

## **Summary of the decision against Andreas Veerpalu, EST**

**On 2 January 2020, the Independent Anti-Doping Delegate of the International Ski Federation ("FIS") issued her decision in the doping matter of Andreas Veerpalu. The Estonian cross-country skier was declared ineligible for a period of four years until 28 February 2023. All competitive results obtained since 22 February 2017 are disqualified. The decision has not been appealed within the applicable deadline and became binding and enforceable.**

On 27 February 2019, at the 2019 FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in Seefeld, Austria, the Austrian police raided several athletes on the suspicion of blood doping. Simultaneously, the German police searched the medical practice of Dr. Mark Schmidt in Erfurt, Germany. Following the incidents in Seefeld and Erfurt, law enforcement authorities of Germany, Austria and Estonia initiated criminal investigations and proceedings against a number of athletes and support personnel, including members of the privately sponsored Estonian sports team "Haanja". Team "Haanja" mainly consisted of Estonian cross-country skiers, including Andreas Veerpalu.

During the investigations, Andreas Veerpalu confessed that between 2017 and 2019, blood had repeatedly been taken from him and later, immediately before certain competitions, reinjected into his circulatory system. According to the results of the investigations, all cross-country athletes training with team "Haanja" who had undergone blood doping under Dr. Mark Schmidt's direction had also been provided with Human Growth Hormone for regeneration purpose.

On 1 March 2019, the FIS notified the Estonian Ski Association of the opening of a disciplinary proceeding against Andreas Veerpalu and provisionally suspended him. The suspension was not challenged. On 21 November 2019, the FIS charged Andreas Veerpalu with the commission of repeated anti-doping rule violations, in particular of Article 2.2 of the FIS Anti-Doping Rules 2016 with reference to M1 of the WADA Prohibited List for the use of a prohibited method (i.e. manipulation of blood and blood components by withdrawals and re-injections of the athlete's own blood by several occasions between 2017 and 2019), Article 2.2 of the FIS Anti-Doping Rules 2016 in connection with S2, para. 2.3 of the WADA Prohibited List for the use of a prohibited substance (namely Growth Hormone), and Article 2.9 of the FIS Anti-Doping Rules 2016 for conspiring and covering up repeated anti-doping rule violations. As a consequence, the FIS requested his ineligibility of four years as a sanction.

Since Andreas Veerpalu accepted the charges made and consequences proposed by the FIS, a hearing was no longer required. Instead, based on Article 7.10 of the FIS Anti-Doping Rules, the Independent Anti-Doping Delegate of the FIS confirmed the anti-doping rule violations and the consequences imposed by the FIS. According to her decision of 2 January 2020, Andreas Veerpalu has been declared ineligible for a period of four years, which means that he is barred from

participating in any sports competition or other activity (other than authorised anti-doping education or rehabilitation programs) authorized or organised by FIS or any other signatory of the WADA code, a signatory's member organisation, or in any other sports-related activity as defined in Article 10.12 of the FIS Anti-Doping Rules. The already served provisional sanction since 1 March 2019 has to be deducted. Andreas Veerpalu is therefore banned from all sports-related activities until 28 February 2023. Andreas Veerpalu's competitive results obtained since 22 February 2017 (i.e. the day of the first re-injection of his own blood) are disqualified with all resulting consequences, including forfeiture of any medals, points and prizes. This decision has not been appealed within the respective deadline and has thus become binding and enforceable.