



## Topic Area 4: ILLICIT DRUGS IN SPORT



LESSON PLAN/GUIDE



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority



Australian Government  
National Integrity of Sport Unit



# Unit 1: INTRODUCTION TO ILLICIT DRUGS IN SPORT

**Level:** Adaptable for Years 9 through 12.

**Subjects:** The following Unit aligns to key knowledge statements in:

- Some senior Physical Education curriculum.
- Some senior Legal Studies curriculum (effectiveness of laws/rules).

## Teacher Notes

The Lesson Plan/Guide for this Topic, and others in this Topic series, provides background information, resources and ideas to assist teachers in developing a lesson (or series of lessons), which addresses the key concepts articulated in relevant areas of the curriculum.



Teachers should introduce the two Units within this Topic by providing an introduction using the **lesson overview** below and highlight the **learning objectives** to be achieved. The teacher should then introduce some of the **key questions** that will be investigated and choose some of the activities (and relevant resources) to examine and explore these further. The **extended learning activity** can be used as a homework or take-away activity and **further resources** can be provided for students who wish to delve deeper into the topic. Learning time for each Unit will be determined by how many activities the teacher wishes to analyse and discuss.

## LESSON OVERVIEW

Illicit drugs include illegal drugs (such as cannabis), pharmaceutical drugs (such as pain-killers, tranquilisers) when used for non-medical purposes (strictly an illicit behaviour), and other substances used inappropriately (such as inhalants). Illicit drugs fall into three main categories: stimulants (amphetamines, cocaine), depressants (opiates including heroin) and hallucinogens (LSD, Magic Mushrooms).



There is increasing concern from sporting authorities about the use of illicit drugs in sport, particularly in sub-elite and local community sport settings. The recent Australian Crime Commission report '*Organised Crime and Drugs in Sport*' established that illicit drugs, performance enhancing drugs and supplements are not mutually exclusive; highlighting that some illegal drugs used socially may also be used to enhance sporting performance.

The use of illicit drugs is not only harmful to athletes, it brings sport into disrepute, and its use by high-profile sportspeople sets a poor example for fans and supporters.

In this Unit, students will examine the extent of the issue in sport and discover how government agencies, backed by national frameworks, strategies and plans, work with sports to address illicit drug issues. Students will closely examine the Australian Government's Illicit Drugs in Sport Program and review how it has supported national sporting organisations to ensure Australian athletes have the education and support to make the right choices when it comes to illicit drugs.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Demonstrate knowledge of the World Anti Doping Authority's (WADA) rules around illicit drug use in sport and out of competition use of drugs.
- Understand the elements of the Australian Government's approach to addressing illicit drugs in sport.
- Critical analysis of the key elements of an Illicit Drugs in Sport Policy.
- Recognise the extent of prescription medication use in sport and its potential effects.



## KEY QUESTIONS

1. Is illicit drug use common in sport?
2. What are the WADA rules around illicit drug use in sport?
3. How does WADA view out of competition use of illicit drugs?
4. What is the difference between anti-doping rules and illicit drug rules?
5. Do you think WADA should play a more prominent role in addressing illicit drugs in sport?
6. What is the Australian Government's approach to addressing illicit drugs in sport?
7. What are the key elements of an Illicit Drugs in Sport Policy?
8. What are the rules around prescription medication use in sport?
9. How could you implement an Illicit Drugs in Sport program within your sport?



## ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

1. Consider the arguments presented by Daryl Adair, Associate Professor of Sport Management, University of Technology Sydney.<sup>1</sup> Should WADA play a more significant role in addressing illicit drugs in sport?
2. Cocaine, ice, heroin, ecstasy, cannabis or any other illegal drugs are not banned by WADA out of competition. Does this send a double message to sportspeople that drugs such as these are not seen as contrary to the integrity/spirit of sport? Discuss.
3. Examine the Australian Government approach to addressing illicit drugs in sport.<sup>2,3</sup> What are the differences and overlap between anti-doping rules and illicit drug rules?
4. Review Rowing Australia's Illicit Drugs in Sport Policy<sup>4</sup> and compare it to the Australian Rugby Union's approach.<sup>5</sup>
5. Look at Surfing Australia's Illicit Drugs in Sport Program. What are the unique features of this program? Are there any other activities that you would add to enhance the effectiveness of the program?
6. Devise your own Illicit Drugs in Sport Program campaign. You could use ambassadors, education programs, social media or develop a new app. Tell us how you would roll out the campaign and how you would fund it.



7. The use of sedative-based sleeping pills by athletes has created recent concern in sporting circles with fears of sportspeople falling into a vicious cycle of addiction to stimulants and sedatives. Research the Grant Hackett case<sup>6</sup> and make recommendations on how athletes can negate the need for the potentially dangerous use of prescription drugs to get to sleep.

### Extended Learning Activity: ILLICIT DRUG POLICIES IN SPORT OFFICER COURSE



The Illicit Drugs In Sport (IDIS) Online Education Program<sup>7</sup> provides practical tools and strategies to assist athletes, coaches and sports administrators to make appropriate choices when faced with illicit drug issues in their sport.

Complete the IDIS Officer course to develop your skills as a budding sports administrator to implement an Illicit Drugs in Sport program within your sport.

### FURTHER RESOURCES

- [Illicit Drugs In Sport \(IDIS\) Online Education Program](#)<sup>8</sup>
- Sports Medicine Australia<sup>9</sup> has information and education modules on drugs in sport.
- Australian Drug Foundation<sup>10</sup>
- ADF's 'The Other Talk'<sup>11</sup>





## Unit 2: CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES

**Level:** Adaptable for Years 9 through 12.

**Subjects:** The following Unit aligns to key knowledge statements in:

- Some senior Physical Education curriculum.
- Some senior Legal Studies curriculum (effectiveness of laws/rules).

### LESSON OVERVIEW

The use of illicit drugs can affect sporting performance and careers, destroy reputations, impact friends, families, teams and community support, and potentially lead athletes into the murky world of crime syndicates and other forms of integrity compromise like match-fixing.

In sport (and life) there are many choices made every day about performance, training and health. Olympic and World Champion Australian cyclist Anna Meares said:

*"We all have choices, we all have decisions to make and whichever choice you make will have ramifications - positive or negative. If you're prepared to make decisions that are incorrect or bad, then you need to be prepared to take the repercussions that come from that."<sup>12</sup>*

Unfortunately, there are many examples of how drugs have destroyed the careers of up-and-coming or successful athletes who have made the wrong choices.

In this Unit, students will examine the dangers of illicit drug use in sport and see how sport is used as an important tool in modelling positive behaviours that can potentially reduce the number of people taking harmful drugs. Students will explore the link between illicit drug use in sport and match-fixing, and analyse the role coaches, sports scientist and support personnel have in guiding athletes' choices.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Awareness of the dangers of illicit drug use and their effect on a person's health and sporting performance.
- Understand how illicit drug use by athletes can make them vulnerable to exploitation by criminals.
- Critically analyse the role coaches, sports scientists and support personnel have in influencing the choices of athletes in sport and how ethical behaviour can be enforced.
- Discover what therapeutic drug use exemptions are and when they can be made.
- Investigate the issue of prescription painkillers in sport.



## KEY QUESTIONS

1. How can illicit drug use affect the careers of sportspeople?
2. What are some of the impacts on athletes who have made poor decisions in relation to drugs?
3. Describe the link between illicit drug use in sport and match-fixing.
4. How are athletes who take drugs vulnerable to criminal elements?
5. While it is always an athlete's responsibility to know what goes into their body, recent incidents in sport have shown the influence that coaches and support personnel such as sports science staff can have. What are the rules governing the behaviour of these people in sport?
6. How can we better educate athletes, parents, coaches and support staff to helping all involved understand the issues surrounding drug use in sport?
7. What are Therapeutic Use Exemptions and how can athletes be granted an exemption?
8. What are the risks around the use of prescription painkillers by athletes in sport?



## ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

1. Watch Ironman champion Ali Day talk about the dangers of illicit drugs in sport.<sup>13</sup> List some of the reasons why sportspeople should not take illicit drugs.
2. Complete the IDIS Online Education Athlete course<sup>14</sup> and follow the story of four athletes who have it all in front of them to see some of the impacts of their decisions.
3. The Australian Crime Commission report '*Organised Crime and Drugs in Sport*' revealed that there are many threats to the integrity of sport, particularly in relation to the threats posed by illicit drug use and criminal associations: '*Illicit drug use by athletes leaves them particularly vulnerable to exploitation for other criminal purposes, including match fixing and fraud arising out of the provision of 'inside information'*'.<sup>15</sup>

In groups, discuss the link between illicit drug use in sport, supply and distribution networks, criminal infiltration and match-fixing.

4. Evidence suggests it is coaches and sports science support staff who seem to be the principle influence and source of information for athletes when it comes to starting or not starting to take banned substances.<sup>16</sup> Review the AIS Sports Science Sports Medicine Best Practice Principles<sup>17</sup> and list the key elements of the framework.
5. Review the information on the ASADA website on prescription medication use in sport. Can you research and find some examples of high-profile Australian sportspeople who have received bans for such use. Then review ASADA's Therapeutic Use Exemption information<sup>18</sup> and discuss what the athletes in these situations could and should have done.
6. Prescription painkillers are used to assist athletes' recover from sports injuries, but evidence suggests this can lead to risks of addiction. A 2014 study in the Journal of Adolescent Health found that male teens that played sports were more likely to abuse opioid medication, compared to their peers who didn't participate in sports. Read the article '*Teen athletes becoming hooked on prescription painkillers*'<sup>19</sup> and discuss some of the ways we might be able to mitigate these risks.



### Extended Learning Activity: NAVIGATING THE PARTY SCENE



After state and national championships some athletes like to party and let their hair down like most other people. It is in these social settings at parties or nightclubs where alcohol and illicit drugs are often available that choices and consequences are crucial. Ask students to consider the following scenario:

You've trained all year, went well at the nationals and are now kicking back and relaxing over a few drinks at a nightclub. As the night rolls on, someone offers you a blue pill and says "No doping control has a test for this - let's party. You know that ecstasy is on the prohibited drug list but it is out of competition time now so it shouldn't matter? Your mates say it's not performance enhancing so what's the drama and encourage you to take it. Do you:

- A: Take the pill and party - bugger the consequences.
  - B: Reject the offer.
  - C: Tell the sport authorities that this person is offering the drug to your club members.
- Ask students to discuss and explain their various responses to the options.

### FURTHER RESOURCES

- [Coaches supplying ice to players in grassroots footy crisis<sup>20</sup>](#)
- [How painkillers are turning young athletes into heroin addicts<sup>21</sup>](#)





## Endnotes

- 1 <https://theconversation.com/illicit-drugs-australian-sports-intervene-while-wada-spectates-37977>
- 2 [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/illicit-drugs-in-sport](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/illicit-drugs-in-sport)
- 3 [www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/310156/IllicitDrugs1.pdf](http://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/310156/IllicitDrugs1.pdf)
- 4 [www.rowingaustralia.com.au/ra-illicit-drugs-in-sport-education-program-and-policy/](http://www.rowingaustralia.com.au/ra-illicit-drugs-in-sport-education-program-and-policy/)
- 5 [www.aru.com.au/Portals/18/Files/Administration/Policies/Anti-Doping/Illicit%20Drugs/ARU%20Illicit%20Drugs%20Policy.pdf](http://www.aru.com.au/Portals/18/Files/Administration/Policies/Anti-Doping/Illicit%20Drugs/ARU%20Illicit%20Drugs%20Policy.pdf)
- 6 [www.news.com.au/entertainment/celebrity-life/grant-hackett-admits-he-was-hooked-on-sleeping-pills/story-e6frfmqi-1226413269762](http://www.news.com.au/entertainment/celebrity-life/grant-hackett-admits-he-was-hooked-on-sleeping-pills/story-e6frfmqi-1226413269762)
- 7 [www.idis.gov.au](http://www.idis.gov.au)
- 8 [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/illicit-drugs-in-sport-IDIS-online-education-programme](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/illicit-drugs-in-sport-IDIS-online-education-programme)
- 9 <http://sma.org.au/training-courses/group-trainingprograms/drugs-in-sport/>
- 10 [www.druginfo.adf.org.au](http://www.druginfo.adf.org.au)
- 11 <http://theothertalk.org.au/about/#sthash.6tECRar2.dpuf>
- 12 [www.3aw.com.au/news/anna-mearns-articulates-what-it-means-to-be-an-australian-sportsperson-20150223-13mr62.html](http://www.3aw.com.au/news/anna-mearns-articulates-what-it-means-to-be-an-australian-sportsperson-20150223-13mr62.html)
- 13 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=RT5k02DgfCE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RT5k02DgfCE)
- 14 [www.idis.gov.au](http://www.idis.gov.au)
- 15 Australian Crime Commission, *Organised Crime and Drugs in Sport* report, 2013; p33.
- 16 [www.ausport.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/436749/Bluestone\\_Edge\\_Access\\_All\\_Levels\\_Report\\_Oct13\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.ausport.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/436749/Bluestone_Edge_Access_All_Levels_Report_Oct13_FINAL.pdf)
- 17 [www.ausport.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/531498/AIS\\_Sports\\_Science\\_Sports\\_Medicine\\_Best\\_Practice\\_Principles\\_FA.PDF](http://www.ausport.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/531498/AIS_Sports_Science_Sports_Medicine_Best_Practice_Principles_FA.PDF)
- 18 [www.asada.gov.au/therapeutic-use-exemption](http://www.asada.gov.au/therapeutic-use-exemption)
- 19 [www.healthline.com/health-news/teen-athletes-becoming-hooked-on-rescription-painkillers#1](http://www.healthline.com/health-news/teen-athletes-becoming-hooked-on-rescription-painkillers#1)
- 20 [www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/coaches-supplying-ice-to-players-in-grassroots-footy-crisis/news-story/45f3f515c824c9e2e260f86a25d7f605?nk=0969759a5d20dcf40aa48dde5a0981a8-1463979433](http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/coaches-supplying-ice-to-players-in-grassroots-footy-crisis/news-story/45f3f515c824c9e2e260f86a25d7f605?nk=0969759a5d20dcf40aa48dde5a0981a8-1463979433)
- 21 [www.si.com/more-sports/2015/06/18/special-report-painkillers-young-athletes-heroin-addicts](http://www.si.com/more-sports/2015/06/18/special-report-painkillers-young-athletes-heroin-addicts)