

**IN THE MATTER OF PROCEEDINGS BROUGHT UNDER THE ANTI-DOPING RULES OF
THE RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

Before:

Christopher Quinlan KC (Chair)

Professor Dorian Haskard

Dr Chinyere Ezewuzie

BETWEEN:

UK ANTI-DOPING LIMITED (“UKAD”)

Anti-Doping Organisation

and

[REDACTED]

Respondent

DECISION OF THE DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to Article 5.3 National Anti-Doping Panel (**‘NADP’**) 2021 Procedural Rules ‘the **‘Rules’**) the Tribunal was appointed by the NADP President to determine anti-doping

proceedings brought by UK Anti-Doping Limited ('UKAD') against [REDACTED] (the 'Respondent').

2. The Respondent was registered with the Rugby Football League ('RFL') and a participant in competitions and other activities organised, convened, authorised, or recognised by the RFL and so at all relevant times he was subject to and bound to comply with the 2021 UK Anti-Doping Rules ('ADR'), as adopted by the RFL. UKAD is the National Anti-Doping Organisation ('NADO') in the United Kingdom. In accordance with ADR Article 7.2, UKAD is responsible for Results Management and pursuant to ADR Article 1.2.1. There was no dispute that UKAD has jurisdiction in this matter.
3. On 12 August 2025 UKAD charged the Respondent with violations of ADR Article 2.1 (presence of a Prohibited Substance or its Metabolites or Markers in an Athlete's Sample) and Article 2.2 (Use by an Athlete of a Prohibited Substance).
4. The remote hearing of this matter was conducted over two days on 18 and 19 May 2026 by video conference call. The following attended:

UKAD

Sam Shurey	Counsel
Niru Uddin	Head of Case Management
Grace Hartley	Lawyer
Amy Marren	Legal Officer
Carla Panozzo	Legal Officer - Observing
Ffion Miller	Paralegal - Observing
Nick Wojek	Witness



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Professor David Cowan Witness

Respondent

██████████ Respondent

Mian Sami ud-Din Counsel

Halima Sohail Associate

Mahwish Khan Intern

██████████ Witness

██████████ Witness

Other

Eisha Wallsten Case Manager, NADP Secretariat

Cameron Taylor Pupil, Farrar's Building, observer.

5. The Tribunal was provided with a hearing bundle comprising 1280 pages. That is referenced herein: *HB/page number*.
6. This is the Tribunal's unanimous decision and is necessarily a summary. It was reached after appropriate consideration of all the evidence, submissions and other material placed before it. Nothing is to be read into the absence of specific reference to any aspect of the evidence, submissions or other material. It was all considered and given appropriate weight.



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B. FACTS AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

7. On 8 February 2025 a UKAD Doping Control Officer ('**DCO**') collected an In-Competition urine sample from the Respondent at the [REDACTED] match between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]. The urine sample was split into two separate A and B Samples.
8. Both samples were transported to the World Anti-Doping Agency ('**WADA**') accredited laboratory, the Drug Control Centre, King's College London (the '**Laboratory**'). The Laboratory analysed the urine A Sample in accordance with the procedures set out in WADA's International Standard for Laboratories. Analysis of the urine A Sample returned Adverse Analytical Findings ('**AAFs**') for the following Prohibited Substances and/or their Metabolites:
 - a. Ostarine;
 - b. GW1516 Metabolites (sulfone and sulfoxide);
 - c. Tamoxifen Metabolite (3-hydroxy-4-methoxytamoxifen); and
 - d. Drostanolone and Metabolite (3 α -hydroxy-2 α -methyl-5 α -androstan-17-one).
9. Ostarine is prohibited under section S1.2 of the WADA 2025 Prohibited List as an Other Anabolic Agent. It is a Non-Specified Substance which is prohibited at all times. GW1516 is prohibited under section S4.4 of the WADA 2025 Prohibited List as a Metabolic Modulator. It is a Non-Specified Substance which is prohibited at all times. Tamoxifen is prohibited under section S4.2 of the WADA 2025 Prohibited List as a Selective Estrogen Receptor Modulator (SERM). It is a Specified Substance which is prohibited at all times. Drostanolone is prohibited under section S1.1 of the WADA 2025 Prohibited List as an Anabolic Androgenic Steroid (AAS). It is a non-Specified Substance which is prohibited at all times.



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10. On 23 April 2025, UKAD sent the Respondent a notice letter notifying him, in accordance with ADR Article 7.8.1, that he may have committed presence and Use ADRVs pursuant to ADR Articles 2.1 and 2.2¹ (**'First Notice Letter'**).
11. On 12 and 13 May 2025, the Respondent emailed UKAD in response to the First Notice Letter stating that he *"refuse[d] to accept these results..."*².
12. On 21 May 2025, UKAD sent the Respondent a Second Notice Letter notifying him, in accordance with ADR Article 7.8.1, that further analysis of the A Sample returned an additional AAF for metenolone and that he may have committed additional presence and Use ADRVs pursuant to ADR Articles 2.1 and 2.2³. Metenolone is prohibited under section S1.1 of the WADA 2025 Prohibited List as an anabolic AAS. The same day, the Respondent emailed UKAD in response stating that he was *"somewhat bemused by additional allegations almost 1 month apart"* and was *"concerned as to the validity of your claims and of the test/samples taken"*⁴.
13. The Respondent did not request analysis of the B Sample in the responses summarised above or at any other point.
14. By letter dated 12 August 2025 the Respondent was charged by UKAD with the following Anti-Doping Rule Violations (**'ADRVs'**)⁵:

"1. An ADRV pursuant to ADR Article 2.1, in that one or more of the following Prohibited Substances, and/or one or more Metabolites, were present in a urine Sample provided by you on 8 February 2025, numbered A8143080, namely:

a. Ostarine;

¹ HB/pp1-11.

² Ibid/pp12-13.

³ Ibid/pp14-25.

⁴ Ibid/p26.

⁵ Ibid/pp27-40.



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- b. GW1516 Metabolite (GW1516-sulfone);
- c. GW1516 Metabolite (GW1516-sulfoxide);
- d. Tamoxifen Metabolite (3-hydroxy-4-methoxytamoxifen);
- e. Drostanolone;
- f. Drostanolone Metabolite (3 α -hydroxy-2 α -methyl-5 α -androstan-17-one); and
- g. Metenolone.

2. An ADRV pursuant to ADR Article 2.2, in that you Used one or more of the following Prohibited Substances, on or before 8 February 2025, namely:

- a. Ostarine;
- b. GW1516;
- c. Tamoxifen;
- d. Drostanolone; and
- e. Metenolone.”

15. On 4 September 2025, the Respondent repeated that he did not accept the ADRVs and wished to “*appeal*” the charges against him. He also stated that:

*“As an amateur player, I have been misguided by an individual in a coaching role and, at no point, was I ever seeking to gain an unfair advantage”*⁶

16. On 17 October 2025 UKAD requested that a NADP Tribunal be convened to determine the said charges. The President of the NADP, appointed Christopher Quinlan KC as Chair

⁶ Ibid/p41.

of the Tribunal on 24 October 2026. Professor Dorian Haskard and Dr Chinyere Ezewuzie were appointed to the Tribunal on 23 April 2026.

17. The first directions hearing was held on 11 November 2025, the earliest convenient date for the parties, and adjourned to 14 November 2025. The substantive hearing was fixed for 23 February 2026. On that occasion the Chair noted:

“Article 7.9.1 of the Rules provides that the hearing must be fixed no later than 40 days after the NADP Secretariat receives the Request for Arbitration. The above timetable was fixed in accordance with the necessary demands of this matter and the parties’ requests.”

18. It is not necessary to set out the long and laborious procedural history of this case. It will suffice to summarise that the Tribunal Chair has, for various reasons relating to the parties, issued or amended procedural directions and ruled upon disclosure applications on no fewer than fifteen separate occasions. In consequence, and on application from the parties, the hearing date also had to be moved twice.

C. HEARING

19. On 18 May 2026 the Tribunal heard evidence from the following witnesses and in this order:
 - a. The Respondent;
 - b. [REDACTED];
 - c. [REDACTED];
 - d. Professor David Cowan OBE; and
 - e. Nick Wojek.



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20. Each witness adopted as true and accurate their statement. They were questioned. There is no need or useful purpose in adding to the length of this decision by repeating at any length the evidence each witness gave. The Tribunal had appropriate regard to the written and oral evidence of each witness. A summary of their evidence is satisfactory.
21. The Respondent played as a rugby league player for over 20 years. He has played for [REDACTED] since [REDACTED]. He denied intentionally taking any Prohibited Substance. His statement set out the circumstances in which his Sample was taken. He said he did not seal the container holding his Sample and he did not see the DCO seal it. He said that in all correspondence he had not accepted the AAFs and said that the opportunity to test his B Sample did not “*catch my attention because the entire process was unfamiliar and confusing to me. I did not consciously give up any right to get the B sample tested*”⁷.
22. Other than rugby league, bodybuilding was his “*passion*”. In or around October 2024 the Respondent said he started a personal training programme at his gym to work on his physique for a holiday in 2025. His trainer had a “*great physique*”⁸. As part of that programme, his trainer sourced supplements for him which he gave to him. He said in evidence that the trainer said, “*they would help [him] achieve [his] bodybuilding goals*”.
23. Those supplements were “*provided to [him] in plain white boxes with no labels or ingredients listed on them*”⁹. They were mainly tablets, although one was in liquid form administered by way of injection. He was told it was a fat burner. He stopped taking the said supplements in December 2024, after suffering chest pains and heart related issues and having in consequence to attend hospital. It transpired that he had a hereditary heart condition.
24. In his statement he said that if it was established that his Sample contained any Prohibited Substance, then he “*strongly believe[d] that they were consumed by me through certain*

⁷ Statement 29 January 2026, §8, HB/p362.

⁸ Ibid, §12

⁹ Ibid, §13.



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*supplements given to me by a personal trainer at the gym*¹⁰. However, he was asked by Mr ud-Din how he knew those supplements contained the non-Specified Substances and he said that after he was told of the AAFs he spoke to the trainer. The Respondent said that the trainer told him, *“they’re the substances that, they’re what I’ll give you to take on your programme”*. That was not in his witness statement, and he gave no explanation as to why; nor could he say when he spoke to the trainer.

25. He identified the trainer as the person who was standing next to him and whose face is blanked out in the Instagram post at HB/p385. His face and other material was redacted in the hearing bundle so as not to reveal his identity. He said the post was by the trainer whom he declined to name. He said the trainer did not want to participate in these proceedings. He said all the packaging in which the supplements came had gone. He said *“I maintain that these allegations are unfounded as far as any deliberate and intentional wrongdoing is concerned”*¹¹.
26. He told the Tribunal that he had not received any anti-doping education. He accepted knowing about anti-doping rules but not that amateur players like him were tested nor not what substances were prohibited. He denied that losing fat and building muscle would help him as rugby league player. He said the trainer did not give him a list of ingredients in the supplements.
27. He said he knew the trainer from the gym and worked out with him. Asked whether he thought it odd receiving supplements in unmarked boxes without labels, he said he was *“just a bit gullible”*. He paid the trainer and never asked what he was taking and injecting nor where the trainer was getting them from.
28. As for the tamoxifen he said that came in a labelled box. He was told to take it by his trainer once he stopped training to help with *“side effects”*. He made no enquiries as to

¹⁰ Ibid, §12, HB/p363.

¹¹ Ibid, §18, HB/p364.



what it was, not even an internet search. He said the photoshoot took place at about the same time he stopped taking the substances. He could not explain why the Instagram post (which was not his) said, inter alia, *“Currently in a maintenance phase before entering his first of 2 improvement phases before begin prep next year”*.

29. [REDACTED] is the Respondent's wife and business partner. She gave evidence about his character. She said he was “low” and feeling insecure about his appearance and fitness in October 2024. She said the Respondent saw bodybuilding as a *“structured, goal-orientated way to manage his mental health during the rugby off-season”*¹². She said the trainer provided the respondent with the training plan, nutritional guidance and a course of supplements. She said the Respondent *“trusted this trainer completely and so did I”*¹³. She said the Respondent *“believed the supplements were legal, safe, and appropriate because the trainer said that they were standard supplement used for bodybuilding”*¹⁴. Ms [REDACTED] said the Respondent took the 12-week course of supplements and ended the programme after a photoshoot on 19 December 2024.
30. When asked a question on behalf of UKAD, she said the trainer, whom she named as [REDACTED] was from the same *“friendship circle”* as the Respondent. She said that after notification of the AAFs, the Respondent approached [REDACTED] who told him the supplements were *“probably banned”*. She said she did not know when that conversation took place. She did not agree it was an important detail to include in her witness statement, though accepted she was not present when the conversation took place. She denied making it up.
31. [REDACTED], is a long-time friend and training partner of the Respondent. He spoke to the Respondent's character. He said the Respondent told him in October 2024 he wanted to improve his physique. He said:

¹² Statement 30 January 2026, §11, HB/p371.

¹³ Ibid, §12.

¹⁴ Ibid.



“Based on my knowledge of [REDACTED] and my time training with him, I believe that he was not familiar with the nature of these products or that they were banned in any manner. I was also not aware that these are banned substances and am surprised that [REDACTED] has found himself in this situation.”¹⁵

32. He confirmed that he knew the trainer. He said the Respondent told him he was following a plan. He did not know what supplements he was taking nor did he see them or see the trainer supply them to the Respondent.
33. In his report dated 26 February 2026, Professor David Cowan, concluded¹⁶:
- a. The Laboratory finding of ostarine, GW-1516 metabolites, tamoxifen metabolite, drostanolone and drostanolone metabolite, and metenolone in the Sample provided by the Respondent is not wholly consistent with administration having ceased at the end of December 2024.
 - b. Specifically,
 - i. The finding of metenolone parent five weeks after administration of an oral formulation is unlikely; and
 - ii. The abnormal GW-1516 metabolite ratio arises from a more recent use of GW-1516 than five weeks before the Sample was collected.
34. Professor Cowan said he “*could not refute the athlete’s story*” so far as two of the five substances were concerned, namely drostanolone and ostarine. He said that the finding of the drostanolone metabolite was consistent with his stopping administration of that

¹⁵ Statement 30 January 2026, §5, HB/p367.

¹⁶ HB/pp297-298.

substance at the end of December 2024¹⁷. Further, he said he “*could not exclude the possibility*” that ostarine was last taken by the Respondent in December 2024¹⁸.

35. The Laboratory also recorded that the testosterone/epitestosterone ratio in the Sample was greater than normal. One of the properties of tamoxifen is that it hastens the speed at which the body’s natural testosterone production is restored. While testosterone is prohibited under section S1.1 of the WADA 2025 Prohibited List as an Anabolic Androgenic Steroid, on the facts of this case UKAD took no action in respect of that finding. When opening the case Mr Shurey stated that UKAD did not rely on the finding of testosterone as part of its case, nor allege exogenous testosterone use. The Tribunal informed Mr ud-Din that accordingly it would ignore that finding, which it did. He was content with that course.
36. Nick Wojek, UKAD Head of Science and Medicine, gave evidence including in his statement¹⁹ about the nature of the Prohibited Substances and the reasons they are prohibited.
- a. Drostanolone – is an anabolic steroid and is only administered by intramuscular injection.
 - b. 3a-hydroxy-2a-methyl-5a-androstan-17-one – is a metabolite of drostanolone. The presence of this metabolite in combination with the parent drug in the urine is an indication that drostanolone has entered the body from a synthetic source as the human body does not naturally produce it.
 - c. GW1516-sulfone and GW1516-sulfoxide are metabolites of GW1516, a metabolic regulator. It may assist persons trying to enhance endurance, physique (due to lower body fat), power (due to an increase in lean body mass), and/or recovery following

¹⁷ §15, HB/p296.

¹⁸ §12, HB/p295.

¹⁹ Statement 4 December 2025, HB/p278.



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training or injury (due to improved metabolic efficiency within skeletal muscle to tolerate the demands of exercise).

- d. Metenolone - The human body also does not naturally produce metenolone. It is administered by intramuscular injection and in tablet form.
- e. Ostarine - is a selective androgen receptor modulator (SARM) designed to have similar effects to testosterone but with fewer side effects.
- f. 3-hydroxy-4-methoxytamoxifen is a metabolite of tamoxifen, which hastens the speed at which the body's natural testosterone production is restored at the end of a period of anabolic androgenic steroid use.

37. He has no first-hand knowledge of rugby league. He agreed every Prohibited Substance taken by the Respondent *"would serve that [developing physique for photoshoot and holiday] aesthetic purpose"*. He agreed that *"there is nothing in this combination of substances that is unique to rugby performance. They equally apply to bodybuilding"*. He said the Prohibited Substances in this case were a *"classical sort of regime"* for bodybuilding. They allow the maintenance or increase of muscle mass, reduction in fat and make one more powerful, all of which has obvious training and other benefits.
38. The Tribunal heard closing submissions on behalf of each party on 19 May 2026.

D. ANTI-DOPING RULE VIOLATIONS

I. Relevant Rules

39. Pursuant to ADR Article 2.1 the following constitutes the presence 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."



40. ADR Article 2.1.1 states:

“2.1.2 Proof of any of the following to the standard required by Article 8.4.1 is sufficient to establish an Article 2.1 Anti-Doping Rule Violation:

(a) An Adverse Analytical Finding of the presence of a Prohibited Substance or any of its Metabolites or Markers in the Athlete’s A Sample, where the Athlete waives analysis of the B Sample and so the B Sample is not analysed.

[...]”

41. The presence ADRV (ADR Article 2.1) is a strict liability offence. In other words, as ADR Article 2.1.1 states, proof of intent, Fault, negligence or knowing Use by an athlete of the Prohibited Substances is not required. UKAD also does not have to show how the Prohibited Substances (or any of their Metabolites or Markers) got into the Respondent’s system, or that the Prohibited Substances enhanced Mr [REDACTED]’s performance.

42. Pursuant to ADR Article 2.2 the following constitutes the Use ADRV:

“Use or Attempted Use by an Athlete of a Prohibited Substance or a Prohibited Method, unless the Athlete establishes that the Use or Attempted Use is consistent with a TUE granted in accordance with Article 4.”

43. It is also a strict liability offence.

44. The burden rests upon UKAD to establish to the comfortable satisfaction of the Tribunal that the ADRVs had been established (ADR 8.4.1). However, ADR Article 8.4.2 states:

“8.4.2 Where these Rules place the burden of proof upon the Athlete or other Person to rebut a presumption or establish specified facts or circumstances, the applicable standard of proof shall be by a balance of probability, except as provided in Articles 8.4.5 and 8.4.6.”

II. Decision



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45. Until March 2026 the case was conducted on the basis that the ADRVs were denied. The Respondent denied the ADRVs, questioning the integrity of the Sample in view of what he said were serious lapses by UKAD in following the International Standard for Testing and Investigations ('ISTI'). He contended that there were failures which undermined the integrity of the collection, chain of control, storage and transport of the Sample such that there was legitimate doubt as to its integrity and identity. He filed detailed written submissions in support of those arguments²⁰.

46. However, on 13 March 2026 his Counsel submitted the following email:

"Following consideration of UKAD's Reply Submissions and Further Evidence, Mr [REDACTED] withdraws his challenge to the ADRVs, including the alleged departures from the ISTI regarding Sample collection and handling, and the alleged analytical issues and errors in the Laboratory results. Mr [REDACTED] will no longer pursue those grounds.

Mr [REDACTED] will instead confine his case to the issue of intention, namely that he had no intention to commit the ADRVs. The Respondent will additionally rely, in the alternative, on No Fault or Negligence and No Significant Fault or Negligence, and will contest any finding of Aggravating Circumstances.

Mr [REDACTED] wishes to place on record that his initial challenge to the ADRVs was advanced on genuine grounds, in light of the irregularities in Sample collection. Having carefully considered UKAD's Reply Submissions and the supporting witness and expert evidence, he is now satisfied that adequate explanations have been provided for those matters and accordingly withdraws his challenge to the ADRVs. This withdrawal reflects a genuine desire of Mr [REDACTED] to focus the Panel's attention on the issues that truly matter in this case – namely, whether Mr [REDACTED] acted with intention. His withdrawal should not be taken as any suggestion that the concerns originally raised were without merit."

²⁰ HB/pp414-433.



47. He confirmed that was his position at the start of the hearing.
48. Therefore, in light of the facts summarised herein, which are not disputed, the Respondent's admissions and the available evidence, the Tribunal is comfortably satisfied that UKAD has established each ADRV. It is worth noting that the Respondent having waived his right to B Sample Analysis, he was deemed under the ADR to have accepted the accuracy and reliability of the AAFs²¹.
49. For completeness, it should be recorded that earlier in these proceedings the Respondent's representative foreshadowed making an application to the Tribunal for it to appoint an expert witness. In the event he did not pursue that.

E. SANCTION

I. Relevant rules

50. The starting point for the period of Ineligibility to be applied is as set out in ADR Article 10.2:

"10.2 Imposition of a Period of Ineligibility for the Presence, Use or Attempted Use, or Possession of a Prohibited Substance and/or a Prohibited Method

[...]

10.2.1 Save where Article 10.2.4(a) applies, the period of Ineligibility shall be four (4) years where:

(a) The Anti-Doping Rule Violation does not involve a Specified Substance or a Specified Method, unless the Athlete or other Person can establish that the Anti-Doping Rule Violation was not intentional.

²¹ ADR Article 7.9.3.

(b) The Anti-Doping Rule Violation involves a Specified Substance or a Specified Method and UKAD can establish that the Anti-Doping Rule Violation was intentional.

10.2.2 If Article 10.2.1 does not apply, then (subject to Article 10.2.4(a)) the period of Ineligibility shall be two (2) years.

[...]"

51. A Specified Substance is a substance which is considered *"more likely to have been consumed or used by an Athlete for a purpose other than the enhancement of sport performance"*. A non-Specified substance is a substance that is likely to be consumed for that purpose. All the Prohibited Substances in this case are non-Specified Substances, except for tamoxifen, which is a Specified Substance.
52. ADR Article 10.2 creates a presumption that the non-Specified Substances are present in the Respondent's Sample because he intentionally ingested them. He has the burden of rebutting or disproving that presumption of intent. The standard of proof is, in accordance with ADR Article 8.4.2, the balance of probabilities.
53. The appropriate starting point for the Respondent's period of Ineligibility is:
 - a. Four (4) years in respect of the non-Specified Substances, unless he can establish, on the balance of probabilities, that his ADRVs were not "intentional".
 - b. Four (4) years in respect of the Specified Substance, where UKAD can establish that Mr [REDACTED]'s ADRVs were "intentional".
54. "Intentional" is defined in ADR Article 10.2.3 thus:

"As used in Article 10.2, "intentional" is meant to identify those Athletes or other Persons who engage in conduct which they know constitutes an Anti-Doping Rule Violation or



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they know that there is a significant risk that the conduct might constitute or result in an Anti-Doping Rule Violation and they manifestly disregard that risk.”

55. It encompasses both intention and recklessness, namely the disregarding of a known risk.

56. ADR Article 10.4 provides:

“10.4 Aggravating Circumstances which may increase the period of Ineligibility

If UKAD establishes, in an individual case involving an Anti-Doping Rule Violation under Article 2.1 [and / or] 2.2 [...], that Aggravating Circumstances are present that justify the imposition of a period of Ineligibility greater than the standard sanction otherwise applicable in accordance with Article 10.2 or 10.3, the period of Ineligibility otherwise applicable shall be increased by an additional period of Ineligibility of up to two (2) years depending on the seriousness of the violation and the nature of the Aggravating Circumstances, unless the Athlete or other Person can establish that they did not knowingly commit the Anti-Doping Rule Violation.”

57. “Aggravating Circumstances” are defined in the ADR as:

“Circumstances involving, or actions by, an Athlete or other Person which may justify the imposition of a period of Ineligibility greater than the standard sanction. Such circumstances and actions shall include, but are not limited to: the Athlete or other Person Used or Possessed multiple Prohibited Substances or Prohibited Methods, Used or Possessed a Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method on multiple occasions, or committed multiple other Anti-Doping Rule Violations; a normal individual would be likely to enjoy the performance-enhancing effects of the Anti-Doping Rule Violation(s) beyond the otherwise applicable period of Ineligibility; the Athlete or Person engaged in deceptive or obstructive conduct to avoid the detection or adjudication of an Anti-Doping Rule Violation; or the Athlete or other Person engaged in Tampering during Results Management. For the avoidance of doubt, the examples of circumstances and conduct described herein are not exclusive, and other similar circumstances or conduct may also justify the imposition of a longer period of Ineligibility.”



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58. In other words, the period of Ineligibility may be increased from four (4) years to up to six (6) years.

II. UKAD's case

59. UKAD's case was that the Respondent had failed to discharge his burden to show that his ADRV's were not intentional within the meaning of ADR Article 10.2.3. It submitted that the quantity and nature of the Prohibited Substances he used are highly suggestive of intentional Use – in particular for a rugby league player requiring a combination of strength, muscular power and endurance. UKAD pointed to:
- a. Drostanolone, metenolone and ostarine, given their anabolic effects, may be used to enhance lean body mass and recovery between training sessions;
 - b. GW1516 may similarly be used to enhance endurance, physique, power and recovery following training or injury;
 - c. Tamoxifen may be used to help minimise the loss of muscle mass and strength at the end of a steroid cycle, given its ability to hasten the restoration of the body's natural testosterone production following a period of anabolic androgenic steroid use (and should therefore be viewed alongside the other AAFs – particularly for drostanolone and metenolone);
 - d. Taken together, it argued that it is feasible that the substances he used could be 'stacked', i.e. using multiple substances concurrently to improve their efficacy, mitigate the risk of substance detection and to counter the side effects of other substances.
60. UKAD further submitted that reliance upon No Fault or Negligence or No Significant Fault or Negligence simply does not arise.



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61. It also argued that given the Aggravating Circumstances set out at paragraph 84 below, it was appropriate to increase the applicable period of Ineligibility from four (4) to six (6) years.

III. Respondent's case

62. The Respondent submitted that he did not commit the ADRVs intentionally. He submitted that *"the test is subjective, based on the Athlete's knowledge, and under Article 8.4.2 the required standard of proof is on the balance of probabilities"*²². He relied upon a number of factors including:

- a. He the Respondent is an amateur rugby league player who is not paid. These are his first doping offences and he pointed to his good character;
- b. The Respondent had no understanding that any products he used might contain Prohibited Substances. He did not knowingly ingest, administer, or seek out banned substances, whether for sporting or non-sporting purposes;
- c. He had received no meaningful anti-doping education from his clubs or governing bodies throughout his time as a player. He said he was never informed of prohibited substances, supplement risks, or athlete responsibilities under the Anti-Doping Rules;
- d. His use arose, he said, exclusively from a short-term bodybuilding programme undertaken for personal and aesthetic reasons (for a photoshoot and a holiday) and not to enhance rugby league performance;

²² *UKAD v Khan* SR/238/2022 [13], HB/p951.



- e. He relied upon a personal trainer who sourced and supplied the products and represented them as ordinary gym supplements. The products were provided in unlabelled packaging with no ingredient lists; and
 - f. In relation to tamoxifen, he said that was taken only briefly, on the advice of the personal trainer, to manage alleged side effects when discontinuing the supplements. He said he did not know it was a Prohibited Substance and did not take it to enhance performance for rugby.
63. It was submitted that the Respondent had no knowledge that the supplements he took at the recommendation of his personal trainer contained Prohibited Substances. Heavy reliance was placed upon his lack of knowledge of Prohibited Substances on the WADA list, the absence of anti-doping education and reliance upon the trainer²³.
64. He further sought a reduction/elimination in the period of Ineligibility on the ground that there is No Fault or Negligence or in the alternative No Significant Fault or Negligence on his part for the ADRVs.
65. Additionally, the Respondent submitted that the period of Ineligibility should not be increased on account of Aggravating Circumstances because he did not knowingly commit the ADRVs.

IV. Decision

(a) Intentional

Non-Specified Substances

66. The Respondent must disprove the presumption that the ingestion was intentional. He must establish that he did not engage in conduct which he knew constituted an ADRV or

²³ *Qerimaj v IWF* CAS 2012/A/2822, HB/p885.



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knew there was a significant risk that his conduct might constitute or result in an ADRV and manifestly disregarded that risk.

67. ADR Article 10.2.3 does not expressly state that the athlete must prove the source of the Prohibited Substance. It is not a *sine qua non* of proof of the absence of intent. However, the World Anti-Doping Code ('**WADC**'), NADP and the Court of Arbitration for Sport ('**CAS**') jurisprudence is clear that save in the most exceptional of circumstances, an athlete cannot rebut the presumption of intentional use unless they first prove exactly when and how the substance entered their system.

68. Comment 58 to the WADC states:

"While it is theoretically possible for an Athlete [...] to establish that the anti-doping rule violation was not intentional without showing how the Prohibited Substance entered one's system, it is highly unlikely that in a doping case under Article 2.1 an Athlete will be successful in proving that the Athlete acted unintentionally without establishing the source of the Prohibited Substance."

69. As the CAS recognised in *RUSADA v Valieva, ISU v Valieva & RUSADA, and WADA v RUSADA & Valieva* ('**Valieva**')²⁴:

"...[I]t is readily apparent that the most persuasive and probative evidence that the Athlete can adduce in an effort to discharge the burden is factual evidence as to the origin of the Prohibited Substance. But this is not a rule of law, it is a matter of evidence."²⁵

70. As a matter of logic, it is difficult for an athlete to prove that they did not take a substance intentionally unless they can demonstrate exactly how and when it entered their system, and those circumstances show that it was inadvertent use, not knowing or reckless use,

²⁴ *RUSADA v Valieva, ISU v Valieva & RUSADA, and WADA v RUSADA & Valieva* CAS 2023/A9451, 2023/A/9455 2023/A/9456 CAS 2023/A9451, 2023/A/9455 2023/A/9456.

²⁵ *Ibid* [359].



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on their part. As the CAS in *WADA v IWF & Caicedo*²⁶ made clear, establishing the origin of a substance requires clear evidence:

*“To establish the origin of the prohibited substance, CAS and other cases make clear that it is not sufficient for an athlete merely to protest their innocence and suggest that the substance must have entered his or her body inadvertently from some supplement, medicine or other product which the athlete was taking at the relevant time. Rather, an athlete must adduce concrete evidence to demonstrate that a particular supplement, medication or other product that the athlete took contained the substance in question.”*²⁷

71. CAS panels have ruled that in principle it may be possible to accept a denial of intentional use where there is objective evidence that satisfies the panel that the explanation for the presence of the substance in the athlete's system is contamination, even if the precise source of the contaminant cannot be established²⁸. This is not one of those exceptional cases. Even if it were, the bar is still a very high one. As for the evidential requirement in those exceptional or rare cases:

“Finally, regarding the above mentioned “extremely rare cases” in which a ADRV may be deemed unintentional even if an athlete has failed to prove the source of a prohibited substance, the Panel considers that in such a case an athlete has to establish lack of intention with other robust evidence, such as the possibility that the prohibited substance came from a specific product, the athlete’s credible testimony, evidence by the athlete’s doctors that the athlete had no intent to use a prohibited substance, or the implausibility of a scenario that the athlete intentionally used prohibited substances (CAS 2017/A/5248 and CAS 2023/A/10273). Or, as the CAS Panel in CAS 2023/A/9451, 9455 & 9456 has summarized it:

‘An athlete must provide actual evidence to support his protestations of innocence; he or she must provide ‘concrete and persuasive evidence establishing such lack of intent on

²⁶ *WADA v IWF & Caicedo* 2016/A/4377.

²⁷ *Ibid* [52].

²⁸ For example, in *WADA & UCI v Contador & RFEC*, CAS 2011/A/2384 & 2386.



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the balance of probabilities'; protestations of innocence, however credible they appear, 'carry no material weight in the analysis of intent' [...]. The same applies to a 'lack of a demonstrable sporting incentive to dope, diligent attempts to discover the origin of the prohibited substance or the athlete's clean record', which have constantly been rejected as justifications for a plea of lack of intent [...]"²⁹

72. UKAD submitted that protestations of innocence, however vehemently proclaimed, and his character, cannot be given any significant weight. The Tribunal adopted a more nuanced and balanced approach as expounded in *Valieva*:

*"[...] Protestations of innocence... will carry whatever weight they will carry in the particular circumstances of the particular case. There is no a priori reason or basis to dismiss such evidence out of hand. True it is that in the ordinary case such evidence will likely be given little weight, but there may be circumstances where such elements may be an important part of the persuasive mix."*³⁰

73. There is little doubt that the Respondent engaged in a successful bodybuilding programme. He may well have done so with a trainer and taken supplements when doing so. All of that is consistent with the Respondent's evidence, that of his wife and [REDACTED], as well as the screenshots. However, that gets the Respondent only so far. He must prove the source of the substance and for the following reasons, the Tribunal is not satisfied that he has established that on the balance of probabilities:

- a. The crux of this account he gave lacks inherent credibility. It amounts to this: over the course of three months, he took and injected himself with products which came in unmarked and unlabelled boxes, without knowing what they were or what they contained. Naive or gullible does not begin accurately to characterise such conduct if it occurred.

²⁹ *WADA & World Athletics v Knighton*, CAS 2024/A/10800 & 10802 [112].

³⁰ *Valieva* (n 24) [363].

- b. There is no evidence of the nature of any such supplements he may have been given. There is no evidence of the ingredients thereof.
- c. There is no clear evidence of the quantity in which he took any such supplements.
- d. There is no physical evidence that such supplements ever existed. For example, any remains, container/s, packaging or even photographs thereof.
- e. There is no scientific evidence which supports his case on the route of ingestion.
- f. There is no evidence from the trainer, whose identify has not been established beyond the vague '██████'.
- g. There is no reference to any such supplements in the screenshot of the training programme from the trainer.
- h. The trainer's alleged admission to the Respondent lacks detail and, frankly, credibility. It did not feature at all in his witness statement and there was no explanation as to why. Mrs ██████ has no direct knowledge of it. It also did not feature in her witness statement.
- i. ██████ did not and could not give evidence that he saw supplements being supplied by the trainer, nor of course if there were any, the ingredients thereof.
- j. The stated timing of his cessation of use of the substances is not wholly consistent with (1) the pharmacokinetic evidence of Professor Cowan and (2) the screenshot, which was not the Respondent's, which suggests the programme continuing into the next year (2025).

74. It follows that the Respondent has failed to discharge his burden of proving that the ADRVs concerning the non-Specified Substances were not intentional.



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75. However, even if the Tribunal was persuaded that the Respondent had established the source of the non-Specified Substances, that would not have been an end to the issue. It would still have been incumbent upon him to prove that the use thereof was not intentional. The Tribunal considered this and concluded that he would and did fail in this respect also. The reasons can be stated shortly.
76. On his own case he deliberately used supplements which he knew would help him lose fat and build muscle. There was much focus in this case as to whether the use of such substances would benefit his bodybuilding or rugby league. With respect, they are not mutually exclusive. The substances used by the Respondent enabled the maintenance or increase of muscle mass and reduction in fat. He knew that. Both have obvious benefits to both bodybuilding and rugby league. To increase muscle and reduce fat has obvious training and other benefits to an athlete such as a rugby league player. It is nonsense to suggest the contrary.
77. The Respondent made no real and certainly no proper enquiry as to what those supplements were or what they contained. At the very least, he must have known that there is a significant risk that such conduct might constitute or result in an ADRV and he manifestly disregarded that risk.
78. So far as his lack of anti-doping education is concerned, that is not relevant to determining Fault, only to assessing the degree thereof. The Respondent cannot pray in aid his claimed ignorance of the ADR or his liability to testing. If that were the case, the ignorant and/or wilfully blind athlete would be in a better position than the educated and informed. That argument also ignores his core responsibilities under the ADR which include *per* ADR Article 1.3.1:

“Core responsibilities under these Rules

It is the personal responsibility of each Athlete:



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- (a) to acquaint themselves, and to ensure that each Person (including medical personnel) from whom they take advice is acquainted, with all of the requirements of these Rules, including (without limitation) being aware of what constitutes an Anti-Doping Rule Violation and of the substances and methods that have been included on the Prohibited List;*
- (b) to comply with these Rules in all respects at all times;*
- (c) to take full responsibility for what they Use;*
- (d) to carry out research regarding any products or substances which they intend to Use (prior to such Use) to ensure that Using them will not constitute or result in an Anti-Doping Rule Violation. Such research shall, at a minimum, include a reasonable internet search of:*
 - i) the name of the product or substance;*
 - ii) the ingredients/substances listed on the product or substance label; and*
 - iii) other related information revealed through research of points (i) and (ii); [...].”*

79. Therefore, even on his own case, the Respondent failed to discharge the burden of establishing that the ADRVs involving the non-Specified Substances were not intentional.

Specified Substance

80. The Respondent's case is that he knew he was taking tamoxifen as it was coming from a marked box. For reasons explained above, he cannot rely on his claim that he was not aware that it is a Prohibited Substance. Ignorance or wilful blindness is not an adequate answer. The Tribunal agrees with these observations:

“Even using a medication or other ‘pharmaceutical product’ could be enough, if done without obtaining an assurance from a properly qualified person that it contained no prohibited substances. Even if [the] athlete was not specifically aware that the medication



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or similar product contained a prohibited substance, the risk that it might do so could be so obvious that taking it without checking amounts to wilful blindness, and so to (indirect) intent...

...the more blindingly obvious the risk that the product in issue contained a prohibited substance, the less likely it will be that a panel will accept the athlete's insistence that they did not appreciate that risk [...]"³¹

81. The Respondent was taking a product to address, he said, the side effects of other substances he had taken. He made no enquiry at all about it. At the very least, the Tribunal is satisfied that UKAD has established the Respondent knew that in doing so there was a significant risk that such conduct might constitute or result in an ADRV and he manifestly disregarded that risk.

(b) Fault or negligence

82. Since the Respondent has not rebutted the presumption of intentional use, consideration of No (or No Significant) Fault or Negligence does not arise. However, it could only arise on his case which is the deliberate use of products from unmarked boxes, without knowing what they were or what they contained and without making any proper enquiry. With respect, that is a classic exemplar of significant fault.
83. Since UKAD has established such use in respect of tamoxifen, consideration of No (or No Significant) Fault or Negligence is precluded.

V. Aggravating circumstances

84. UKAD has established the following Aggravating Circumstances:
- a. This case involved multiple Prohibited Substances and/or their Metabolite(s) namely Ostarine, GW1516 Metabolite (GW1516-sulfone), GW1516 Metabolite (GW1516-

³¹ Lewis & Taylor, 4th ed., C17.8.

sulfoxide), Tamoxifen Metabolite (3-hydroxy-4-methoxytamoxifen), Drostanolone, Drostanolone Metabolite (3 α -hydroxy-2 α -methyl-5 α -androstan-17-one) and Metenolone.

- b. On any view the Respondent took such substances, repeatedly over a sustained period of time; and
- c. The Respondent was a senior player (■■■ years old at the time of his test) and he was sufficiently experienced to know the risks of using such an array of Prohibited Substances.

85. However, The Tribunal does not accept, as UKAD argued that his conduct was *“inherently dangerous to his opposition players”*³².

86. In light of those circumstances, it is appropriate to increase the applicable period of Ineligibility from four (4) to six (6) years.

VI. Commencement

87. The period of Ineligibility will commence on the day the Respondent was provisionally suspended, namely 23 April 2025, since the Tribunal understands he has not participated in sport since that date (ADR Article 10.13.2). There is no sensible basis to start it earlier.

F. SUMMARY

88. For the reasons set out the Tribunal:

- a. Finds the ADRVs proved;
- b. Imposes a period of Ineligibility of six (6) years; and

³² UKAD Submissions, §64b, HB/p411.



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- c. Which period of Ineligibility shall commence on 23 April 2025 and end at 11:59pm on 22 April 2031.

G. RIGHT OF APPEAL

89. In accordance with ADR Article 13.5 of the NADP Procedural Rules any party who wishes to appeal against this decision must lodge a Notice of Appeal with the NADP Secretariat within 21 days of receipt of this decision.
90. Pursuant to ADR Article 13.4.2(b), the Appeal should be filed to the National Anti-Doping Panel, located at Sport Resolutions, 1 Paternoster Lane, London, EC4M 7BQ (resolve@sportresolutions.com).



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Christopher Quinlan KC

Chair, on behalf of the Tribunal

London, UK

9 June 2026

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