

## UFC Vice President Defends IV Ban

Jeff Novitzky, UFC Vice President of Athlete Health and Performance, has remarked the upcoming ban on IV usage for post-weigh-in rehydration is an important aspect of what he considers is the strongest anti-doping program in professional sports. Novitzky added he hopes to help athletes contend with the new policy by providing alternatives to IV-based rehydration.

Recently, USADA CEO Travis Tygart disclosed that fighters using IV bags filled with saline solution to rehydrate would find themselves in violation of the new drug testing policy of the UFC. IV-rehydration is a common practice among MMA fighters and a big majority of fighters cut extreme amounts of weight in the day before their pre-fight weigh-ins and then try to gain that weight back as quickly as possible through good-old fashioned drinking and IVs.

At a moderated Q&A session at the UFC's International Fight Week in Las Vegas, Novitzky said the upcoming ban on IV usage is definitely a hot-button issue and the UFC is going out and educating its fighters. Novitzky, who is best known as the BALCO investigator and agent for the Food and Drug Administration investigating the use of [steroids in professional sports](#), remarked this policy follows rules of the World Anti-Doping Agency and their list of prohibited substances and prohibited methods, and the World Anti-Doping Code prohibits the use of IV transfusions in excess of 50 m/L. The UFC Vice President also commented that there is historical evidence that athletes have used Intravenous (IV) in those amounts in an attempt to defeat drug tests.

The former Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) investigator came to national prominence through his critical role in the Bay Area Laboratory Co-operative (BALCO) [doping scandal](#) that rocked Major League Baseball. Novitzky was appointed as the UFC Vice President of Athlete Health and Performance in April this year. On July 1, the UFC launched its [revamped anti-doping policy](#) and Novitzky remarked he assisted in developing the guidelines for the program based on his learned lessons through extensive interaction with athletes in other sports, including past doping cheats who discussed their motivation for using performance enhancing drugs.

Novitzky also remarked they did not trust that their sports league cared enough about it as the system was not strong enough. He also commented they also did not have any trust their opponent or their teammate wasn't using, who they were competing with for contracts and money.

This announcement was not appreciated by many MMA fighters, including featherweight champion Jose Aldo who said he will ignore the decision and use intravenous injections to recover following weigh-ins. Former two-division UFC champion B.J. Penn (16-10-2 MMA, 12-9-2 UFC), who was notorious for his willingness to fight at any weight throughout his career, was on the other side and said he welcomes the IV ban. Penn labeled athletes that complain about the ban as "wimps." The ex-two-division UFC champion was recently inducted into the "modern era" branch of the UFC Hall of Fame prior to UFC 189 as part of the UFC International Fight Week festivities in Las Vegas.