

PRESS RELEASE

Matthew Willenbring Responds To 4-Month Sanction Issued By FINA For Inadvertent Ingestion of Hydrochlorothiazide

Austin, TX (March 26, 2018) – Following the recent announcement of his positive test, Matthew Willenbring provides the following details:

-a Hearing was held before FINA’s Doping Panel in Lausanne on January 12, 2018, which was attended by Matthew Willenbring as well as his mother, his lawyer, and one other witness.

-on January 16, 2018, FINA transmitted a summary decision, providing for a four-month sanction starting on October 19, 2017 (and therefore ending on February 18, 2018); disqualifying all results from August 28, 2017 only; and determining that there would be no public reporting due to his being a minor.

-pursuant to FINA Doping Control Rule 10.12.2, Matthew Willenbring was permitted to practice with his team for the last month of his sanction. He fully complied with FINA’s restrictions on practicing with his team between the date that he was declared ineligible and the date that he was permitted to return to training.

-on February 19, 2018, the FINA Doping Panel issued its Reasoned Decision, in which it explained the reasons for reducing Mr. Willenbring’s sanction to 4 months. In that Reasoned Decision, the FINA Doping Panel stated as follows:

“The Athlete gave honest and credible testimony that he never intentionally used HCTZ, that he did not know what HCTZ was and that he had no idea HCTZ was ever present in the family home prior to the AAF. The Panel believes the Athlete’s testimony.

The Athlete’s urine was not dilute. Urine that is very dilute can indicate that there may have been attempts made to manipulate the urine with HCTZ or another diuretic to avoid the detection of prohibited substances.

The concentration of HCTZ detected in the Athlete’s urine was very low. The FINA DCRB confirmed this fact. So low, that it would not be effective to either control the athlete’s weight or to serve to mask another prohibited substance ...

The Athlete was at all relevant times trying to gain weight – not lose it ... The Athlete would have no reason to use HCTZ to lose weight.

In the Report there was no evidence of anabolic agents present in the Athlete's hair. Prof. Kintz concluded that the Athlete had not ingested anabolic agents during the preceding 6 months. There would be no reason to use HCTZ to mask the use of steroids."

"The Panel believes the Athlete's inadvertent ingestion of the Tribenzor pills (and thus the HCTZ) took place between August 14 and August 20, 2017."

"The evidence each person tendered was honest and sincere. It was not coached or invented. The evidence had the 'ring of truth' and, importantly, was largely compatible with how the Panel believes the individuals involved would have acted in each circumstance described."

The initial decision not to name or identify the Athlete in any public reporting was specifically permitted by FINA Doping Control Rule 14.3.6. However, FINA subsequently decided to publicly report the sanction on March 23, 2018.

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