

NEW ERA ADR
Anti-Doping Arbitration Tribunal

In the Matter of the Arbitration between

UNITED STATES ANTI-DOPING AGENCY (USADA),

Claimant

and

LAURA MEADOR,

Respondent

Re: New Era ADR Case No. 26050702

AWARD OF ARBITRATOR

Pursuant to the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, 36 U.S.C. § 220501 et seq. (the “**Act**”), and the Procedures for the Arbitration of Olympic & Paralympic Sport Doping Disputes (the “**Arbitration Procedures**”), which are included in Annex C of the United States Anti-Doping Agency (“**USADA**”) Protocol for Olympic and Paralympic Movement Testing (the “**USADA Protocol**”), a merits hearing was held on August 6, 2026, via secure video conference under the auspices of New Era ADR, before arbitrator Victoria Sahani (the “**Arbitrator**”), with Claimant USADA’s legal counsel in attendance. Respondent Laura Meador did not attend the merits hearing or raise any objections or concerns.

The Arbitrator does hereby AWARD as follows:

I. THE PARTIES

1. Claimant, USADA, is the independent anti-doping agency for Olympic sports in the United States and is responsible for conducting drug testing and for adjudicating any positive test results and other anti-doping rule violations pursuant to the USADA Protocol. Spencer Crowell, Director of Legal Affairs of USADA, appeared and represented USADA.
2. Respondent, Laura Meador, is a forty-four-year-old female recreational master athlete who has consistently held a USA Weightlifting (“**USAW**”) membership since 2013. By virtue of her USAW registration and active participation in sanctioned competitions, including the 2025 United Masters Weightlifting Federation (“**UMWF**”) World Championships, Respondent is

bound by the USADA Protocol, the World Anti-Doping Code (the “**Code**”), and the International Weightlifting Federation (“**IWF**”) Anti-Doping Rules.

3. Claimant and Respondent shall be referred to collectively as “the parties” and individually as a “party.”

II. JURISDICTION, APPLICABLE LAW, AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

4. New Era ADR is granted the jurisdiction to hear and resolve this dispute under the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, 36 U.S.C. § 220501 et seq. (the “**Act**”), and the Procedures for the Arbitration of Olympic & Paralympic Sport Doping Disputes (the “**Arbitration Procedures**”), which are included in Annex C of the USADA Protocol for Olympic and Paralympic Movement Testing (the “**USADA Protocol**”).
5. Respondent requested this Arbitration in a writing dated April 29, 2026, to contest the four-year sanction imposed in USADA’s formal Charge Letter dated April 15, 2026. USADA’s Charge Letter explained the charges of anti-doping rule violations under Code Articles 2.1 (Presence of a Prohibited Substance or its Metabolites or Markers in an Athlete’s Sample) and 2.2 (Use or Attempted Use by an Athlete of a Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method).
6. On May 7, 2026, USADA formally initiated this arbitration at the request of Respondent by filing a Demand for Arbitration with New Era ADR under Case Number 26050702.
7. On May 11, 2026, New Era ADR appointed Victoria Sahani (the “**Arbitrator**”), an independent arbitrator drawn from the Arbitrator Pool established under Section R-3 of the Arbitration Procedures, to serve as the sole Arbitrator in this matter pursuant to Section R-10 of the Arbitration Procedures.
8. On June 4, 2026, the Arbitrator conducted a prehearing conference via telephone, during which both parties participated, formally accepted the Arbitrator’s appointment, agreed to arbitrate this dispute before New Era ADR, confirmed the Arbitrator’s jurisdiction, and agreed to schedule the merits hearing for August 6, 2026. During the prehearing conference, Respondent also confirmed that she understood the charges in the Charging Letter. No party raised any jurisdictional objections.
9. On June 8, 2026, following a prehearing conference call with the parties, the Arbitrator issued Scheduling Order Number 1, setting the original timeline for the filing of briefs and evidence. In strict compliance with that order, USADA timely filed its Pre-Hearing Brief, Exhibit List, and Witness Designation on June 18, 2026.
10. Following Respondent’s failure to comply with her designated filing deadlines under Scheduling Order Number 1, and at Claimant’s request, the Arbitrator scheduled and convened a Show-Cause Hearing on July 22, 2026, via telephone. Despite receiving proper and timely notification, Respondent failed to attend the conference call. Consequently, pursuant to Rule R-24 of the Arbitration Procedures, the Arbitrator proceeded with the show-cause hearing with only Claimant present.

11. On July 22, 2026, the Arbitrator issued Prehearing Scheduling Order Number 2, which modified the schedule while maintaining all of the unmodified portions of Scheduling Order Number 1 in full force. To protect Respondent's procedural rights, the Arbitrator *sua sponte* granted an extended and final deadline of July 27, 2026, for Respondent's pre-hearing submissions and made Claimant's reply brief optional rather than mandatory. The final merits hearing date, August 6, 2026, remained unchanged.
12. The Arbitrator convened the merits hearing virtually via secure videoconference under the auspices of New Era ADR on August 6, 2026. Claimant appeared via its Director of Legal Affairs, Spencer Crowell. Despite receiving proper notice and personally agreeing to the hearing date during the prehearing conference call on June 4, 2026, Respondent failed to attend or raise any objection.
13. Under Rule R-24 of the Arbitration Procedures, the Arbitrator proceeded with the hearing in Respondent's absence, hearing testimony from Claimant's witnesses: Grayson Potter¹ (USADA Education Department representative) and Dr. Matthew Fedoruk (USADA Chief Science Officer). No other witnesses testified during the hearing.
14. As explained above, the rules applicable to the merits issues in this case are the USADA Protocol, the Code, and the IWF Anti-Doping Rules, which implement the Code. This proceeding conforms to the Arbitration Procedures.

III. FINDINGS OF FACT AND ANTI-DOPING RULE VIOLATIONS

15. The Arbitrator has considered all of the facts, allegations, legal arguments, and evidence submitted by both parties in the present proceedings. For brevity, this Award summarizes and refers only to the submissions and evidence considered necessary to explain and support the Arbitrator's reasoning and decision.
16. Both parties agree that Respondent is a Recreational Athlete.
17. On December 5, 2025, Respondent competed in the UMWF World Championships in Daytona Beach, Florida, and placed first in her master age and weight division. Following her competition, Respondent was selected for in-competition testing. Under direct observation of a Doping Control Officer, Respondent provided a urine sample, which was split into Sample A and Sample B and sealed under Security Number 132134P. The collection complied with the International Standard for Testing and Investigations (ISTI). On her signed Doping Control Form (DCF) (Ex. C-23), Respondent failed to declare her active use of testosterone cypionate injections, which she was receiving weekly.
18. The Sports Medicine Research and Testing Laboratory (SMRTL), the WADA-accredited laboratory in Salt Lake City, analyzed Sample A and reported Respondent's sample as an Atypical Finding based on inconclusive results regarding the presence of exogenous testosterone.

¹ Grayson Potter testified in place of Tammy Hanson, named on Claimant's witness list, who was unavailable at the time of the hearing.

19. After receiving the report from SMRTL, on February 2, 2026, USADA notified Respondent of the Atypical Finding and requested an explanation and medical documentation.
20. In a written response via email dated February 12, 2026, Respondent admitted to her weekly use of prescribed testosterone cypionate injections since February 2023 for medically diagnosed perimenopause and submitted medical charts from Dermatology Realm.
21. Based on this written admission, and pursuant to Article 5.2.3 of the International Standard for Results Management (ISRM), USADA converted the Atypical Finding to an Adverse Analytical Finding (AAF).
22. On February 19, 2026, USADA issued a provisional suspension against Respondent. Respondent did not request the analysis of her Sample B by the February 26, 2026, deadline, thereby irrevocably waiving her right to Sample B analysis under the Protocol.
23. On March 18, 2026, Respondent submitted a retroactive Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) application (Ex. C-15), which was evaluated and formally denied by the independent USADA TUE Committee on April 10, 2026 (Ex. C-16). Respondent failed to appeal the TUE denial by the April 20, 2026, deadline.
24. Although Respondent has submitted medical records and doctor visit notes as exhibits in this case, Respondent has not submitted any evidence, arguments, or witness testimony contradicting or disputing any of the above facts.
25. Therefore, based on SMRTL's laboratory findings, Respondent's express written admission of weekly synthetic testosterone injections, and the final denial of Respondent's retroactive TUE application, USADA has met its burden of proof under Code Article 3.1, on a standard of comfortable satisfaction, to establish that Respondent has committed anti-doping rule violations under Code Articles 2.1 (Presence of a Prohibited Substance or its Metabolites or Markers in an Athlete's Sample) and 2.2 (Use or Attempted Use by an Athlete of a Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method).

IV. ADVERSE INFERENCE

26. Under Rule R-24 of the Arbitration Procedures, when a party fails to appear or comply with arbitral scheduling orders, the Arbitrator is empowered to proceed with the arbitration and render a final award based on the submissions and evidence of record. The rule specifies that an award shall not be made solely on the default of a party; rather, the present party must submit such evidence as the Arbitrator may require.
27. During the closing arguments on August 6, 2026, Claimant formally requested that the Arbitrator draw an adverse inference against Respondent based on her refusal to appear and answer questions. Code Article 3.2.5 and IWF Rules Article 3.2.5 explicitly authorize the hearing panel to draw an inference adverse to the athlete who refuses, after a request made a reasonable time in advance, to appear at the hearing and answer questions.

28. Respondent personally participated in the preconference hearing on June 4, 2026, during which she agreed to schedule the merits hearing on August 6, 2026. Thereafter, Respondent has failed to meet multiple filing deadlines and failed to participate in the Show-Cause Hearing on July 22, 2026. Respondent had more than two months, from June 4 to August 6, 2026, to explain her nonparticipation, raise any concerns, or request a postponement. The hearing date was also memorialized in Scheduling Orders 1 and 2, and in several written messages sent directly to the parties through the New Era ADR website portal.
29. Accordingly, Respondent had verified actual notice of the hearing date and ample opportunity to request that it be rescheduled if she could no longer attend. Her failure to appear justifies the drawing of an adverse inference that she has no credible defense or evidence to rebut USADA's case on the merits.
30. Therefore, USADA's request for an Adverse Inference is GRANTED, and the Arbitrator draws a formal adverse inference against Respondent.

V. PERIOD OF INELIGIBILITY

31. Under Code Article 10.2.1.1 and IWF Rules Article 10.2.1.1, the standard period of ineligibility for an ADRV involving a non-Specified Substance (such as synthetic testosterone cypionate) is four (4) years, unless the athlete can establish that the anti-doping rule violation was not intentional.
32. For violations involving non-Specified Substances under Code Article 10.2, the standard period of ineligibility is four (4) years (the maximum penalty) where the violation is intentional, and two (2) years (the minimum penalty) where the violation is shown to be not intentional. In this matter, USADA has requested the maximum penalty of four years of ineligibility, asserting that Respondent's violation was intentional.
33. Pursuant to Code Article 10.2.3, the term "intentional" identifies those athletes who engage in conduct which they knew constituted an anti-doping rule violation or knew that there was a significant risk that the conduct might constitute or result in an anti-doping rule violation and manifestly disregarded that risk.
34. In this case, the Arbitrator finds that Respondent's violations were "intentional" within the meaning of the Code. Respondent had completed online Athlete's Advantage anti-doping tutorials in 2018, 2019, and most recently on February 20, 2025, scoring 100% on the accompanying competency quizzes (Ex. C-6). These educational materials explicitly informed her of the strict liability rule, that testosterone is always prohibited, and that a TUE must be obtained before administration.
35. Furthermore, on March 13, 2025, Respondent submitted a TUE Pre-Check Form explicitly asking about her weekly testosterone cypionate use (Ex. C-7). On March 17, 2025, USADA responded to her pre-check form via email, explicitly notifying her that synthetic testosterone was prohibited and that she was required to obtain an approved TUE before using or possessing the substance (Ex. C-8).

36. Despite this explicit, written regulatory warning, Respondent continued to administer weekly injections of testosterone cypionate and competed in the UMWF World Championships on December 5, 2025, without ever applying for a prospective TUE. She then failed to declare her active testosterone use on her signed Doping Control Form on the day of the test (Ex. C-23).
37. Respondent's clinical records from Dermatology Realm on February 17, 2023, also record: "She has been taking testosterone from another clinic but was not happy with levels. Then she started ordering it online... She is an elite weightlifter and prefers to have higher levels of testosterone." (Ex. C-12, page 12). This contemporaneous record demonstrates that her administration of testosterone was driven by a conscious preference to maintain elevated testosterone levels for weightlifting, rather than a clinical necessity with an organic etiology, as subsequently confirmed by the USADA TUE Committee's denial of her retroactive TUE.
38. These facts represent a classic and severe case of "manifest disregard" of a known, significant risk of committing an ADRV. In *USADA v. Schumm* (Ex. C-20 and available at <https://www.usada.org/sanction/aaa-panel-imposes-doping-sanction-jennifer-schumm/>), the arbitral tribunal found that the recreational athlete who was already taking testosterone "chose to continue to take the testosterone, apply for the TUE and race, without declaring the testosterone on the doping control Declaration of Use Form when asked what substances she had taken, and gave her urine sample" (Schumm Arbitral Award, paragraph 25) Similarly, in this case, Respondent applied for the TUE retroactively after already taking synthetic testosterone cypionate; her retroactive TUE application was denied, and she continued taking testosterone and competing; and she did not disclose her testosterone on the Doping Control Form when she gave her positive urine sample. By continuing to administer synthetic testosterone cypionate after being directly informed of its prohibited status, Respondent intentionally violated the anti-doping rules.
39. Respondent did not offer any evidence that her violation was unintentional. On the contrary, Respondent submitted medical records documenting doctors prescribing her testosterone, indicating intentionality. Therefore, the standard period of ineligibility of four (4) years must be imposed pursuant to Code Article 10.2.1.1.
40. Pursuant to Code Article 10.13, the period of ineligibility shall commence on the date of the final hearing decision, unless the athlete has respected an immediate provisional suspension. Because Respondent was provisionally suspended on February 19, 2026, and there is no evidence of non-compliance, she is entitled to credit for the time served under her provisional suspension under Code Article 10.13.2.1. Therefore, Respondent's four-year period of ineligibility shall commence retroactively on February 19, 2026, and will run through February 18, 2030.

VI. DISQUALIFICATION OF RESULTS

41. USADA has requested that the Arbitrator retroactively disqualify all of Respondent's competitive results achieved on and after February 10, 2023, which is the date she first visited Dr. Baker at Dermatology Realm and admitted to taking testosterone and ordering it online. This date is more than three years before the sample collection that precipitated this case.

42. Under WADA Code Article 10.10 and IWF Anti-Doping Rules Article 10.10, the standard consequence for an anti-doping rule violation is the disqualification of “all other competitive results of the Athlete obtained from the date a positive Sample was collected (whether In-Competition or Out-of-Competition), or other anti-doping rule violation occurred, through the commencement of any Provisional Suspension or Ineligibility period, shall, unless fairness requires otherwise, be Disqualified with all of the resulting Consequences including forfeiture of any medals, points and prizes.”
43. Because Respondent was charged and found to have committed an anti-doping rule violation under Code Article 2.2 (Use of a Prohibited Substance) in addition to Article 2.1 (Presence of a Prohibited Substance), the phrase “or other anti-doping rule violation occurred” applies directly to her Use violation. Respondent’s contemporaneous clinical records (Ex. C-12, page 12) and her written admission of testosterone use to USADA (Ex. C-3) establish that her Use of synthetic testosterone cypionate was continuous and repeated starting on February 10, 2023. Consequently, the Article 2.2 Use violation first occurred on February 10, 2023, and continued through the date of her drug test.
44. Under the plain language of Article 10.10, the Arbitrator is legally authorized to disqualify all of the competitive results obtained from the date the “other anti-doping rule violation occurred,” which in this case is February 10, 2023.
45. Article 10.10 further mandates that such disqualification must be imposed “unless fairness requires otherwise.” In assessing fairness, the Arbitrator notes the Adverse Inference drawn and that synthetic testosterone cypionate is a potent, non-Specified anabolic agent of exogenous origin that provides long-lasting physiological and performance-enhancing advantages. The effect of testosterone is especially pronounced in female athletes, as confirmed by Dr. Fedoruk’s expert scientific report (Ex. C-19). To allow Respondent to retain competitive weightlifting titles, medals, points, or prizes achieved during a multi-year period in which she was actively and continuously administering synthetic testosterone cypionate would be deeply unfair to clean competitors and would directly undermine the integrity of the sport. Respondent has not provided evidence or arguments regarding any mitigating circumstances justifying a “fairness” exception that would allow her to keep those results.
46. Accordingly, the Arbitrator grants USADA’s request. All of Respondent’s competitive results obtained on and after February 10, 2023, through the commencement of her provisional suspension on February 19, 2026, are hereby retroactively disqualified, with all of the resulting consequences, including the forfeiture of any medals, points, titles, and prizes.

VII. FINDINGS AND DECISION

The Arbitrator therefore rules as follows:

47. Respondent, a Recreational Athlete, has committed an anti-doping rule violation under Article 2.1 (Presence of a Prohibited Substance) of the Code and Article 2.2 (Use of a Prohibited Substance) of the Code;
48. Respondent's violations are determined to be intentional within the meaning of Code Articles 10.2 and 10.2.3. Respondent knowingly administered a prohibited substance without an approved TUE and with manifest disregard of specific, written warnings from USADA on March 17, 2025;
49. A four (4) year period of ineligibility is hereby imposed upon Respondent under Code Article 10.2.1.1. Commencing retroactively on the effective date of her Provisional Suspension, February 19, 2026, through February 18, 2030, with credit for all the time served under her provisional suspension;
50. Pursuant to Code Articles 9 and 10.10, all of Respondent's competitive results, medals, points, titles, and prizes obtained on and after the date of her first confirmed use of synthetic testosterone, February 10, 2023, through February 19, 2026, are retroactively disqualified and forfeited;
51. Pursuant to Section R-46 and R-47 of the Arbitration Procedures, the administrative fees and expenses of New Era ADR and the compensation and expenses of the Arbitrator shall be borne by USADA;
52. The parties shall bear their own attorneys' fees and costs associated with this Arbitration; and
53. This Award constitutes a full and final resolution of all claims and counterclaims submitted to this arbitration. All claims not expressly granted herein are hereby denied.
54. This Award may be executed in any number of counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, and all of which shall constitute together a single instrument.

SO ORDERED.

DATED this 29th Day of August 2026

By: 
Victoria Sahani
Independent Arbitrator