



# Cannabis and sport

*Background on Cannabis  
as a Prohibited  
Substance*

# **What is the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)?**

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) is an international independent organization created in 1999 to promote, coordinate, and monitor the fight against doping in sport in all its forms.

## **WADA (cont'd)**

Composed and funded equally by the sports movement and by governments of the world, WADA coordinated the development and implementation of the World Anti-Doping Code, a document that brings together anti-doping policies in all sports and all countries.

## **WADA (cont'd)**

WADA is also responsible for the Prohibited List, an international list of banned substances and methods that are prohibited in-competition, out-of-competition, and in particular sports.

# WADA and cannabis

In 2004, WADA added cannabis to the Prohibited List. This decision was made on the basis of an extensive process, in which an expert committee consulted with international sport federations, national anti-doping organizations, the International Olympic Committee, national Olympic committees, and governments.

## **WADA and cannabis (cont'd)**

WADA will consider placing a substance or method on the Prohibited List if it thinks the substance or method meets any 2 of the following 3 criteria:

- Actually or potentially enhances athletic performance
- Presents an actual or potential health risk to the athlete
- Its use violates to the spirit of sport.

## **WADA and cannabis (cont'd)**

Cannabis has been added to the list because WADA feels it meets the last 2 criteria: it carries actual or potential health risks and it violates the spirit of sport.

# CCES and Cannabis

In Canada, the anti-doping program is administered by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES).

Because of the high number of athletes testing positive for cannabis in Canada, the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport researched the role of cannabis in sport and identified five reasons why athletes should be cautious with cannabis.

## Reasons for athletes to be particularly cautious of cannabis

1. *Rules of sport*: cannabis is a prohibited in-competition substance.
2. *Athletic performance*: cannabis use can affect athletic performance.
3. *Health risks*: there are health risks associated with cannabis use.
4. *Fair play*: cannabis use associated with sport can have an impact on the image of an athlete and sport.
5. *Canadian laws*: cannabis use and possession is against the law.