

13 July 2026

**DECISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TENNIS INTEGRITY AGENCY
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 7.14 OF THE 2026 TENNIS ANTI-DOPING PROGRAMME**

I. Introduction

1) The International Tennis Integrity Agency (**ITIA**) is the delegated third party, under the World Anti-Doping Code (**Code**), of the International Tennis Federation (**ITF**), the international governing body for the sport of tennis and signatory of the Code. Under the delegation, the ITIA is responsible for the management and administration of anti-doping across professional tennis in accordance with the Tennis Anti-Doping Programme (the **TADP** or the **Programme**), which sets out Code-compliant anti-doping rules applicable to players competing in Covered Events.¹

2) Luiza Esteves (the **Player**) is an 18-year-old tennis player from Brazil. She has never had an ITF or WTA ranking. By virtue of (among other things) her participation in Covered Events, the Player was bound by and required to comply with the TADP.

3) The ITIA charged the Player with the commission of anti-doping rule violations under Article 2.1 and/or Article 2.2 of the TADP (copied below), and proposed certain Consequences based on its analysis of the degree of fault that the Player bears for those violations:

“2.1 The presence of a Prohibited Substance or any of its Metabolites or Markers in a Player’s Sample, unless the Player establishes that such presence is consistent with a TUE granted in accordance with Article 4.4.”

“2.2 Use or Attempted Use by a Player of a Prohibited Substance or a Prohibited Method, unless the Player establishes that such Use or Attempted Use is consistent with a TUE granted in accordance with Article 4.4.”

4) The Player is deemed to have admitted the anti-doping rule violations charged and accepted the Consequences proposed by the ITIA.

5) In such circumstances, Article 7.14 of the 2026 TADP provides that:

“7.14.1 At any time prior to a final decision by the Independent Tribunal, the ITIA may invite the Player or other Person to admit the Anti-Doping Rule Violation(s) asserted and accede to specified Consequences [...]

7.14.2 In the event that the Player or other Person admits the Anti-Doping Rule Violation(s) asserted and accedes to Consequences specified by the ITIA (or is deemed to have done so in accordance with Article 7.13.3), the ITIA will promptly issue a reasoned decision confirming the commission of the Anti-Doping Rule Violation(s) and the imposition of the specified Consequences [...], will send notice of the decision to the Player or other

¹ Unless specified otherwise, references in this decision to the TADP are to the 2026 edition. Any defined term denoted by an initial capital letter that is not otherwise defined in this decision has the meaning given to it in the TADP.

Person and to each Interested Party, and will Publicly Disclose the decision in accordance with Article 8.6. [...]

7.14.3 Any decision issued by the ITIA in accordance with Article 7.14.2 that an Anti-Doping Rule Violation has been committed [...] will address and determine (without limitation): (1) the factual basis of the decision that an Anti-Doping Rule Violation was committed; and (2) all of the Consequences to be imposed for such Anti-Doping Rule Violation, including the reasons for imposing the Consequences specified, and in particular the reasons for exercising any discretion not to impose the full Consequences available under this Programme."

II. The Player's commission of anti-doping rule violations

- 6) On 20 January 2026, the Player was required to provide an Out-of-Competition urine sample for drug testing pursuant to the TADP. The sample she provided was given reference number 1715485 and was split into an A sample and a B sample, which were sealed in tamper-evident bottles and transported to the WADA-accredited laboratory in Montreal (the **Laboratory**) for analysis.
- 7) The Laboratory detected the presence in sample A1715485 of Chlorthalidone, which is prohibited at all times under Section S5 (Diuretics and Masking Agents) of the 2026 WADA Prohibited List. Chlorthalidone is a Specified Substance.
- 8) The Adverse Analytical Finding reported by the Laboratory in respect of the A sample was considered by an independent Review Board in accordance with TADP Article 7.4. The Review Board did not identify any apparent departures from the applicable sample collection and sample analysis procedures that could have caused the Adverse Analytical Finding, and the Player did not have a valid Therapeutic Use Exemption (**TUE**).
- 9) Accordingly, on 25 February 2026 the ITIA sent the Player a formal pre-charge Notice, asserting that the Player had a case to answer for breach of TADP Articles 2.1 and/or 2.2.
- 10) Given that Chlorthalidone is classified as a Specified Substance under the TADP, the Player was not subject to a mandatory provisional suspension under TADP Article 7.12.1.
- 11) The Laboratory subsequently analysed sample B1715485 and reported, on 4 March 2026, that it had detected the presence of Chlorthalidone, i.e., the B sample analysis confirmed the Adverse Analytical Finding made in respect of the A sample.
- 12) On 4 March 2026, the Player attended an interview with the ITIA in which she indicated that the positive test may have been caused by her use of medication containing Chlorthalidone, which she had not declared on the applicable Doping Control Form, and for which she had not applied for a TUE.
- 13) The Player adopted a similar position in her formal response to the pre-Charge Notice on 18 March 2026. She stated that, on 19 January 2026, she ingested one tablet of Chlorthalidone 25 mg which had been prescribed that day by her general practitioner to treat [REDACTED]. The Player provided supporting evidence which included:
 - a) A prescription for Chlorthalidone issued by the Player's general practitioner dated 19 January 2026.

- b) A medical certificate issued by the Player's general practitioner dated 26 February 2026. The Player's doctor stated he prescribed symptomatic medication on 19 January 2026 for the Player after she reported [REDACTED] and was diagnosed with [REDACTED].
- c) Photographs of the relevant medication with the name 'clortalidona'.
- 14) On 5 May 2026, the ITIA sent the Player a formal Charge Letter, asserting that the presence of Chlorthalidone in her sample collected on 20 January 2026 constituted anti-doping rule violations under TADP Articles 2.1 and/or 2.2. The Player did not formally respond to the Charge Letter.
- 15) TADP Article 2.1 is a strict liability offence that is established simply by proof that a prohibited substance was present in the Player's sample, i.e., the ITIA does not have to prove how the substance got into the Player's system or that the Player took the substance intentionally (or even knowingly).
- 16) During the interview with the Player on 4 March 2026, the ITIA advised her to apply for a prospective TUE if she wished to continue using such medication. The Player confirmed that she was aware of the TUE application process as she had previously been granted a TUE in 2025 for other medication (relating to a separate medical condition).
- 17) On 11 March 2026, the ITIA recommended (via the TADP Portal) that the Player apply for a retroactive TUE in respect of her use of medication containing Chlorthalidone, and offered support if she required advice about the applicable process.
- 18) A further call with the Player took place on 23 March 2026, in which the ITIA explained the process to apply for a retroactive TUE. The Player was invited to do so by 30 March 2026, later extended to 2 and 7 April 2026.
- 19) On 7 April 2026, the Player informed the ITIA that she had commenced an application for a retroactive TUE.
- 20) On 14 April 2026, the ITIA held a call with the Player to explain, in detail, the process by which to apply for a retroactive TUE and the documentation which she would need to submit.
- 21) The ITIA further notified the Player (via the TADP Portal):
- a) On 29 April 2026, that the Player's physician had not yet accessed the TADP Portal to submit documents required to support her retroactive TUE application.
- b) On 3 June 2026, that there had been no further progress towards her retroactive TUE application, and that the ITIA would proceed with determining her case if it remained incomplete on 8 June 2026.
- c) On 9 June 2026, that the Player's retroactive TUE application had not progressed (nor had there been any response to earlier communication) and, accordingly, the ITIA had determined the appropriate sanction to be imposed.
- 22) No response was received from the Player to these further communications.

III. Consequences

A. Period of Ineligibility

- 23) Under TADP Article 4.4.2.1 *“Players who are International-Level Players must apply to the ITIA for a TUE.”* The Player is an International-Level Player as she has entered into or participated in more than one Covered Event.
- 24) TADP Article 4.4.4.1 provides that *“As a general rule, Players must obtain a TUE prior to the presence, Use or Attempted Use, Possession, or Administration or Attempted Administration of a Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method.”*
- 25) TADP Article 4.4.5.1 deals with retroactive TUE applications and states that a *“TUE may only be granted retroactively in...limited circumstances...”*.
- 26) Under TADP Article 4.4.5.2 *“A Player must submit an application for a retroactive TUE to the TUE Committee no later than five working days after an Adverse Analytical Finding is reported in respect of the Sample collected from that Player (although the ITIA may extend this deadline upon request by the Player for good cause shown). Any such TUE application must be resolved before any Adverse Analytical Finding, Atypical Finding, or Adverse Passport Finding relating to that Player's Sample is processed.”*
- 27) Article 4.1 of the ISTUE sets out the requirements which must be met in order for the TUE to be granted retroactively.
- 28) The Player commenced an application for a retroactive TUE which was not meaningfully progressed despite the ITIA providing several extensions of the applicable deadline and detailed advice about how to submit this application (and supporting evidence required).
- 29) This is the Player's first doping violation.
- 30) TADP Article 10.2.1 mandates a four-year ban for a TADP Article 2.1 and/or 2.2 violation that is *“intentional”* and is a first violation.² If the prohibited substance in question is classified as a Specified Substance (as here), the ITIA has the burden of proving that the violation was *“intentional.”* If the ITIA does not believe, or is not able to prove, that the violation was *“intentional”*, then TADP Article 10.2.2 provides for a two-year period of ineligibility, subject to potential further mitigation. TADP Article 10.2.3 explains that in this context *“the term ‘intentional’ is meant to identify those Players or other Persons who engage in conduct that 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*

² In accordance with TADP Article 10.9.4.1, for the purposes of imposing consequences under the TADP, the anti-doping rule violations will be *“considered together as one single first Anti-Doping Rule Violation, and the sanction imposed will be based on the Anti-Doping Rule Violation that carries the more severe sanction”* if (as here) the Player did not commit the second anti-doping rule violation after they received notice of the first.

that risk". The jurisprudence is clear that what counts in this context is what the Player actually knew, not what she should have known.³

- 31) The ITIA accepts that the Player did not intentionally breach the provisions of the TADP. The ITIA believes the Player's statement – that she ingested the relevant medication as advised by her doctor to alleviate symptoms of a medical condition and was not aware that it contained a Prohibited Substance (which she would only be permitted to use with a TUE) – and has sympathy for the Player's level of experience and awareness of anti-doping. Accordingly, the ITIA accepts that the Player's commission of the violation was not "*intentional*" within the meaning of TADP Articles 10.2.1 and 10.2.3, and so the two-year period of ineligibility set out in TADP Article 10.2.2 applies.
- 32) The Player has not formally responded to the Charge Letter sent by the ITIA on 5 May 2026. The ITIA, therefore, is not aware of any additional arguments the Player may have in terms of mitigation of her case or any applicable sanction (beyond those advanced in her response to the pre-Charge Notice).
- 33) In determining the appropriate period of ineligibility, the ITIA is mindful of other comparable cases, including those in which retroactive TUEs have not been granted (or have been denied) and in which the 'intention' of the athlete has been considered.
- 34) In accordance with TADP Article 10.13, "*the period of Ineligibility will start on the date of the final decision providing for Ineligibility, or (if the hearing is waived, or there is no hearing) on the date Ineligibility is accepted or otherwise imposed*" save in certain circumstances which are set out in TADP Article 10.13.1. "*Where there have been substantial delays in the hearing process or other aspects of Doping Control, and the Player or other Person can establish that such delays are not attributable to the Player or other Person, the period of Ineligibility may be deemed to have started at an earlier date, commencing as early as the date of Sample collection or the date on which another Anti-Doping Rule Violation last occurred. All competitive results achieved during the period of Ineligibility, including retroactive Ineligibility, will be Disqualified.*"
- 35) Here, there have been delays in the case which are attributable to the Player (i.e. repeated extension requests in relation to the retroactive TUE application and a failure to respond to more recent correspondence about the progress of her case) and so the Player's two-year period of ineligibility will be deemed to have started running from 13 July 2026 – the date of the decision. Therefore, it will expire at midnight on 12 July 2028.
- 36) During her period of ineligibility, the Player's status will be as set out under TADP Article 10.14, i.e., she may not play, coach or otherwise participate in any capacity in (i) any Covered Event; (ii) any other Event or Competition, or activity (other than authorised anti-doping education or rehabilitation programmes) authorised, organised or sanctioned by the ITF, the ATP, the WTA, any National Association or member of a National Association, or any Signatory, Signatory's member organisation, or club or member organisation of that Signatory's member organisation; (iii) any Event or Competition authorised or organised by any professional league or any international or national-level Event or Competition organisation; or (iv) any elite or national-level sporting activity funded by a governmental agency. Nor will she be given accreditation for or

³ ITF v Sharapova, Independent Tribunal decision dated 6 June 2016, para 68, not challenged on appeal, Sharapova v ITF, CAS 2016/A/4643.

otherwise granted access to any Event referred to at points (i) and (ii). In accordance with TADP Article 10.14.5.2, the Player may use the facilities of a club or other member organisation of a Signatory's member organisation for training purposes in the last two months of her period of ineligibility, i.e., from 13 May 2028 on.

B. Disqualification of results

- 37) Because the relevant sample was provided by the Player Out-of-Competition, and she has not participated in any subsequent Competitions, there is no disqualification of results pursuant to TADP Articles 9.1 and 10.10.

C. Costs

- 38) Each party shall bear its own costs of dealings with this matter.

D. Publication

- 39) In accordance with 2026 TADP Article 8.6, this decision will be publicly reported by being posted (in full and/or summary form) on the ITIA's website.

E. Acceptance by the Player

- 40) The Player is deemed to have accepted the consequences proposed above by the ITIA for her anti-doping rule violations and has therefore waived her right to have those consequences determined by the Independent Tribunal at a hearing.

IV. Rights of appeal

- 41) This decision constitutes the final decision of the ITIA, resolving this matter pursuant to TADP Article 7.14.
- 42) Further to TADP Article 13.2.1, each of WADA and Autoridade Brasileira de Controle de Dopagem (ABCD) has a right to appeal against this decision to the CAS in Lausanne, Switzerland, in accordance with the procedure set out at TADP Articles 13.8 and 13.9.
- 43) As part of this resolution of the matter, the Player has waived her right to appeal against or otherwise challenge any aspect of this decision (both as to the finding that the Player has committed anti-doping rule violations and as to the imposition of the consequences set out above), whether pursuant to TADP Article 13.2.1 or otherwise. However, if an appeal is filed with the CAS against this decision either by WADA or ABCD, the Player will be entitled (if so advised) to exercise her right of cross-appeal in accordance with TADP Article 13.9.4.

Issued Decision of the ITIA

London, 13 July 2026

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