

THE PUBLIC MUST ACT AS PROSECUTORS

Former FIFA General Secretary Zen-Ruffinen called for support from legislators and the public to get a better sports governance

by Kasper Lindberg

Michel Zen-Ruffinen, ousted Secretary General of FIFA, held the closing speech at Play the Game 2005 on road maps for better governance in sport. The Swiss sports lawyer identified the main problem in sports governance as too many personal interests and called on the public to act as prosecutors on behalf of sport.

Zen-Ruffinen became one of the most famous whistleblowers in the world of sport in 2002 when he exposed examples of mismanagement by FIFA president Sepp Blatter and subsequently had to leave his job.

In the opinion of Zen-Ruffinen all the problems of sport governance are already well-known but nevertheless difficult to change.

"The question is why – when we know the problems – are we not in a position to make sure these problems disappear? It is very easy. There is only one reason for that, namely that there are too many personal interests involved," he said.

All too often, the leaders who have the power to change the rules, are the same who already benefit from them. Not that the leaders are all crooks who want to exploit the sport for their own benefit. But Zen-Ruffinen believes in a need for better rules at the foundation of every sport organisation.

The problematic roadmap

He pointed to two different roadmaps for better governance in sport. One he called roadmap no. 2 and that is automatically renewed or redrawn by GPS.

"When a rule in whatever sport does not work, you amend the rules. You take the laws of the game, you convene a body and with the people of this body, you define new rules under which the sport in question should work in the future. This system works very well," he explained.

The other roadmap is the one under which the basic rules for sports administrators are issued.

"Here we have a big problem. This roadmap is not adapted to reality. Whenever you ask people to take steps to change these rules, they will feign or give the impression that they are active in that respect whereas they do exactly the contrary."

"In other words: They ask for a time out or they throw the ball out or they put the ball in the corner. And when the ball is put back in the game again it is with rules which are not the ones which the people who identified the problem were asking for".

Public responsibility

Zen-Ruffinen pointed out that in general there is not enough support from the normal world towards the sports world to force sports administrators to amend the rules.

"In sport, public opinion is not really concerned with all the scandals or the stories they hear about illegal governance. They are just satisfied that these

organisations organise interesting competitions. We need to get support from outside, the legislators should be helping more, the public opinion should be helping more."

Zen-Ruffinen asked the public to act as prosecutors on behalf of sport in order to create better rules and guidelines for the leaders of sport and has one wish for the future:

"If there is a Play the Game again, it should really be to speak about the game being played and not about the game being put in disrepute."



After a long time out of the public limelight, FIFA whistleblower Michel Zen-Ruffinen came to Copenhagen to endorse Play the Game's new guidelines on anti-corruption in sport.



John Githongo, former Kenyan anti-corruption adviser, believes sport is better equipped than most to deal with corruption.

IOC and FIFA must show leadership

Sport is well-equipped to fight corruption, but needs to act urgently, said anti-corruption expert John Githongo

by Kasper Lindberg

Sport has an advantage in battling corruption because of the high level of global organisation centralised in strong governing bodies. So says John Githongo - one of the world's leading experts on clearing up corruption.

John Githongo is a journalist and former head of Transparency International's chapter in Kenya. From 2002 to 2005 he was permanent secretary for ethics and governance in Kenya with the main task of putting an end to corruption in his home country. A dangerous task and last year he was forced to resign and flee to Britain to save his own life.

At Play the Game, John Githongo used his expertise to address corruption in sport.

A unique opportunity

In his view, corruption scandals are likely to strike again soon in the world of sport as big money attracts profit-seeking and often dishonest individuals. But sport has a unique opportunity to fight back against corruption, said Githongo.

The advantage stems from the high level of global organization centralized in strong governing bodies such as the IOC and the major sport federations. Such organisations have the power to make rules and initiatives to fight corruption and expect these to be globally accepted.

"The first and most important element in dealing with corruption in sports therefore is the leadership of organizations like the IOC and FIFA. Secondly, there is no doubt that a range of institutional reforms are critical in the fight against corruption," Githongo said.

He proposed rules to promote transparency and to protect whistleblowers, the people who alert the public to corruption and maladministration. Githongo also pointed to the media's responsibility to show an interest in corruption cases.

But action is required, because as he reminded the audience: "The urgency for these reforms will grow. It is not unlikely that there shall be major corruption related scandals at a global level in sport in the not too distant future."

Recipe for a corruption-safe organisation

by Kasper Lindberg

Many speakers at Play the Game 2005 addressed the issue of corruption. Few were as direct as Mary A. Hums in providing a recipe to prevent it.

Hums, an associate professor at the University of Louisville, Kentucky, has even put her recommendations into a simple six-step model called SLEEPE, designed for sport governance. The SLEEPE model is an organised method for sport managers to analyse their decisions in advance of making them.

The model recommends that one considers the implications of any managerial decision in six different areas:

S – Social
L – Legal
E – Economical
E – Ethical
P – Political
E – Educational

SOCIAL Considerations

What will society say about our decisions? What social message do we send?

LEGAL Considerations

Do our decisions follow the "letter of the law" or the "spirit of the law"?

ECONOMIC Considerations

Is this our primary consideration? Do we consider fair wages? How do we carry out our bid processes? Do we cater only to the "high end" consumer?

ETHICAL Considerations

Do we consider basic human rights? What is our approach to diversity? How do we determine who is eligible? What attitude do we take towards use of performance enhancing substances?

POLITICAL Considerations

How will other sport organizations react to our decisions? How will our decisions interact with governmental policy? How do our decisions incorporate "power players"?

EDUCATIONAL Considerations

Teach sport managers about best practices. Educate constituents about decisions (transparency). Create environments where professional development is encouraged.