

European Hurdles Champion Out Of Commonwealth Games

Welsh 400m hurdler Rhys Williams has been provisionally suspended from Glasgow Commonwealth Games after he tested positive for a banned substance. The 400m hurdle European champion said he “devastated” to hear about his positive drugs test and denied any wrongdoing.

Ranked 14th in the world this year, Williams has the opportunity to appeal against the initial suspension at a full hearing before the National Anti-Doping Panel. Williams, the co-captain of Wales’ Commonwealth Games athletics squad, was using the Mountain Fuel [supplements](#).

Recently, Wales 800m runner [Gareth Warburton](#) also received a suspension and both athletes have been using Night Fuel, a chocolate-tasting drink high in protein. A spokesman for Mountain Fuel confirmed an internal and external investigation is going on to find out what has happened.

The 30-year-old Williams, son of Welsh rugby great JJ Williams, won the European title in Helsinki in 2012. Williams was also the Welsh U15 backstroke swimming champion. He won the European Youth Olympics in 2001 and also won the 400 meters hurdles at the 2005 European U23 Championships. The 30-year-old was expected to be one of the chief rivals of Dai Greene for gold at the Glasgow Games.

Welsh Athletics announced that it has already launched an internal review after the two failed drugs tests and remarked it was obviously concerned that this is the second anti-doping violation by a senior Welsh athlete.

Meanwhile, Mike Hooper, the chief executive of the [Commonwealth Games Federation](#), has remarked that he does not believe Rhys Williams’ failed drug test in any way puts a cloud over the Games. Hooper added he thinks it sends a very strong and clear signal to anyone who would go down that path that if you take that choice, you will be caught. Hooper, addressing a daily briefing in the host city, said the case of Williams was picked up in pre-Games testing in the UK and was not part of the Games-time testing program. He went on to remark that a “totally different” approach is now being taken to testing that does not simply focus on competition time. Hooper further remarked the emphasis now is on working in collaboration with a number of other anti-doping organizations and said the reality is combating doping in sport is a fundamental priority for the Commonwealth Games Federation.

Former Wales’ athlete Baroness Grey-Thompson said she was shocked to learn about the positive doping test of Williams. She said it is a huge blow for Wales and for athletics and she does not think we ever would have expected anything like this from him.

Matt Newman, the chief executive of Welsh Athletics, explained the B sample of Williams was tested and that came back to match the A same results. Newman added that what will now happen is we shall have the opportunity to go in front of an anti-doping panel but that is not

likely to happen until the autumn. He also remarked it is really now in the interim period for Rhys to gather as much information as possible to make a case for the defense.