Alcohol

What is it?
Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant. It is rapidly distributed to all parts of the body following ingestion, including the brain. Alcohol is used as a disinfectant and an antiseptic. Many medications in fluid form contain alcohol as a solvent or solubilizer, since the particular active ingredients are not readily soluble in water or not at all. Rubbing the skin with a highly concentrated ethanol solution (e.g. rubbing alcohol) improves blood circulation. Ethanol is also used to treat insect bites.

Status on the prohibited list
Alcohol comes under the category P1 on the list of prohibited substances in-competition in particular sports.

Effects of Alcohol on the body
Depending on the situation, alcohol has either an anaesthetic or a stimulating effect or even causes a mood change. It also causes dilation of peripheral blood vessels in particular. This results in a feeling of warmth when alcoholic beverages are consumed. In this way the body's natural system of heat regulation is disrupted at low temperatures.

Alcohol has been proven to:
- Decrease accuracy, balance, and reaction time
- Slow visual tracking and information processing
- Decrease strength, power and muscle endurance
- Dehydrate the body

There is some evidence that alcohol may be able to reduce anxiety and muscle tremor, but the associated decrease in coordination, balance and information processing would negate any real benefit to sport performance gained from the advantage in those areas.

Potential harmful side effects
- Liver cirrhosis
- Ulcers
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Myopathy (muscle damage, wasting, and weakness)
- Bone disorders
- Mental health

Sports prohibited
For most sports alcohol would be detrimental to performance, therefore it is only subject to certain restrictions. Alcohol (ethanol) is prohibited In-Competition only, in the following sport.
- Aironautic (FAI)
- Archery (FITA, IPC) (also prohibited out of competition).
- Automobile (FIA)
- Karate (WKF)
- Boules (CMSB)
- Powerboating (UIM)
- Motor cycling

Testing
Most commonly alcohol use in a sporting event is detected through either breath or blood tests