



“ *It's simple: it was just fantastic!* ”

*Radu Naum, Sports Reporter and Commentator,
RTV Romanian Television*

that many countries have not paid their fees towards the agency's operational costs. In a media-driven sports world where everything is about breaking records, diminishing results are just not interesting.«

An Italian self-attack

If politician and sports leaders will not solve the problems, who will?

»The pressure for a doping-free sport must come from the grass roots,« the Italian doping-expert Sandro Donati said at Play the game (see also page 22-23). »In ten years' time, drug controls could be replaced by a demand for medically-supervised doping.«

Though one of the worlds' most renowned anti-doping experts - and the official head of the research department in the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) - Donati wasn't invited to join the Italian delegation at the WADA congress in March.

There, the delegation was headed by the sports minister Mario Pescante who in 1998 had to withdraw from his post as president of CONI - thanks to his implication in a drug scandal unveiled by Donati.

Since then, Pescante has made a spectacular political comeback.

As Italian sports minister, Pescante had to tolerate an attack during the WADA congress along with other governments who never payed their contributions to WADA.

The outraged attack was launched by the president of the European Olympic Committee whose name is... Mario Pescante!

Apparently, Pescante's attack on himself did not impress him much. When the edition of this magazine was closed in April 2003, Italy still hadn't payed their 2002 contribution to WADA.

Found listeners

For Sandro Donati, it is in no way a new sensation to be neglected or obstructed by the sports establishment.

In 2000, he was banned from speaking at that year's Play the game - until CONI during the conference was persuaded by protests from world media.

But Play the game 2002 may have been another turning point for Donati. His fellow Italians may still not want to listen to him - but WADA does:

»Play the game gave me an opportunity to make ties with WADA representatives, and I hope our contact will be of mutual benefit.«



Doping Doctors

Doctors continue to play a major role in the practice of doping, says Leicester University's Ivan Waddington

By Jonna Toft

The development of substances which allow athletes to arrive at their destination just a little faster, or jump just that little bit higher over the bar, is a practice not confined to a few eccentric physicians. In fact, today doctors play a major role in improving athletes' performances – both legally and illegally.

»The fact that more and more doctors are involved in elite sport has meant that doping research is an increasingly important part of their work,« says Ivan Waddington of the Centre for Research into Sport and Society at the University of Leicester in England.

Moreover, he claims, sports doctors must bear a large part of the blame for the doping explosion.

»The development of sports medicine began long ago, but over the last three decades it has increased in pace – and at the same time medical reasoning has altered,« he says.

»It is no longer about using sport as just one of many ways of understanding the body. Sports medicine has now become an eternal search to win and set new records.«

Waddington adds that at the same time, it now appears that today's doctors are not particularly affected by ethical considerations. He cites the example of a doctor meeting doping officials with a declaration that his entire team were taking heart medicine on health grounds.

Instead of doctors attempting to protect their athletes, he says, athletes are often simply seen patients who are required to perform better and better.

Ivan Waddington highlights the connection between sports medicine and doping with the following quote from a report into blood doping in the USA's cycling team at the 1984 Olympics. »In the national euphoria after the games, no one thought nothing of probing into secret places. The U.S. team had won nine medals and dominated the cycling events. Fantastic riders.... fantastic trainers.... fantastic cycles, wrote the press. No one thought to add 'fantastic doctors'.«

Success for anti-doping transparency

While it still remains to be seen if WADA will succeed in the anti-doping struggle, the global agency has already set new standards in another field in international sports. The communication policy of WADA has been carried out in a way all sports organisations can learn from – if they will.

From the first to the final day in the negotiation process of the international anti-doping code, everyone could follow the debates on WADA's website

The comments and suggestions made by researchers, sports organisations and other stake holders were simply published there without any censoring and open to the public.

The openness was rewarded. When the last draught of the new code was presented on the site, it was downloaded by 22,500 people in less than two weeks!

Moreover, most of WADA's congress in Copenhagen was webcasted live.

For journalists, www.wada-ama.org is a useful bank of facts, documents and opinions. Unlike many international sports leaders, those of WADA has accepted the invitation to face the critics at Play the game with no delay.

Seemingly, WADA regards the public as a strategic ally on the road to achieve its goals – why don't all international sports organisations?