

Clare Egan video interview transcript

'I think the sport of biathlon is vulnerable to the same kind of integrity issues that we've seen unfortunately come up in other sports, such as cross-country skiing recently, specifically with regards to doping.

'The push to make sure athletes are educated about rights and responsibilities and consequences is really, really important. Of course, communication is always the most important piece to any puzzle like that, and the Biathlon Integrity Unit is working hard on it.

'If you look back at years of data you can see that testing actually hasn't led to so many Anti-Doping Rule Violations. It's been more investigations that have led to Anti-Doping Rule Violations. That's true of other sports as well. And so I know that the Biathlon Integrity Unit is focusing more on investigations, in the hope that that will provide a more targeted and fruitful pursuit of dopers.

'Whereabouts are an inconvenience, but that's not all they are. They're really fundamental to our anti-doping system. So, yes, it is annoying that if I go anywhere, I need to update my anti-doping organisation as to where I'm going, so that they can test me if they want to. That's annoying, but it's absolutely worth it, and I think that's the key point. Almost every athlete I know would agree that it's a very small sacrifice to pay to play our part in keeping the sport clean.

'The piece of advice that I would give to any biathlete who is considering doping is that, first of all, it's not necessary, and I'm an example of that. When I was 31 years old, I had a breakout season and in that season I actually had the fastest course time in one of our World Cups, as a clean 31-year-old athlete; and if I can do that, truly anyone can.

'And the other thing I would say is to have a listen to an interview that was done by the American cross-country skiing and biathlon news website Fasterskier.com. They did it with the Estonian athlete Karel Tammjärv. He was caught in 2019 at the Seefeld cross-country skiing world championships for blood doping, and he did this interview after the fact about his experience with doping, and there were two key points.

'The first point was that he said he was most happy if he finished between, let's say, 15th and 25th places, because if he finished in the top 15 he felt a bit guilty. And I thought to myself, if you're going to go through all this trouble to cheat, only to be unhappy if you succeed, then what is the point?

'And the second point he made that stuck with me was that he said he spent so much time and energy and stress thinking about how to dope, and also how to hide his doping, that he thought if had instead dedicated that energy to his training and his recovery, that he just would have been a faster athlete anyway.

'Biathlon has had its own fair share of doping cases in recent history, so that really makes it clear why the creation of the Biathlon Integrity Unit is so important to our sport.

'As an athlete who was involved in the sport but not involved in the IBU prior to 2018, I really doubted the system that we had in place to manage any kind of integrity issue. And now, as an athlete who's still involved in the sport and now also involved in the IBU here in 2021, I can say that the biggest improvement is that I, and I hope many of my fellow athletes, have much more faith in the system that we have in place to deal with integrity issues.'