

CIMP 2008

Second report by CIMP President.

This is the second half of my report, the first being largely concerned with EASA and it was distributed by email on 05 May. A meeting of the Air Sport Commission Presidents was held in Lausanne on the week-end 10-11 May. It was attended by Presidents or Vice Presidents of all the Air Sport Commissions. In addition to me, the Environmental and Education Technical Commissions were represented. This has proved a useful extension because many of the topics discussed involved technical matters.

The agenda comprised two parts, firstly a report on progress with the World Air Games to be held in Turin 06-13 June 2009. The organisers are suffering problems raising sponsorship money, partly because of the general economic situation and partly because they are selling a product without a proven track record. It was noted that 'medical' did appear in their organisation chart as a sub section of 'security', but I did not question further. With nearly a thousand competitors and potentially many thousands of spectators, there will be a need for dedicated medical support.

Of the remaining agenda, at least half the discussion involved matters relating to the Technical Commissions so the decision to include them was well justified. The new revised code for WADA was the principal medical question. This version is less stringent than the last but there is danger that it will actually be enforced. The European Representative of WADA planned to visit the FAI on 16 May so I volunteered to interrupt my holiday and be present.

The finances of the FAI have been eased by the large contribution from the World Air Games and also their contract with Red Bull.

A final issue arose from the potential conflict of loyalties when a President of a Commission is elected to be a member of the FAI Board. While it is inevitable that any prospective candidate for election to the Board will have given long service in a Commission, it was agreed that the two posts should not be held simultaneously. Therefore a Statute will be proposed requiring officers of Commissions to resign their position if elected to the Board.

A similar conflict of loyalties arises when national delegates are also FAI Vice Presidents. As a VP they are

expected to represent the policies of the FAI to National Aero Clubs, as a National Delegate they may be mandated to vote against those same policies. I myself have been in this uncomfortable position.

WADA has become unpopular, press articles circulated described WADA as the new Gestapo. Testing during in air sport contests has recorded a number of positives and these fall into two groups, legitimate use of therapeutic drugs treating real disease where the fault was a failure to obtain a Therapeutic Use Exemption [TUE]. In one such case a member of CIMP recommended a reprimand but an appeal is now in progress demanding a more severe penalty! The other group arises from the unwise abuse of cannabis, mostly by parachutists and hang glider pilots. This activity is illegal and could be a flight safety hazard so merits a penalty, but it does not enhance competition performance.

A special problem relates to the use of oxygen, the breathing of supplemental oxygen being forbidden by WADA. The FAI is asking for an exemption but our Federation can make its own rules. That would mean that any dispute is then between the FAI and WADA and will not involve competitors. Mischievously I pointed out that a strict reading of the WADA rules would disqualify every athlete that travelled in a commercial airliner because the normal pressurisation system is an artificial means of providing additional oxygen!

An issue is 'out of competition testing'. The rules have been relaxed but remain impracticable. Many air sports competitors either work for airlines or are in the military. In neither of these two professions are the future whereabouts of individuals known with any certainty.

A difficulty relates to the definition of the competition period. CIMP recommended the inclusion of certain drugs, including ethanol, on grounds of flight safety. In fact WADA has now standardised on 20mg/%, a level that we first proposed. However we did not envisage that this limit would apply to the whole competition period as now defined by WADA, we thought that limits imposed for reasons of flight safety would only apply when actually flying. This problem remains to be resolved.

Drugs are used to control rest periods during long duration space flights and also in flights with gas balloons. These flights have been recognised as records and such drug use not considered to be cheating. Drugs

have also been used to oppose environmental effects such as motion sickness.

I had two meetings on 16 May, firstly together with Rob Hughes of the FAI Office with Jean-Pierre Moser of the European Office and the second with Dr Alain Garnier of the Agence Mondiale Antidopage [WADA] in the Maison du Sport Internationale. With both I put the argument that the FAI and members were absolutely opposed to the use of drugs to enhance performance but that extensive military research had not yet produced such drugs. We remained concerned with the abuse of cannabis and accepted that there had been a failure to obtain TUEs.

The danger for WADA is that if they are over zealous and treat all competitors as suspects, they may lose the confidence of the pilot population. As every policeman knows, the support of those who are being policed is essential for success. Successful police tactics depend on gaining intelligence of the crimes being committed, the identification of the criminals concerned and finally obtaining the evidence necessary to prove the crime. The evil of doping is no different. Random sweeps in the hope of gaining evidence has never been a cost effective police technique.

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