

The Anti-Doping Data Base (ADAMS): Athletes' Privacy in Jeopardy

By [Inside Out](#)

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Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all.—W.Shakespeare

To clarify for non-experts, ADAMS is the web-based database management system that coordinates anti-doping activities and stores a registered testing pool and its results. Certainly, it simplifies the whole process.

But it turns out the system is not working properly. Let's look at a few issues of concern.

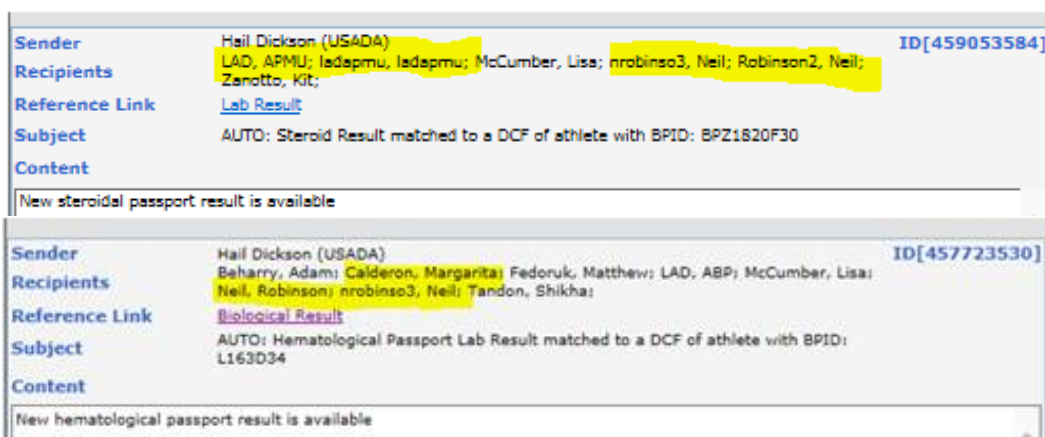
Uncontrolled access to athletes' data

With ADAMS in place, all parties involved receive lab results by email.

At first glance, such a mailing list includes random recipients. As one who's familiar with WADA's work, I doubt whether all these people really need to receive notifications.

Even more alarming is that this may suggest leaks of confidential data. Apparently, WADA is unable to control who else may get access to the sent information after the email is delivered.

Below is a message containing U.S. athletes' doping test results. The recipients that are highlighted in yellow raise some doubts. As an expert, I can barely understand why athletes' results should be delivered to all these people.



Recipients Errors

WADA's work is at odds with public statements by WADA officials. Athlete privacy is under threat. And it has nothing to do with cyber-attacks or another type of meddling.

Besides, doping control is far from transparent. I would like to point at the first recipient LAD APMU that refers to the Athlete Passport Management Unit based at Swiss Laboratory for Doping Analyses in Lausanne. In 2012, Dr. Ashenden resigned from the APMU after the Unit had issued new contracts to its experts, with much tighter confidentiality clauses. To read more, see: <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-17586597>. Ashenden's story is to demonstrate that anti-doping control is intentionally running behind closed doors.

Errors in completing the Doping Control Form at the 2016 Rio Games

Here is a summary table created after the 2016 Olympics. ADAMS checking for errors showed that employees are negligent in completing the form. Some athletes do not have their results recorded with their numbers: samples do not match the numbers (6220764, 6221953 and 6220490). A few samples (numbers 303 251 and 161 644) are not even sent to the laboratory. Not to mention the fact that some athletes such as with the ID 6222637 have been wrongly attributed.

Lab	Test type	Sample Code	Time of Test	JS Comments
LAB-Rio-BRA-LBCD	Out Of Comp	6220764	21:03	This test was attributed to the wrong athlete
LAB-Rio-BRA-LBCD	In Comp	6221953	0:18	This test was attributed to the wrong athlete
LAB-Rio-BRA-LBCD	In Comp	6220490	23:36	This test was attributed to the wrong athlete
LAB-Rio-B	Out Of Comp	6222637	14:29	Sport was wrong in the mission order, fixed
LAB-Rio-B	Out Of Comp	6224846	22:37	Lab error, Lab notified
LAB-Rio-B	Out Of Comp	6222170	22:55	Lab error, Lab notified
LAB-Rio-B	Out Of Comp	6224834	19:20	Lab error, Lab notified
LAB-Rio-B	Out Of Comp	6222162	21:05	Lab error, Lab notified
LAB-Rio-B	In Comp	6227309	12:08	Lab error, Lab notified
LAB-Rio-B	In Comp	6225018	12:12	Lab error, Lab notified
LAB-Rio-B	In Comp	6223899	11:57	Lab error, Lab notified
LAB-Rio-B	Out Of Comp	161673	19:55	Lab error, Lab notified
LAB-Rio-B	In Comp	6223056	14:15	Lab error, Lab notified
LAB-Rio-B	In Comp	6223068	14:52	Lab error, Lab notified
LAB-Rio-B	Out Of Comp	161558	9:36	Lab error, Lab notified
LAB-Rio-B	Out Of Comp	6221765	10:50	Lab error, Lab notified
LAB-Rio-B	Out Of Comp	6221768	10:35	Lab error, Lab notified
LAB-Rio-B	Out Of Comp	161591	10:40	Lab error, Lab notified
LAB-Rio-B	Out Of Comp	161635	16:35	Lab error, Lab notified

ADAMS errors checking

Simon system errors

USADA similar system has practically the same issues.

For example, comparing the information stored in the American management system to the data of the IAAF it has been revealed that 5176 of 12364 athletes have wrong samples number. On the part of the IAAF, no violations have been found, and thus, inaccuracies have been committed by the American part. The USADA was immediately notified of that (see the report below), but don't expect them to fix it in a hurry.

From [redacted]@usada.org > ☆
Subject: IAAF Data 10.09.2015 2:28
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]

Here is my early pass on this data.

Matching on First/Last name (SirName/Name in IAAF file) and gender produces 537 matches with athletes in Simon.

Matching sample Codes hits 183 samples for 121 unique athletes. Here is the breakdown of labs (instrument) for these matching samples:

LAB-Dresden-GER	1
LAB-Lausanne-SUI-LSAD	11
LAB-Montreal-CAN-INRS	2
LAB-UTAH-USA-SMRTL	150
Paris lab	1
SYS Kreisch	2
SYS Laus.	1
SYS XT2000 Barcelona	1
SYS(Koeln)	4
SYS(Madrid)	2
SYS-Lausanne	4
XE-2100^A1219	3
XT-2000i^14754	1

5176 of the 12364 are missing a valid sample id number.

Based on this I will use the Name mapping to get Simon ID numbers and auto generate Person IDs for the rest starting with 77xxxxx.

For the samples I will insert a sample id number starting with 99xxxxx.

I will work to have this done and produce the correct formats spread sheet for Ideavise by noon tomorrow.

Thanks,

U.S. ANTI-DOPING AGENCY

[redacted]
Database Specialist

The report on Simon checking

Certainly, errors or inaccuracies may occur when dealing with large amounts of data and completing forms by hand. You see, however, that half of the athletes have absolutely wrong information registered in the system. So, the software is not working properly. This is not appropriate because a wrong sample ID number could affect decision making, as a result of which many dishonest athletes would still escape punishment while clean athletes would be unsuccessfully trying to justify themselves. Taking into account the number of errors, there is no doubts the agency has done harm to many athletes for no good reason.

This is unacceptable for such organizations as WADA. Before they make decisions on athletes, they need to take care of their own system first. The WADA leadership has been repeatedly reported on systematic errors but no concrete action has been taken. Perhaps, they knowingly turn a blind eye to the errors of the system, updating of which requires a lot of money.

For me as for a former employee it seems reasonable that it would be better to appeal to a third party to check the test results database. Only a non-involved party is able to conduct an accurate accounting of athletes' data, not dividing them into "us" and "them".

As you can see, claiming to fight for athletes' rights WADA just fails to fulfill its responsibilities.

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