



IAF Anti-Doping Policy

Adapted by the International Aikido Federation 2008 General Assembly.

Introduction

The international sports community is firmly devoted to the anti-doping commitment, as regulated and administered by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). The International Aikido Federation (IAF) also commits itself completely to those objectives and regulations.

The IAF will not accept any use or handling of achievement-enhancing drugs or methods defined by WADA as doping. Violations of this will result in sanctions according to the directives of the WADA Code (see wada-ama.org). The IAF will also vigorously act on suspicions of such violations, and inform its members of the WADA Code, its implications and considerations in aikido, as well as actions taken by the IAF in relation to it.

The IAF will participate emphatically in the struggle against doping in the world of sports. Doping is a violation of the spirit of aikido, as defined by its founder Morihei Ueshiba.

The use of any substance or method listed in the WADA *Prohibited Substances and Prohibited Methods* is prohibited also in aikido. The IAF is a signatory of the WADA Code and will act forcefully to uphold it within the aikido community. The IAF also urgently implores all its member organizations to do the same. Unless a member organization is hindered by national law to do so, it is expected to comply with the WADA Code and the IAF directives regarding doping.

The IAF will keep a keen watch over the aikido community in order to quickly and forcefully react to any appearance of doping in aikido. Its member organizations are requested to do the same.

Non-Competition

Due to the nature of most sports, and the present use of doping within them, the WADA Code is mainly focused on competition and its circumstances. There is no competition in aikido, as stated clearly in the IAF Statutes, so that part of the WADA Code does not apply.

In addition, the nature of aikido is such that doping substances and methods have little or no relevance to its practice, or to individual achievement in aikido.

Therefore, the IAF is not puzzled by not knowing of any case of doping among its practitioners, nor by learning from National Anti-Doping Agencies that aikido is regarded as a low-risk activity when it comes to doping.

Nonetheless, the IAF is determined to keep a close watch on aikido in regard to doping, so as to be aware of any change or exception to the above. The fact that aikido has been spared of doping habits in the past is not to be taken as a guarantee for doping not appearing in the future. With a close watch and forceful action, the IAF aims to counter any such tendency, should it appear in the future.

Events in which to excel

Although there are no competitions in aikido, the IAF and its members should be aware of three types of events in aikido where practitioners may want to excel, which is precisely where doping in sports is usually applied.

One such event is a Kyu or Dan grading, where the applicant tries to perform aikido with the utmost skill. So is the case in an aikido demonstration, whether it is for a general audience or for other aikido practitioners only. The third type event is a seminar, where participants want to be their best and endure several hours of practice a day.

Although there has not yet been any indication of doping used at events of the above-mentioned types, the IAF and its member organizations should keep them under close observation in order to quickly spot any introduction of doping in such cases.

As for regular dojo practice, there seems to be no incentive for performance-increasing doping. The instructor is supposed to excel, and so are senior students, to a lesser extent. But this is not in a way that known doping substances or methods enhance in any significant way. Instructors and seniors need to show technical skill and experience, but no extreme physical prowess or any mental aptitude that can be enhanced by doping.

Still, the IAF encourages awareness of doping also on dojo level, and does in no way oppose the idea of testing done at such opportunities.

Athletes of multiple sports

Although doping has little or no use in aikido, the IAF and its member organizations should be aware of the possibility that some aikido practitioners who also practice other sports may use doping substances or methods for the purpose of improving their results in those other sports. Certainly, such doping is equally offensive to the IAF.

Even in the case where a certain doping substance or method is neither health-hazardous nor relevant to aikido, and therefore not a violation according to IAF rules, the IAF respects and supports sanctions against athletes decided by other sports organizations or Anti-Doping Agencies.

Out-of-Competition

The aikido community should be aware of the fact that the WADA Code does not deal with competition exclusively, but also with out-of-competition situations, such as regular practice in any sports club, also in seminars and training camps. Any kind of aikido practice is included.

Doping substances and methods are also prohibited in out-of-competition situations. So, they are never allowed in aikido either.

Trafficking and Administration of doping

The WADA Code includes regulations about trafficking and administration of doping substances or methods, which are regarded very severely. The IAF agrees completely with the WADA view on such behavior, which is particularly deplorable since it may tempt practitioners to commence doping. If young practitioners are exposed to such temptations, this is regarded as a particularly deplorable behavior.

The IAF and its member nations should take decisive and firm action against any sign of trafficking or administration of doping, as described in the WADA Code.

Doping Lists

WADA keeps an updated list of prohibited substances and methods at its website (wada-ama.org). It is divided into two main groups: prohibited at all times, and prohibited only at competitions.

The latter is of no relevance to aikido, which has no competitions. The former, though, is in its entirety just as relevant to aikido as to any other sport, since it lists substances and methods that are severe health-hazards, and constitute substances and methods detrimental to the benefits and fair play of sports. The IAF supports the prohibition of those substances and methods.

The list also includes substances and methods prohibited in particular sports, but they are only relevant in competition, and therefore not in aikido.

Sanctions

The WADA Code specifies the sanctions applied, when prohibited substances or methods are used or administered. The normal sanction for a normal first-time violation of the rules is two years exclusion from all activities within the sport, except for participation in anti-doping activities.

For lesser offenses, or ones where there are circumstances favorable to the athlete, the sanction can be one year, but rarely less. For repeated offenses, the sanction is eight years to life.

The IAF supports the sanction rules of the WADA Code, and the procedures by which to administer them, with the following reservations:

Since there is no competition in aikido, athletes may be somewhat unaware that the WADA Code applies also to aikido practitioners. Therefore, the IAF and its member organizations should make a particular effort in informing aikido practitioners of this. Also, the IAF and its member organizations should consider this, when deciding on sanctions of individual practitioners.

Any lifetime punishment is an extreme measure, which should only be applied in extreme circumstances. Aikido, as well as many other martial arts, is a lifetime commitment, with many practitioners continuing until a very high age. A lifetime sanction is therefore much more severe a punishment than it would be in sports where the athlete is expected to spend a significantly shorter period of his or her life. This should be seriously considered before deciding on a sanction exceeding eight years.

The IAF opposes the idea of sanctions with no time limit, since this is also rare in national legal systems. Any sanction exceeding eight years should be used with caution, and with respect to the principle that every human being is able to reform and improve. Sanctions should not make it forever impossible for individuals to prove this.

The violation of the WADA Code that the IAF regards as the most severe one, is the trafficking and administration of prohibited substances or methods in an effort to make other persons use them – especially if introduced to non-adults. In such a case, the IAF will not hesitate to decide on longtime sanctions, even substantially exceeding eight years.

Decisions

As for violations of the doping rules, specified in the WADA Code, during aikido events organized by the IAF, its Directing Committee (DC) will decide on sanctions and other measures. The IAF member organizations shall honor such decisions, and cooperate to ensure that they are pursued.

The IAF DC may decide to appoint a special committee to handle such cases, and

make the decisions instead of the DC.

Regarding the concerns for a fair hearing of the person accused of violating the rules, and regarding possibilities to appeal the decision of the IAF, the rules in the WADA Code are to be applied.

The IAF cannot decide on any sanction without first giving the accused person opportunity to be heard on the matter.

As for violations of the doping rules during aikido events under the rule of a national member organization of the IAF, its governing or appointed body will decide on sanctions and other measures, if this is not handled by an Anti-Doping Agency of that nation. The IAF shall be informed of any such decision.

As for violations of the doping rules during aikido events under no obvious IAF or member organization supervision or control, the matter may be presented to the IAF for investigation. The IAF will be obliged to find the proper body to handle the case, or to find proper measures where that cannot be decided.

Testing

Generally, the responsibility of testing athletes for prohibited substances or methods lies with the organizer of the event where that testing is to be done. Also, nations that have agreed to the WADA Code have their own Anti-Doping Agencies, administering tests on competitions as well as out-of-competition.

The IAF has small resources, and rarely manages events where such testing is relevant. Therefore, the IAF is presently unable to administer testing at any significant quantity. Instead, the IAF encourages Anti-Doping Agencies to perform tests according to their wishes and priorities at aikido events anywhere – seminars as well as regular practices in a dojo belonging to any of the IAF member organizations.

The IAF also encourages its national member organizations to cooperate with local Anti-Doping Agencies, in order to facilitate testing of aikido practitioners.

At present, the IAF has no indication of doping taking place in aikido at all. Nonetheless, the testing of aikido practitioners should be done occasionally, in order to ascertain the absence of doping, if that is the case, and to get early indications if that is about to change.

The IAF is eager to be informed of tests done on aikido practitioners, and the results thereof, so that the IAF can adjust its policy and actions when needed. The member organizations are requested to inform the IAF promptly of any tests taking place within their organization. The IAF will also promptly inform its member organizations of such events, especially if there are cases of violation of the WADA prohibited list.

Information

To ensure doping-free aikido practice all over the world, the IAF recognizes the crucial importance of information. The IAF will produce such information, accurately and promptly, and spread it through the channels at its disposal.

It is very important that the member organizations participate in this, to ensure that such information reaches the individual practitioners of aikido.

Although the IAF and most of its member organizations have limited means, WADA and the many Anti-Doping Agencies can assist very competently in the effort to keep all aikido practitioners wary of doping, and the terrible damage it does to sports as well as to individual athletes.

Signatory of the WADA Code

The IAF is a committed signatory to the WADA Code of 2009 in its entirety, and intends to be so also on any future revision of that code. The IAF implores its member organizations to make the same commitment.

Large portions of the WADA Code apply only to competition, of which there is none in aikido. That raises no need for any revision of the Code for the IAF to be its signatory, since the IAF agrees completely with its rules and directives also regarding competition.

As for the out-of-competition applications of the WADA Code, the IAF sees no reason for any revision of its application to aikido. Therefore the IAF is committed to the WADA Code of 2009 in its entirety, and will fulfill its obligations at the full extent of its ability.