

UEFA Gets Tough On Doping

Players will undergo blood tests next season as part of the new anti-doping regimen of UEFA, the Union of European Football Associations, in all competitions run by European soccer's governing body.

Till now, UEFA has only conducted blood tests at international tournaments-Euro 2008 and 2012 but the detection regime is to be extended to the Champions League and Europa League from this month. Players may now be asked at doping controls to give urine samples, blood samples, or both, and checks will be made in and out of competition. On its website, UEFA said out-of-competition checks would only be carried out if players or teams had not informed testers where they would be when required to be tested.

The new rules follow a [UEFA anti-doping panel](#) meeting that was held late last year. Chairman Dr Jacques Lienard said at the meeting that we cannot say that football is free of doping and it is important UEFA remains vigilant in its fight against doping and all products that are associated with doping.

UEFA anti-doping assistant Richard Grisdale said if you make a mistake or don't know the rules and you test positive, you will be banned--you will suffer, your team can suffer. Grisdale added that doping was cheating the team you're playing against and cheating your teammates and went on to add that you are responsible for everything in your body and if you test positive, you cannot blame somebody else. The UEFA anti-doping assistant added you need to take responsibility for the medicines you take, any supplements, what you eat, what you drink.

In another development, UEFA made an announcement that there were no positive doping tests in last season's Champions League and Europa League after 1374 doping controls were carried out in Europe's major club competitions in 2012/13. In the [Champions League](#), UEFA conducts both in and out-of-competition doping controls. A total of 813 samples were collected from players during 2012-13, with over 67 percent of the samples analyzed for EPO.

The Union of European Football Associations in collaboration with the WADA-accredited laboratory in Lausanne is also launching a study to analyze the steroid profiles of almost 900 players who have been tested at least three times in UEFA competitions since 2008. The goal of this study is to identify the potential prevalence of steroid use across European football by using data from previous doping controls. This study will be anonymous and its findings will not result in any player incurring an anti-doping rule violation.

The European soccer's governing body recently warned the young players at the UEFA European Women's Under-17 Championship of the dangers of match-fixing and urged them to stay clear of this scourge on the game. UEFA intelligence officer Graham Peaker said UEFA has a zero tolerance policy on match-fixing and this means that if we identify anybody that has been involved – a player, a referee or a club – they will be kicked out of the game and they will get a red card from football. Peaker added the UEFA had set up a betting fraud detection system in which approximately 30,000 domestic league and cup matches and UEFA matches throughout Europe are monitored for irregular betting patterns each year.