

# Hysteria and hypocrisy

»Doping is a logic consequence of achievement sport, and to fight it requires government action,« said Verner Møller, sports researcher at The University of Southern Denmark, whose book "The doping devil" stirred up controversy in Denmark in 1999. He concluded:

**A**lready Pierre de Coubertin knew that: "Sport must have the freedom of excess", ambition drives the weaker to train more to approach the level where he is able to threaten his previously superior rival.«

It is this ambition that leads to excess. Excess is simply a consequence of sport.

A person does not become an elite athlete if he is not inspired by ambition, and he is not likely to win in competition with the very best if he is not able to surpass himself - if he is not prepared to excess.

Sport is, among other things, pain, suffering and sacrifice. It is these ingredients (in addition to talent of course) that are a precondition for the excitement that we as spectators experience.

The fact that they are able to suffer the pain and bear the sacrifice makes them heroes and idols. We see their superb achievements as a transcending of the human being. We acclaim them, in other words for the surpassing character of their achievements, for the sublime that they have accomplished.

Here we are presented with the dynamism of sport. It is this that induces athletes to persevere with their training, to force their weight down and to employ any methods to gain a competitive advantage. To change this, necessitates the end of achievement sport.

## Political intervention needed

It is indisputable that doping rules, just as football laws are necessary, but the belief that it is possible to combat doping within sport is naive. An effective prevention of doping must begin in an altogether different area, and sporting organisations can not do this alone. It requires political intervention. For effective doping prevention must be directed against the medical industry, for example mandatory addition of biological markers to drugs that can not be detected in doping tests, or by systematic control of the distribution of drugs. Only by such initiatives can there be any hope of an effective limitation of the doping problem in the future.

Read more at [www.play-the-game.org](http://www.play-the-game.org)



## When a punishment led to a power struggle

WADA is fighting to persuade all of sport's governing bodies - including cycling, football and tennis - to enforce hard, standardised penalties for doping

By Jonna Toft

**I**f it were up to Dick Pound, the governing bodies of cycling, football and tennis would all have been suspended from the Olympic movement. The reason - these bodies' continued failure to get into line with their sporting counterparts by implementing a standard punishment for doping.

»That would have been more in keeping with my style« the World Anti-Doping Agency Chairman told Play the Game on its final day. »Unfortunately,

most members wanted to find another solution.«

Dick Pound, who is among the favourites to succeed Juan Antonio Samaranch as the next President of the IOC, was referring to events at an anti doping conference in Lausanne in February 1999. At the time, the IOC was under pressure to harmonise the doping punishments being handed out by various sports associations. However, the ruling bodies of cycling (UCI) football (FIFA) and tennis (ITF) were unwilling to tow the line.





### TIRED LEGS AND ENTHUSIASTIC HEARTS

What can cause one woman and 20 men from all corners of the world to meet up in a sports hall? Football, of course.

After the first day's formalities, opening speeches, acclimatisation and evening meal, most Play the Game delegates were expected to be ready for an early night. Not so. Twenty-one enthusiastic football lovers, all but one of them male, still had the energy to meet in the sports hall for an evening of "activity and games."

The four instructors had a hard task getting all the participants (some slightly older than others) through a vigorous warm up programme. However, those expecting a simple kickabout soon found themselves involved in both a tug-of-war competition and a sack race. However, the fun and games were taken with a large dose of humour and a similar amount of sweat, and demonstrated that sport has the power to create social bonds and new friendships.

When the two multinational football teams finally took to the field to practise the beautiful game, they proved that background and age are no hindrance to playing the world's favourite sport. ♦

The problems faced by WADA were clearly illustrated by the case of Danish cyclist Claus Michael Møller. After testing positive for doping, he receiving a two-year suspension from his domestic cycling union body. However the UCI overruled the ban, altering the penalty to just six months. Despite issuing the "correct" punishment, the Danish Cycling Union was subsequently threatened with a hefty fine or even suspension from the UCI if it did not fall into line.

»The Danish case shows why we need to harmonise the rules, and make sure they are followed by all governments and sports associations,« said Pound.

He stressed the importance of getting governments on board. Professional sports bodies would be more likely to fall into line if they knew the law was on their side, he added.

»If a football player is earning 10 million euros per year, and is handed out a two-year suspension, it is important that the punishment is upheld by the courts,« he explained. »Without legally binding punishments, it would be natural for any association to fear a demand for compensation. What if a civil court decided that the sentence should have been six months? The player would claim to have lost 1.5 million euros, and demand that his association compensate him for the time he was wrongly suspended.«

»The punishment in itself is not a problem for the sports governing body. But the legal system must accept our sanctions,« he said.

»We are still working to streamline sanctions, and if we could get the public authorities on our side, it will only be a matter of time before the sports organisations follow. Maybe I am making it sound a little simplistic - in effect it will certainly be difficult to achieve. A total of 220 nations, all with different legal systems, are involved.«

Pound goes on to confirm that WADA is currently very anxious to move forward with the proposal.

### A year of pressure

WADA was founded after the scandal-hit Tour de France of 1998. It is a private organisation that includes representatives from governments, the medical industry, and different branches of the Olympic movement. Like the IOC, it has its headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland. For the first two years of its

existence, WADA was financed by the IOC to the tune of 25 million dollars. However, at a recent anti-doping conference in Norway, it was decided that in order to retain influence in WADA, individual governments must collectively come up with half this figure by January 2002.

»Education is more important than acting as the world's doping police,« continued Dick Pound. »We must ensure that there is a global understanding that this kind of cheating is not only dangerous - it also destroys the essence of sport. We will do everything in our power to stop doping. Cheats are not welcome in the Olympic movement.«

### The unfair fight

The development of doping tests will in their nature always follow the development of new substances. As long as there is the incentive of money, new types of drugs appearing on the market for which tests do not exist yet. Currently, WADA is especially interested in developing reliable tests for EPO and human growth hormone.

»We can test for growth hormone,« said Pound, "but the test is only 85 per cent reliable, so legally, it is of no use to us at all. If you are going to suspend someone from their sport for two years, you must be 100% sure that they are guilty.«

He also pointed out that although a test for EPO has been developed, it can only detect whether the substance has been used up to four days before prior to the sample being taken. A sports person using EPO will typically stop taking the substance two or three weeks before a major competition where testing may be carried out. No athlete tested positive for EPO during the Sydney Olympics.

»With unannounced testing, there is a real chance of identifying sportspeople who use EPO,« added Pound, who hopes that a more exact EPO test will be available for the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics, as well as a new test for growth hormone. He also confirmed that WADA is aware of the threat posed by gene doping, and is in contact with leading health experts across the globe.

»Gene doping is new and very, very frightening,« he admitted. Earlier in the conference, Professor Bengt Saltin, Chairman of Anti Doping Denmark, had given a qualified guess that gene doping in the sports world could become a reality in sport within the next three years. ♦ (pp. 5)

