

TACKLING DOPING IN SPORT 2011 A GLOBAL SUCCESS

[Tackling Doping in Sport](#) packed over 200 delegates into Twickenham Stadium's conference facilities in a hugely successful two-day event that highlighted the new challenges presented by doping, and new methods of tackling them. The expert line up of speakers at the sell-out event attracted delegates from Bermuda, the US, Australia, Russia, South Africa, New Zealand, Qatar, Puerto Rico, Brazil as well as from European countries, international sporting federations, national associations, governments and more.

One of the major themes was that doping is now part of a wider problem of corruption in sport. In an illuminating keynote speech David Howman, Director General for the World Anti-Doping Agency, warned that the criminal underworld is now "controlling a significant proportion of world sport" through trafficking prohibited substances, match fixing and bribing laboratory officials, as "the return on investment is huge". He warned that this black market is now controlling 25% of world medicine. Andy Parkinson, CEO of UK Anti-Doping, said that sport is tackling this problem by "moving away from focussing on the end user to focussing on the supply chain. If sport thinks that it can solve doping on its own, then it is foolishly deluded. The impact that law enforcement has had in the last 18 months has been incredible. It has provided a much-needed sharpness to what we do."

The use of athlete biological passports to provide an indication that an athlete may have been involved in doping was another key issue. Howman highlighted how a [key decision](#) from the Court of Arbitration for Sport supporting the use of such passports in convicting two Italian cyclists for doping had "validated" the use of such passports. He thanked the Union Cycliste Internationale for investing the money in launching the passports without any guarantee that their use would be supported by a court of law, and that he expected other sports to begin investing in them soon. Delegates were warned that biological passports should not be used as the sole method for convicting an athlete of doping.

Hugh Robertson, UK Minister for Sport and the Olympics, revealed that the UK Government is open to the possibility of passing legislation criminalising anti-doping. "If – as a result of work done by the Council of Europe and the European Union – it is suggested that there are things we need to do, then we will do them", he said in response to a question about whether criminal legislation was needed to tackle doping.

One of the most popular and most discussed sessions was a series of round-table debates on aspects of the World Anti-Doping Code that need revising, which filled the room with a buzz of conversation. Popular topics included resumption of training following a ban and altering sanctions given to athletes following 'aggravating circumstances' or 'substantial assistance'.

Tackling Doping in Sport 2011 was organised by [World Sports Law Report](#) in association with UK Anti-Doping and Squire Sanders Hammonds. It received international news coverage from the BBC, Sky News, The Guardian, The Independent, Reuters, Television New Zealand and more. Tackling Doping in Sport is just one of World Sports Law Report's annual conferences. Others include Player Issues: Regulations and Contracts and Sport, Gambling and Sponsorship.

• For more information on World Sports Law Report events or if you are interested in taking part in next year's Tackling Doping in Sport, contact Erika Joyce on +44 (0)20 7012 1383 or erika.joyce@e-comlaw.com. For more information on discussions at Tackling Doping in Sport 2011, contact Andy Brown on +44 (0)20 7012 1380 or andrew.brown@e-comlaw.com.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Other highlights from Tackling Doping in Sport 2011 included:

- A method that has the potential for detecting gene doping in sport using a molecular biological approach was presented by Professor Perikles Simon of Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz. Gene doping was previously thought to be undetectable.
- London 2012 will involve a higher number of drug tests on athletes than ever before, revealed Richard Budgett, Chief Medical Officer for the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games. 5,000 athletes will be tested, as compared to the 4,500 tested at Beijing 2008. 1,250 tests will be conducted during the Paralympics. Ten mobile anti-doping teams will also be used.
- There is a need for new markers to be brought into the athlete biological passport to combat 'Microdosing', which involves using small amounts of Erythropoietin (EPO) that are difficult to detect using current methods.
- Governing bodies need to tread a fine line between publicising positive athlete tests in order to limit damage and protecting the athlete. England Hockey gave an example where it was considering publicising a positive 'A' sample find from an athlete. It decided not to and the 'B' sample came back negative. "We could have ruined that person's life", said Sally Munday, CEO of England Hockey.
- To state that any food or supplement is '100% safe' for athletes to consume is very difficult, if not impossible.
- Contaminated food presents a problem for athletes, as do supplements, which can be contaminated with other substances.
- The standard of care that an athlete can expect from a sporting body during the doping control process has now been 'Codified', which means that athletes may be able to hold sporting bodies liable if these standards have not been adhered to.
- As well as the problem of false positive tests, a problem now exists with false negatives, as people are scared to report a positive test due to the ensuing legal process that will result from it.
- Whether there is a need to adapt the World Anti-Doping Code to regulate the use of technology in sport, as it can provide an unfair advantage or even endanger the health of athletes.