



SUNDAY, 14 FEBRUARY 2010

FIS FACT SHEET

Frequently Asked Questions - FIS Start Prohibition

Q. What is the purpose of the FIS blood testing program and the FIS haemoglobin (Hb) limits of 16.0 g/dl for ladies and 17.0 g/dl for men?

A. Very high haemoglobin values represent a clear health risk. Scientific studies have shown that individuals with very high haemoglobin values have a shorter average life span than individuals within the normal range. High haemoglobin values also increase the risk of thrombosis (blood clots). Most regular people with Hb values exceeding the FIS limits typically receive some medical treatment for their condition.

The FIS Blood Profiling Program, under which the FIS haemoglobin testing at the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games is taking place, was introduced from the season 2001/2002 to address the cultural problems that existed within Cross-Country skiing. The Cross-Country skiers participating in the annual Viessmann FIS World Cup Cross-Country series are tested on a regular basis during the competition season. As at the Games, the entire field of athletes are tested at several World Cup races during the season.

Since the beginning of this program, the mean value for Cross-Country skiers (ladies and men) within the FIS World Cup has decreased drastically from the later-1990's and now equals that of the normal population. 98% of the athletes are close to the mean range of Hb value.

Q. How can an individual have increased haemoglobin values?

A. The haemoglobin value increases naturally when an individual resides at a high altitude for more than a few days; the increase is greater the higher the altitude. Also severe dehydration, especially in high altitude conditions, can lead to an increase of haemoglobin in blood.

Q. How were the FIS limits of 16.0 g/dl for ladies and 17.0 g/dl for men set?

A. The FIS limits were set to follow the generally accepted levels in other sports and equal the levels implemented by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in 2003 that are used by WADA to trigger a urine doping control.

Q. Some athletes have dispensation from the FIS Hb rule. What is required for someone to receive such a dispensation?

A. In addition to the long-term, comprehensive data gathered through the FIS Blood Profiling Program that demonstrates the persistently high natural Hb values, FIS requires reliable and certified data from the athlete's youth, ideally from their childhood, as well as data from the

family members to establish any genetic factors. The athlete must also be checked to exclude the chance of any haematological diseases.

Q. In the FIS World Cup testing program, any pre-competition haemoglobin tests are followed by a urine test. Is the same process followed at the Vancouver Olympic Games?

A: Here in Vancouver/Whistler, FIS is conducting the pre-competition haemoglobin testing in the same way as at the FIS World Cups. At the Olympic Winter Games, the IOC is responsible for conducting the urine testing that follows FIS's pre-competition haemoglobin tests.

Q. The athletes with too high haemoglobin values were issued with a five-day suspension. How was the length of this suspension determined?

A: Five days is a sufficient time to allow for the blood values to normalize if they are the result of living at a high altitude or dehydration.

Q. The rules also allow a 14-day start prohibition. What is the difference?

A. The 14-day start suspension is issued when an athlete is showing a Haemoglobin z-score or a Haemoglobin OFF z-score ≥ 3.09 , respectively an OFF-score model ≥ 125.6 in males / ≥ 113.5 in females, OR a positive Bayesian model. This is because changes in the z-scores indicate intense changes of the body functions which should be handled with extra care to protect the health and/or to investigate all possible physiological factors that might have influenced the athlete during the previous weeks or months, and if excluded, to be categorized as suspicious for the use of forbidden substances or methods.

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About FIS

Founded in 1924 during the first Olympic Games in Chamonix, France, the International Ski Federation (FIS) aims to promote the sport of skiing and snowboarding and directs the development of all ski and snowboarding activities world-wide. It administers the Olympic disciplines of Alpine Skiing, Cross-Country Skiing, Ski Jumping, Nordic Combined, Freestyle Skiing and Snowboarding, including setting the international competition rules. With the help of its 110 member nations (one currently suspended), FIS stages more than 6'000 ski and snowboard competitions annually. FIS also makes recommendations for recreational skiing and snowboarding in the interest of all and promotes play in the snow as a healthy leisure activity for children and the youth. For more information, please visit www.fis-ski.com .

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Further references:

FIS FACT SHEET: FIS Anti-Doping Program prepared for the Olympic Winter Games 2010
<http://www.fis-ski.com/uk/news/pressreleases/press-releases-2010/pre-games-anti-doping-up.html>

FIS Anti-Doping Program enters the 2010 Olympic year:

<http://www.fis-ski.com/uk/news/pressreleases/press-releases-2009/fis-fact-sheet-anti-dopi.html>

Organization of FIS Medical and Anti-Doping Activities:

<http://www.fis-ski.com/data/document/fis-fact-sheet-fis-medical-and-anti-doping-activities.pdf>