

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Ranking Member Kathy Castor
Hearing on “Examining Anti-Doping Measures in Advance of the 2024 Olympics”

June 25, 2024

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your convening this hearing to investigate illicit doping in sports and the troubling questions swirling around the World Anti-Doping Agency especially with the summer Olympic Games starting next month in Paris.

Americans do not like cheaters, and we will not tolerate organizations that give cheaters a pass. WADA was established in 1999 as the international agency responsible for developing and coordinating anti-doping rules across all sports and countries as well as monitoring compliance with those rules. Importantly, WADA has the power to investigate allegations of doping and to enforce penalties when the World Anti-Doping Code is violated.

However, recent troubling reports suggest that WADA did not do its job in the case of 23 Chinese swimmers who tested positive for performance-enhancing drug TMZ just months before the Tokyo Games. Is it worse than that? Is the Chinese Communist Party or the People’s Republic of China paying WADA to look the other way?

Thanks to investigative reporting it appears that in January 2021, the Chinese Anti-Doping Agency — known as CHINADA — collected 60 samples from Chinese swimmers staying in the same hotel for a national championship swim meet. Nearly six weeks later, in March 2021, test results were reported to WADA showing that 23 of the swimmers tested positive for TMZ. CHINADA suggested that the TMZ positive tests were due to food contaminated in a kitchen that served athletes. CHINADA did not impose a rule violation against the swimmers or make the matter public. WADA also kept the violations secret, and shockingly agreed to allow the swimmers to compete.

Any amount of TMZ found in an athlete’s system is a violation of the rules and presumptive sanctions are required by the rules. Yet, thirteen of the 23 athletes that tested positive for TMZ went on to compete in the Games in Tokyo, and some have been named to the Chinese team for the upcoming summer Olympics in Paris.

This makes no sense. Why did WADA accept CHINADA’s conclusions? Why did WADA keep the violations secret? Why were Chinese athletes treated differently than athletes from other countries? Why were the Chinese swimmers not provisionally suspended? What kind of scientific testing did WADA perform when assessing the results and why won’t it share details? Why were the required procedural steps were not followed? Did purported payments from the PRC to WADA influence WADA’s decision-making?

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These unanswered questions are why I am especially disappointed that WADA refused the Committee's invitation to testify today at this hearing. Its lack of transparency is troubling, especially this close to the Paris Olympics. As the international enforcer of anti-doping rules, WADA must provide answers and be held accountable.

As our witnesses know well, the Olympic Games are one of the most visible and elite athletic competitions in the world and set the standard for sports at all levels. Maintaining the integrity of competition, a level playing field, and safety of athletes at the Games is paramount and I am interested in accountability through the funds that U.S. taxpayers provide to WADA. I serve on another congressional committee special Committee on the Strategic Competition with the Chinese Communist Party where my colleagues also recently called for greater accountability.

Finally, I want to thank our Olympian witnesses for being here today and applaud them for representing us on the world stage. Your hard work, dedication, and commitment to excellence inspire millions. Thanks also to the US Anti-Doping Agency for your presence here today. Your work to ensure that anti-doping rules are followed and that our American athletes are held to the highest standards helps set an example for the world to follow.

True champions don't cheat. They compete fairly. Follow the rules. And as the International Olympic Committee affirms in its mission the movement is intended to encourage and support the promotion of ethics and good governance in sport, to protect clean athletes and the integrity of sport, by leading the fight against doping, and by taking action against all forms of manipulation of competitions and related corruption.

Thank you. I yield back.