

Issued Decision

UK Anti-Doping and Thomas Deakin

Disciplinary Proceedings under the Anti-Doping Rules of the Rugby Football League

This is an Issued Decision made by UK Anti-Doping Limited ('UKAD') pursuant to the Anti-Doping Rules (the 'ADR') of the Rugby Football League ('RFL'). It concerns an Anti-Doping Rule Violation ('ADRV') committed by Mr Thomas Deakin and records the applicable Consequences.

Capitalised terms used in this Decision shall have the meaning given to them in the ADR unless otherwise indicated.

Background and Facts

1. The RFL is the national governing body for the sport of rugby league in England. UKAD is the National Anti-Doping Organisation ('NADO') in the United Kingdom. The RFL has adopted, as its own ADR, the UK Anti-Doping Rules¹, which are issued by UKAD and subject to updates made by UKAD, as necessary and in accordance with the World Anti-Doping Code.
2. Mr Deakin is a 23-year-old rugby league player. At all relevant times, Mr Deakin was subject to the jurisdiction of the RFL and bound to comply with the ADR. Pursuant to ADR Article 7.2, UKAD has Results Management responsibility for anti-doping matters in respect of all players that are subject to the jurisdiction of the RFL.
3. On 13 April 2025, a UKAD Doping Control Officer ('DCO') collected a urine Sample from Mr Deakin, In-Competition, at the Betfred Super League match between Huddersfield Giants RLFC and Catalans Dragons RLFC at the John Smith's Stadium in Huddersfield.
4. Assisted by the DCO, Mr Deakin split the urine Sample into two separate bottles which were given the reference numbers A8210168 (the 'A Sample') and B8210168 (the 'B Sample').
5. Both Samples were transported to the World Anti-Doping Agency ('WADA') accredited laboratory in London, the Drug Control Centre, King's College London (the

¹ Version 1.0, in effect as from 1 January 2021.

'Laboratory'). The Laboratory analysed the A Sample in accordance with the procedures set out in WADA's International Standard for Laboratories and Technical Document TD2022MRPL.

6. Analysis of the A Sample returned Adverse Analytical Findings ('AAFs') for cocaine and its Metabolite benzoylecgonine, at estimated concentrations of 20 ng/mL and 13.9 µg/mL, respectively.
7. Cocaine is listed under S6.A of the WADA 2025 Prohibited List as a Stimulant. It is a non-Specified Substance that is prohibited In-Competition only². Pursuant to Article 4.2.3 of the 2021 World Anti-Doping Code, cocaine is specifically identified as a Substance of Abuse in the 2025 WADA Prohibited List.
8. On 16 May 2025, UKAD sent Mr Deakin a letter (the 'Notice Letter'), formally notifying him that he may have committed ADRVs pursuant to ADR Article 2.1 (Presence of a Prohibited Substance or its Metabolites or Markers in an Athlete's Sample), and/or ADR Article 2.2 (Use or attempted Use by an Athlete of a Prohibited Substance or a Prohibited Method). The Notice Letter also confirmed the immediate imposition of a Provisional Suspension. UKAD invited Mr Deakin to provide an explanation for the alleged ADRVs.
9. In his response to the Notice Letter, Mr Deakin admitted to ingesting cocaine for recreational purposes within a social setting, estimating that he ingested approximately 0.5g to 0.6g of cocaine, on 12 April 2025 (i.e. Out-of-Competition).
10. Following receipt of Mr Deakin's response, UKAD sought the opinion of an independent scientific expert, Professor David Cowan OBE, as to whether the account provided by Mr Deakin was consistent with the concentration of cocaine detected in the A Sample.
11. Professor Cowan requested further detail in relation to Mr Deakin's ingestion of cocaine. UKAD, therefore, sent further follow-up queries to Mr Deakin, who responded stating that, his estimated maximum cocaine and alcohol consumption in any approximate eight-hour period was 1-1.5 grams of cocaine and 12 pints. Mr Deakin also confirmed that, more recently, he had been ingesting cocaine every two to three weeks.
12. Professor Cowan provided an expert report in which he concluded that it was more likely than not that Mr Deakin's last ingestion of cocaine took place Out-of-Competition (i.e. before 11:59pm on 12 April 2025).
13. On 6 August 2025, UKAD proceeded to issue Mr Deakin with a Charge Letter in accordance with ADR Article 7.11.2. The Charge Letter asserted the commission of

² In-Competition is defined in the ADR as the "period commencing at 11:59 p.m. on the day before a Competition in which the Athlete is scheduled to participate through the end of such Competition and the Sample collection process related to such Competition [...]"

an ADRV pursuant to ADR Article 2.1 (Presence of a Prohibited Substance or its Metabolites or Markers in an Athlete's Sample) in respect of cocaine and benzoylecgonine³.

Admissions and Consequences

14. ADR Article 2.1 provides that the following is an ADRV:

2.1 Presence of a Prohibited Substance or its Metabolites or Markers in an Athlete's Sample, unless the Athlete establishes that the presence is consistent with a TUE granted in accordance with Article 4.

15. ADR Article 10.2.4 provides:

10.2.4 Notwithstanding any other provision in Article 10.2, where the Anti-Doping Rule Violation involves a Substance of Abuse:

(a) If the Athlete can establish that any ingestion or Use occurred Out-of-Competition and was unrelated to sport performance, the period of Ineligibility shall be three (3) months; provided that it may be further reduced to one (1) month if the Athlete satisfactorily completes a Substance of Abuse treatment program approved by UKAD. The period of Ineligibility established in this Article 10.2.4(a) is not subject to any reduction pursuant to Article 10.6.

16. On 14 August 2025, Mr Deakin provided his response to the Charge Letter. Mr Deakin admitted to the ADRV charged and accepted the asserted period of Ineligibility of three (3) months, but indicated that he may complete a Substance of Abuse treatment program approved by UKAD.

17. On 19 August 2025, Mr Deakin confirmed that he did not wish to complete a Substance of Abuse treatment programme. Consequently, the applicable period of Ineligibility remained three (3) months.

Commencement of period of Ineligibility

18. ADR Article 10.13 requires that the period of Ineligibility starts on the date Ineligibility is accepted or otherwise imposed where there is no hearing.

19. However, ADR Article 10.13.2 allows for credit to be given against the total period of Ineligibility to be served, where an Athlete has been provisionally suspended and has respected the terms of that Provisional Suspension.

³ Mr Deakin was not charged with an ADRV pursuant to ADR Article 2.2 (Use of a Prohibited Substance or a Prohibited Method) because cocaine is prohibited In-Competition only and, in light of his account and the opinion of Professor Cowan, there is insufficient evidence to suggest Mr Deakin ingested the substance after 11:59pm on 12 April 2025 (i.e., within the In-Competition period).

20. Mr Deakin was subject to a Provisional Suspension from the date of the Notice Letter, 16 May 2025. As far as UKAD is aware, Mr Deakin respected the terms of that Provisional Suspension. Therefore, on 18 August 2025 (16-17 August 2025 having been a weekend), UKAD wrote to Mr Deakin and informed him that UKAD had lifted his Provisional Suspension, acknowledging that he had served the maximum three (3) months period of Ineligibility asserted by UKAD in this case.
21. Affording Mr Deakin credit for the time he spent provisionally suspended, his period of Ineligibility expired at 11:59pm on 15 August 2025. Mr Deakin has therefore been eligible to participate in sport since that date.

Summary

22. For the reasons given above, UKAD has issued this Decision in accordance with ADR Article 7.12.2, and records that:
- a) Mr Deakin committed an ADRV pursuant to ADR Article 2.1;
 - b) A period of Ineligibility of three (3) months was imposed pursuant to ADR Article 10.2.4(a); and
 - c) In accordance with ADR Article 10.13.2, affording Mr Deakin credit for the time he spent provisionally suspended, his period of Ineligibility was deemed to have commenced on 16 May 2025, and expired at 11:59pm on 15 August 2025.
23. Mr Deakin, the RFL, International Rugby League, Sport Integrity Australia and WADA have a right to appeal against this Decision or any part of it in accordance with ADR Article 13.4.
24. This Decision will be publicly announced via UKAD's website in accordance with ADR Article 8.5.3 and ADR Article 10.15.

20 November 2025.