

## WADA probes Jamaica's drug-testing agency

Jamaica's drug-testing agency, the Jamaican Anti-Doping Commission (JADCO) is now facing an investigation by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) over alleged loopholes and a lack of policing of its athletes prior to the 2012 Olympics in London, according to reports Monday.

The Associated Press reports that WADA is conducting an audit of JADCO after data revealed to the Jamaica Gleaner by JADCO's former director, Anne Shirley indicating that little to no out-of-competition testing of Jamaica's athletes took place in the seven months prior to the summer games in July and August of last year. According to Shirley's data, there were 96 tests administered during Jamaica's national trials and a local invitational meet in May and June of that year. However, Shirley insisted that no testing took place for five of the seven months leading up to the London games. Additionally, Shirley's figures revealed that, aside from 10 out-of-competition tests administered in February and one in April of 2012, JADCO's out-of-competition program stopped. These figures were then published in a Sports Illustrated article this past summer, driving worldwide attention to the issue and triggering talk of a possible expulsion of Jamaica from the 2016 summer games in Rio de Janeiro should any damning findings regarding Jamaica's anti-doping policies be found. WADA Director General, David Howman told the Associated Press that the agency was kept out of the loop regarding Jamaica's alleged lapses in its drug-testing policy. "There was a period of — and forgive me if I don't have the number of months right — but maybe five to six months during the beginning part of 2012 where there was no effective operation," he said. "There might have been one or two, but there was no testing. So we were worried about it, obviously." Howman admitted that this is an "extraordinary" audit, with Jamaica being a "high priority" because of these findings. Shirley said the findings were alarming, telling the AP, "It irritated me as a Jamaican: one test out of competition, for what, five months or four months? Given that it was an Olympic year, I felt that more could have been done." JADCO chairman, Herbert Elliott blasted Shirley in a response to the AP, branding her as a "Judas" and "demented" while rubbishing the data she collected. He admitted that JADCO could not accommodate auditors from WADA at a date they originally set and does not expect such a visit before the end of 2013. Howman says that excuse hasn't sit well with WADA. "It doesn't over-impress us," he told the AP. "If there's going to be that sort of delay, you need to have a better reason." International Olympic Committee (IOC) medical officials also revealed that they weren't made aware of these alleged gaps until Shirley's data was revealed. Though they admit they would have ordered additional tests on Jamaican athletes had they known about this data sooner, IOC's medical commission chairman, Arne Ljungvist intimated that it would be unfair to pinpoint Jamaica's drug-testing issues given their high status and reputation within the track world. "Jamaica is far from being alone, you know?" she said. "We know that out-of-competition testing in the proper way is not being conducted unfortunately in many parts of the world. One shouldn't single out Jamaica." Jamaica's high-level performances at the last two Olympics, including nine gold medals and three world records (all involving sprint legend, Usain Bolt) has garnered them worldwide attention, thus making WADA's probe that much more critical as Bolt, Shelly-Ann Fraser Pryce and others aim to defend their sprint titles at the 2016 summer games in Brazil. "It's almost abnormal, OK? Let's face it. For a country of less than three million people," she said. "What, you're saying there's something peculiar in the water in Jamaica?" Source: examiner.com