



11 February 2010

Next generation of Athletics stars get anti-doping message in Hobart

Athletes from Athletics Australia's National Under 19 Talent Squad will be taking some time out this Friday in Hobart to boost their anti-doping knowledge with the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) education program.

Doping in sport can have serious ramifications for athletes. In addition to the health risks, under the World Anti-Doping Code athletes in possession, using, or attempting to use prohibited substances potentially face serious penalties including a lifetime ban for second offences.

Presenters from ASADA will provide the National Under 19 Talent Squad with the opportunity to understand anti-doping rules and procedures, and their rights and responsibilities.

Acting ASADA CEO, Richard Ings said that the athletes from the Talent Squad are at a pivotal stage in their sporting careers where a wrong decision can be costly.

"Our education program reinforces important messages like the risk of inadvertent doping and the importance of checking the status of medications.

"We also want to ensure athletes understand their rights and responsibilities throughout the anti-doping process.

"Too many athletes have learnt the hard way that they can never win their reputation back if they go down the doping path in sport," said Mr Ings.

ASADA invests heavily in world class anti-doping education. In 2008/09, a record 10,530 athletes and support personnel attended 221 education activities across Australia.

Surveys indicated that 97 per cent of participants believed the education session reduced their likelihood of inadvertent doping, and 95 per cent believed it deterred them from contemplating doping.

ASADA's anti-doping education program has been developed with input from national sporting organisations, Australian athletes, other national anti-doping organisations and the World Anti-Doping Agency.

The education program, which is an important part of ASADA's multifaceted approach to protect Australia's sporting integrity through the elimination of doping, aims to reduce the number of athletes contemplating doping, reduce the percentage of inadvertent anti-doping rule violations and raise anti-doping awareness throughout the Australian sporting community.

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