

USADA Empowers Athletes to Help Preserve the Sanctity of Competition with New Technology

The U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) has a mandate to preserve the integrity of sport for Olympic, Paralympic, Pan American, and Parapan American sport in the United States, as well as its professional sports clients, the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) and the Professional Fighters League (PFL). Not only is it the anti-doping organization recognized by Congress, USADA also uses its platform to advance clean sport through scientific research, education, and advocacy. Finding innovative means to keep competition safe by closing potential gaps in testing and investigating doping offenses is an organizational imperative.

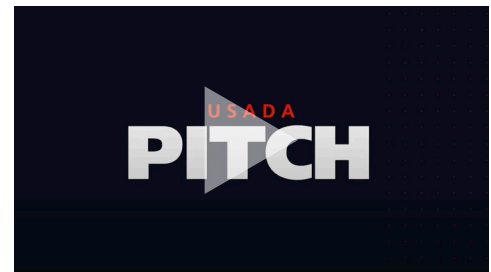
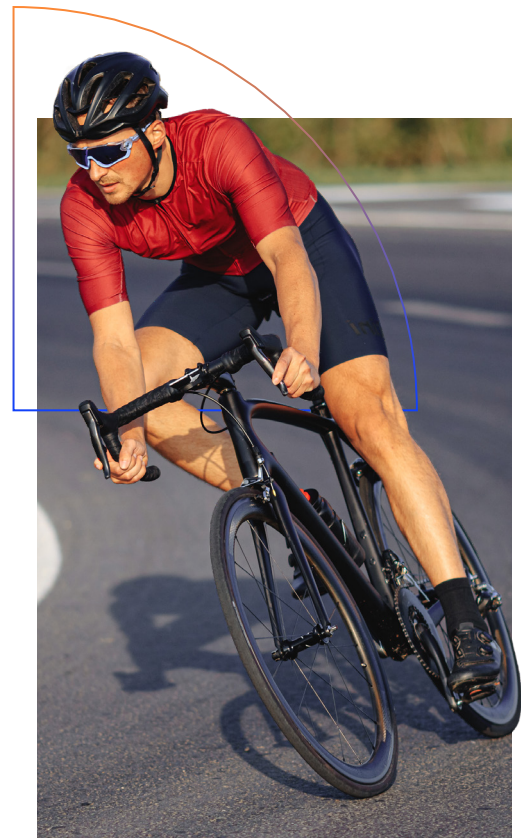
Challenges Promoting the Tip Center

USADA has been a tireless voice for clean sport in the U.S. anti-doping movement from the time it began operations in October 2000. USADA's global leadership in bringing cases based on investigations (and not just on positive tests) has made it essential that USADA develop strong partnerships with like-minded organizations and have tip lines readily accessible from anywhere in the world to facilitate investigations.

In recent years, it had become clear that the communication tools it was using to engage potential whistleblowers needed updating. Writing letters, sending emails, and conversing over the phone were no longer preferred modes of communication. WhatsApp, a free instant messaging app, was favored within a few global sports communities and offered an opportunity for USADA to make reporting easier for its stakeholders.

Ensuring athletes are familiar with the existing tip reporting mechanisms presented another challenge. If an athlete was not part of a whereabouts pool, meaning they provided whereabouts to USADA so they could be more easily tested any day of the year, that person was generally not made aware of USADA's Play Clean Tip Center.

"Drug testing does not alone find drug use," Victor Burgos, Chief Investigative Officer, USADA, explains. "Doping detection and deterrence require options for communicating intelligence privately and anonymously to protect athletes and clean sport."



USADA General Counsel Jeff Cook [shares details](#) about a new texting service for its Play Clean Tip Center that will allow athletes and other members of the sports community to anonymously text tips to USADA.

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—VICTOR BURGOS, CHIEF INVESTIGATIVE OFFICER, USADA

Empowering Athletes and Others with an Anonymous Texting Platform

Keeping both athletes' safety and their communications preferences top of mind, USADA leaders adopted the RealResponse platform to enable two-way, anonymous texting integrated with WhatsApp, so that athletes could comfortably report any doping issues.

With RealResponse, USADA leaders have gained investigative efficiency with seamless and anonymous back-and-forth correspondence with tipsters. USADA investigators can build out a timeline with credible information, time stamp it, and obtain reliable evidence. USADA has also empowered athletes by reducing their personal risk for doing the right thing by reporting potential doping violations.

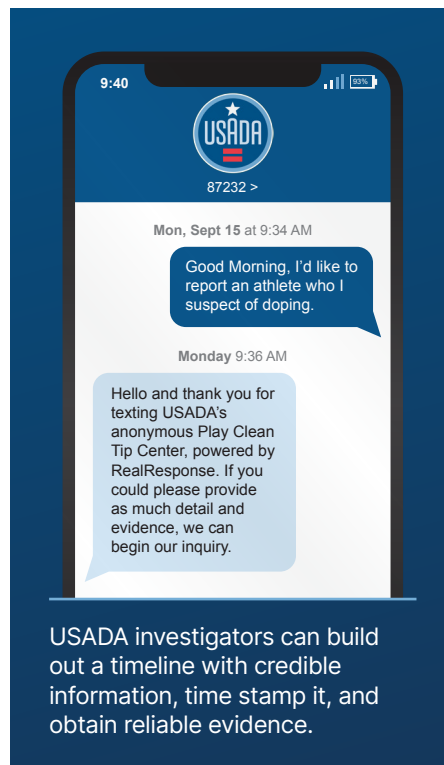
As part of a well-defined process and methodology, USADA has dedicated staff members assessing tips coming in through RealResponse to determine what course of action is needed. Clear and established guidelines determine whether tips are actionable. If USADA does not have jurisdiction, tips may be referred to other anti-doping organizations or regulatory bodies that do have jurisdiction.

The Power of Anonymity

USADA includes details about the RealResponse platform in its educational and training program curriculum used for athletes and medical personnel when explaining their roles and responsibilities in keeping sport clean and safe. USADA's robust outreach reaches athletes, at all levels, through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok.

USADA has been able to move investigative conversations forward more easily because of the anonymity enabled through RealResponse's texting platform and the platform's seamless integration with WhatsApp. USADA has seen the quality of reports and their actual numbers increase by lowering the barriers to sharing doping concerns.

The RealResponse platform's ease of use—simply punching in a code and texting it—makes it a powerful resource for athletes, and one that is equally as easy to use on the back end for USADA staff. USADA has delivered a safe way for athletes to communicate on their terms and has a reliable investigative tool to help fulfill its important mission as the primary anti-doping agency in the United States.



→ See what this game-changing platform can do for your organization.
RealResponse.com