

Introductory Remarks by WADA President John Fahey

WADA Press Conference, Vancouver, February 11, 2010

Good morning ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for being with us today for this traditional WADA pre-Olympic press conference.

Every other year, the Olympic Games bring a special focus to athletic excellence. WADA is pleased to actively participate in the anti-doping measures implemented to protect the integrity of this major event where the stakes for athletes are so high.

As many of you are probably aware, WADA has assumed a number of roles in the lead-up to these Games and will conduct a number of important programs during the Games.

Before going into the details of these, let me first make one point clear: WADA is not a testing agency. We are the independent international agency responsible for monitoring and coordinating the global fight against doping in sport. Therefore, generally speaking, testing is the responsibility of national anti-doping organizations, the sports federations, and the major games organizers. The testing here in Vancouver is the responsibility of the International Olympic Committee.

However, in the context of the Olympic Games, WADA has developed a collaborative strategy with the IOC, the Games Organizing Committee, international federations, national anti-doping agencies and national Olympic committees to ensure that pre-Games testing is targeted and enables to catch cheats prior to their competing.

In fact, based on the notifications received by WADA from international federations and national anti-doping organizations, more than 30 athletes have been prevented from competing in the Vancouver Olympic Games for violating anti-doping rules. This number is significant.

Some cases are still in the results management phase conducted by national anti-doping organizations or international federations. WADA is not involved in the individual management of doping control results, and I cannot go into more details at this point. But what this number shows is that enhanced coordination between anti-doping organizations, in particular through the use of WADA's Anti-Doping Administration and Management System (the central database short-named ADAMS), help significantly protect the right of clean athletes to pursue their Olympic dreams.

Does this mean that the Vancouver Games will be clean? Nobody is in a position to say so. In sport, as in other areas of society, human behaviour is rarely predictable, and there will always be athletes who will attempt to get an edge over their competitors in any possible way. But one thing is clear to me: thanks to the coordination I mentioned and to the rigorous anti-doping measures implemented, those who may take the risk to dope at these Games will have more chances of being caught than at any past Olympic Games.

During the Games as such, WADA will assume two main roles. One is monitoring. The Vancouver Olympic Games will be the sixth Olympic Games at which WADA will have an Independent Observer Team. This team will be chaired by Scott Burns, who is with us today. Mr Burns is the former White House Deputy Drug Czar and current Executive Director of the National District Attorneys Association of the United States. He and his team will monitor the various phases of the doping control and results management procedures during the Games and publish a summary report following the Games.

For the first time at an Olympic Games, this Independent Observer mission will take the form of an audit. This means that the Independent Observer Team will still observe doping control and results management procedures in a neutral way, but the team will have daily meetings with the IOC to report on potential issues. This evolution is significant in that it will ensure that suggestions for improvement made by the experts can be heard and addressed in real time by the IOC, and that the protections provided to the clean athletes will be further strengthened.

The other main role that WADA will assume during the Games is to conduct awareness activities. As for past Olympic Games, we will have Athlete Outreach Centers in the two Athlete Villages in Vancouver and Whistler. These Outreach Centers will allow athletes and their support personnel to learn more about the dangers and consequences of doping, and to interact with international anti-doping experts. This will be another opportunity for all participants to know more about their rights and responsibilities in anti-doping in a relaxed and engaging atmosphere.

This concludes my introduction. I thank you for your attention and I would be happy to take questions.