Cannabinoids

What are they?

These substances are extracted from Indian hemp or Cannabis sativa. The most effective is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). The THC content of hemp plants has been greatly increased in recent years through selective breeding. They are offered on the black market in the form of marijuana (dried flowers and leaves of the plant), hashish (small block of dried cannabis resin from the female flowers) and as a strong concentrated oil that is extracted from the plant.

Status on the prohibited list

Cannabinoids come under category S8 on the list of prohibited substances in-competition in all sports.

Potential harmful side effects

- Inflammation of lung tissue and cancer (caused by smoking)
- Lung infections
- Psychological dependency

Other side effects include

- Impaired balance and coordination
- Increased heart rate
- Increased blood pressure
- Loss of short term memory
- Anxiety
- Abnormal body temperature
- Emotional instability
- Disturbances with ovulation
- Decreased sperm count

Who would use them and why?

Marijuana/hashish may be used to limit stress and facilitate relaxation before a competition. However, athletes that consume cannabinoids can decrease inhibitions and increase the readiness to take risks, especially in dangerous sports. Consequently there is an increased risk of harming oneself and others, particularly in dangerous sports. Yet, in most sports these substances act to reduce performance as a result of poorer coordination and a reduced ability to react.