



**SPORTS FOODS, MEDICAL AND
PERFORMANCE SUPPLEMENT POLICY**

RA Board Approved

Date 7th November 2013

1. Background

The Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) Sports Supplement Program was originally developed in 2000 to ensure that AIS athletes used supplements and sports foods safely and appropriately. A panel of AIS sports scientists reviewed research on supplements and categorised products according to their safety and efficacy. Protocols for the use of various supplements were also prepared. In 2006, the Board of Rowing Australia (RA) approved the adoption of the AIS Sports Supplement Policy as the Rowing Australia Sports Supplement Policy to ensure that RA policy remained consistent with developments within the field and benefited from the continual research review conducted by AIS experts.

In 2013, the AIS released their Sports Science/Sports Medicine (SSSM) Best Practice Principles to support its High Performance Investment Principles, including investment being dependent upon *sports, athletes, coaches and support personnel demonstrating the highest possible standards of integrity in sport, including anti-doping, that will enhance the reputation of Australia internationally and provide a positive example to all Australians.*

Rowing Australia endorses this approach, and has developed this this Sports Foods, Medical and Performance Supplement Policy (Policy) to ensure that RA complies with the AIS SSSM Best Practice Principles and continues to provide an environment that maintains the highest standards of integrity within the sport whilst delivering world class performances through the appropriate use of supplements and sports foods.

1.1. Guidance for School aged and Developing Athletes

In addition to providing a framework for the use of sports supplements by appropriate high performance rowers this Policy provides guidance to school aged and developing athletes regarding sports foods, including the recommendation that sports supplements not be administered until an athlete has competed in at least 5 international regattas.

Unfortunately, Rowing Australia sees numerous examples of junior, school aged and developing athletes adopting supplement practices that are not supported by sound science, are not applicable to rowing and which provide no performance benefit.

Furthermore, the potential consequences of inappropriate or improper use of sports supplements include:

- a small but real risk of a positive doping outcome ;
- money being wasted on products that simply do not work; and
- time, money and energy being diverted from the factors that can really enhance health, performance and recovery.

Instead of pursuing supplementation practices that are of questionable benefit and which may have serious consequences, RA recommends that junior, school aged and developing athletes focus on improving their rowing performance through better training, better nutrition and better recovery. We believe that this could yield a significant improvement in performance just by doing the simple things better and with more intent. RA seeks to ensure that the early years of athlete development should focus on improving rowing performance, rather than on external

supplements or ergogenic aids. Indeed, RA only provides access to performance supplements to Senior high performance athletes who have competed in at least 5 international regattas, and even then any supplementation is strictly supervised and incorporated into an athletes' holistic Individual Learning and Performance Plan (performance plan).

2. Policy Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance on the appropriate use of Sports foods, Medical and Performance Supplement within rowing, and to provide a framework for the provision and administration of sports supplements, limited to those Senior high performance athletes for whom sports supplements may be appropriate.
- 2.2. By this Policy Rowing Australia's aims to:
 - 2.2.1. provide a framework for the provision and administration of sports supplements to those appropriate Senior high performance athletes who have competed in at least 5 international regattas and for whom an approved sports supplementation plan can be of benefit;
 - 2.2.2. allow those athletes to focus on sound use of supplements and sports foods as part of their holistic performance plan;
 - 2.2.3. ensure that supplements and sports foods are used correctly and appropriately to deliver maximum benefits to health and wellbeing performance, and recovery;
 - 2.2.4. minimise the risk of supplement use leading to an inadvertent doping offence; and
 - 2.2.5. provide clear decision making guidelines to ensure the most appropriate use of supplements both in training and competition by those athletes.

3. Position Statements

- 3.1. RA endorses the Australian College of Sports Physician's (ACSP) position on the use of sport supplements, including:
 - 3.1.1. All sports supplementation programs should be based on the three principles of:
 - 3.1.1.1. Athlete safety;
 - 3.1.1.2. Evidence-based science; and
 - 3.1.1.3. Compliance with the WADA Code;
 - 3.1.2. Sports supplementation is not required by all high performance athletes and is not required by the vast majority of recreational athletes in the general community;
 - 3.1.3. Sport supplementation should only take place on the advice of a qualified sports dietitian, physician or other appropriately trained practitioner with experience in prescription of supplements for sporting purposes; and
 - 3.1.4. Situations where individuals under the age of 18 would be required to use dietary nutritional supplements for sporting purposes are rare. Parents and responsible adults, including coaches, should seek guidance from appropriately qualified professionals before allowing children to take supplements.

- 3.2. If used in an appropriate way, in conjunction with sound nutrition principles and in accordance with this Policy, supplements have the potential to maximise benefits to the health, recovery and athletic performance of appropriate Senior high performance athletes competing at the pinnacle of International rowing, and who have maximised the performance advantages available through optimised training, nutrition and recovery.

4. RA Supplementation Programme

- 4.1. The RA Supplementation Programme provides the framework through which appropriate high performance athletes that have competed in at least 5 international regattas propose the use of performance supplements within their holistic performance plans, and the process by which such applications will be assessed, approved (or otherwise), and reviewed by relevantly qualified experts. The RA Supplementation Programme shall also provide the Board of RA at all times with transparent oversight of the supplementation programs being administered for appropriate high performance Senior athletes.
- 4.2. For the avoidance of doubt, the RA Supplementation Programme is intended to provide the process by which only those appropriate high performance athletes that have competed in at least 5 international regattas can make application for the use of performance supplements. Members of the general rowing community, junior, school aged and developing athletes should retain a focus on maximising the benefits provided by completing the basics of rowing correctly rather than pursuing the use of sports supplements. In the event that these categories of rowers seek to use supplementation, products should be strictly limited to those identified as appropriate for the relevant category of rower within the RA Supplement Provision Protocol at clause 6.

5. Supplement Advisory Panel

- 5.1. The RA Board shall appoint a Supplement Advisory Panel to oversee RA's Supplement Programme and the delivery of RA's Supplement Provision Protocol, including ongoing compliance with AIS Sports Science and Sports Medicine Best Practice Principles.
- 5.2. In overseeing RA's Supplement Programme, the Supplement Advisory Panel shall:
 - 5.2.1. Ensure that RA's policies and practices remain ethical, compliant with the WADA code and the AIS SSSM Best Practice Principles; and
 - 5.2.2. Report at least annually to the Rowing Australia Board on the use of supplements, the approval of athlete and coach supplement plans and the supplement provision program.
- 5.3. The role of the Supplement Advisory Panel shall include:
 - 5.3.1. Annual review of this Sports Foods, Medical and Performance Supplement Policy;
 - 5.3.2. Annual review the operation of RA's Supplement Provision Protocol, including assessing and endorsing the summary of supplement practices by RA athletes as approved by the Supplement Approvals Panel;
 - 5.3.3. Engaging with other sports to collaborate on current trends within their sport with respect to supplements and ergogenic aids;

- 5.3.4. Assist with guiding rowing specific research with respect to supplements and ergogenic aids undertaken within the Australian Rowing High Performance network; and
- 5.3.5. Develop and distribute appropriate education materials to the rowing community.

6. RA Supplementation Provision Protocol

- 6.1. RA has developed a Supplementation Provision Protocol within which sports supplements are assessed. The Supplementation Provision Protocol provides guidance on the appropriate use of each category of sports supplements for athletes within the rowing community.
- 6.2. The RA Supplementation Provision Protocol classifies supplements into groups according to their safety and effectiveness for each category of rower. The grouping is guided by the AIS Sports Supplement Policy and can be viewed, along with information sheets on individual products, at <http://www.ausport.gov.au/ais/nutrition/supplements/overview2>.
 - 6.2.1. Food and Sports Foods includes normal food items used to support training and recovery as well as those foods and drinks prepared with specific functionality for sport in mind. This may include sports drinks, sports gels, recovery drinks and protein based drinks which are not essential for all athletes but at times offer a practical addition to regular food items. Sports foods which include performance supplements e.g. caffeine, creatine and others should be considered to be performance supplements.
 - 6.2.2. Group A Medical Supplements includes items recommended by a medical practitioner or dietitian to correct identified deficiencies. Examples might include iron or calcium supplementation which have demonstrated benefit where there is a known deficiency.
 - 6.2.3. Group A Performance Supplements includes supplements taken with the specific purpose of improving performance either in training or competition. Products in this category have good evidence of benefit and safety when used in the right situations by the right athletes.
 - 6.2.4. Group B Medical Supplements includes supplements which have some evidence of benefit in specific clinical situations but require more investigation to understand optimal protocols or situations for use. This may include items such as fish oil to reduce inflammation or probiotics to reduce upper respiratory tract infections. These would be used only when recommended by a medical doctor and the outcomes would be monitored.
 - 6.2.5. Group B Performance Supplements are products for which there is no substantial proof of health or performance benefits at the current time, but remain of interest to RA because of the background interest of our athletes and coaches or are too new to have received adequate scientific attention, or have preliminary data which hints at possible benefits
 - 6.2.6. Group C includes the majority of supplements and sports products promoted to athletes. These supplements, despite enjoying a cyclical pattern of popularity and widespread use, have not been proven to provide a worthwhile enhancement of

sports performance. Current scientific evidence shows that either the likelihood of benefits is very small or that any benefits that occur are too small to be useful. In some cases, these supplements have been shown to impair sports performance, with a clear mechanism to explain these results.

6.2.7. Group D includes products that are banned or are at high risk of being contaminated with substances that could lead to a positive drug test.

6.3. RA refers to the AIS Sport Supplement Program as a guide when making decisions related to supplements however there may be appropriate circumstances where RA, in accordance with this Policy, may wish to approve the administration of appropriate WADA permitted substances with supporting evidence that are not included on the AIS Sport Supplement Program to ensure that the individual needs of rowing are met.

6.4. The RA Supplementation Provision Protocol is provided below:

RA Supplementation Provision Protocol					
	Community	Junior & U21	U23	Senior	Gold medal
Food & Sports Foods focus (no caffeine)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Medical Supplements (Group A) under guidance from a health practitioner Iron Calcium Probiotics Multivitamins Fish oil Vitamin D	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Performance Supplements (Group A) Creatine Caffeine Bicarbonate Beta alanine Beetroot juice	✗	✗	✗ Except: Creatine where approved by the supplement panel	✓ Creatine and low dose caffeine Athletes who have attained 5 international competitions are eligible to include supplements from this category in their	✓ Athletes are likely to have ongoing approval for this category where previous practice is already established.

Rowing Australia Sports Foods, Medical and Performance Supplement Policy

			Low dose caffeine (~1mg/kg) from sports foods for use during selected training sessions (i.e long distance / duration, steady state efforts)	performance plans for consideration by the supplement panel. To ensure the supplement has the best possible impact on performance there is a monitoring process outlined below (fig 1)	A high level of individualized support would be available to trial new products in their performance plan.
Group B Performance Supplements	x	x	x	This category is open for proposals from the athlete group for further investigation by the supplement panel. Depending on the current level of evidence supplements may enter a research protocol or an individual case management approach to increase understanding of use in rowing.	As for Senior A athletes but with a higher degree of individualisation
Group B Medical Supplements Used as part of a medical management plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Group C	x	x	x	Only where approved by the supplement panel as part of a controlled research project	Only where approved by the supplement panel as part of a controlled research project
Group D	x	x	x	x	x

6.5. The process for consideration of suitability for administration of sport supplements to appropriate athletes shall be:

6.5.1. Each athlete seeking selection in an Australian Under 23 or Senior Rowing Team must complete and submit a Supplement Declaration in accordance with directions provided by RA.

6.5.2. The RA Supplement Approval Panel shall review each athlete's supplementation plan and, if not inconsistent with the RA Supplementation Provision Programme, may provide approval at its absolute discretion for an athlete to utilise a sports supplement in that season.

6.5.3. In assessing proposed supplementation plans the Supplement Approval Panel will assess each athlete's performance plan based on the Rowing Australia supplement use decision tree model (available at Appendix A). Specifically this will require an athlete to demonstrate they meet the relevant criteria for supplement use including;

6.5.3.1. Having competed in at least 5 international regattas;

6.5.3.2. Providing a strong rationale for efficacy consistent with their performance plan; and

6.5.3.3. Providing supporting evidence in the form of scientific literature or previous individual data specific to rowing; or

6.5.3.4. Have previously had supplementation programs approved in accordance with clauses 6.5.3.1 – 6.5.3.3 and which, in the assessment of the RA Supplement Approval Panel, remains valid and appropriate.

6.5.4. If approval is provided by the Supplement Approval Panel in accordance with clause 6.5.3, written informed consent shall be obtained from the athlete and the approved supplement shall be obtained and efficacy of that supplement monitored by the Supplement Approval Panel as detailed in the RA Supplementation Provision and Review Protocol (available at Appendix B).

6.5.5. For the avoidance of doubt, and to ensure National Selection Events are conducted in a manner that is fair for all trialling athletes, no 'acute' performance supplements should be used at Selection Trials. This shall include caffeine in any preparation including as part of a sports food, beetroot juice and bicarbonate. Athletes who are already using creatine or beta alanine are not required to 'unload' from these for selection races but must ensure their use of these products has been approved by the Supplement Approval Panel within their prevailing performance plan.

7. Supplement Approval Panel

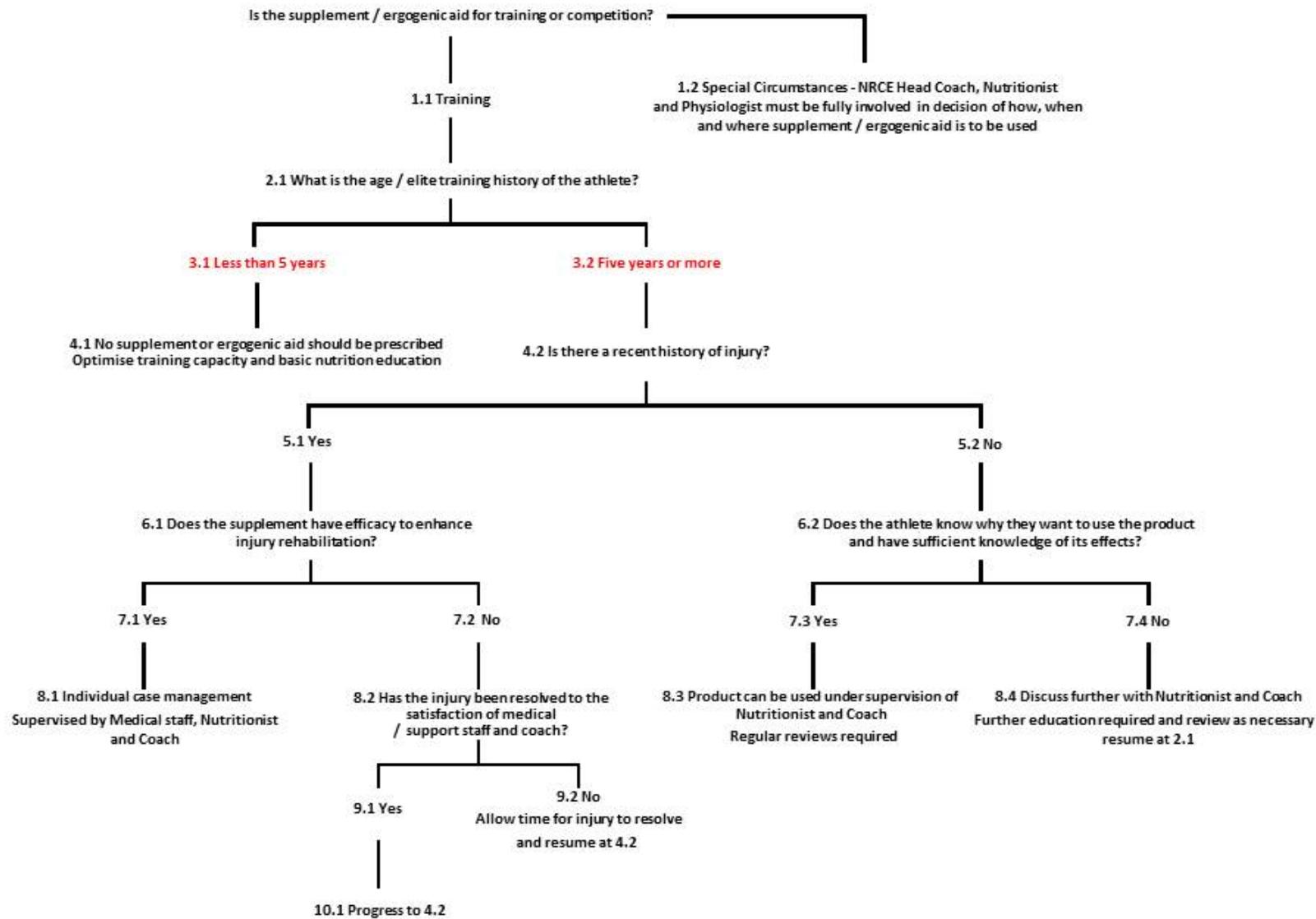
- 7.1. The RA Board shall appoint a subcommittee of the Supplement Advisory Panel to administer RA's Supplement Provision Protocol including the review, assessment and approval (or otherwise) of supplementation plans as proposed by appropriate Senior athletes within their performance plan, in accordance with clause 6.5.
- 7.2. The Supplement Approval Panel shall be comprised of suitably qualified individuals and may include the following:
 - 7.2.1. Principal Medical Officer (Chair)
 - 7.2.2. National Team Performance Director
 - 7.2.3. Sports Science Coordinator
 - 7.2.4. Lead Nutritionist
- 7.3. The role of the Supplement Approval Panel shall include:
 - 7.3.1. Reviewing individual U23 and Senior A performance plans with respect to supplement requests for that season;
 - 7.3.2. Providing direct feedback to athletes and coaches as to decisions on approval status of supplement requests contained in their performance plan;
 - 7.3.3. Providing direct guidance to athletes, coaches and supporting scientists / nutritionists as to the requirements and on-going documentation for approved supplement use; and
 - 7.3.4. Meeting with key athletes and coaches to discuss and review emerging trends in supplements with the aim of providing guidance and a researched position on their use within the Australian Rowing Team.

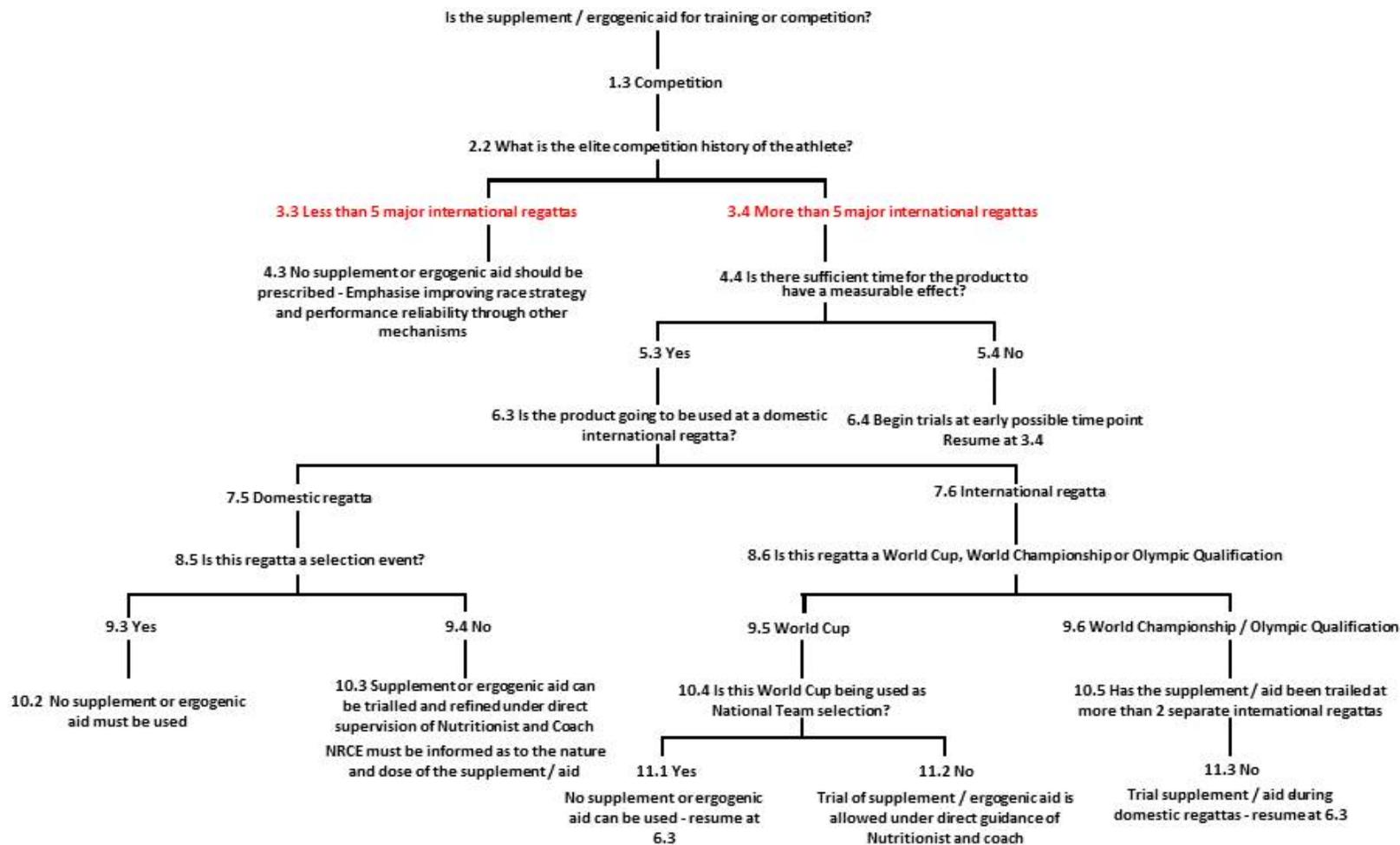
8. Sanctions

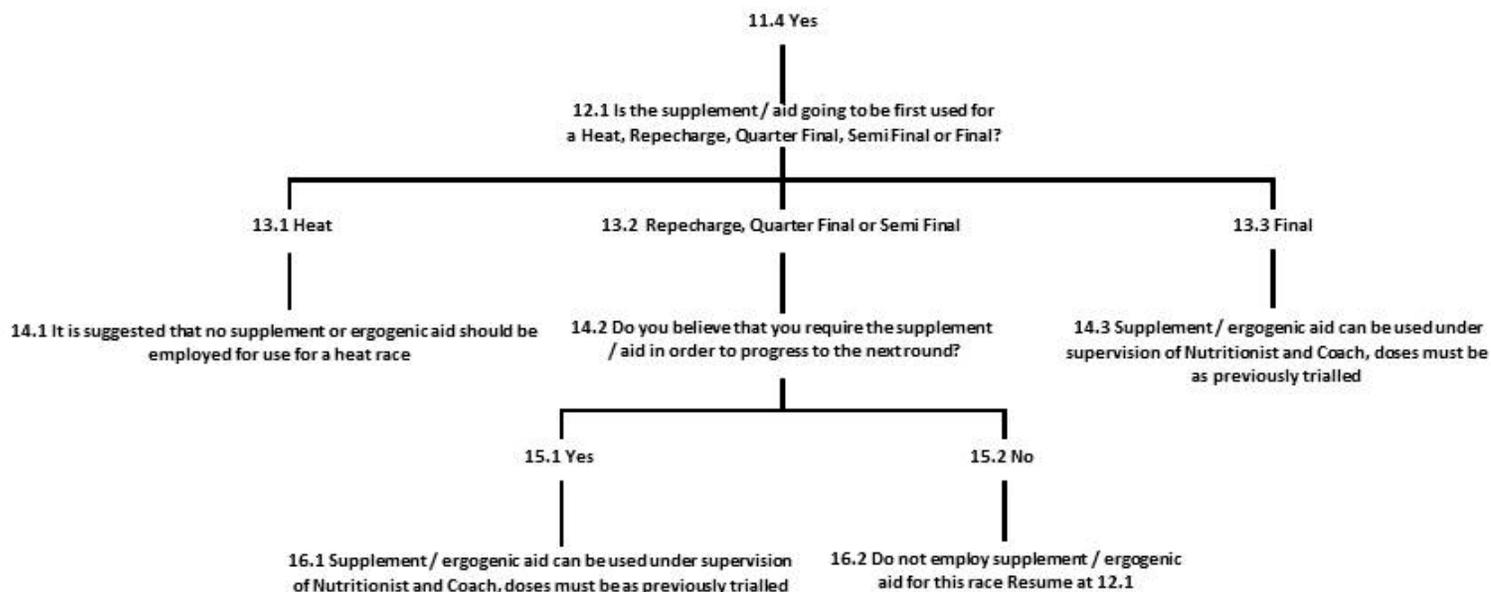
- 8.1. Any athlete, coach, support staff or other person bound by this Policy that is found to have breached this Policy, or to have been administered with or taken any substance that was not approved under this Policy may face disciplinary action under the RA Member Protection Policy, National Team Nomination Terms & Conditions and/or other relevant Policies.
- 8.2. Such disciplinary action may involve a verbal or written warning and, depending on the severity of the breach may result in additional sanctions including suspension or removal from Australian Rowing Teams.
- 8.3. Athletes and coaches that nominate for selection to Australian Rowing Teams are also bound by, amongst other RA Policies, the RA Anti-Doping Policy (available at http://www.rowingaustralia.com.au/docs/policy_anti-doping-100205.pdf) and must ensure that they comply with these policies at all times.
- 8.4. In addition to the sanctions which may be imposed by RA or ASADA, it is important to understand that there are various laws concerning the importation or acquisition of

certain substances and any breach of these laws may result in investigation and action by the relevant authorities under that legislation.

Appendix A RA Supplementation Decision Tree







Note: The NRCE understand the importance of consistency of approach to using ergogenic aids / supplements during major competition for those individuals and crews which meet all the relevant criteria. The above decision chart (from 11.4 onwards) is a suggested pathway and not the only pathway to use these aids during competition. It is a requirement that the frequency of use of supplements and ergogenic aids by individuals and crews that meet the relevant criteria must be pre-planned, discussed and agreed to by the crew, crew coach, nutritionist / sports scientist and the relevant National Head Coach.

Appendix B

RA Supplementation Provision and Review Process

