

## DOPING IN E-SPORTS AND ITS REGULATION

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As experts continue to work to understand how and why doping occurs as well as how to avoid it, the topic has grown to be one of importance and complexity in the sports world. "Sensational" press revelations highlight the seriousness of an issue that is resonating across most athletic disciplines. Doping scandals undermine the integrity of the athletic performance, casting doubt on and disputing certain "arena heroes" mediatized successes. In the modern day, several sports seem to have surpassed both human and at times even legal limitations. This phenomenon may be explained by financial interests, pressure to do better, media coverage of sporting events, and last but not least, human nature. Human performance can only advance so far in some sports, like cycling or running. The fact that sports have evolved into an industry, a business, a source of political or national pride, and that winning requires breaching any laws, means that they are no longer just games. The majority of e-sports enthusiasts polled (50.2%) said that authorized drugs (including caffeine, such as energy drinks) increase their performance in video games, 29.1% disagreed, and 20.7% said it was "impossible to determine." However, research done in the United States has not supported the respondents' assumption about the influence of energy drinks and similar goods on their performance, which is most likely based on public opinion. There was no positive effect of energy drinks on the psychomotor performance of professional LoL players in that research. Nonetheless, the study's authors emphasized that their research was merely a starting point for larger and more extensive assessments (Thomas et al. 2019). Because today's sports are about sponsors, advertising contracts, and money, some athletes may consider that any risk is worthwhile if they are hidden, disguised, working with a team of experts behind them, or working alone. Even health hazards to themselves are no longer important (sometimes with severe and irreversible repercussions). Today, doping is an international issue that affects international athletic events everywhere. Over the past 50 years, international sports federations led by the International Olympic Committee have made attempts to halt the development of this issue, but with little success. This substance abuse behavior was anticipated to decline with educational initiatives, testing, and supportive medical care. This, however, has not been the case. In reality, elite athletes are increasingly abusing new, more potent, and undetectable

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doping methods and chemicals, and sophisticated networks of distribution have grown. Adolescent and young adult populations frequently look up to professional athletes and model their behavior after them, including abusing drugs. The goal of this analysis of doping in international sports is to educate experts in addiction treatment and the international psychiatric community on the origins of doping in sports and how it has affected both vulnerable athletes and non-athletes. Jiri Murak, Pavel Slepicka, and Irena Slepickova's study, "Sports motivation and doping in teenage athletes" (2018) what are the doping intents and performance objectives of teenagers competing in sports? Was a topic presented as part of an analysis of doping from a motivational standpoint? To evaluate the factors of motivation, objectives, moral beliefs, and behavior-related doping, they asked 1035 teenagers who were competing in sports contests to complete a questionnaire. The study concluded that anti-doping practice regulations should be drafted after taking psychological factors into account when determining motivation in sports. The weekly *New Scientist* addressed the issue of uncontrolled and excessive use of authorized stimulants during tournaments, such as energy drinks, caffeine tablets, and other prescription-free drugs, in a commentary on Bjoern Franzen's report (Hodson 2014). The first nutritional supplements for athletes meant to boost attention and composure have already hit the market in the United States. They don't include sugar or taurine, but they do have caffeine, choline, green tea extract, powdered ginger, l-theanine, and vitamins B3, B5, B6, and B12.

The results include not just an acute, short-term stimulation, but also a long-term increase in brain activity (Kotowski 2019). 58.5% of those polled agreed that video game contests should not exclude any of the already permitted drugs. Only 21.6% were accepted. Prohibiting some of these medicines, while 19.9% said it was "difficult to say." Furthermore, 44.0% of respondents stated that the players should not be punished. Checked for the usage of permitted drugs, 29.0% passed such tests, and 27.0% chose the "difficult to say" option. Francesca Della and Gaetano Raiola published "Development of Doping in Sports: Overview and Analysis" in 2018. It is emphasized that doping practices are widespread among amateur athletes as well as top athletes. Although the electronic sports (Esports) sector has always been popular among young people, the covid-19 epidemic greatly accelerated its global expansion. This was true for all market sectors, including players, fans, and investors, and it was made possible by the industry's intrinsic passion, dedication, and financial rewards. However, international Esports governance frameworks have lagged behind their physical equivalents. The prize money presently available in Esports, the sponsorship opportunities, and the visibility on social media, similar to physical sports, have enticed players and stakeholders to try to obtain unfair

advantages by cheating. E-doping refers to both the mechanical and electrical modification of the software as well as players abusing medicinal drugs to improve their performance. Both techniques aim to increase unfair advantage by enhancing performance and gaining in-game benefits by methods other than the player's talent, which affects the outcome of a match. Physical sports fall under the regulation of their regulating bodies, as well as the criminal legislation of the participants' and venues' home countries. The world of Esports is struggling to deal with the issue of e-doping due to the lack of an appropriate body (there are two at the international level, but not everyone is a signatory), as well as the lack of a requirement for those involved in Esports to submit to regulatory oversight (since it is all largely publisher controlled). Players in esports must maintain composure under pressure, regulate their reflexes, and respond fast to changes on the screen. E-doping physically can assist with these needs. Drugs like Adderall, Ritalin, and Selegiline can help with attention and reaction time by calming and controlling the nervous system. They also have therapeutic applications. Recently, a professional Esports player unintentionally unleashed a computer worm when he nonchalantly admitted to using Adderall together with his teammates. Each game's producers set its restrictions, although tournament organizers have tried to limit drug usage by enacting tournament-specific rules based on the World Anti-Doping Code. Although it may be challenging to police national anti-drug laws in Esports events, they apply. Electronic and Mechanical E-doping, a trickier technique, involves using third-party tools or software that isn't authorized by the game producer, server assaults, defects, and software cheat codes and programs. These hacks are employed in a variety of ways, such as giving players access to extra powers like strength and flying, changing computer program settings to enable automatic weapon aiming, seeing past walls and smoke, and seeing through other players' obstacles. Through distributed denial of service and hindrances like time latency, the adversary's server or network may be compromised. Through hardware alterations such as changing keyboards and pointing devices' settings to obtain an edge, technological improvements enable e-doping. Players were able to watch live broadcasts of their matches, giving them insights into their opponents' strategies, thanks to the expansion of affordable live broadcasting and streaming possibilities that produce tremendous income. While tournament organizers and broadcasters have implemented precautions like brief interruptions in live streaming, e-doping has evolved into an ongoing conflict between organizers and cheaters that demands constant awareness and dedication. The implementation of mechanisms to prevent e-doping has been made possible by the foundation of the Esports Integrity Commission (ESIC) in 2015, the acceptance of ethical norms and practices by several tournament organizers, and the efforts of game creators.

However, because ESIC cannot keep up with the number of reports, certain unethical behaviors continue to go unchecked. Instances reported to it each month, but due to a dearth of information, it has been unable to satisfactorily wrap up its laborious investigations. The idea is not brand-new. When honor and riches are at stake, competitors may use illegal drugs to increase their chances of winning. Although the practice is not new, the environment has altered as more and more participants in the emerging sport of esports (electronic sports) admit to using drugs. Contrary to conventional sports, esports doping is more about improving a player's response speed by milliseconds than it is about boosting muscular mass or endurance. Given the recent explosive surge in esports' popularity and a corresponding rise in tournament prize money, it is crucial to comprehend this trend. There have been attempts to change this practice, but the decentralized structure of esports has made consistent regulation extremely difficult. Esports, to put it simply, is the practice of watching people contest in video games, either live or online. First-person shooters and arena combat games are often the most popular game genres. Players can join competitive matches on their own or through third-party party services, depending on the game. Then, to compete for prizes and notoriety, players participate in several tournaments that are unique to each game. The main goals of esports doping are to increase attention, response time, and concentration. To do that, some gamers supplement their gaming skills using stimulants like Adderall and Ritalin. Players who have acknowledged using prescription pharmaceuticals claim that by enhancing concentration, these substances lengthen and improve the quality of their gaming. Esports has developed from merely people competing against one another for pleasure into a multibillion-dollar industry as of 2019. There is no doubting the popularity and worth of esports, even though some prominent players in conventional sports have refused to recognize the new phenomenon. There are currently esports tournaments with rewards of several million dollars. In reality, since traditional sports alternatives have disappeared in these turbulent and ever-changing times, more individuals are starting to follow esports. As betting companies extend their coverage of esports, this audience rise has seen a commensurate value increase. Leagues are working to eliminate this issue, in part because of the money at risk. Esports leagues have a great interest in ensuring that triumphs are authentic as the stakes climb and have started collaborating with a few regulatory organisations in this field. To that purpose, a few organisations are attempting to control the esports business, even though the sector is mostly unregulated and scattered. The International Esports Federation (IESF) and the E-sports Integrity Coalition (ESIC) are the two biggest; both organizations have extensive anti-doping policies intended to prevent doping and encourage fair competition. Both organizations have lists of chemicals they consider to be illegal that

include medications like Ritalin and Adderall. Both teams have a Therapeutic Utilize Exemption that permits a player to use drugs that are often prohibited. Both organizations use general language when describing testing, with ESIC asserting that testing can occur "at any time or location." It's interesting to note that the IESF includes a different, more thorough section regarding testing at events. Many of the World Anti-Doping (WADA) Agency's guidelines are included in the IESF rules. Rules and procedures that might eventually make it the more credible of the two. There are various obstacles to the enforcement of these laws. Participation in regulatory organizations is not required, and some corporations, such as Epic Games and Activision Blizzard, the respective owners of Fortnite and Overwatch, want to act independently without more regulation. Additionally, drug testing is expensive. While some of the bigger leagues may afford it, smaller organizations may find it prohibitive. These laws frequently provide an exemption for Adderall or Ritalin users who have prescriptions; nevertheless, some players contend that since prescriptions are widely available, this exception is open to misuse. Last but not least, challenges stem from the fact that while a tournament's finals are held in enormous venues, many of the previous rounds are played at home, making it nearly impossible for the regulator to accurately assess if any contestants used drugs to get to the finals. The head of the eSports Integrity Coalition has urged both domestic and foreign anti-doping agencies to increase their assistance in the fight against performance-enhancing substances. Speaking at the most recent ESL One competition in Cologne, Ian Smith referred to the testing practices now in use as "hopelessly wrong." The claim was made as part of an ongoing effort to improve how the general public views eSports. The Realm Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has had a difficult time addressing the issue in the world of professional gaming for a long time. Even if illegal medications like Ritalin and Adderall are very different from the steroids and growth hormones used in "legitimate" sports like cycling or athletics, they can nevertheless provide players with a competitive edge. The ongoing controversy over these medications, which are frequently given to patients with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and are known to improve reflexes and concentration, worries eSports officials who hope to transform the perception of eSports into a "real sport" among the general public. Doping allegations have dogged eSports since professional Counter-Strike player Kory "Memphis" Friesen claimed in a 2015 video aired on the Landers Cstrike YouTube channel that he and his Cloud9 colleagues used Adderall before competition in Katowice, Poland. In response, The Electronic Sports League (ESL), which organizes many of the world's largest eSports competitions, promised that future events will have tougher anti-doping procedures. The ESL then issued a list of prohibited drugs in compliance with WADA standards, and

Germany's National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) warned that any player detected taking any of them will be penalized. WADA issued a similar warning and promised to monitor eSports "around the clock." However, eSports organizers have been upset by the lack of anti-doping personnel at ESL tournaments since then. The list of prohibited substances has also generated some confusion, with specific chemicals included rather than the medications in their packaged form. A doctor's letter, similar to a therapeutic use exemption for athletes in other sports, can also be used to get around some of the rules. Another source of worry is the fact that there is still no independent regulation of doping in eSports. E-Sports teams, except the ESL, which specializes in League of Legends and Counter-Strike tournaments, are self-regulating. Among them is the eSports squad of Bundesliga club Schalke, which competes largely in FIFA and Pro Evolution Soccer. "We do a medical with each player," stated Tim Reichert, Schalke 04's Head of eSports. "Blood tests are included. Fans of Counter-Strike: Global Offensive were stunned in 2019 by a cheating controversy involving the Polish squad Tajemnice Watykanu (Secrets of the Vatican), which was excluded from the Polish ESL Championships eliminations. The affair sparked more debate since ESL took its time issuing a punishment, and the team's suspension was not accompanied by any individual consequences for the players. Adrian Kostrzbski, ESL Poland's representative, emphasized that ESL believed in fair play and that any alleged dishonesty was properly investigated (Groenke 2019). The primary issue, however, was that event organizers did not interact with one another in this regard (Chomczyk 2019), which raises issues regarding the availability and efficiency of coordinated social controls for various types of cheating in e-sports. It is not as thorough as the medicals that our professional football players have, but the exam is pretty thorough." Players that test positive for any prohibited drug during their medical as part of the joining procedure are disqualified. This policy, according to Reichert, is an issue of sports integrity. "We are so accustomed to testing in football, which has paid off over the last 20, or 30 years. That is why I regard it as a good technique in eSports; a doping reputation would be quite damaging. Taking samples just makes sense." Perhaps an excellent stance. But, without a centralized regulatory body to ensure that all teams follow the same rules, who can judge how even the virtual playing field is? According to Germany's NADA, a stronger emphasis on education and openness is needed, with officials and participants made aware of exactly what is and isn't prohibited." We help the ESL in education and doping prevention," NADA CEO Lars Mortsiefer told DW recently. "NADA can assist eSports in implementing these anti-doping standards, but only when a clear set of guidelines has been established." According to the eSports Integrity Coalition, this would represent a significant step forward in the fight for more sporting acceptability. E-sports reflects

sport (or pseudo-sport) functionalities, as evidenced by professional players, teams, attire, coaches, managers, agents, leagues, tournaments, events (often held at traditional sports arenas), sponsorship agreements, player transfers, popular commentators, and student scholarships, but also by the presence of match-fixing, gender inequality, and the use of social media. Chemicals used to dope (Funk et al. 2018; Jenny et al. 2017). Nonetheless, the Doping policies appear to differ between e-sports and traditional sports.(Baldwin 2019), which poses several complications, such as negotiating the inclusion of video games as an Olympic discipline. Any future collaboration between WADA will also be required to be involved by e-sports organizations and the IOC.

The findings of this study provide a foundation for future, more in-depth research that might reveal general processes responsible for doping in competitive video game play, as well as a clearer differentiation between doping in conventional sports. as well as electronic sports The comparatively significant number of doping studies in cycling can be used as a guide for organizing and conducting comparable research one-sports, which might include the following topics:

- 1) The nuances of doping in e-sports;
- 2) The working circumstances of professional athletes;
- 3) The formalisation of e-sports;
- 4) The motivations for doping usage;
- 5) The stigmatization of athletes who have been penalised for doping or accused of cheating.
- 6) The anti-doping system's operation.

In e-sports, like in traditional sports, the media is the major - and often the only - source of information concerning doping (Leszczyska 2017). Furthermore, doping in conventional sports and e-sports is influenced by athletes who view competition as a source of wealth. Sponsors do not want their athletes to be perceived as cheaters for fear of jeopardising their reputations. The involvement of authorities, organizations, and other interest groups in doping-related concerns, as well as their meddling in the anti-doping system, deserves a thorough examination (Leszczyska 2017). The institutional entities fighting doping in e-sports have several hurdles. It appears that the use of artificial drugs to boost physical capabilities in professional gaming

is mostly underappreciated, with only a few exceptions. Few e-sports activists are attempting to raise awareness of this obscure but significant issue.

