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ERASMUS-SPORT-2023-SCP (#101134079)

Supporting anti-doping via Transforming Athletes' Life Experiences after Doping into Education Resources and Policy Recommendations (TALE)

WP2 – D2.1 Preliminary Scientific Results of Interviews



Co-funded by
the European Union

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Objectives

Work Package 2 (WP2) aimed to generate an in-depth understanding of athletes' experiences, perceptions, and needs following sanctions for anti-doping rule violations (ADRV). This knowledge serves as the foundation for developing targeted, evidence-based education and support structures for athletes, in line with the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) International Standard for Education (ISE). The ISE, a mandatory International Standard developed as part of the World Anti-Doping Programme, requires signatories to provide education not only for active athletes but also for those who have committed an ADRV. So far, however, little is known about this group of athletes, so the signatories to the Code have no scientific basis on which to build any programmes to effectively meet the ISE's requirements.

Specifically, WP2 sought to:

- a. **Understand the lived experiences of athletes** – This includes the challenges athletes face when being sanctioned for ADRVs as well as the psychological and emotional impact, wider consequences on the social environment and career.
- b. **Explore athletes' coping strategies and situational management** – The study further explored how athletes deal with being sanctioned for an ADRV, including which coping mechanisms athletes apply and on which support systems they rely.
- c. **Identify sanctioned athletes' support needs** – This is achieved by exploring the extent to which athletes receive assistance from the sporting community and wider society, as well as gaps in existing support structures highlighted by athletes and the research team, to inform future interventions.
- d. **Capture a diverse range of perspectives** – To ensure a comprehensive picture, WP2 included athletes from various sports, countries, and cases involving intentional and unintentional doping. It aimed to gain knowledge on how athletes experience the sanctioning process and perceive the anti-doping system across the globe.

Therefore, the study set out to answer the following three research questions:

- (1) What are the experiences of athletes being sanctioned for ADRVs?
- (2) How do athletes cope with and manage the situation?
- (3) What are the support needs of athletes being sanctioned for ADRVs?

The insights gained from WP2 will provide the foundation for subsequent work packages, which focus on translating these findings into practical applications. Future efforts aim to develop evidence-based education for sanctioned athletes and integrate their experiences into existing anti-doping education to provoke critical thinking (WP5). Additionally, the results of WP2 will inform the creation of sports policy recommendations addressing reintegration processes after a doping sanction and support strategies for athletes returning or transitioning out of sport (WP4), nudging discussions about structured guidance for sanctioned athletes beyond their elite sport careers.

Methods

Research Design

The present study employed a qualitative research design to allow for an in-depth understanding of athletes' experiences and perspectives in an area where empirical evidence is limited and where personal experiences are complex and often marginalised in the public discourse. This research was guided by a pragmatist stance, which emphasises generating knowledge that is useful for understanding and addressing real-world problems (Feilzer, 2010; Morgan, 2014). For this study, this meant choosing methods of data collection and analysis that would best capture and interpret the lived experiences of sanctioned athletes, with the aim of producing insights that are meaningful not only academically but also for athlete support and anti-doping practice.

Data Collection

To gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of athletes facing sanctions for ADRVs, the study employed a qualitative approach using a peer-interview technique, where 16 trained athlete co-researchers conducted life-story interviews with affected athletes. Similar peer-to-peer approaches have already been successfully adopted in other research projects in the sport and anti-doping context like the International Olympic Committee's LEGIT project or RESPECT(-P) (Barkoukis et al., 2025; Petróczi et al., 2021). Selected co-researchers were active or former elite athletes, who were trained to conduct interviews following an established interview guide. This approach allowed that the interviews were conducted in the athletes' native language or in English. The interview guide was developed based on previous literature and followed a semi-structured format (Petróczi et al. [Preprint], van der Kallen et al., 2023). Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and, if necessary, translated into English for data analysis purposes. The study aimed to interview athletes that that were sanctioned for ADRVs by and after the first World Anti-Doping Code of 2003 – either intentionally or unintentionally. Eligible participants were adult elite athletes (≥ 18 years), covering a wide range of sports, nationalities, and types of rule violations to ensure a comprehensive analysis.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed using thematic Template Analysis (TA) (Brooks et al., 2015). Following the six steps to TA outlined by Brooks et al. (2015), an a priori template was created based on previous literature on the topic, the research team's knowledge and experiences, and the defined research questions. Themes were thereby tentatively organised into a hierarchical structure. Step 1) involved familiarisation with the data and selection of a subset of six athlete interviews (selected on the basis of the greatest possible diversity of circumstances of doping). Following step 2), the a priori template was put into use for guiding the preliminary coding of this subset. Preliminary themes were 3) further organised and restructured and 4) assembled to constitute an initial coding template. As the athlete narratives unfolded, the template was iteratively refined across six versions in step 5) to ensure that new, unexpected insights were incorporated through multiple cycles of coding and team discussion. Following step 6), the final template was then re-applied to the full set of data and used to identify patterns and relationships across the data, producing a set of analytically meaningful

themes. Given its structured yet flexible approach, template analysis was particularly useful for capturing diverse, nuanced participant experiences, while allowing for systematic analysis across different groups in larger data sets (King, 2004; Brooks & King, 2014).

Results

As of the date of this report, 42 athletes participated in the study, including participants from 22 countries worldwide and representing a variety of 15 sports covering endurance, strength and combat sports, as well as individual and team sports. The sample comprises 18 females and 24 males. An average of 5 years and 6 months had passed between the interview and the occurrence of the ADRV. A number of 10 athletes had admitted to having deliberately violated anti-doping rules, while 32 athletes stated unintentional ADRVs. The interviews lasted between 42 and 191 minutes with an average duration of 99 minutes. Participants' demographical information is displayed in Figure 1. The following sections outline the findings from these interviews, highlighting key themes in respect to the objectives of WP2.

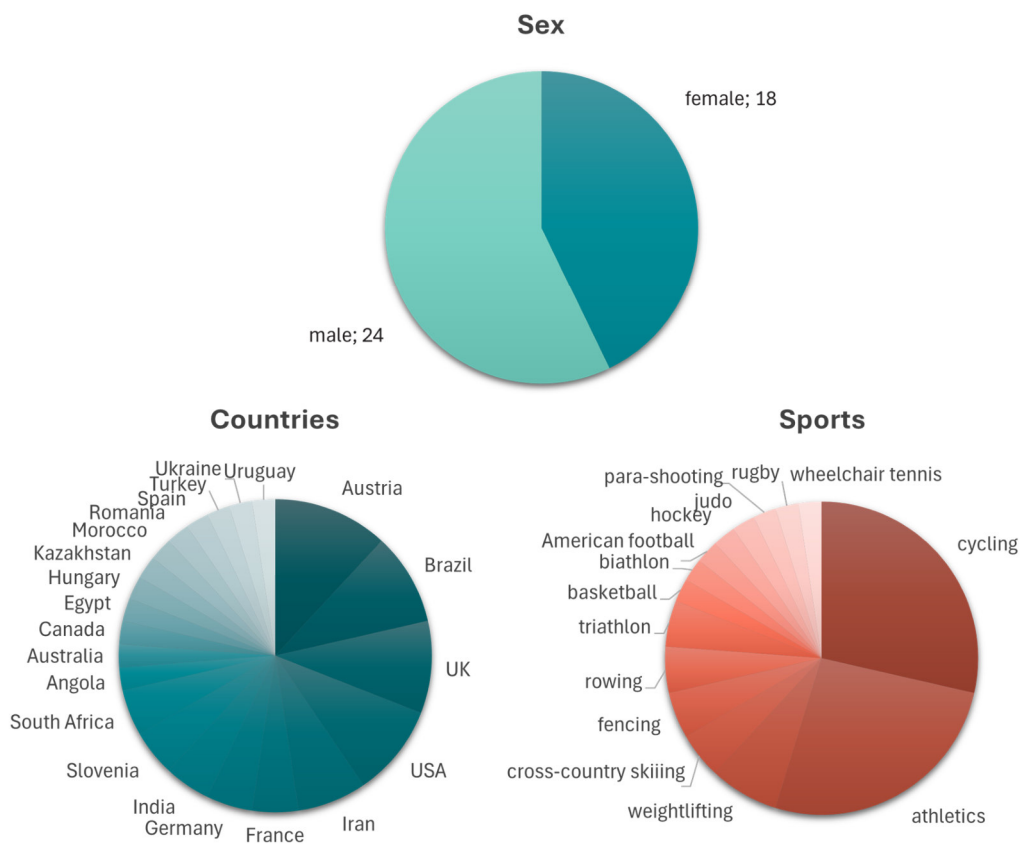


Figure 1. Illustration of participants' sex distribution, range of countries, and diversity of sports.

In total, five first-order themes were generated, that were further distinguished in second, third and in some cases fourth-order themes. A graphical overview of the key results of the Template Analysis is presented in figure 2.

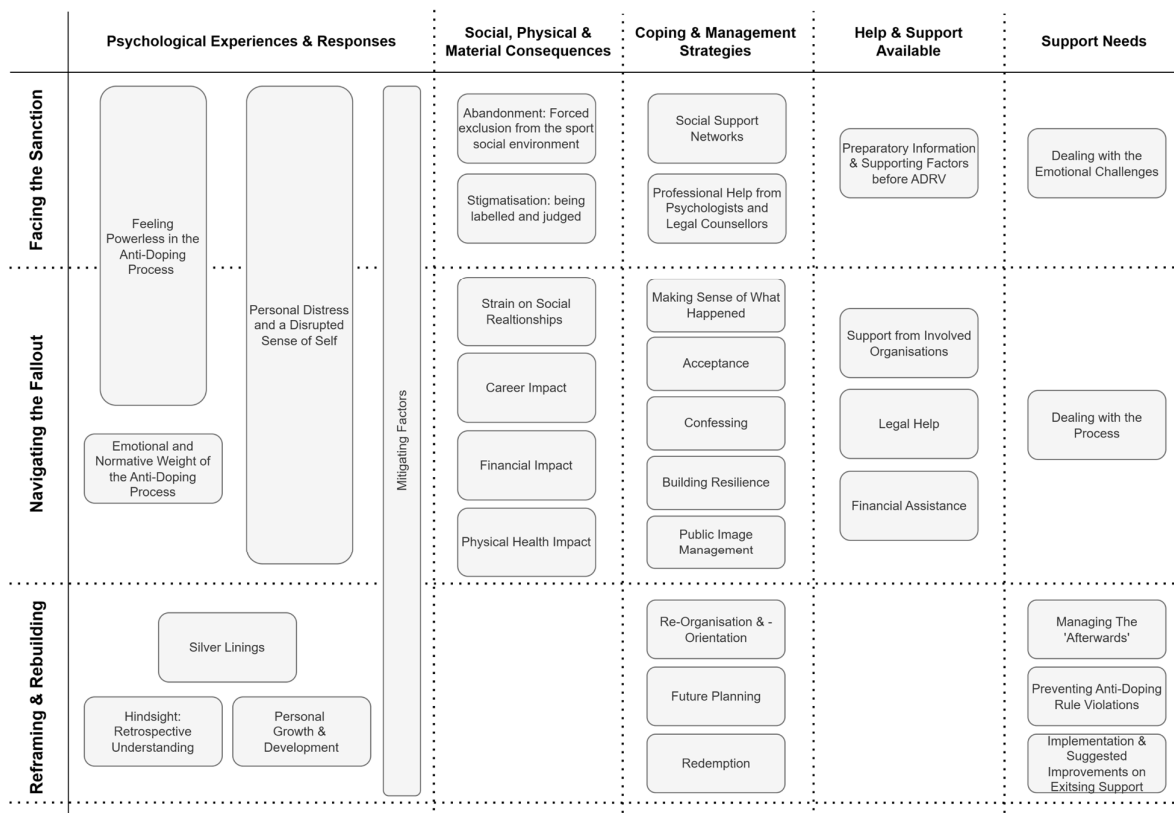


Figure 2. Thematic Map displaying first and second order themes as in the template.

Even though the themes must not be considered as distinct they will be presented according to the research questions for easier understanding and flow of reading. The first two themes are thus presented from the context of the lived experiences of sanctioned athletes (RQ1), one theme will be presented from the perspective of how athletes coped and managed the situation (RQ2), whereas the last two themes shed light on available support and needs that athletes articulated (RQ3).

(1) Lived Experiences and Impact on Athletes' Lives

A central aspect of sanctioned athletes' experiences was the profound emotional and psychological impact of the sanction. Regardless of whether the ADRV was intentional or unintentional, athletes described the period following their sanction as highly distressing. Details of the first two higher-order themes, including associated lower level themes are outlined in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Psychological Experiences & Responses

2 nd order themes	Mentioned by athletes ¹ (in %)	3 rd order themes	Mentioned by athletes ¹ (in %)
Feeling Powerless in the Anti-Doping Process	97	Lack of understanding of what had happened	86
		(Un-)Fairness of the sanction	84
		(Un-)Fairness of the process	81
		Helplessness/Lack of control	57
		Perception of personal interaction with & treatment of athletes	46
Personal Distress and a Disrupted Sense of Self	97	Identity crisis	95
		Stress & anxiety	86
		Sadness, hopelessness & depression	62
		Social Anxiety/ Withdrawal from social life	51

		Fear	35
		Panic attacks	22
		Feeling isolated and left alone	16
Emotional and Normative Weight of the Anti-Doping Process	95	Anger & disappointment	84
		Shame & guilt	62
		Frustration	59
		Regret	46
		Feeling torn between denying & admitting	22
		Embarrassment	14
Rethinking the Self in and beyond Sport	92	Mitigating factors making the situation more bearable	65
		Silver linings: Welcoming change and new opportunities	62
		Personal growth & development	62

¹Number refers to the percentage of athletes mentioning this (sub-)theme in relation to the total number of athletes in the sample (N=42).

In total four 2nd order themes were created. The theme Feeling Powerless in the Anti-Doping Process centred on athletes' predominantly negative perceptions of the anti-doping system. For most athletes, the experience of being notified of an ADRV marked the beginning of a disorienting and unsettling process in which they felt they had little control and influence. Initial reactions were often characterised by disbelief and confusion. Among those who maintained that their ADRV was unintentional, feelings of helplessness and a lack of control were particularly prevalent, as they struggled to understand how the violation had occurred and were desperate to prove their innocence. Many athletes expressed concerns about the fairness of the anti-doping process and sanction as well as the way cases were handled. A recurring complaint was that the anti-doping process is rigid and lacks nuance, treating all violations similarly regardless of intent or context. Some argued that sanctions should consider individual circumstances rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach.

The length of the process was described as frustrating, with many athletes feeling that extended waiting periods robbed them of valuable years in their careers. Some also raised concerns about the financial burden of challenging decisions, leaving athletes to accept a four-year sanction. A further critique was the perceived lack of empathy from anti-doping organisations (ADOs). Many athletes described feeling dehumanised, treated more as 'criminals' than as individuals facing complex personal circumstances:

It was an insanely bad time and I think I never want to feel like a criminal again, because that's what I felt during that time, those eight to twelve weeks with [the National Anti-Doping Organisation] and with the police and you felt like a serious criminal

Austria, American Football

Athletes' lived experiences further revealed a deeper psychological toll that extended beyond the immediate sanction, permeating their daily lives and sense of well-being, and summarised in the second 2nd order theme Personal Distress and a Disrupted Sense of Self. The most critical topic of this was the experience of an identity crisis, that almost all athletes described. Being banned from sports and its social environment often equalled having their whole life suddenly taken away, leaving athletes without purpose and nothing to live for any more. The sudden loss of their role as an athlete led to uncertainty about the future and a decline in self-confidence. Public condemnation and the stigma of being labelled a 'doper' further reinforced this identity crisis:

It was your like my whole, like your whole life ended like it's like that's all I left, for my whole life that's all I've been doing since I could have probably walked. My whole life was dedicated to that
South Africa, athletics

A majority of athletes experienced shock, anxiety, and fear about the future as the athletes' career and life goals suddenly seem at risk. The overwhelming media attention and public scrutiny further exacerbated these feelings, leaving athletes feeling exposed and stigmatised. Especially athletes with unintentional ADRVs experienced various mental health challenges, comprising deep sadness with constant crying, inability to sleep or eat, and depression. Six athletes even mentioned how they struggled with suicidal thoughts.

In response to the ADRV, many athletes struggled with the Emotional and Normative Weight of the Anti-Doping Process, the third 2nd order theme. A universal reaction inherent to almost all athletes was anger and disappointment. This was especially directed toward the anti-doping system, as well as toward news media, that fuelled public scrutiny and stigmatisation through inaccurate and sensationalised reporting. Others directed their anger more specifically at (abusive) coaches, uninformed and ignorant doctors or store owners that sold contaminated products. Most commonly, such emotions were aimed at authorities and members of athletes' sporting environment whom athletes felt had abandoned them. This disappointment was compounded by the lack of communication and empathy described above.

A majority of athletes also described deep feelings of shame and guilt, particularly toward their families and close ones who were unintentionally drawn into the situation.

I've decided to do so. That's the way it is, it's part of my life, I stand by it. But the fact that the very people who still support me and stand by me are suffering, that they are suffering too, was certainly the hardest part for me
Austria, cross-country skiing

Closely tied to anger was a deep sense of frustration, particularly in those with unintentional rule violations. These athletes continued to struggle to understand how the violation had occurred and how they could possibly prove their innocence in a system where *'the odds are stacked against you'* (South Africa, athletics). Beyond frustration with the system itself, athletes grappled with emotions tied to moral and relational expectations. For those who had admitted an intentional ADRV, the dominant emotional response was a feeling of being torn between denying and admitting the truth. If denying for months or even years, the secrecy surrounding their doping was often described as increasingly difficult to sustain, resembling a precarious house of cards that demanded constant effort to prevent from collapse. Ultimately, the athletes interviewed suggested that the burden of maintaining this fragile construction became unbearable, making disclosure appear not only inevitable but also a form of relief.

Despite the many challenges outlined by athletes, the last 2nd order theme displays a contrast in narrative, as it captured positive experiences. Many athletes were able to see silver linings in hindsight as they were Rethinking the Self in and beyond Sport. Particularly those athletes that doped intentionally, found relief in the sanction, as it removed the pressure to continue competing or provided an escape from toxic environments. Others enjoyed having more time to reconnect with family, explore new interests, or pursue further education. Going through the process and sanctions associated with an ADRV also offered opportunities for personal growth and development. Athletes frequently described themselves as becoming tougher, stronger, and more mature.

Psychological experiences and responses are deeply intertwined with some more tangible consequences of ADRVs, including Social, Physical and Material Consequences – the second 1st order theme related to athletes' lived experiences. An overview of included subthemes is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Social, Physical and Material Consequences

2 nd order themes	Mentioned by athletes ¹ (in %)	3 rd order themes	Mentioned by athletes ¹ (in %)
Social Consequences	95	Strain on relationships with family, friends and teammates	81
		Abandonment: Forced exclusion from former social environment	76
		Stigmatisation: Being labelled and judged	70
Career Impact	74	Interruption or end of athletic career	51
		Negative impact on future career chances	27
		(Lack of) alternative career options	27
		Negative impact on career outside sports	11
Financial Impact	53	Financial strain resulting from the process and sanction	32
		Loss of regular sources of income	30
Physical Health Impact	26	Difficulties to maintain a healthy training routine and lifestyle	19
		Physical deterioration	5

¹Number refers to the percentage of athletes mentioning this (sub-)theme in relation to the total number of athletes in the sample (N=42).

A majority of athletes experienced strained relationships with family, friends, and teammates, as they were drawn into the controversy, facing criticism and judgment themselves. While loved ones often wanted to support the athlete, they struggled to provide the level of support necessary to navigate the challenges of the ADRV. As coaches, teams, sponsors, and governing bodies distanced themselves, supposedly out of fear of association and negative publicity, athletes were left isolated and unsupported. Exclusion was frequently accompanied by profound stigmatisation, as athletes felt unfairly judged and labelled. This judgment often led to a sense of being perpetually marked by a single mistake, overshadowing past achievements and creating a lasting public identity tied to the ADRV:

If anyone trains with me, or anyone in a training group that I, you know, might go and join for a ride or anything, I'm very open because I don't want to put anyone in a situation where they may feel uncomfortable. So it's a constant thing that I kind of wear this badge, like, watch out for me, my feet smell
South Africa, athletics

Career-wise, sanctions frequently interrupted or even ended athletic careers, with long-term repercussions for future opportunities in sport. With careers and education often neglected in pursuit of sporting success, the loss of an athletic identity (already described above) left athletes without clear pathways for alternative careers and reintegration into 'ordinary' life. Financial difficulties, particularly legal costs and loss of income, added further pressure:

During the suspension period you are not supported, you are not allowed to train in weightlifting gyms or in accredited gyms of the Ministry of Youth and Sport or the Committee. You don't get paid for what you do, you have to do something else during that period, you have to work, support yourself, etc. But it was, how shall I

say, like a harsh reality check because we, athletes, are used to staying in training camps, doing the same things. Real life eventually hit me
Romania, weightlifting

(2) Coping and Management Strategies

Beyond the immediate impact of the ADRV, athletes' accounts revealed a complex interplay of resources, needs and responses that shaped how they coped with the sanction in everyday life. Addressing the second research question, the following section focuses on the mechanisms athletes adopted to manage the uncertainties, disruptions, and demands that marked this phase of their trajectories. An overview of the resulting themes is displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. *Coping and Management Strategies of Athletes*

2nd order themes	Mentioned by athletes¹ (in %)	3rd order themes	Mentioned by athletes¹ (in %)
Social Support Networks: Relying on family, friends, coach/management and support groups	95	Unconditional love & support	84
		Encouragement & support in envisioning a future	55
		Supporting individuals in the athlete's sporting environment	18
Making Sense of What Happened	84	Uncontrollable circumstances/ Minimizing own doing	71
		Blaming others, deception & betrayal	34
		Social/systemic pressure	34
Re-Organisation & - Orientation	84	Alternative activities & tasks	68
		Detachment from the athlete identity & settling into a new role	66
Acceptance	68	Making peace: accepting own fate & coming to terms with the situation	45
		Being content: it's good how life evolved	34
		Taking responsibility for own actions	26
Redemption	66	Giving something back to the sport	61
		Opportunity to make it right	24
Building Resilience	47	Blocking out public opinion	34
		Engaging with/working on oneself	24
Future Planning for career (transition) and setting (new) goals	45	Preparing for a successful comeback	34
		Focussing on new career pathways	16
Professional Help from Psychologists and Legal Counsellors	40	Psychotherapy & sport psychological help	29
		Encouragement and relief through lawyers	16
Confessing: Revealing everything and getting the matter off their chest	29		27
Public Image Management	11		11

¹Number refers to the percentage of athletes mentioning this (sub-)theme in relation to the total number of athletes in the sample (N=42).

As demonstrated in the identification of ten 2nd order themes in Table 3, athletes employed various strategies to manage the emotional and practical challenges of their sanction. Here, we provide further details of the ones mentioned by most athletes across the sample. Nearly all athletes emphasised the importance of their social networks in this, describing the unconditional support and

encouragement from family, partners, friends, and in some cases trusted coaches and teammates as essential for getting through the early phase:

For me it was a hundred percent it was a nightmare and my family they stood by me like a rock and because of them I like I literally started surviving
India, fencing

Athletes further engaged in various attempts to make sense of what had happened, as a way of cognitively and emotionally processing the violation. These efforts often responded to the lack of understanding and perceived unfairness described in earlier themes. Athletes engaged in problem solving to try to identify the root cause of their ADRV, which included trying to reconstruct events, understand how the violation could have occurred, and wrestling with questions of responsibility in retrospect. With regard to the latter, athletes often highlighted a profound lack of anti-doping education, particularly in certain less developed regions or in cases where athletes only competed at national or amateur level, to argue that they could not have known they were violating a rule. By emphasising these structural factors, they described the violation as something shaped by the conditions around them rather than as a fully informed choice or personal failure, which might have helped reduce self-blame and restore a sense of coherence.

Further cognitive processing and reframing was employed, as the majority of athletes were able to move beyond making sense of the violation towards actively reorganising and reorientating, to regain structure and direction after the disruptions caused by the sanction. They described revisiting their priorities, taking up new activities, or pursuing work and educational opportunities, which helped them stabilise daily life, detach from their athletic identity and find meaning beyond sport.

Acceptance was another key coping mechanism, primarily addressing the emotional burden of the sanction. Even among those who maintained their innocence, many eventually came to terms with their situation, learning to move forward rather than dwelling on the past. Some took responsibility for their actions, even in cases of unintentional doping, while others described a more resigned acceptance of the situation.

My taking responsibility is not that I'm guilty of, or I felt I did anything wrong, but at the end of the day, I choose to be part of this sport. So I have to sign up for what everything comes with it.
Australia, athletics

Despite the frustrations with the anti-doping system, some athletes channelled their experiences into efforts to improve the system in an act of redemption. They expressed a desire to give back to sport by supporting other athletes, whether through mentoring, coaching, or involvement in athlete advocacy groups.

(3) Athletes' Needs for Support

Despite the significant challenges athletes faced after a sanction, structured support remained largely absent or support was only accessible through athletes' own initiative. Overall, about one third of participants reported being left without reliable institutional support meaning that for most, support originated primarily from outside the sport system. The two 1st order themes related to the third research question highlight the support available to athletes before summarising athletes' expression of what their actual needs of support were when being faced with an ADRV. An overview is outlined in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4. Help and Support Available.

2 nd order themes	Mentioned by athletes ¹ (in %)	3 rd order themes	Mentioned by athletes ¹ (in %)
Help and Support Available to Athletes with ADRV	71	Legal help	46
		Support from involved organisations	38
		Financial assistance	22
Preparatory Information: Supporting factors in place before an ADRV occurs	5	Alternative career options	5

¹Number refers to the percentage of athletes mentioning this (sub-)theme in relation to the total number of athletes in the sample (N=42).

While athletes reported receiving some form of help, this was primarily legal assistance that they actively sought out. Only in rare cases did ADOs provide guidance or access to welfare officers. In some cases, independent experts such as scientists or doctors provided guidance, but there was no consistent or structured support system in place:

I got myself a lawyer anyway, who had already worked on doping cases and knew his way around, and that was really the first moment of peace for me
Austria, American football

Table 5. Expressed Support Needs of Athletes.

2 nd order themes	Mentioned by athletes ¹ (in %)	3 rd order themes	Mentioned by athletes ¹ (in %)
Dealing with the Emotional Challenges	87	Dealing with the athlete as a human being	49
		Psychological Support: Need for mental health services and counselling	32
		Opportunities for redemption and proofing innocence	22
		Role models/Support groups	16
		Social support from family, friends, and peers	11
		No publication of ADRV to protect athletes' privacy	8
		Dealing with the Process	53
Financial assistance to guarantee a fair process regardless of money	14		
Procedural improvements to mitigate the impact	14		
Need for communication: keep athletes informed	11		
Need for being heard	11		
Preventing Anti-Doping Rule Violations	47	Increased and improved anti-doping education	35
		Procedural improvements to prevent ADRVs	14
		Athlete Empowerment & Resilience: help athletes build a personality independent of sports	11
Managing The 'Afterwards'	42	Navigating the suspension and return to sport	24

	Building a life beyond the ban	19
Suggested Improvements on Existing Support & Implementation	21	22

¹Number refers to the percentage of athletes mentioning this (sub-)theme in relation to the total number of athletes in the sample.

Most athletes expressed a strong need for support to help them Dealing with the Emotional Challenges of their sanction. About half of the athletes wished for ADOs and federations to treat them with more understanding and empathy. They frequently criticised authorities for de-humanising them, lamenting the lack of understanding from authorities and describing interactions as dealing with ‘robots rather than people’. They desired a more personal approach that considers individual circumstances and acknowledges the emotional toll of the process. There was a strong sentiment that authorities should not be holding athletes to a higher standard but recognise that they can make mistakes, and that the punishment should not extend beyond the sanction itself to include public shaming or career-ending judgments.

Regardless of whether they intentionally or unintentionally violated anti-doping rules, athletes further highlighted the need for professional psychological support and targeted counselling services tailored to sanctioned athletes’ experiences:

Psychologically, there were such moments when it all piles up anyway. In any case, here you are striving, let's say, for Olympics, and then one day you are disqualified [...] of course, yes, I would like psychological support
Kazakhstan, weightlifting

A common concern was the lack of guidance when Dealing with the Anti-Doping Process. Many athletes felt unprepared for handling the complexities of anti-doping proceedings and expressed a need for legal support, including access to knowledgeable legal counsel and clearer communication from anti-doping authorities. Financial assistance to ensure a fair defence, independent of personal resources, was also mentioned as a key requirement.

To Prevent Anti-Doping Rule Violations, athletes called for improved education that was more engaging and tailored to athletes' realities, helping them to better understand the risks of inadvertent doping and to navigate anti-doping regulations more effectively:

What would help, though, is proper education: information that helps athletes avoid this situation altogether. Better knowledge about anti-doping regulations, supplements, nutrition, and vitamins would make a big difference.
Romania, weightlifting

This was underlined by a strong wish for more comprehensive and targeted education programmes to enable athletes to take informed decisions independent of coaches or other trusted persons. Looking back, many athletes reflected on how their unintentional rule violation could have been prevented, or what support would have been necessary to refrain from intentional doping. Beyond education, those that had deliberately chosen to use prohibited methods or substances advocated for better support systems during their active careers that offer alternative career paths and easier transitions out of elite sport, noting that many athletes dedicated their life to being an athlete without a ‘plan B’.

Conclusion and Outlook

The findings of Work Package 2 underscore the complexity of sanctioned athletes' experiences, revealing both individual struggles and broader structural challenges. In addition, a number of common themes were identified that are experienced by the majority of athletes regardless of which part of the world or sporting discipline they come from. The findings highlight the need for a more athlete-centred approach in anti-doping, one that balances regulation with fair treatment and meaningful support. Current gaps in education, organisational guidance and support, as well as reintegration pathways call for targeted interventions to better equip athletes during and after their sanctions.

These results will play a crucial role in shaping the next phases of the project. The next work packages of the TALE project will focus on translating the findings from WP2 and WP3 into concrete policy recommendations and educational initiatives:

WP4 - Policy Recommendations: Developing guidelines on how to manage sanctioned athletes and facilitate their potential reintegration into the sporting community.

WP5 - Education Initiatives: Creating educational programmes for emerging athletes to highlight the consequences of doping and designing tailored support and education for sanctioned athletes.

Integrating our insights into policy and practice opens an opportunity to create a fairer and more effective system that not only upholds clean sport but also acknowledges the realities faced by sanctioned athletes.

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