

The fight against doping is a fight for the protection of the clean athlete, the health of the athlete and the integrity of sport

Arne Ljungqvist

INTRODUCTION

The consensus document published in this issue of *BJSM* contributes significantly to the ongoing fight against doping which started some 50 years ago. Following its creation in the 1960s, the IOC Medical Commission developed antidoping rules to be applied at the Olympic Games; these rules were amended before each game. One international federation after the other adopted the IOC rules and modified them specifically for their sport. Also some national sports bodies adopted particular antidoping rules which were, however, country specific.

The birth of the World Anti-Doping Agency

When antidoping activities accelerated following the Ben Johnson case at the Seoul games in 1988 and following worldwide political changes that took place soon afterwards, it became apparent that the situation and antidoping rules around the world were in chaos. Athletes received different penalties for the same offence

depending on sport and their nationality. The antidoping campaign could not advance without a harmonised and universally accepted set of rules. But that could not be carried out by sport alone. Governmental support was needed. That was one of the main reasons for the creation of WADA in 1999.

Remarkably, WADA had a draft set of rules—a draft Code—ready by late 2003. It received wide support mostly from the governments whereas some federations expressed reservations. The IOC declared, however, that those Olympic federations that did not adopt the Code before the Athens Olympic Games (2004) would not have their sport included in the games. Thus, when the Athens Games opened, the world also saw the birth of the ‘World Anti-Doping Code’. The governments took their share of the commitment by creating a Convention under UNESCO in 2005; this to encourage all governments around the world to support the fight against doping on the basis of the WADA Code.

The Code is a dynamic, living document serving the integrity of sport

The Code has undergone major revision twice which resulted in the 2009 and now

the 2015 versions. In addition, revisions of attaching documents such as the International Standards can take place more frequently. The ‘Prohibited List’, for instance, is revised annually. Advances in sports science are used to better detect a wider range of illegal substances and doping strategies. This all makes the Code a living document.

The consensus document published in *BJSM* and provided as Open Access, shows the commitment of the sports movement to make use of the much improved 2015 Code to develop new and improved strategies in the fight against doping. FIFA should be commended for having brought together a broad representation of stakeholders to that end. The document will surely serve as a road map that will assist in the future journey towards doping free sport. Even though that goal may be ambitious, it should always be kept in mind that the fight against doping is a fight for the protection of the clean athlete, the health of the athlete and the integrity of sport.

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