

TOP TIPS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES AND THEIR PARENTS

ANTI-DOPING

“Doping is a serious problem for sport at all levels. Athletes who intentionally dope to gain an advantage are cheats. They are letting down their family, their coaches and all who have supported them.” Drug Free Sport New Zealand

“The key to not getting into trouble around anti-doping is awareness - make sure you are educated, know what is legal and safe, and what is not. Tap into the support and advice that is available - don't leave it too late to ask for help” Victor Vito - All Black

1. All athletes are responsible for what they eat, drink, take, or apply to their bodies under the New Zealand Sports Anti-Doping Rules and the World Anti-Doping Agency rules in other countries.
2. Drug-testing at school age level has not occurred in New Zealand in the past but this will change. This is why it is important for all school age athletes to understand the anti-doping rules.
3. Athletes must take extreme care to check that all substances they eat, drink, apply, or are administered are permitted in sport under the anti-doping rules.
4. You should receive anti-doping education regularly. If you have not received any anti-doping education, or had an update in the past 12 months, let your team or school sports manager know, and make sure you get up-to-date as soon as possible.
5. Drug Free Sport has various options available to educate athletes. Encourage your school or team sports manager to get in touch with and develop a plan to educate you and your team mates: <http://drugfreesport.org.nz/what-we-do/education/> .
6. If you have doubts about a substance, drink, food, medication, or cosmetic product do not take it and immediately contact Drug Free Sport (0800 DRUGFREE or <http://drugfreesport.org.nz/medication>) to check whether it's permitted in sport.
7. Supplements are a major cause of positive drug tests. Make sure you carefully assess your need for supplements, check the ingredients and refer to the DFSNZ pamphlet on supplements for more advice. You can check the level of risk associated with substances on Drug Free Sport NZ's website: www.drugfree.org.nz/supplement-check

8. If you see a doctor, dentist, or other health professional, you must tell that person that you are a high performance athlete who is eligible for drug-testing and make sure they check that any medication they give you is permitted in sport.
9. Before you take any prescription drug, call (0800 DRUGFREE), text 4365 (Drug Free Sport) or visit www.drugfreesport.org.nz/medication-check to ensure it is permitted in sport.
10. When buying over-the-counter medication or another substance from a pharmacy ask the chemist to check that it is permitted in sport.
11. Never use another person's medication.
12. If you are not able to check the status of a medication in sport due to an emergency or other situation, then you should immediately contact your team or school sports manager, Drug Free Sport (0800 DRUGFREE) or the NZRPA (0800 PLAYER).
13. Don't use any recreational drugs, they will make you perform worse and most are prohibited when you are competing.

"If you are serious about being a top athlete then from a young age you will need to make important decisions around how you deal with many social situations from relationships and alcohol, to social media and drugs. You simply cannot afford to have any involvement with performance enhancing or illicit drugs. It will cost you your sporting career. Staying clean and well clear of drugs is all part of the life of a top athlete" Andy Ellis - All Black

Case Studies:

Former Canterbury Age-Grade Rep Rugby Player

In 2015, a former Canterbury age group rugby player was banned from all sport for two years after he purchased a performance enhancing drug over the internet - the drug was banned by Drug Free Sport NZ.

The young player pleaded guilty to possessing the prohibited substance GHRP-6, a human growth hormone precursor. New Zealand Customs seized a package which was addressed to the young boy's residence. He did not think there would be any great consequences in ordering the drug and he wasn't aware of breaching the anti-doping regulations by ordering the substance as a prank - he never consumed the drug, he merely wanted to show how easy it was to order it into New Zealand. He realised his mistake after he attended a Drug Free Sport NZ anti-doping seminar - not only is it illegal to consume a banned drug like this, it is also illegal to have it in your possession.

Former Scotland Age-Grade Rep Rugby Player

In 2013 a Scotland Age-Grade Rep Rugby Player failed a drugs test while he was in camp with the team. The player pled guilty to taking methandienone and stanzonal, both listed as steroids on the Anti-doping Agency's prohibited list. The player was suspended from all Rugby for 2 years.

In summary, the player had been on the fringes of Scotland age-grade teams in the past but had always been told to add more muscle to his already slender frame if he wanted to be selected. As a result, the player ordered the steroids over the internet and even though the manufacturer had made it known on its product label that it was an anabolic steroid he still decided to take it - because many users had reported immediate gains. As a result of taking the product, the player experienced adverse effects due to his diabetes and multiple allergies. He acknowledges he was stupid and naive to take the banned substance in an attempt to cope with the physical demands of representative rugby and encourages other young players not to succumb to the pressure which led him to making a foolish decision.

New Zealand Touch Representative

In 2012, a touch rugby player was drug tested while playing in the national touch championships. Due to shift work, the player was tired so a team mate offered him an energy drink to help keep him keep awake in between the semi-final and final. The player had been told that the drink was called Jack3d and was bought in a health store. The player had made an incorrect assumption that the drink was safe to take. He never saw the drinks label so he did not check the ingredients. Jack3d was being sold at a discounted price because it contained a banned substance. The player did not complete the appropriate checks before drinking the substance and he was banned from any form of touch rugby for 12 months.

For further information and advice on the topic of ANTI-DOPING for young athletes please contact Drug Free Sport New Zealand on 0800 DRUGFREE or the New Zealand Rugby Players' Association on 0800 PLAYER