Narcotics

What are they?

A narcotic is an addictive drug that reduces pain, induces sleep and may alter mood or behaviour. They are used in medicine to treat the pain caused by serious diseases or injuries and for treating addiction under medical supervision (i.e. in controlled distribution of heroin, methadone programs).

Status on the prohibited list
Narcotics come under S7 on the list of substances and methods prohibited in-competition.

Examples
Examples include but are not limited to heroin, morphine, methadone and pethidine.

Potential harmful side effects

- Narcotics can reduce coordination as well as the ability to concentrate.
- They cause mood changes that in extreme cases lead to psychological disorders.
- Narcotics are associated with a high addiction potential.
- Loss of sleep and depression
- Taken in high doses, they lead to decreased consciousness, paralysis of the respiratory center and even death.
- A feeling of invincibility

Who would use them and why?
Narcotics may produce sensations of euphoria, invincibility and illusions of athletic prowess beyond athletic ability and also may be used to increase pain threshold. Narcotics are used primarily in competition, especially in sports associated with pain (e.g. combat sports). Some deaths can be attributed to the misuse of these substances (partly in combination with stimulants). An example known from cycling is "pot belge", a dangerous mixture of heroin, amphetamine, cocaine and other substances. This cocktail pushes to extremes the willingness to perform and the ability to endure pain, so that the athlete no longer perceives his or her limits and falls prey to overexertion.

Testing
Narcotics can be detected through urine testing using gas chromatography-mass spectrometry techniques.