# Anti-doping chiefs urge caution in athletes’ private lives amid calls for regulatory change



At a conference held in London, anti-doping authorities have provided new guidance for elite athletes, advising them to exercise caution in their private lives to mitigate the risk of inadvertently consuming banned substances. The discussion highlighted the importance of distinguishing between intentional doping and substance contamination stemming from close personal relationships.

Among the cases discussed were those of tennis player Richard Gasquet and boxer Virginia Fuchs, both of whom tested positive for prohibited drugs but were cleared of wrongdoing after establishing that their positive results were likely caused by exposure to substances through intimate relationships. Gasquet, for instance, was exonerated in 2009 by the Court of Arbitration for Sport, which ruled that his positive cocaine test was "probably" due to kissing a woman in a nightclub. Similarly, Fuchs was cleared in 2020 after an investigation revealed the metabolites in her sample were consistent with recent exposure to a substance used by her partner.

Travis Tygart, the chief executive of the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), expressed concern regarding the implications of such cases. "It’s so pathetic that we’re having this conversation," he remarked. "But I think based on the cases we’ve seen, watch who you kiss. Watch out who you have an intimate relationship with." He emphasised that athletes often bear the burden of proof regarding drug use, stating, "The onus is always on the athletes. We as anti-doping organisations need to take some of that responsibility back."

Tygart pointed out the need for evolving anti-doping regulations, suggesting that the current framework disproportionately targets innocent athletes while potentially allowing intentional cheaters to elude scrutiny. "I worry how many of the intentional cheats are actually getting away because we’re spending so much time and resources on the cases that end up being someone kissing someone at a bar," he commented.

He also announced that regulatory changes regarding specific substances are anticipated. Among those mentioned were Clostebol, an anabolic steroid that led to a positive test for tennis player Jannik Sinner last year, and Ostarine, which was detected in boxer Ryan Garcia's system following his fight against Devin Haney in 2024. Both athletes denied any intention to use the banned substances but accepted suspensions.

Tygart advocated for the introduction of a "minimum reporting level" (MRL) for certain substances, allowing for a more nuanced approach to detection. He noted that the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) currently has such measures in place for substances like clenbuterol, and suggested that Clostebol and Ostarine could be eligible for similar consideration. "There’s a handful of substances that you could say at certain levels, and we’re talking very, very low levels, you put in an MRL," Tygart stated.

The conference highlights the ongoing complexities surrounding doping regulations, especially as they relate to personal lives and relationships of elite athletes. The discussions aim to foster a more reasonable framework for drug testing and to ensure that athletes are not unduly penalised for factors outside their control.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

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* <https://www.cnn.com/2009/SPORT/12/17/tennis.gasquet.cocaine.cas.cleared/index.html> - CNN reports on Richard Gasquet's clearance by the Court of Arbitration for Sport in 2009, highlighting his defense that the cocaine in his system was due to kissing a woman who had taken the drug at a nightclub.
* <https://www.tennis.com/news/articles/cas-clears-gasquet-of-drug-charges-avoids-ban-x1890> - This article details the Court of Arbitration for Sport's decision to clear Richard Gasquet of drug charges in 2009, emphasizing that the contamination was likely due to kissing a woman in a nightclub.
* <https://www.skysports.com/tennis/news/5777962/gasquet-escapes-doping-ban> - Sky Sports covers Richard Gasquet's escape from a doping ban in 2009, noting that the Court of Arbitration for Sport accepted his explanation that the cocaine in his system was from kissing a woman in a Miami nightclub.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/tennis/8417167> - BBC Sport reports on Richard Gasquet's clearance of drug charges in 2009, mentioning that the Court of Arbitration for Sport dismissed appeals after finding that Gasquet had not committed any fault or negligence.
* <https://www.france24.com/en/20090715-frances-gasquet-cleared-return-drug-ban-expires-> - France 24 reports on Richard Gasquet being cleared to return to the tour after testing positive for cocaine, with the International Tennis Federation stating that a 12-month suspension would be disproportionate.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/othersports/article-14669599/Elite-athletes-told-AVOID-one-night-stands-risk-drug-contamination.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data