

## **Banned Anti-Obesity Drug Was Administered To Essendon Players**

**Tags:** essendon football, Melbourne Football Club, AOD-9604, anabolic agents, peptides, EPO, masking agents, testosterone, anabolic steroids

The [Essendon Football Club](#), on the eve of ANZAC Day, made a public admission that the anti-obesity drug AOD-9604 had been administered to some of its players last year.

The announcement comes as devastating news for the Melbourne Football Club, with the World Anti-Doping Agency stating categorically that AOD-9604 is a banned substance. The determination of WADA was made with respect to substances that are prohibited at all times and appears under the heading 'Non-Approved Substances' as any pharmacological substance which is not addressed by any of the subsequent sections of the List and with no current approval by any governmental regulatory authority for human therapeutic use (e.g. drugs under pre-clinical or clinical development or discontinued, designer drugs, substances approved only for veterinary use) is prohibited.

Many in the sports fraternity said the banning by WADA of AOD-9604 with regard to it having never received government regulatory approval would not carry weight retrospectively, but the wording of the relevant clause is a 'catch-all' that encompasses all and any drugs that have failed to receive the necessary tick required for human use. There have also been claims going around that WADA had earlier provided, in writing, a determination that AOD-9604 was indeed not a banned substance and the Bombers said they relied on the authenticity of that document with respect to the use of the drug.

John Fahey, the head of WADA, said he has never heard of WADA informing an individual club on what's on the prohibited list. The section relating to 'Non-Approved Substances' is numbered S0, which comes before a group of other sections numbered S1 to S5 that cover the full gamut of drugs specifically banned under the [World Anti-Doping Agency Code](#) – like anabolic agents, peptides, EPO, and masking agents.

The use of AOD-9604, in accordance with the WADA code, brings with it the standard two-year ban. A reading of the explanatory notes within the WADA Code attached to rules 10.5.1 and 10.5.2 indicates that players banned for administering AOD-9604 will have a very hard time getting their penalties overturned as the notes specify the administration of a prohibited substance by the athlete's personal physician or trainer without disclosure to the athlete does not constitute an acceptable excuse to have a ban overturned.

If the bans are imposed, it could be argued that the players were simply complying with instructions given to them by people they believed were in a position of trust, who had been installed within the club by its administration after a test of due diligence and it may be said the young men in question were simply acting on good faith when asked to submit to certain medical protocols. The examples of young athletes in countries like East Germany back in the 1970s and '80s can be cited wherein athletes took sinister substances like testosterone and anabolic steroids after being wrongly told that there were only vitamin pills.

However, a big majority of sports thinkers believe it is hard to see any leniency being granted to those who were administered banned substances given the framework of the WADA Code and the way it has been applied since it was codified.