

Suburban Footballers Face Scrutiny Like Elite AFL Counterparts From ASADA

The Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority tested players from the Essendon District Football League B-grade match on Saturday between [Doutta Stars](#) and Craigieburn. This is seen by many as a stern warning to suburban footballers that they could face as much scrutiny as their elite AFL counterparts.

ASADA officials randomly tested four players from the two teams in the Essendon District Football League. Stars team manager Robert Lamberti said he had never heard of Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority's officials testing district football players. The ASADA officials warned the clubs and players they could face a two-year ban if they did not comply.

The Doutta Stars are coached by Dean Wallis, former Essendon player and official who used to maintain the spreadsheets during the club's controversial supplements program run by [Stephen Dank](#). Dank, who was banned by the NRL and AFL, has been a sought-after figure by community football clubs and had been a guest speaker at a recent Doutta Stars club function.

In a statement, ASADA said we can confirm the Australian Football League (Victoria) Limited contracted ASADA to conduct tests at this level. The statement added the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority implements an intelligence-based testing program, working with sports to target athletes and competitions at highest risk in an effort to deter and detect [doping](#).

The anti-doping agency's statement further said we thought it was important in this instance to clarify reports in the media while it is not our normal practice to discuss specifics of our operations. It was further added it is important for athletes to understand that ASADA can conduct testing on any athlete who participates in a sport with an anti-doping policy and it was also commented that every athlete, regardless of the level of competition, has the right to compete in a sport free from doping.

It was reportedly said by Wallis that he had been told the need to test the players had come from Canberra. Meanwhile, AFL Victoria talent manager John Hook remarked he

welcomes any drug testing done at suburban levels. Hook added he thinks the more we can afford with testing to try and combat that (PEDS and illicit drugs) and education, they both go hand in hand, and he thinks that is good for the sport.

AFL revealed the tests were conducted at the request of AFL Victoria. This is not the first time that drug testing has happened at VFL level but it is believed this is the first time such an investigation has taken place in the EDFL.

AFL Victoria, in wake of the February 2013 Essendon supplements scandal, had then released a statement warning that players at any level of competition run under the Laws of Australian Football were bound by the AFL Anti-Doping Code.

In 2013, a report by the Australian Crime Commission detailed links between the sport and the criminal world and mentioned "sub-elite athletes" who were "considered a high-risk group for doping". It was also disclosed by the ACC that hormones and peptides were being used in competitions below the elite level.