

WADA Conference

Conference Session 9: World Anti-Doping Code Review
(Sports Movement interventions)

Intervention of Mr Sergey Bubka,
Chairman, IOC Athletes' Commission

Madrid, 16 November 2007

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Colleagues,

As an Olympian and as a father, the fight against doping has always been a relevant priority for me.

In today's society, the athlete is a modern hero, an example for young people.

The athletes, as the first concerned, have a role to play in this fight. I will always urge that every athlete must get involved to encourage clean sport and help to rid sport of cheats so that the new generations are set a healthy example.

Not only can doping cause physical harm to current and future generations of athletes, it calls also the integrity of all winning athletes into question. Doping threatens the credibility of sport. Cheating defeats the very universal values of sport, which include: healthy behaviour and lifestyle, fair play, respect, discipline, solidarity, personal development and tolerance.

This is why, as Chairman of the IOC Athletes' Commission, I will always be supportive of the IOC's untiring fight against doping to protect the athletes and thus for pure and healthy sport.

Our message is clear: zero tolerance in doping. Let me remind you that it is the athletes themselves who ask for such a forceful policy.

The strong initiatives, proposed by the IOC Executive Board in Osaka last August, are forceful and effective responses to the seriousness of the threat of doping, especially when it comes to the use of performance-enhancing drugs or banned practices by any athlete.

As clearly stated by the IOC President, these measures are aimed at further strengthening the fight against doping.

Let me remind you of some of them:

- athletes could be banned from taking part in the Olympic Games in the event of violations of anti-doping rules during the Olympiad which have led to sanctions of more than six months;
- an automatic suspension after a positive A sample;
- the IOC could reserve the right to reduce penalties on athletes and their entourage found guilty if they wish to cooperate and provide valuable information on suppliers, networks and any other person involved in the doping chain;
- and the IOC could impose strong financial penalties.

Apart from the confidentiality in doping procedures, one of the main concerns of the athletes is the sanction applied to the athlete.

We definitively ask for tough sanctions to get fair competition and to ensure credibility in the results.

This is why we are very pleased with the new point 10.6 in the Code under review which provides for four-year sanctions in case of

aggravated circumstances unless the athlete or any other person can prove to the comfortable satisfaction of the hearing panel that he did not knowingly violate the anti-doping rule.

It is important to recognise and put in place strict sports-related sanctions and/or penalties for athletes, but it is also important to clear (and punish) the network behind the athletes. The networks are involved in supporting doping - be it the coach, the doctor, the sporting body, the supplier or any other person.

Since its creation by the IOC in 1999, WADA has made great strides in the fight against doping, in particular the development of the world's first uniform anti-doping code, which is on our agenda today. There is one issue of fundamental importance for the athletes concerning the latest version of the Code: in the new article 20.7 "Roles and responsibilities of WADA", the conduct of anti-doping controls by WADA has been deleted.

During the 2005 International Athletes' Forum, all participants unanimously recommended maintaining a high level of out-of-competition testing to cover all competitors. This is why we ask that the WADA budget for out-of-competition tests be maintained, as well as the necessary internal controls.

Moreover, appeal mechanisms (ethics and auditing) should be put in place within WADA to avoid conflicts of interests or any other arbitrary decision by WADA.

In the same article 20.7, we strongly welcome and support the inclusion of the anti-doping education promotion within the role and responsibility of WADA.

This is exactly what the 2005 International Athletes' Forum recommended by encouraging and supporting the IOC, WADA, sports bodies and relevant public authorities to increase education and communication on the fight against doping and on the ethical principles of sport.

High profile athletes could be used as important role models / ambassadors in the fight against doping, nutritional lifestyle campaigns and grassroots programmes. Rehabilitated athletes could also speak to young people about the risks of doping.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The athletes definitely have a role to play in this fight against doping, alongside all the stakeholders in sport world: sports organisations, governments, sponsors, the media, etc.

We strongly encourage all NOCs and IFs to set up athletes' commissions so that athletes can influence the decision-making process and ensure that messages on doping are disseminated and supported.

We also call upon governments to adopt and support the UNESCO Convention on Doping.

As Chairman of the IOC Athletes' Commission, let me assure you that the big majority of the athletes will always strive to move doping and the cheaters away from the sporting arena.

We stay committed and to and engaged with WADA and the principles contained within the Anti-doping Code.

Let's work all together for a doping-free world for the future generation!