited/specified substances being contained in food supplements was not as high as it should have been. The CAS further finds that the case at hand cannot be compared to cases where an athlete uses prohibited/specified substances deliberately and intentionally. A reduction of the standard sanction of 2 years seems therefore mandatory (CAS 2012/A/2822: para. 8.23).

In CAS 2012/A/2924 among the several circumstances which speak for maintaining a three month period of ineligibility the following facts and circumstances are underlined by the arbitration:

- (1) A sportsman indicated the use of "Rhinofluimicil" on the doping control form;
- (2) She submitted on 12 August 2012 a detailed account of the circumstances of her positive test;
  - (3) The sportsman has a clean anti-doping record over her long career;
- (4) It has not been disputed by UCI that she advised the pharmacist at the pharmacy located one block from the team hotel in Rome that she was an athlete and subject to doping controls. The pharmacist confirmed that her use of the medication would not result in a doping violation;
- (5) The sportsman informed the team's assistant coach that she had obtained a medication from a local pharmacy;
- (6) She could not benefit from the same support as normal professional athletes and was not accompanied by medical staff when she committed the anti-doping violation;
- (7) The warning and contents label on the medication was written in Italian, a language that is not sportsman's native tongue, nor was there evidence she had any knowledge of the language (CAS 2012/A/2924: para. 62). In view of the above elements, the arbitration has reached the conclusion that the sportsman has committed a minor anti-doping rule violation which justifies a reduced sanction. A period of ineligibility of 3 months is therefore appropriate in the circumstances (CAS 2012/A/2924: para. 63).

In CAS 2012/A/2756 the arbitration recognizes that the appellant was in a state of emotional stress which led him to ignore the level of care which he would otherwise have observed. The CAS also wishes to add that during the hearing the appellant came across as an honest man who regrets the error committed (CAS 2012/A/2756: para. 8.46). Taking into account all of the circumstances mentioned above, the Panel determines that a period of six months suspension is a sanction proportionate to the Appellant's degree of fault (CAS 2012/A/2756: para. 8.47).

In CAS 2012/A/2756 the arbitration mentioned that the appellant cannot be blamed for not reading the patient's information leaflet for Tamoxifen as due to his own negligence he thought he

was taking his own medication and not Tamoxifen (CAS 2012/A/2756: para. 8.37). The CAS reasoning is parallel in particular to those cases where athletes were successful in demonstrating that – like in the case at hand – they were completely unaware that they were ingesting material which was or which contained a prohibited (specified) substance. These are the cases where the absence of intent to enhance performance is obvious since logically the athlete cannot have had intent if he did not know he was ingesting the substance (CAS 2012/A/2756: para. 8.49).

The arbitration finds support for this conclusion in CAS 2010/A/2107, where the athlete was able to establish that she was unaware of the presence of a specified substance in a dietary supplement: this was sufficient to prove the absence of intent to enhance performance, but the reasons for her failure to know were the crucial element in assessing the degree of fault and thus the extent of the sanction 18 months. Because the sportsman was an elite level athlete and a professional cyclist at the time of her first positive test rather than an intercollegiate or high school athlete, the CAS concludes that her period of ineligibility should be more than 50 % of the maximum for her first doping offence; specifically, it should be 75 % of the maximum sanction – eighteen months. The Panel finds that the facts relevant to sportsman 's degree of fault are similar but not identical to those in CAS 2005/A/847, in which a CAS panel imposed an eighteen month period of ineligibility on a professional skier who tested positive for the prohibited substance from ingesting a contaminated nutrition supplement (CAS 2010/A/2107: para. 52).

In CAS 2006/A/1025 the athlete had mistakenly drunk from his wife's glass of water in which she had poured – unbeknownst to the athlete – her medication containing a specified substance. The CAS determined that the athlete was not without fault or negligence but that he was entitled to a sanction of two years for a second violation which for reasons of proportionality was even below the minimum established in the rules.

The arbitration submits that he cannot be expected to exercise "utmost caution" when he has no knowledge that he has ingested anything at all. In the view of the CAS, he is overstating his position. Water is ingested just like any other liquid, be it coffee or orange juice. It is not unreasonable to expect of the sportsman, who had been aware for several years of his wife's regular use of colorless, tasteless and odorless "Effortil" and the manner in which she administered it (10 to 20 drops in a glass of water), to be aware also that residues of the substance could be found in a used glass, even if the glass appears to be empty. Athletes must be aware at all times that they must drink from clean glasses, especially in the last minutes before a major competition (CAS 2006/A/1025: para. 41).

It has been said many times by CAS that it is an athlete's responsibility to ensure that what goes into his body does not contain a prohibited substance. It is not open to an athlete simply to say "I took what I was given by my doctor who I trusted". At the very least, an athlete who has been given medicines by a doctor should:

- 1. Specifically ask to be informed of what are the contents of those medicines;
- 2. Ask whether the medicines contain any prohibited substance;
- 3. Attempt to obtain written confirmation from the doctor that the medicines do not contain any prohibited substances.

It will no doubt be objected that to require an athlete to ask such questions and to obtain such confirmation would be to place too heavy a burden on the athlete. The CAS rejects such an objection. It rarely, if ever, is the case that medicines are given to an athlete in circumstances in which it would not be possible for him to ask such questions or to obtain such confirmation.

In CAS 2016/A/4512, the respondents appealed to the fact that the application of article 19 of the FIFA Anti-Doping Regulations referred to by WADA is incorrect as it indicates "intentional" use of doping (CAS 2016/A/4512: para. 25). As it is known, the term requires a person to know that his behavior is a violation of the anti-doping rules, or to know that there is a significant risk that the behavior could lead to a violation of the anti-doping rules and clearly ignored this risk. In his defense, the player provided medical records confirming his testimony before the disciplinary authorities of the national football federation, namely that he took medications for the infertility treatment and cited some studies proving the probability that taking these drugs caused the presence of a prohibited substance in his sample after five and a half months. The footballer believed that he had fulfilled his burden of proving that he had no intention of improving his athletic ability, and explained how the prohibited substance had entered his body (CAS 2016/A/4512: para. 27).

Rigid approach of WADA does not allow the differentiation that justice requires when it comes to delimiting a player who intends to improve athletic performance from someone who mistakenly uses a substance not for the purposes of athletic competition. Therefore, the use of substance, when a football player knew that it was prohibited by WADA, was extremely reckless. The period of disqualification can be reduced only if there was no significant fault or negligence. This situation is not applicable in the CAS 2016/A/4512 dispute due to the fact that the player was aware of the prohibited nature of the substance and, nevertheless, decided to accept it, making his fault clearly significant (CAS 2016/A/4512: para. 25). In this case, the player had the opportunity to re-apply for therapeutic use, but he decided not to do this, realizing the risk. Thus, the player's behavior is considered intentional within the meaning of article 19 (3) of the FIFA Anti-Doping Regulation, and shall be subject to disqualification for four years (FIFA Anti-Doping Regulations).

Special attention to the objective and subjective elements of the violation should be drawn when the prohibited substance has entered the body of a football player as a result of taking the medicine prescribed by a doctor. An athlete who has been given medicines by a doctor should:

- (1) ask to be informed about the content of these medicines;
- (2) ask if the drugs contain any prohibited substances;
- (3) obtain written confirmation from the doctor that the drugs do not contain prohibited substances.

If an athlete wants to convince CAS that he has a prohibited substance in his body, but there is no fault or negligence, he must do more than just rely on his doctor (CAS 2015/A/4059: para. 154).

For example, in CAS 2013/A/3262 a player did not challenge the scientific conclusion on the identification of "Methylhexanamine" and its metabolites in his "sample" (CAS 2013/A/3262). He said that he worked with a nutritionist to improve his diet and thereby improve his physical characteristics in football. The player explained that his nutritionist focused on weight loss and developed a diet plan for the player, which included, among other things, eating a product called "Hemo Rage Black" (CAS 2013/A/3262: para. 20). As a result, the football player was disqualified for two years for violating article 6 of the FIFA Anti-Doping Regulations).

The arbitration in CAS 2013/A/3262 notes that the player does not refute the violation of anti-doping rules, in particular, article 6 of the FIFA Anti-Doping Regulation. Consequently, he was reasonably applied a standard sanction in the form of a disqualification for two years. However, a football player has the right to prove the need to reduce or not use such a standard period of disqualification (CAS 2013/A/3262: para. 65).

Since the arbitration concluded that the disqualification cannot be canceled on the basis of article 21 of the Regulations, the question of reducing the sanctions was considered in accordance with article 22 of the Regulations. This rule applies only to special substances, by determining how the substance enters his body, as well as evidence supporting his statements, and establishes the absence of intent to improve his athletic performance.

But in CAS 2013/A/3262 the player could not prove the absence of significant fault or negligence. Taking a product as part of a weight loss plan, and actually causing weight loss, it cannot entail any other result than improving the player's health, and hence his physical and athletic performance. Moreover, the expert witness explained that a prohibited substance affects pressure, heart rate, mental clarity and physical performance, and its primary effect is a stimulant, and weight loss is only a secondary effect (CAS 2013/A/3262: para. 65). In particular, the CAS noted: the player must prove that the use of a special substance, and not the product itself, was not intended to enhance its athletic performance, and also provide supporting evidence in addition to its statement, which confirms the absence of fault (CAS 2010/A/2107: para. 53). In accordance with the practice of the CAS and the Code, a player must establish the facts that he claims were in accordance with the "balance of probabilities", which means that the accused athlete bears the burden of proof that the occurrence of the circumstances to which he refers is more likely than their absence or more likely than other possible explanations for the violation of the Regulations (CAS 2013/A/3262: para. 99).

# 4. Results

The fight against doping is difficult and this may require strict rules. Therefore, CAS concludes that every participant in the sports industry must start by being strict with themselves. The provisions of the anti-doping regulatory framework must be properly applied when appointing sanctions to the athlete.

The anti-doping regulation in football impose on each sportsman a personal duty guaranteeing that the prohibited substance does not enter the body of the player, which necessarily means that the player must take all possible precautions in "utmost caution" to avoid any anti-doping rule violations. Accordingly, the fact that this is a personal obligation means that the player cannot escape responsibility simply by claiming that another person has been negligent.

Thus, the presence of fault or negligence, their degree in the actions of an athlete, considered in the totality of circumstances, have a direct impact on the application and the size of the sanction.

According to the CAS, the player who is a professional football player, knows about the risks connected with acceptance of nutritional supplements concerning doping and, thus, it was reasonable to expect from him, at least, consultations with the team doctor, but not with the nutritionist who does not work in the world of soccer (CAS 2005/A/847: para. 103). This fact demonstrates considerable negligence of the player. If an athlete wants to persuade an anti-doping tribunal, or the CAS, that he has been found to have a prohibited substance in his body, but that he was not at fault or negligent, or that he was not substantially at fault or negligent, he must do more than simply rely on his doctor.

In any case, the fact that the sportsman allegedly did not know that the product contains a prohibited substance does not prove the absence of fault or negligence. A football player can only claim that there is no intent to increase his effectiveness when his behavior was not reckless, that is, due diligence was shown. Therefore, the player's arguments that increase in sports characteristics has no relation to the products which were a part of its diet and that he was never going to use a product for direct increase in its sports results are most often insolvent.

To establish whether the sportsman without significant fault or negligence acted, it is required that the behavior of the athlete was compared to the standard of responsibility which can be expected from "the reasonable person" in the athlete 's situation (CAS 2016/A/4416: para. 66). Practice of the CAS shows that it can be proved when the football player observes "accurate and obvious precautionary measures which any person will accept" in specific circumstances (CAS 2005/A/847: para. 7.3).

# 5. Conclusion

According to CAS positions, the following factors should be mentioned in qualification of fault or negligence (especially, in investigating the significant fault or negligence):

- 1) The sportsman has not received education in the field of anti-doping regulation.
- 2) The sportsman has not has used the WADA hotline or any other hotline.
- 3) The sportsman has not conducted an online search for the supplement or made any other requests for its elements or properties, including not asking the doctor about the supplement, although everyone signed the consent form for its introduction.
- 4) The risk of using a medicine without consulting not only with the manufacturer, but also the team doctor existed and was intentionally ignored by the sportsman. A nutritionist cannot be considered an expert in anti-doping issues, and it is a matter of negligence on the part of the player to rely solely on the advice of a nutritionist when he could easily consult with the team doctor.
- 5) It was completely unreasonable to rely on the unfounded assumption about the knowledge of the club's doctor about the introduction of additional injections under the program, especially when the player did not seek, although it did not require much effort, to check the validity of the assumption. In a statement of consent to the introduction of additional injections, it was stated that the substance is not a prohibited. The fact that a specific substance was indicated in the form should have been the reason for requesting the properties of such a substance, and not an excuse for non-observance of the anti-doping rules.
- 6) To rely on the knowledge of the created program for football players and its approval by high-ranking officials at the club, who have no relation to medicine, was absolutely not reasonable. Being in a team, namely in a football team, does not justify the inability to take steps that are mandatory for an athlete in sports.

- 7) The sportsman has not conducted any research on the Internet about medication due of the language or other problems faced by an athlete. There is no evidence that the player was looking for additional information by phone, online or in person. The fact that the product label contains a warning in English, which is said to have not been understood by the athlete, is not an excuse. Indeed, the product contains a warning that it contains ingredients that may be banned by some sports organizations. In addition, it is noted that the description (in foreign language) of the product, provided on the web page that the nutritionist was testing, describes the typical effects of taking the drug associated with improving athletic performance. Therefore, the CAS reasonably believed that by adopting minimal efforts, the player had to come to the conclusion that a prohibited substance could be found in the medication.
- 8) Despite early age or inexperience of an athlete, from the sportsman the corresponding duty of due discretion at intake of any medicines is not removed.
- 9) The sportsman knew or should have known about the anti-doping procedures in accordance with the anti-doping regulations and had experience playing at the international level. Anti-doping rules impose a personal obligation on each sportsman to ensure that the prohibited substance does not fall into the body of the player, which means the sportsman must take all due diligence measures to avoid any violations of the anti-doping rules (exercise "utmost caution"). Accordingly, it is an obligation, and the player cannot escape responsibility, simply by asserting that the other person has been negligent.
- 10) The sportsman has not reported in the form of a doping control that he was taking medication. Here, the facts demonstrate a situation that goes beyond simple ignoring, since the player did not exercise due diligence ("utmost caution") to comply with applicable anti-doping rules.
  - 11) The level of awareness has been reduced by a careless but understandable mistake.
- 12) Any personal problems (including the stress) that prevent a person from maintaining an objective element of responsibility.

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