

Doping Cases Threaten International Cricket

Richard Ings, the former head of the [Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority](#), has slammed the “inconsistent” testing procedures of cricket in an interview with the *New York Times*.

The anti-doping expert lifted the lid on the growing problem faced by international cricket in the recent past in the game’s shortest format.

The sport has received a huge shot in the arm with the evolution of T20 cricket. However, some experts are of the view that the pressure of faster-paced game play could soon bring a drug issue of gigantic proportions into the game.

Recently, West Indian T20 specialist and Big Bash star [Andre Russell](#) was given a ban for a breach in the rules. Russell was banned from playing professional cricket both internationally and domestically until late January 2018. In 2015, the 28-year-old all-rounder failed to file his whereabouts on three separate occasions, an offence equal to failing a drug test under Anti-Doping Agency guidelines. However, the West Indian T20 specialist played on for 11 months, a period in which he helped the West Indies win the World Twenty20 tournament, before he was finally suspended.

In the past, Shane Warne was caught in one of cricket’s most publicized drug offences in 2003 after he was caught with Moduretic, a prescription drug banned by the International Cricket Council as it can mask the presence of anabolic androgenic steroids. The bowler tearfully admitting to using the diuretic and was banned for a year. Warne went on to make a return to international cricket in early 2004 to complete one of the greatest careers under the baggy green.

Afghanistan T20 powerhouse Mohammad Shahzad tested positive for [Clenbuterol](#), a banned substance, before being suspended. The wicketkeeper-batsman from Afghanistan is yet to receive the full outcome of his disciplinary hearing.

Ings remarked cricket is a high-risk sport for the use of performance enhancing drugs. The former head of the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority also commented that he would rate the risk of doping in cricket as high and the quality of the sport’s coordinated global anti-doping efforts as poor. Ings also said that risk is a function of motive and opportunity and added motive in cricket exists because selections are highly competitive, contracts involve massive sums of money and injuries are common.

Presently, it seems that the ICC just could not monitor anti-doping efforts in cricket with the number of domestic T20 leagues growing. The Council conducts out-of-competition testing on cricketers who have played international matches in the previous two years but players who have not played international cricket in this period, or have retired from the international game, are not subject to testing by the world governing body of cricket. Drug testing depends on national governing bodies and anti-doping authorities for these cricketers. There are inconsistent standards of testing across the different leagues among all 10 full-member countries.

In England, only 193 drug tests were conducted on professional male or female cricketers in the 12-month period that ended in March.

Paul Dimeo, an expert on doping in sport from the University of Stirling, said it seems a low number and not much of deterrence. Dimeo also said it also makes it too hard to ascertain if there is a risk of doping behaviors occurring.