



BCU Emergency Procedures

Introduction

On preparing this paper I have brought together information from a number of bodies. The prime purpose is to ensure that the control of information is maintained, at all levels of the organisation (BCU) and that, when fully compiled, is disseminated by the right person relevant to the organisation and at the correct time. The secondary reason is to protect and prevent those without the proper information and understanding from putting themselves in a difficult and inappropriate position which could provide distress and harm to others and affect the credibility and position of the British Canoe Union.

Outline and Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to establish a procedure for handling communication in the event of either of the following situations:

- Major accident or fatality
- Positive Test of an athlete for a Prohibited Drug

1 Major Accident or Fatality

a) Operational Group: Director of Coaching, Chief Executive and Press Officer

Report of the accident from all local, regional and national officials and volunteers are fed to the Director of Coaching. Director of Coaching or their nominated delegate then make their own enquiries to emergency services and other relevant groups to establish the known facts. Once this is completed they liaise with the Chief Executive and Press Officer.

Whoever receives the notification of the accident must make it quite clear to all the message of not making any statement or comment on behalf of the BCU (or one that could be perceived as being on behalf of the BCU) to the media. It is important that any remarks are restricted to good wishes to the injured and sympathy to the family and friends of the bereaved.

The Director of Coaching or their nominated delegate shall immediately inform the BCU switchboard to refer all enquiries to the Press Officer or nominated individual who will then act as the lone spokesperson.

b) Preparation of Statement and Distribution:

Once the Operational Group agree the scope of any statement then the Press Officer in conjunction with the Chief Executive and with technical input from the Director of Coaching prepares a press release on behalf of the BCU.

Once any statement is finalised it is signed by each member of the Operational Group and is distributed by the Press Officer.

c) Comment:

At all stages it is vital that local, regional and national officials (other than those authorised by the operational group) refrain from comment and giving interviews and statements to the media and press. Only those who are fully informed and briefed should be placed in a position to give or make statements and comment.

d) Summary:

Uninformed comment can be both harmful and damaging to the BCU image and position. Misguided impulse gestures, whilst they may be done for the best possible reasons, can cause distress and hurt to the injured victims and their families.

All should be aware that it is very difficult when being pressured to undertake an interview not to make a statement or comment that could be erroneous or damaging.





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2 Positive Test of an Athlete for a Prohibited Drug.

Operational Group: Performance Director, Medical Adviser, Legal Adviser, Chief Executive, Chairman of Board, Press Officer.

a) Report of Positive A Sample

On receiving notification of a positive test from the A sample the Performance Director advises the Chief Executive and Press Officer of the result. The overriding priority at this stage is:

- (i) Maintaining total confidentiality of the sample result and the identity of the athlete
- (ii) Establishing communication with the athlete and supporting them as much as possible at a very stressful and difficult time.
- (iii) Preventing any media enquiries from discovering the identity of the athlete until the information is in the public domain or released by the athlete

The Chief Executive should act as the coordinator and compile information on both the legal and medical aspects of the A sample result.

The Performance Director's role should be to act as the BCU's primary link to the athlete. He will inform the athlete of a positive A sample result and that they are suspended from all BCU competition until the investigation is complete.

If the A sample result and the athlete's identity becomes public, the athlete must have total belief in the support and confidentiality of their communications and dealings with the BCU. Coaching staff should not be advised of the result by anyone at the BCU. If the athlete decides to give up their confidentiality they must be made aware by the Performance Director of the risk and implication of their decision.

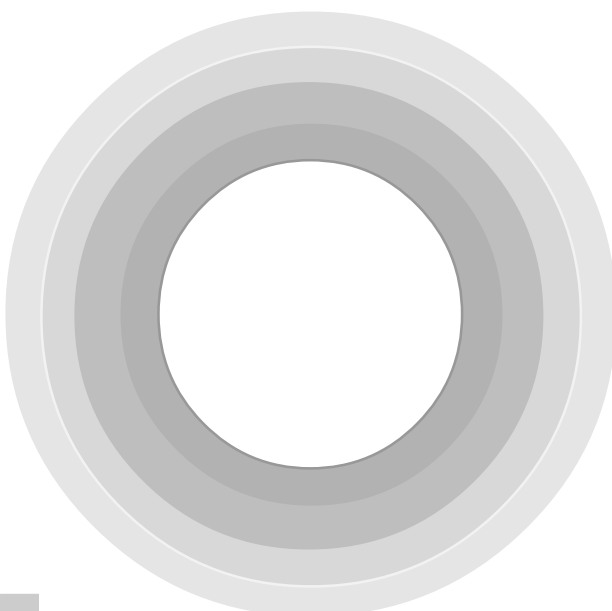
b) Report of B Sample Result

Once the test result for the B sample is known, the Performance Director advises the Chief Executive who then brings together the Operational Group at the earliest possible time. The Chief Executive then coordinates the implementation of the BCU Doping Control Rules with the BCU Drug Advisory Committee investigating the case and calling a hearing within 28 days.

The key elements are to maintain the clarity and accuracy of all communication with the media by ensuring that only the Press Officer or another nominated spokesperson comments on the issue. To this end the Operational Group may feed information for distribution only via the Press Officer or nominated spokesperson.

c) Decision, Statement and Distribution

- (i) Once the BCU Drugs Advisory Committee investigation is complete it reports its findings and decision immediately to the Chief Executive who within seven days informs the athlete.
- (ii) A statement of the decision and findings is prepared and approved by all members of the Operational Group. The statement is distributed by the Press Officer who may decide to hold a Press Conference. Should this be agreed with the Chief Executive and Chairman of Board then the invitation is distributed.





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(iii) The Performance Director advises the athlete and their representative of the Press Conference (usually following the final decision or appeal) and allows them the option to attend and make a statement and/or answer questions once the BCU has completed its Disciplinary Process. This conference is in two halves, the first with the BCU announcing its decision and ruling and, once this is over, the athlete is given the opportunity to make a statement or answer questions. Once the BCU part is over no BCU Drugs Advisory Committee or council member should remain at the conference room to ensure that the athlete is completely free to make their own statement. The only BCU officials to remain in the room should be the Press Officer (to take notes) and the Performance Director who maintains the link role to the athlete.

(iv) This does not in any way prevent the athlete from appealing to the BCU Board within 14 days of notification of the decision. A further statement should be released following decision of the appeal as per (ii)

d) Olympic Games

This guide is only relevant for tests undertaken outside of the Olympic Games. During the Games a different procedure is in place as much of the governing body's role is initially taken by the British Olympic Association. Therefore, once a team manager is advised of a positive A sample they should advise only the Performance Director and the Chief Executive who will then call the Operational Group together

e) Summary

It is vital that the BCU maintain the respect and confidence of the athlete and that they understand that the BCU will provide them with support during what could be a long, lengthy and stressful period.

Information must not be given out on **any** pretence to members outside the Operational Group to secure the confidentiality of the identity until the B sample result is known or the identity enters the public domain.

Conclusion

This guide is designed and targeted to ensure that the BCU's reputation and position as the National Governing Body of the sport of Canoeing is maintained and held in the highest esteem.

It is in the interests of **all** members at all levels to adhere to this guide and by doing so understand that they are ensuring that all media reports are accurate and correct and do not harm the BCU's status.

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