

*South African Institute for  
Drug-Free Sport*



# ATHLETE SUPPORT PERSONNEL (ASP) GUIDE TO CLEAN SPORT

**I PLAY FAIR**  
**SAY NO! TO DOPING**

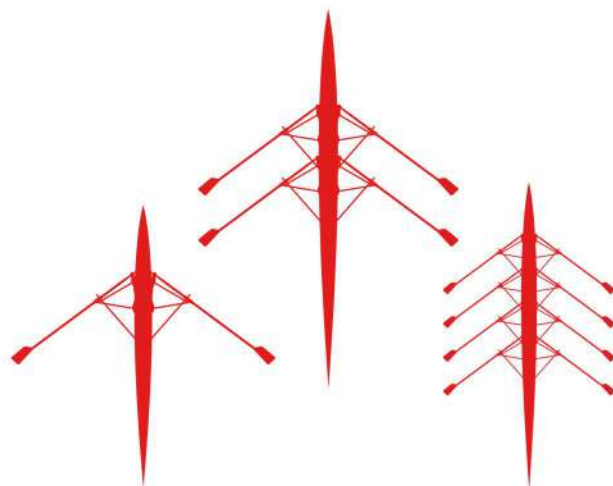
[www.drugfreesport.org.za](http://www.drugfreesport.org.za)

## THE ROLE OF AN ASP

According to the World Anti-Doping Code Athlete Support Personnel (ASP) is defined as – **Any coach, trainer, manager, agent, team staff, official, medical, paramedical personnel, parent or any other Person working with, treating or assisting an Athlete participating in or preparing for sports Competition.** The ASP has a vital role in ensuring that athletes fulfill their responsibility towards clean sport.

The International Standard for Education (ISE) <sup>1</sup> explains that “...the vast majority of Athletes wish to compete clean [and] have no intention to use prohibited substances or methods and have the right to a level playing field. Education, is one Prevention strategy as highlighted in the Code, and seeks to help prevent Athletes and other Persons from doping, and to promote behaviour in line with the values of clean sport.”

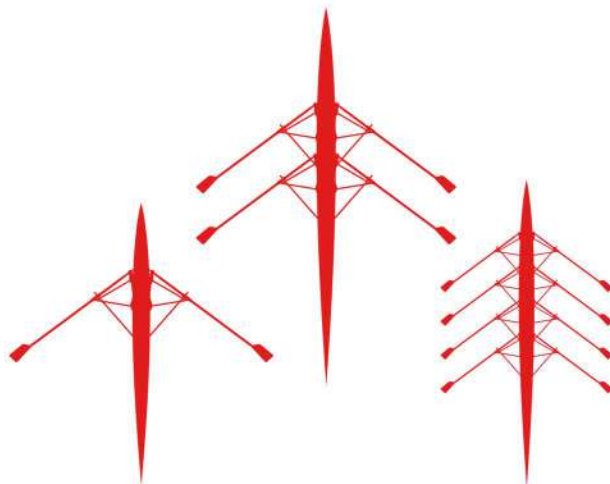
ASP are some of the most influential people in athletes’ lives, and are in a unique position to assist athletes in making positive and healthy choices. Understanding the role they play in the attempt to keep sport clean, as well as their responsibilities under the World Anti-Doping Code <sup>2</sup>, is vital for both the ASP and the athletes they support.



## THE ROLE OF AN ASP (CONTINUOUS)

ASP should be sensitive to what their athletes are experiencing and be aware of when they may be vulnerable, so as to adjust training schedules or encourage effective rest strategies. WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) has mandated ASP to counsel and advise athletes in anti-doping matters as well as support them in their anti-doping experiences. Doping in sport affects everyone involved, and it is therefore everyone's responsibility to ensure that we eradicate doping in sport. ASP should also enforce athletes to comply with the anti-doping rules.

Some of the ASP's responsibilities are modelling **ethical behavior**, **educating athletes on how to excel in their sport**, and **assisting athletes to realise their full potential**. Every athlete has the right to participate in clean sport, free from the use of performance enhancing drugs. Supporting athletes to understand the importance of what this means, taking pride in promoting anti-doping and keeping the playing field level, are just some of the roles of the ASP.<sup>3</sup>



## ASP SHOULD UNDERSTAND THESE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. To be knowledgeable of and comply with all anti-doping policies and adopt the rules of the WADC applicable to them or the Athletes whom they support.
2. To cooperate with the Athlete Testing program.
3. To use their influence on Athlete values and behaviour to foster anti-doping attitudes.
4. To cooperate with SAIDS and the WADC.
5. ASP shall not Use or Possess any Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method without valid justification. <sup>4</sup>



4. [https://www.wada-ama.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/2021\\_wada\\_code.pdf](https://www.wada-ama.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/2021_wada_code.pdf)

## ASP SHOULD ACT IN THE ATHLETES' BEST INTEREST, HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Sports physicians and therapists play a role in their athletes need to rest and recover and be transparent about when they can return to play. It also means nutrition experts advising athletes about a “food first” approach to improve performance through adjusting their athlete’s diet and assisting athletes to understand what substances are banned in sport and sharing the risks of supplement usage.

ASP should encourage harmonising their message with the values they are promoting as they often have the biggest influence on athletes. ASP are encouraged to provide access to information that explains their roles and responsibilities and how to positively influence their athletes. Why? Because ASP have regular, close contact with athletes, therefore if ASP have good levels of anti-doping knowledge, they can advise athletes correctly and positively thereby influencing their decision making.



## ROLE OF EDUCATION

ASP are required to gain the knowledge and confidence to reinforce educational messages with athletes by raising awareness of the values of clean sport which should be developed in athletes or providing access to key anti-doping information. ISE Article 4.3.3 explains that it is the ASP's responsibility to be knowledgeable of anti-doping policies and rules. <sup>5</sup>

The purpose of the anti-doping education programs is to minimise the risk of intentional doping by understanding the anti-doping rules and regulations. Education involves the active participation and engagement of Athletes and ASP and should continue throughout the athlete's sporting career.



5. [https://www.ukad.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-06/UKAD\\_Clean%20Sport%20Essentials\\_PLA%20&%20ASP\\_Booklet\\_FEB2022\\_WEB\\_Spreads.pdf](https://www.ukad.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-06/UKAD_Clean%20Sport%20Essentials_PLA%20&%20ASP_Booklet_FEB2022_WEB_Spreads.pdf)

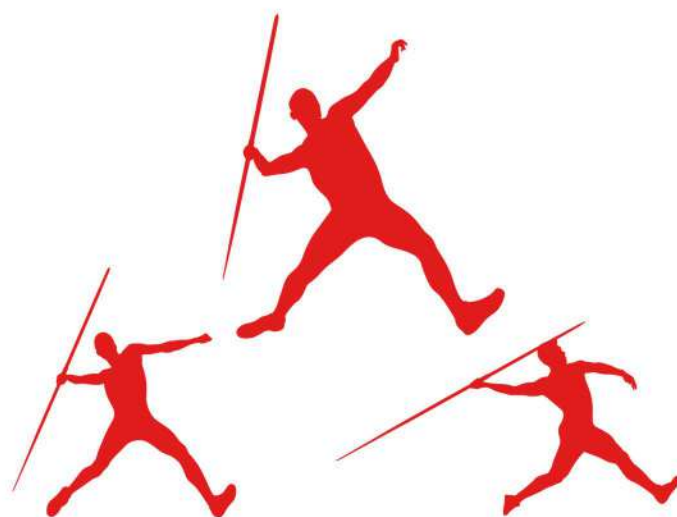
**Registered Testing Pool-** The pool of highest- priority Athletes established separately at the international level by International Federations and the national level by National Anti- Doping Organizations, who are subject to focussed In- Competition and Out-of-competition Testing as part of that International Federation's or National Anti- Doping Organization's test distribution plan and therefore are required to provide whereabouts information as provided in Article 5.5 and the International Standard for Testing and Investigations.

**ADAMS-** The Anti- Doping Administration and Management System is a Web- based database management tool for data entry, storage, sharing, and reporting, designed to assist stakeholders and WADA in their anti- doping operations in conjunction with data protection legislation.



# STRICT LIABILITY

Athletes are completely responsible for anything they consume, including food, therapeutic medications, sports supplements or any other substances. ASP need to understand what “strict liability” as defined in the World Anti-Doping Code and how strictly liability is enforced in anti-doping matters.



# MANDATORY ANTI-DOPING EDUCATION TOPICS FOR ASP TO UNDERSTAND TO SUPPORT THEIR ATHLETES.

- Principles and values associated with clean sport.
- Athletes', ASP's and other groups' rights and responsibilities under the Code.
- The principle of strict liability.
- Consequences of doping, for example, physical and mental health, social and economic effects, and sanctions.
- Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRVs).
- Substances and methods on the Prohibited List.
- Risks of supplement use.
- Use of medications, eligibility and applying for Therapeutic Use Exemptions (TUEs).
- Testing procedures, including urine, blood and dried blood spot.
- Requirements of the Registered Testing Pool (RTP), including whereabouts and the use of Anti-Doping Administration and Management System (ADAMS).
- Speaking up to share concerns about doping.

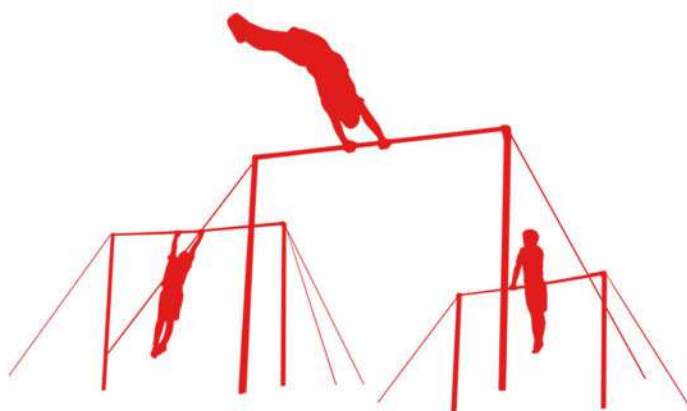




## HOW TO ASSIST YOUR ATHLETES.

It is the responsibility of the ASP to learn about periods of vulnerability for athletes with regard to doping and the need to re-focus conversations around values during these risk periods (e.g. when an athlete returns from injury; when an athlete changes competition levels; when an athlete changes clubs or environments; when there is a performance setback or plateau; or when an athlete experiences a significant life transition that causes emotional instability). Values can play a vital role in assisting athletes to stay true to themselves and what they believe in when times are tough.

**Support** your athlete with coping mechanisms to deal with situations in order to avoid a doping decision. **Encourage** athletes to positively work through periods of vulnerability by providing an open and safe environment for them to share their concerns. Your relationship with the athlete is critical to this, as is understanding those around them who influence them (other ASP such as parents, peers). **Understanding** the protective factors around an athlete will help reinforce any interventions you introduce. Working with athletes to improve their self-belief and cognitive capability to manage challenging times helps to build resilience. **Scenario-based** conversations can be a useful technique to help athletes mentally prepare and practise for further challenges. It is important to ensure athletes know the range of external options and support available to them. To help athletes effectively you need to take the responsibility for your own education in anti-doping. You too have a responsibility to help protect clean sport. <sup>6</sup>



6. [https://www.ukad.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-06/UKAD\\_Clean%20Sport%20Essentials\\_PLA%20&%20ASP\\_Booklet\\_FEB2022\\_WEB\\_Spreads.pdf](https://www.ukad.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-06/UKAD_Clean%20Sport%20Essentials_PLA%20&%20ASP_Booklet_FEB2022_WEB_Spreads.pdf)

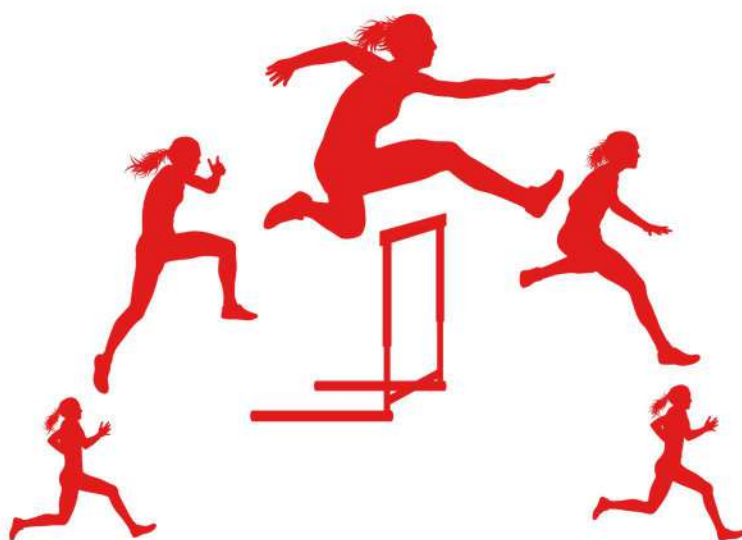
## EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE

Athletes should feel confident in the different situations they are faced with. These situations could vary from financial pressures, life changes or their individual sport system. Making effective ethical decisions in a range of situations is critical to protecting their careers. You can guide athletes to access additional information from trusted sources to support their decision-making process. Also, encourage and motivate athletes to participate in education sessions to assist them with strategies to manage the risks of unintentional doping. ASP should be educated and well informed, by requesting anti-doping education workshops through SAIDS or completing the eLearning courses on the ADEL platform.



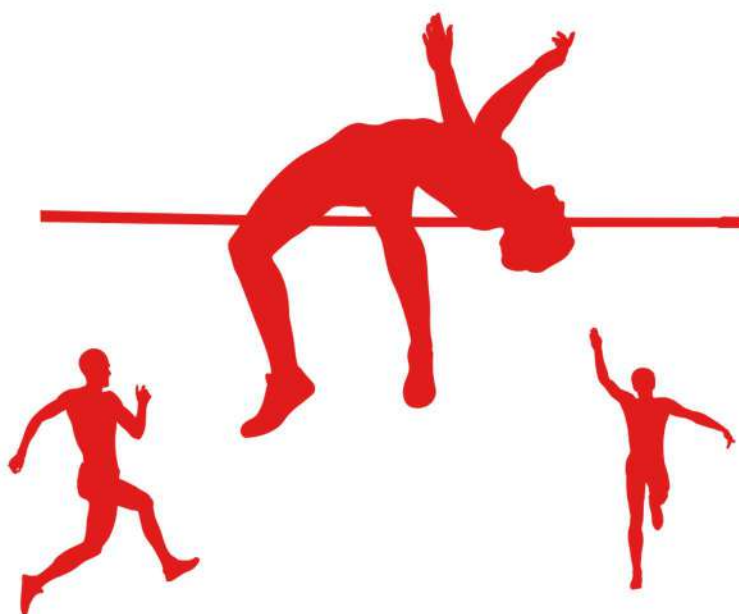
## HELP ATHLETES TO RECOGNISE SYMPTOMS THEMSELVES

Stress and feeling under pressure can be a common amongst athletes, yet some athletes may shy away from these feelings. It is important for athletes to understand their own feelings and know the self-management techniques they can rely on. Time taken to discuss enhancing an athlete's self-awareness including, reflecting upon the appropriateness of their self-management techniques, can provide useful insight into different coping mechanisms. You may discover the athlete has addictive tendencies, disengages from training or over trains, perhaps they become insular and withdrawn. ASP should be fully aware of the coping mechanisms the athletes use. Assisting athletes to recognise the signs when they are not coping increases the chances of seeking help earlier on.



## CONTROL THE CONTROLLABLE – GET ATHLETES INTO A ROUTINE

Trying to fit in training schedules around work/study and family life can increase an athlete's stress levels. Equally in sport there will always be times when the future of an athlete's career is out of their control, such as selection and sponsorship decisions. These occurrences may influence an athlete's decision. ASP should be open and encouraging discussion about this in order to assist athletes prepare for these scenarios and encourage athletes to develop routines and make others around them aware of these routines. Routines can act as a coping technique when times become stressful or an athlete faces a period of uncertainty as well as help athletes focus and manage possible vulnerability.



## OUR AIM

SAIDS's aim is to instil the culture of clean sport, which involves deterrence and detection of the use of performance enhancing substances through education and testing. We are committed to supporting athletes and ASP to feel confident in their responsibilities to keep a clean, level playing field and to protect the integrity of sport within South Africa. Hence we encourage ASP to:

- Familiarise themselves with the medication their athletes are using.
- Check the status of medication on the prohibited list at this link: <https://drugfreesport.org.za/online-medication-check/>
- Assist their athletes in applying for a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) where necessary and to ensure the correct documentation is provided with the application.
- Report doping.
- Provide feedback and ask questions.

Within your role as ASP, you should have a reasonable level of anti-doping knowledge. We encourage you to request an anti-doping education workshop with SAIDS and to complete the relevant clean sport eLearning courses available on ADEL.

For more information regarding SAIDS Anti-Doping Education Workshops and eLearning online courses contact the education team at [thando@suids.org.za](mailto:thando@suids.org.za)



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