

Harsher Global Doping Code Planned By WADA

Top officials of the World Anti-Doping Agency are honing a new global code that includes doubling suspensions for some drug cheats. The executive committee and foundation board of the anti-doping agency recently met in Montreal for reviewing the third draft of the proposed 2015 [World Anti-Doping code](#) that will come up for approval at the November 12-15 World Conference on Doping in Sport in Johannesburg.

Last November, the anti-doping agency revealed that it has plans to increase bans for serious violations from two years to four years and its president, John Fahey, said the final revision was intended to make the code shorter and sharper. Fahey remarked the World Anti-Doping Agency had received almost 4,000 individual comments about the code since starting the review in November 2011. The updates follow a two-year consultation process, which ended in March. WADA received a total of 174 submissions, which were revised to create a new version of the international code.

In a WADA statement, Fahey remarked WADA values the input of these stakeholders and is pleased with the level of their engagement throughout the review process and added that WADA continually seeks to enhance the framework that supports the anti-doping system, and revisions depend on these contributions.

Presently, athletes found guilty of a first major doping offense are handed a ban of two years with any subsequent positive test incurring a life-ban. The longer ban would be introduced for offenses that include the use of anabolic steroids, human growth hormone, masking agents and trafficking, according to a second draft of the 2015 WADA code that was reviewed. Fahey said there is a strong desire in the world of sport, from governments and within the anti-doping community to strengthen the sanction articles in the code and this second draft has done that, doubling the length of suspension for serious offenders and widening the scope for anti-doping organizations to impose lifetime bans.

The proposed new code also defines punishments in cases involving coaches and other athletic support staff among other amendments with an emphasis on testing and investigations along with the longer sanctions for athletes caught using prohibited performance-enhancing substances. Fahey remarked quality WADA-approved testing programs are needed to ensure that testing is effective and that sophisticated cheaters are found, which will ultimately advance the fight against doping in sport. He also remarked the agency heard a strong demand from athletes to strengthen the consequences for those who intentionally set out to get an advantage by doping and added we are in the business to protect the overwhelming majority of clean athletes around the world and the way you protect clean athletes and support them is to deal properly and effectively with the cheats.

The new code is expected to come into effect in 2015.

The agency also decided to immediately implement a modification to increase the threshold level for marijuana to ensure that athletes using the substance in competition will be detected. The Kenyan government was also urged by the Athlete Committee to put in place an independent inquiry to investigate the [doping allegations](#) involving some Kenyan athletes.