

Asian Shooting Confederation

Directions to the National Shooting Associations of Asia on the participation of shooters at the Beijing Olympic Games - Medical and Anti-doping aspects

The sports of shooting, contrary to common belief is a strenuous sport as it involves maintaining a particular posture for long periods of time that too carrying weight (Guns). Thus shooting can tire out the participants physically. Mentally too it tires out the participant as the sport of shooting demands absolute focusing and concentration. The need for proper medical back up to shooters becomes important here.

Shooting is an ageless sport. Adults and even senior citizens excel in it with gay abandon. With the result the age related medical problems also find their place in shooting unlike in many other sports. Patients of arthritis, diabetes, hypertension and even the pregnant get qualified into the national teams and excel in shooting unlike in other sports.

That is the case, the sport of shooting demands adequate medical back up for the shooters preparing for and also participating in higher level competitions. Beijing Olympic Games is one of them.

The National Shooting Associations under the Asian Shooting Confederation needs to ensure that the shooters who have qualified to participate in the Beijing Olympic Games are well taken care of in terms of their health and fitness. They need to ensure the following:

1. Pre-participation medical examination

This is to ensure that the shooters are healthy and fit for participation. Acute ailments and injuries, if any, are to be properly diagnosed, investigated and treatment prescribed. In case if the ailment needs prolonged treatment and would affect his/her performance at the Olympics, the NOC will have to take a final decision in time on the shooter's participation at the Games. There is no justification to include an unfit shooter in the team to Beijing where he is not expected to compete or going to under perform

In the case of shooters who are patients of chronic ailments like arthritis (Cervical/lumbar spondylosis included), bronchial asthma, hypertension, diabetes etc, it has to be ensured that they are under proper medication and their problems are under control and will remain under control during the period of the Olympic Games too.

The shooters should be subjected to detailed eye testing with emphasis on visual acuity and peripheral vision. Defects if any should be adequately corrected.

In the case of shooters who are pregnant, due to lack clear cut instructions from the International Shooting Federation, decision has to be taken on case by case basis before they are cleared for participation at the Olympics

2. Medical support personnel for the shooting team.

Depending on the number of shooters participating in the Games, medical support personnel including doctors, masseurs and psychologists may be considered for inclusion in the team. (Since shooting sport is not much prone to muscular-skeletal injuries, the role of physiotherapist gets limited. Since shooters participate in multiple events, masseurs could help them in faster recovery). Very often the requirement of medical supports personnel for shooters is not well understood by policy makers who clear the national teams for multi- disciplinary games. As such the shooters suffer at such games, especially when the medical support personnel attached with the national contingent tend to give least priority to shooters and instead concentrate on acute injury prone disciplines.

The qualifications and medical license particulars of the team doctor need to be communicated to the national Olympic committee for onward submission to the Beijing Olympic Games organizing committee so that the doctor is given temporary license to practice medicine at Beijing during the duration of the Olympics.

3. Insurance cover

All the shooters and officials going to the Olympic Games should be provided with internationally valid medical insurance cover including accident cover and hospitalization. The medical cover provided by the Organizers of the Olympic Games will be of limited nature and it includes insurance cover only for medical and surgical treatment attributable to sports activities at the Games.

4. Vaccination / Inoculation

Pollution in Beijing is in the news now. It may be water or air pollution. It is advisable to take effective steps to ward off water borne diseases. Shooters may be advised to take vaccination / inoculation against Typhoid, Hepatitis A, B, and C and also against Tetanus.

5. List of medications

A list of medications which are being used by the shooters should be submitted to the National Olympic Committee for inclusion of the same in the overall list of medications which the contingent will be carrying to Beijing. This is necessary to get the required clearance from the municipal health authorities, drug control as well as customs authorities in Beijing for importing the medications at Beijing for the Olympic Games.

6. Doping Control

a. Education/Awareness:

All the shooters need to be educated on doping control before their departure for the Games. This will be done through talks and by distribution of pamphlets, where they are informed on the list of medications banned by WADA and on the sample collection procedure. The shooters may be advised to take medications only under the supervision of doctors, who are aware of the WADA regulations on doping control and also keep a record of such medications.

b. TUE/ATUE Certification:

Shooters should be asked to declare all types of medications which they have been taking for ailments, if any. If any of these medications are in the WADA list of banned substances or specified substances, they should be asked to apply for Therapeutic Usage Exemption (TUE) / Abbreviated TUE certificates from the concerned National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) or from the International Shooting Federation through the National Shooting Association. This application should be submitted within the prescribed time limit so that their participation in the Games is not jeopardized.

Shooters who are using medications like Bronchodilators, Corticosteroids, Insulin, and Hormones etc will need such certification. The shooters who have obtained the TUE/ATUE Certificates should carry the same with them to the Olympics.

c. Random dope tests

Random collection of urine samples for dope tests should be carried out from shooters selected for participating in the Olympics and gets the samples tested in a WADA accredited laboratory and results obtained before the departure of the team to Olympics.

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