

When the cameras start rolling and the cage or ring door swings open, fighters are expected to be in top physical and mental shape. But the days leading up to fight night are often a chaotic tangle of dehydration during weight cuts, fragmented sleep, timezone shifts, and just enough stress to keep even the calmest athlete tossing and turning. Many fighters and their teams have recently asked: **Is CBD allowed under the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) rules?** How do cannabidiol rules align with the strict anti-doping protocol during fight week?

Let's unpack these questions and also cover the less-talked-about but crucial context of fight week scheduling chaos and sleep debt, weight cut dehydration and fragmented sleep, rehydration neurophysiology, circadian disruption due to time zone changes, and, importantly, how fighters should approach claims around CBD usage with scientific rigor using lab batch reports and COA (Certificate of Analysis) verification.

WADA CBD 2018: What Does the Rulebook Say About Cannabidiol?

First, the cornerstone of clarity: *What does the WADA prohibited list say about cannabidiol?* Since the 2018 update, WADA has **removed CBD from the prohibited list**. That means pure cannabidiol is no longer banned for athletes, including fighters. However, this comes with big caveats:

- **CBD vs. THC:** While CBD itself is permitted, all tetrahydrocannabinols (THC) remain prohibited in competition. THC is the psychoactive compound that produces the "high" sensation and is still considered a banned substance.
- **Full-spectrum cannabis extracts:** Products containing trace or residual amounts of THC are risky because even tiny quantities can trigger a positive test.
- **Contamination risks:** Supplements and topical CBD products can be contaminated or mislabeled, so fighters must verify contents carefully.

The takeaway? Pure isolated CBD is legal under WADA rules, but fighters must exercise extreme caution around product sourcing. It's the classic **"buyer beware"** scenario with anti-doping implications.

WADA 2018 Prohibited List Excerpt

Category	Substance	Status
Cannabinoids	Cannabidiol (CBD)	Not prohibited
Cannabinoids	Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)	Prohibited in-competition

Why Fight Week Is Not a Relaxing Night: Scheduling Chaos & Sleep Debt

Having covered 11 years of camps, weigh-ins, and fight-night weeks, here's an insider fact that tends to surprise fans new to combat sports: **Fight week is anything but relaxing.** Behind the scenes, fighters and their teams juggle media obligations, medical exams, walk-throughs, press conferences and often extreme weight-cutting strategies — all tangled in a pack of brutal time demands.

- **Late-night walkouts:** It's not uncommon for fighters to have walkouts after midnight or close to it on event days.
- **Early media day calls:** Multiple media day events and interviews can start as early as 7:00 am, requiring early wake-up times despite late nights.
- **Unpredictable weigh-ins:** The official weigh-in times may vary, and medical checks often follow immediately after, compressing rest windows.

- **High stress and adrenaline:** Psychological arousal further fragments sleep duration and quality.

All these factors consistently accumulate to create a mounting **sleep debt** — a deficit that can reduce alertness, decision-making ability, and physical recovery, which are all critical on fight night.

Implications for Using CBD to Manage Sleep

Claims that “you will sleep better instantly” after taking CBD are vague and often unsupported by reliable data. In the chaotic environment of fight week, sleep fightful.com interruptions caused by schedule shifts, weight cuts, and nervous excitement overpower any quick-fix narrative. Athletes should be skeptical of broad anecdotal claims without accompanying clinical evidence.



Weight Cut Dehydration & Fragmented Sleep Patterns

Most fighters follow tough dehydration protocols during weight cuts to make the scale. This process profoundly disrupts normal sleep physiology.

- **Dehydration causes increased core temperature and heart rate**, which correlate with reduced sleep depth.
- **Frequent urination and thirst mechanisms** often fragment sleep cycles during weight cut nights.
- **Muscle cramps and electrolyte imbalance** lead to additional nighttime awakenings or discomfort.

In this state, natural sleep architecture suffers. The body struggles to enter slow-wave non-REM stages that support recovery, amplifying fatigue and slowing cognitive processing speed.

CBD Use During Weight Cut Nights

While some fighters consider CBD for its purported anxiolytic or calming benefits, keep in mind:

- There is **no WADA ban on CBD**, but product purity is a must (see below on lab reports).
- Scientific studies on CBD’s effect on sleep remain preliminary. Effects are often dose-dependent and can vary individually.

- If CBD is used, timing is crucial to avoid any unwanted grogginess around weight checks or medical evaluations.

Rehydration Night Physiology & Wakefulness Interruptions

Post weigh-in rehydration is a physiological battleground, with fighters aggressively restoring fluids and electrolytes to optimize performance. However, this stage also triggers its own set of sleep-interfering factors:

- **Polydipsia:** Drinking large amounts of fluid can increase nighttime urination frequency, breaking continuous rest.
- **Gastrointestinal distress:** Sudden electrolyte and fluid shifts occasionally cause discomfort or cramping.
- **Neurophysiological alertness:** The stimulation to rehydrate often comes alongside mental alertness or anxiety about upcoming fights, further impeding restful sleep.

CBD enthusiasts suggest cannabidiol may help smooth these transitions, but again, thorough validation through batch lab reports is essential. Without precise, COA-verified sourcing, athletes risk ingesting prohibited THC levels disguised in full-spectrum extracts.

Time Zone Shifts & Circadian Rhythm Disruption

Many fighters travel across multiple time zones during fight camp or fight week. This rapid shift generates **circadian rhythm misalignment**, a form of internal body clock disturbance that exacerbates existing sleep problems.

- Sleep onset latency increases — it can take much longer to fall asleep at the “new” local time.
- REM and slow-wave sleep stages may be reduced or fragmented in early nights after travel.
- Daytime fatigue and cognitive fog are common, implicating performance risks.

Unlike melatonin — which has established protocols for circadian adjustment — the literature on CBD’s role in circadian resetting is limited and inconclusive.

Batch Lab Reports & Certificate of Analysis (COA) for CBD Products

Let’s get to what I always ask first: *What does the rulebook say?* Then: *What’s in your bottle?*

For fighters considering CBD in any form during fight week, strict adherence to scientific verification is non-negotiable. Many products marketed to athletes lack independent testing or have mislabeled cannabinoid profiles.

Always insist on reviewing **batch-specific lab reports or Certificates of Analysis (COA)** for:



1. **CBD purity:** Confirm the CBD content matches the label, ideally above 99% pure for isolates.
2. **THC absence:** The COA must certify non-detectable or below-threshold THC levels compliant with WADA's limits.
3. **Contaminants:** Testing for heavy metals, pesticides, and residual solvents reduces health and anti-doping risks.

Practically, COAs should come from ISO-accredited, third-party labs. The absence of such data should be an immediate red flag.

YouTube Interview: Understanding CBD and Anti-Doping Compliance

In this interview, Dr. Jane Smith, sports pharmacology expert, discusses how fighters can safely navigate cannabidiol use within anti-doping frameworks, emphasizing the importance of product verification and timing during fight week.

Summary & Fighter Recommendations

Here's the bottom line for fighters and their teams planning CBD use under WADA rules:

- **CBD itself is allowed** under WADA since 2018, but THC is not.
- **Fight week sleep disturbances** from scheduling chaos, weight cuts, travel, and rehydration cannot be solved overnight by CBD alone.
- **Claims about immediate sleep improvement** require skepticism without clinical support.
- **Only use CBD products with valid batch lab reports and Certificates of Analysis** from accredited, third-party labs to avoid doping violations.
- **Plan administration carefully** around weigh-in schedules, medical checks, media obligations, and broadcast timelines.
- **Discuss CBD use with team doctors and anti-doping officials** before ingestion to stay compliant.

Fighting isn't just about the hours in the gym – it's also a 24/7 strategy that extends to nutrition, sleep, compliance, and mental focus. Stay informed, stay skeptical of vague supplement promises, and always check the rulebook first.