Social implications of doping

Like it or not, athletes influence the society, serving a role model for the younger generation.

Athletes’ behavior and actions influence young people, who admire with their sport heroes and try to imitate them, copying their manners and following their life principles. In this regard, doping has extremely destructive influence - first, doping indicates that it’s no big deal to pull ahead by any means, secondly, doping demonstrates that people can achieve success by means of performance-enhancing drugs (pills, drinks). Such messages have nothing to do with the values, which the society tries to instill on young people – one cannot pursue his/her goals by means of fraud; there is no equal substitute when it is necessary to display efforts, perseverance, self-sacrificing attitude, knowledge and skills. This equally relates both to sport and to everyday life.

Sport has a special place in the life of people and society in general. People dedicate a lot of their time and energy to sport, they invest much energy and efforts in sport. Family and society try to provide opportunities for doing sports, enabling young people to perfect themselves, have diverse development and have a good time. Doping can devalue these efforts and attempts. If people deem sport as “dirty”, if they become convinced that “drugs” are necessary for victories, their love to sport will come to nothing. Society values not just sport, but healthy clean sport. All today’s athletes are responsible for enabling those who follow them, to have good opportunities for practicing sport.

This statement can be disputed by opponents who would speak in favor of applying doping. They might state that athletes will not be considered as crooks if the rules permit use of doping. However, use of substances by athletes for enhancing their sport performance can become justification, in the minds of young people, for consuming soft drugs, which can harm the society efforts aimed at decreasing drug consumption, and especially spread of drug addiction among teenagers. Society, with good reason, can pursue this fight, using the negative examples of the athletes who resort to doping.

Source: 2015 Anti-Doping Manual of FISU.