



# A boost to ethics in the sports media

By Bente Mikkelsen

»Human beings often explain why they did something by saying 'it felt right'. But these 'feel-right' decisions are only appealing because they fulfil an inner need to make a choice. Just because a decision 'feels' right, it doesn't mean either that it is wise, or that it has an ethical or moral basis.«

Marcia Sage, a qualified lawyer and President of The Sports Ethics Institute in the USA, fights stubbornly to encourage the media to deal with ethics in sport.

Moreover, she boosts the attention given to

journalists who raise ethical issues, through a free newsletter sent out almost daily from her institute. The newsletters and the homepage is a treasure chest of links to articles dealing with sport in society – see for yourself at [www.sportethicsinstitute.org](http://www.sportethicsinstitute.org)

At Play the game, Marcia Sage gave a workshop on ethics in sports journalism.

If the sports media distances itself from ethical questions, Sage says, we miss out on a debate that can persuade people to make a stand on moral dilemmas.



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**Such a chance to interact, exchange views and network with some of the world's top researchers and journalists is a chance in a lifetime. The heated debates that characterised the presentations during the panel meetings and thereafter shows clearly how informative and interesting the topics were ”**

*Omulo Okoth, Sports Reporter, East African Standard, Kenya*

## Strengthen sport's moral fibre

Sport needs to take back control of its affairs from sponsors, says a former federation president

By Steen Bille

**B**ig corporate sponsors are often accused of threatening the internal democracy in sports. But the biggest threat may come from within the sports organisations themselves.

»Only sport itself can keep check on the big sponsor companies it partners,« asserts Lars Martin Kaupang, former member of Norway's Olympic Committee and currently senior consultant at the firm MMI Sponsoring.

»Sport cannot control the content of sponsorship contracts, but its leaders can ensure that certain preconditions are included in the lucrative contracts they sign. They need to build a stronger ethical resolve than they have today.«

Kaupang is also the former Chairman of the Norwegian Athletics Association – and still holds the national running record in 1,500 metres set in 1976!

His comments come as part of a debate on sport and business, centring on what many see as a shift in the role of the international sports leader. Since large sponsors and business interests began to get involved with sport in the 1970's, he

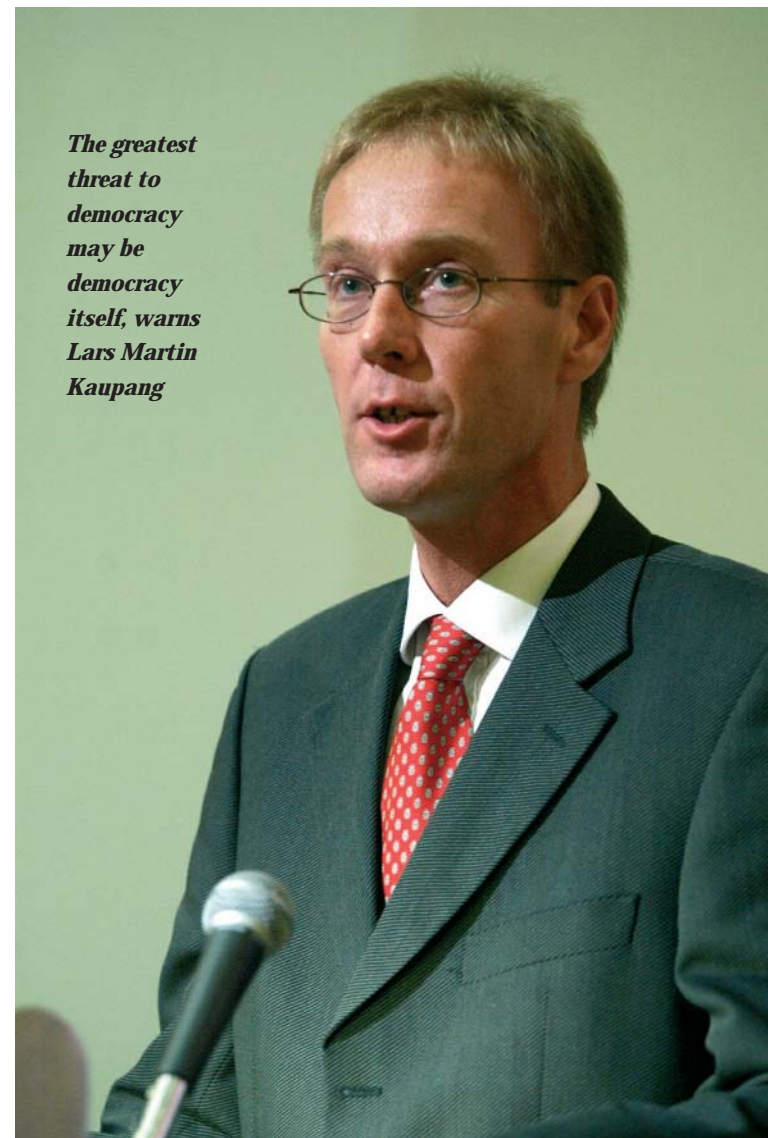
points out, sports leaders with names like Samaranch, Nebiolo and la Costa have altered the way in which sport interacts with the corporate world.

»All of a sudden, it became fashionable to say that if something was good for ISL Marketing and Adidas, then it must be good for sport,« continues Lars Martin Kaupang.

»The firms created their marketing programmes before giving any thought to developing sport. At the same time, secret bank accounts and the flow of money started to become a major part of the sports world. This is a fact that sports leaders would do well to address today.«

Lars Martin Kaupang emphasises his hope that sports leaders will face up to today's ethical challenges by adopting a 'moral attitude' to the events going on around them. Such ethical standards has for long been a public demand to the corporate sector, but the sports organisations seem to lack well behind.

»The greatest threat to sporting democracy is if democracy itself is not strong enough to make a stand.«



**The greatest threat to democracy may be democracy itself, warns Lars Martin Kaupang**