

IAAF Suggests "Health Passports"

Written by The Staff

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At the end of a three-day symposium hosted by the International Association of Athletics Federations yesterday, officials announced the need for better tracking of athletes' physiological makeup, and suggested the use of "health passports" to assist in that effort. The system would use a worldwide data base for storing and evaluating the information.

As reported:

"It's not that we suspect individual athletes but we wish to protect the vast majority who aren't doing anything wrong from those who try to cheat you, rob you and steal your glory," World Anti-Doping Agency executive committee member Arne Ljungqvist said. "That's why we need to profile all athletes individually."

Health passports - or medical profiles - could help anti-doping agencies identify abnormalities or detect sudden changes in an athlete's blood. WADA first championed the idea in 2001, but it has recently gained momentum.

Currently, testers measure athletes' samples against predetermined average levels for substances naturally occurring in the body - such as EPO and testosterone. But this potentially allows athletes with naturally low levels to cheat without being detected.

The IAAF's medical and anti-doping commission hopes to launch the project before the world championships at Osaka next August.

([The AP](#))