



IAF - Doping Risk Assessment

1. Introduction to sport

Aikido is a non-Olympic discipline without any form of competition. It is developed in the same period as Kendo and Judo. A time where the founders were seeking to preserve the traditions of the Samurai and its code of honor *Bushido* into the modern world of the 20th Century. Unlike Kendo and Judo, instead of competition, cooperation was chosen as way to strive for personal Excellence, Respect and Friendship. As a path of personal growth, part of its philosophy is based on the Japanese concept of Misogi; the aim of training is purification of the Heart, which requires a purification of its Body - considered to be the temple of its soul- in the practice with a partner. This purification is not like in traditional Sport done by Competition, but by Cooperation. As such is the use of Doping alien to the core values and beliefs of Aikido.

Aikido is performed on a tatami- the mat which the same as used in Judo- where persons demonstrate the art in couples. In training the purpose is to train with everyone and to exclude no-one regardless age, sex, grade, or cultural background. In demonstrations couples are matched together by dan grade and age, normally a mix of combinations of 2 males, 2 females and female-male. Each couple showcase a specific basic technique where to by turn perform the technique on the partner. The one who perform is called, tori. The one who receives the technique is called, uke. As such Aikido has become discipline which is been practiced now in more than 130 countries. Aikido itself is represented by 2 main organizations:

- The **Aikikai** is responsible for the global training system and standards, the grading (curriculum for dan-rankingsystem), the spiritual matters in Aikido: Ai = harmony, Ki= energy, Do = the Way, and to be the caretaker for Aikido as Japanese Budo.
- The **IAF**, which is since 1976 member of **GAISF**, **AIMS** and **IWGA** and is categorized as a demonstration sport and as such representing the discipline within the international community of sport and is responsible for the international sport manifestations every 4 years in the form of demonstration by country teams and in events as part of the World- and Combat

Games. It is the IAF as member of GAISF, who needs to fulfill specific to the discipline of Aikido, to the WADA Code. The IAF takes part in demonstration program of the World Games, and in the Combat Games. The IAF has currently 73 members, but is currently growing fast and is expected reach the number of 100 members by the year of 2024.

The IAF is, in align with its core values, a committed signatory to the WADA Code since 2009. The latest revision of the WADA Code 2021 has given the opportunity for the IAF in cooperation with WADA and with the assistance of ITA (the IAF has outsourced to administer the limiting testing for the IAF to the International Testing Agency ,ITA), to find the right balance for implementing the World Anti Doping Code for Aikido, a demonstration sport wit its own characteristics and specifics, having no competition at all. In understanding of this, WADA has granted the IAF the exemption for Out-of-Competition Testing since 2018.

From a cultural point of view, Aikido in being a Japanese Budo, is embedded in a value system which strongly discourage any dishonestly or betrayal in presenting or performing the art, whatsoever including Doping. The ethical code inherent to Aikido, is to be pure and to express and present the purity of oneself on the mat. As being a Budo, discipline and authority are key-elements. At the head of Aikido is the Doshu, care-taker and keeper of the style. The current Doshu is Moriteru Ueshiba, grandson of the Founder. The culture in the Aikido Community is characterized by creating Friendship, mutual respect for each other (and its own body) and creating Personal Excellence by cooperation instead of competition. In being in Japanese Budo, its inner core and values is carefully protected both by the Aikikai and the IAF, against any corruption of it, or any changes regarding having no competition which undermines the foundation of the Art. In being also a movement discipline emphasizing the integration of Body & Mind - scientific studies as Szabolcs et al. (2017) also reflect both aspects of this practice, it is nowadays embedded in a value system of promoting a healthy and meaningful lifestyle.

1.1 Disciplines/Categories

As an international demonstration sport, it has developed since 2009 the following format to present itself in the World- and Combat Games .

Member of the Founding Family		
7-8 th dan	Masters	Age 60+
5-6 th dan	Experts, defined as the International Level Practitioners	Age 45+
2-4 th dan	Participants	Age 18-45
1st dan or less	Youth	Age 12-17

The Masters and Experts are appointed for the event by the IAF, in close communication with the Aikikai. The pool of Aikidoka's who represent the athletic/sportive part of Aikido, are appointed and nominated- by a quota set by the IAF – by the member countries of the IAF. By this procedure of appointment and nomination, no selection by a jury or judges are involved. There is no competition or ranking involved to get appointment. Appointment is done on the basis of the eye of the expert and by the Heart. Every country is also asked to appoint a reserve in case of inability to come or injury. The IAF has by its events no medical teams involved. During the events there are also no jury, judges, or national coaches involved. Since 2017 starting on a small scale ,international event for Youths are

organized by members of the IAF. Youths are defined by youngsters between the age of 12-17 years old with a dan grade of 1st dan or less. The IAF itself is the organizer every 4 years of an Event called the IAF Summit, which is normally held in Tokyo, Japan. In this event the IAF organise a demonstration event, normally in Japan, where the members present themselves in country-teams. Goal by these event is to proudly represents its country. Also, here there is no medical teams, jury, judges or national coaches involved. In 2012 and in 2016, a small-scale testing was executed during this event by the Japanese NADO. The IAF is not involved in the appointment procedure of the National members in making their teams. In these, of the appointments procedures described above is no influence possible by intake of any substances whatsoever.

This format is now the benchmark for the organization of the IAF Summit with is held every 4 years. The next one will in Tokyo , due the Pandemic not in 2020, but in 2024. During the congress about 2000 Aikidoka's of all categories- including the Board of Directors of the IAF - will train together in an International Friendship seminar. The congress is concluded with the demonstration by member nation teams of Aikidoka's in an Japanese traditional event, called the Embukai. The seminar is a **Sports-for-All Event**. As Aikido promotes training for everyone, regardless of age, sex, dan or whatever, registration for the seminar is open for any Aikidoka who is motivated to come. The member nation teams for the Embukai are appointed by nomination by the their national organizations of origin, without any guidelines given by the IAF. Due to the character of the seminar as a Sport-for-All Event, for this type of Event Doping and Doping Control, developed in the context of Elite Sport by competition, has no meaning at all and therefore not in the scope of the Doping Risk Assessment.

2. Physiological risk category

2.1 Physical demands of Aikido as Demonstration Sport

On the level of practitioners, the performance is in physical sense challenging. Endurances, stamina, being athletic, flexibility in relation to moderate physical strength are required. On this level, the art has the appearance on the one hand of being very dynamic and sporty. But on the other hand, on this level, athletes are asked to perform basic techniques within the duration of 2-3 minutes . Experts, defined as the International Level Practitioners , are asked to show advanced Aikido techniques within the timeframe of maximum 5 minutes and the Masters are asked to perform Free style without time constraints.

To perform the art well, partners of expert, the ukes are in general on the practitioner level, and chosen by the experts and themselves. On the next level, the Masters tend to perform their technique, with experts as uke.

Executing the techniques means immobilisation and throwing techniques, which involves fall-breaking by the ukes. It is emphasized and trained, that the higher in rank, the less physical force is used or needed, to execute the techniques. In technical and physical sense, the goal in Aikido is that any-body (regardless seize, weight, age, and sex) can throw or immobilize any other body. This “how to do that”, with the body you have, is the technical part of the Way. This is the domain of the technically skilled experts of the art, where in technical sense, difficult techniques, are performed in such way that it looks easy.

The ultimate aim is doing-by-not-doing, where in the technique no physical strength is imposed on the partner. On that level, the partner is thrown or immobilized by natural weight and the use of intention only and internal energy, the ki (S. Tsuyoshi,2009) only... This is the domain of the Masters. So strangely enough, the older you become in practise, the less physical strength is required and the

better you become in performing the Art. This is common for other disciplines in the domain of the so called, integration of Body & Mind- like Yoga and Tai-Chi, where by aging the loss of physical strength and physical stamina is compensated by the increase of the mastering internal energy- the Ki. Disciplines in which you can become a master of the discipline by mastering this internal energy.

In this sense Aikido is to be physically described on the crossroads of two paradigm's; the Western one – common in sports - emphasising VO2max and the Eastern one – not common in sports-centred around the concept of Ki. It is said (Vriesman , 2013)that Aikido is using a hybrid energy system: Aikido= VO2max + Ki. Generation and accumulating Ki is generally connected to special breathing techniques, which can be seen as a different and perhaps extra way to generate and accumulate of O2 in the human system then by physical training only (*).

At the practitioners level the VO2 max is a physical focus; to have enough stamina and endurance to maintain performing for 2-3 minutes effortless. At the Master level the training and performing focus has shifted to the domain of Ki.

In light of this description of the physical demands in terms of power and strength, cardiovascular and muscular endurance, the physiological risk of Aikido is low. By maturing into an expert and later a masters, the physical demands in terms of power and strength, cardiovascular and muscular endurance are not the primary focus of training and performing anymore...it is about expressing the flow- of- Ki in the movement in such a way that its appears effortless.

2.2 Performance-enhancing substances and methods

Considering the physiological requirements of the sport, the possible scenarios for using prohibited substances and methods (WADA classification) are few in Aikido. There is a low probability to use substances which increase strength like *Anabolic Agents* (S1) or which enhance cardiovascular like *Peptide hormones, growth factors, related substances, and mimetics* (S2); since strength and cardiovascular do not appear as limited factors to perform. However, and given the advanced age of some aikidokas, these substances may be part of an anti-aging medicine to sustain a functional efficiency. We may also question and consider the utility of substances like *Stimulants* (S6) to enhance concentration, alertness or *Beta-blockers* (P1) to increase concentration, coordination.

2.3 TDSSA

More than specify the Minimum Level of Analysis (MLA) for the Prohibited Substances within this scope (Erythropoietin Stimulating Agents, Human Growth Hormones and Human Growth Hormones Releasing Factors) for each sport-discipline, TDSSA could be used as a more general risk scale. Indexing Aikido in the table which adds ESAs, GHs and GHRFs percentage (see below) reflects the sport risk level and allows us to spread sports-disciplines in three groups (Low-Medium-High risks).

SPORT	DISCIPLINE	ESAs%	GHs%	GHRFs%	SUM	Risk level
Aikido	Aikido	5	5	5	15	LOW

3. Political and financial risk category

3.1 Country Ranking

Without competitions, Aikido doesn't have a country ranking. The performance of the practitioners is for its/their own sake, and there is no measurement, judging, or any form of competition of the performance involved. Aikido, while conducting demonstrations, does not judge the performance of the athletes by scores or points. So, there is no judges or referees involved in demonstrations.

3.2 Doping history in sport/discipline per country

For the period 2013 to 2016, we have identified in the ADRVs reports only one ADRV and it was a non-analytical Anti-Doping Rule Violation for a Romanian athlete, who was doing a form of competition Aikido, which is not part of the IAF.

3.3 Financial rewards and incentives

Aikido is not considered as an Elite Sport and is not taking part in the Olympics or Paralympics. Aikido practitioners are not being paid or supported by Public Finance and there is no financial gain connected to the performance of the athletes. There are no sponsors for, or sponsor contracts with the athletes. No Public money is connected to the individual athlete. Since there is no winner, Aikido is also not exposed to the danger of betting. In general, there are no financial incentives as a motive to use Doping. Thus, social and symbolic recognitions in the Aikido community seems to be the only incentive for aikidokas. This could be the case for the International Level Practitioners, being on the threshold of being recognized and nominated to a Master.

3.4. Other considerations

In Aikido, state sponsorship doesn't exist. Although some countries have known to have a history of Doping with other discipline, this is not the case with Aikido. The last two Combat Games were hosted in China and Russia. No incidents concerning political interferences with the participation of Aikido to the event occurred. Also, there is no cases known of a paid transfer of citizenship of an Aikidoka. On a national level, all the current (and future) 73 members NF's, are mandatory recognized by the Aikikai, and therefore there is a global unity in training and grading standards. Membership of the IF is linked to membership of the NFs to membership of the National Sport Federation and/or NOC of their country, and on a national level are considered beyond the need of testing. None of the NF's are submitted to a national doping testing program for their athletes.

In 2021, the IAF decided to sign a specific MOU regarding the absolute Non-Competition status of Aikido ,with our member in Russia. Thus was done on the request of our member in Russia, who were under pressure by the Sports Authorities in their country to add elements of Competition in the forming of the National Team.

4. Cultural and environmental risk category

4.1 Relevant calendar considerations

IAF is responsible for the international sport manifestations every 4 years in the form of demonstration by country teams and takes part in the World Games (every four years, next in 2022) and the Combat Games in 2023.

4.2 Anti-Doping Education

From a moral standpoint and from an educational point of view we enhance fully the concept of a Doping Free Sport, and therefore we start implementing an education program for our practitioners and youth. From a symbolic point of view as being part of GAISF, we seek for a way of compliancy with the WADA code which fits to our discipline. No scientific study on the effects or use of Doping in Aikido has been done. Aikido has never been submitted to an out of event testing and no Aikidoka has ever had to fill Whereabouts.

Conclusion

In consideration of the all above mentioned factors and elements, the IAF in accordance with their new Anti Doping Regulations adopted in December 2020 , has allocated the level of Experts, as their International Level Practitioners as part of the Testing Pool. Due to their age , 45 + being in Aikido at the peak of their Physical level and touching the Internal -Ki_ elements of the art which defines the master-level. As such to can be potential be the group who is potential the most at risk for the unlikely events of Doping abuse , in their striving to become one day, acknowledged as a master.

Furthermore, a security measure, to assist our member in Russia has been taken in the form of an MOU with Russian member.

Reference:

Szabolcs Z. et al, (2017). “Physiological and psychological benefits of aikido training: a systematic review”. *Archives of Budo*, 13 (1).

Tsuyoshi S et al , (2009). “ Philosophy, Psychology, Physics and Practise of Ki, Evidence Based Complementary Medicine, June 2009;6(2): 175-183.

Vriesman W.(2013). “The use of Ki in Sports”, lecture during an International Coach Congress, National Sports Centre, Papendal, the Netherlands. (6th dan Aikido, MSc. Movement Sciences, University of Amsterdam)

(*) www.wimhofmethode.com. An example of breathing techniques to generate energy which is currently under scientific investigation.