

UFC Announces Revamped Drug Policy

Earlier this year, the [Ultimate Fighting Championship](#) (UFC) announced that it will bring a significant transformation to its drug testing policy. On Wednesday, the largest mixed martial arts promotion company in the world turned the dream into a reality.

A series of dramatic changes were outlined by [Jeff Novitzky](#), the UFC's new Vice President of Athlete Health and Performance, at a press conference in Las Vegas. This revamped drug policy is created with a vision of being the best anti-doping program in all of professional sports. The new program is expected to roll out on July 1 and will be under the leadership of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA). Novitzky announced the entire roster of UFC of 500+ fighters will be subject to unannounced, year-round in- and out-of-competition testing including both blood and urine testing, with the possibility of a collection that may occur at any place, any time, with no notice.

The announcement comes a few days after the Nevada Athletic Commission announced a series of sweeping changes to its drug testing program.

Under the revamped UFC drug policy, fighters would be tested for in- and out-of-competition for [anabolic steroids](#), growth hormones, peptides, blood doping drugs, and methods. Fighters who fail test for the first time will fail a suspension of 2 years with a possibility of a 4-year suspension for "aggravating circumstances". The second offense would mean double the sanction for the first offense and the third offense would be double the sanction of the second offense. Fighters would be subjected to in-competition testing only for marijuana, cocaine, other stimulants, and glucocorticosteroids. Athletes failing test for these specified substances, for the first time, will face a suspension of one year with a possibility of 2 additional years for "aggravating circumstances". The second offense under specified substances' policy would mean double the sanction for the first offense and the third offense would be double the sanction of the second offense.

The term "aggravating circumstances" across several spectrums was defined by Novitzky including "egregious intent, conspiracy or agreements with others to attempt to defeat the testing system," along with past offenses and multiple offenses, all modeled after the World Anti-Doping Agency code. In-competition testing was defined by Novitzky as the

time period between six hours prior to weigh-ins until six hours immediately following the fight of an athlete.

The UFC also announced that there would be disqualification of result of the bout, and forfeiture of title, ranking, and purse or other compensation in case of anti-doping violation during or leading up to a bout. It was also announced that any purse, compensation or fine forfeited will be put towards cost of anti-doping program and/or anti-doping research of the UFC.

USADA CEO Travis Tygart today is a huge win for the athletes in the UFC as they set a new standard for all professional sport in protecting the rights and health of clean athletes and the integrity of competition. Tygart added the UFC has taken a bold and courageous leap forward for the good of its athletes in developing a comprehensive and cutting edge anti-doping policy expressly modeled on the key elements of the WADA Anti-Doping Program and by having it run by an independent and transparent National Anti-Doping Organization.