

Cheating, doping: How Volleyball has forgotten ethics and fair play

(Lausanne 20 March 2007) Founder and president of the International Ethics Commission of Freiburg (IECF), the oldest institution of its kind in Europe, Professor Honoris Causa Hans - Peter Graf, equally presides the « World Sports – Ethics Commission » an independent society holding numerous mandates in matters of Ethics, such as that of the WVBF (World Volleyball and Beach Volleyball Federation). As such, out of a passion for sports, and because he shares the ethical and democratic approach, Prof. Graf has committed himself to enquire on the morality of practices in the world of sports and of the Olympic movement.

At the end of several months of research, interviews, and meetings, Prof. Graf wishes to communicate to the media, to the institutions regulating international sport, and thus to the greater public, the reprehensible acts that from the point of view of ethics and the battle against doping, reveal the dangers that stalk the sport of Volleyball, and which tarnish the enthusiasm and the commitment of those who practice it, regardless of their origin or the degree of their performance.

The criminal acts in question have been committed by the Volleyball Federation of the Dominican Republic with the complicity of a high personality of the FIVB, in the person of its President, Mr. Ruben Acosta. These actions are constitute more than 30 violations committed in five years and reveal the existence at the heart of this Volleyball Federation, of a policy that is based on pursuing results at any cost without analyzing their consequences or the essential right of each athlete to participate in competitions with equal conditions for all.

Doping at the 2006 FIVB World Championships at Tokyo

Prof. Graf and his commission denounces in this way, the violation committed by Ruben Acosta, President of the FIVB, and Cristobal Marte, Second Executive Vice President of the FIVB, the former President of the Organizational Committee of the 2006 FIVB Women's World Championships in Japan, and the latter member of the Organizational Committee, during the recent 2006 FIVB Women's World Championships in Japan, of principles of the WADA as well as the fundamental and ethical principles of the IOC.

It is effectively established that the 1st of November, 2006, after the match in which the Dominican Team played against China, the female player Eveline Carrera was selected for a doping control which resulted positive for the anabolic steroid « Chlostebol ». The athlete as well as the leaders of the Dominican Team did not request to have a new control of sample « B » done, thus admitting that the first control was in fact positive. It has also been demonstrated that Mr. Cristobal Marte was overzealous in convincing his friend Mr. Ruben Acosta, President of the FIVB, not to sanction the female player but rather the team doctor, Mrs. Maria Josefina Cordero who, it is supposedly said, forced the female player, Miss

Carrera, to use a special cream to treat a skin rash. Mr. Ruben Acosta, who is not at his first violation to the ethical rules of the IOC , (see decisions of the ethics commission of the IOC of May 2004, various letters of the IOC) accepted not to sanction the female player Eveline Carrera, but instead to sanction the team doctor by a lifetime suspension.

The repeated scandal of falsified passports

Elsewhere, in a second affair, Ramon Alexis Garcia, President of the Dominican Republic Volleyball Federation, registered the following women players to participate in the 2006 Women's Junior Continental Championships not withstanding the fact that their age exceeded the maximum regulatory age. It involves the athletes Ruth Reyes, Cindy Rondon, Gina Mambru and Bethania de la Cruz.

Cristobal Marte, Vice President of the Dominican Republic Volleyball Federation, authorized in his capacity as President of the NORCECA Confederation, as well as of the Control Committee, the participation of the four athletes of the Dominican Republic having been pointed out that the latter was signing documents in which the real age of the athletes was clearly indicated. The Dominican Republic Women's Junior Team recruiter used the falsified passports of the four women players so that they could participate in the 2006 Women's Junior Continental Championships and thus obtain their qualification to the World Championships of this category in the year 2007.

According to a similar scheme, Ramon Garcia, President of the Dominican Republic Volleyball Federation, registered the athletes Ana Lara, Rossy Burgos, Sidarka Nunez for the 2006 Junior World Championships having knowledge that the age of these latter athletes exceeded the regulatory age.

Cristobal Marte, Vice President of the Dominican Republic Volleyball Federation, in his capacity of « Team Manager » of the National Women's Junior Team, as well as in his capacity as Second Executive Vice-President of the FIVB, deceived the Control Committee by presenting falsified documents that attested that three of the Dominican women players were eligible to participate in the 2005 Women's Junior World Championships.

The Dominican Republic Women's Junior Team used falsified passports to participate in the 2005 Women's Junior World Championships.

By going back in time, Prof. Graf's enquiry furthermore established that Ramon Garcia, President of the Dominican Republic Volleyball Federation, registered the athletes Rosa Medrano, Rossy Burgos, Ana Lara and Sidarka Nunez, to participate in the 2002 Girl's Youth Continental Championships however knowing that their age exceeded the regulatory age.

Cristobal Marte, Vice-President of the Dominican Republic Volleyball Federation, authorized also, in his capacity as President of the NORCECA Confederation and of the Control Committee, the participation of these four Dominican athletes when at the time they exceeded the regulatory age. The leader of the Dominican Republic Delegation used

their falsified passports to allow the athletes to participate in the 2002 Girl's Youth Continental Championships.

Another similar example : Ramon Garcia, President of the Dominican Republic Volleyball Federation, registered the athletes Juana Savinon, Margarita Suero, Grechi Pérez and Kenia Moreta to participate in the 2001 Women's Junior World Championships organized by his country, knowing that their age exceeded the regulatory age.

Cristobal Marte, Vice-President of the Dominican Republic Volleyball Federation, in his capacity as « Team Manager » of the Women's Junior National Team and also in his capacity as Second Executive Vice-President of the FIVB, and President of the Control Committee, deceived the Control Committee by presenting falsified documents so that the Dominican athletes whose age exceeded the regulatory age, could nevertheless participate in the 2001 Women's Junior World Championships.

Nelson Ramirez, Secretary of the Dominican Republic Volleyball Federation and of the NORCECA Confederation, abused his office at the heart of the Control Committee and of the Organizational Committee so that the Dominican Republic women players whose age exceeded the regulatory age, could participate without a problem in the 2001 Women's Junior World Championships.

The Dominican Republic Women's Junior Team used falsified passports to participate in the 2001 Women's Junior World Championships.

And finally, Ramon Garcia, President of the Dominican Republic Volleyball Federation, registered the women players Iris Santos, Yeimi German, Grechi Pérez, Johanna Luna, Laritza Reyes, Susan Silverio and Kenia Moreta, to participate in the 2001 Girl's Youth World Championships knowing that the age of these latter athletes exceeded the regulatory age.

Cristobal Marte, Vice-President of the Dominican Republic Volleyball Federation, in his capacity as « Team Manger » of the National Youth Team, and in his capacity as Second Executive Vice-President of the FIVB, deceived the Control Committee by presenting falsified documents to allow the Dominican players to participate in the 2001 Girl's Youth World Championships, when their age was not acceptable nor in accordance to the regulations.

The Dominican Republic Girl's Youth Team used falsified passports to participate in the 2001 Girl's Youth World Championships.

Emblematic cheating

These are sad practices that complete a history of emblematic cheating, of evils that eat away at Volleyball, governed by Norceca and the FIVB. At the end of the 90s, within the Volleyball arena of the Dominican Republic, we find a girl named Carmen Caso, a young girl with ideal conditions, but without experience, who will to be immediately integrated into the national teams.

Recently, and in 2001, before the participation of the Dominican Republic in the Girl's Youth World Championships for which the Dominican Republic qualified. Miss Sierra was offered the possibility of participating in one of the national teams.

Unfortunately for her, this possibility was not given to her because she was about to be 20 years old, as this was to be 4 weeks after the authorized closing limit.

It seems that this cause of regulatory disqualification from participation was not respected by the sports leaders of Dominican Republic Volleyball who have the habit of doing anything and everything they can to violate the current regulations in use.

Thus begins the history of one of the greatest secrets of Dominican Volleyball with the arrival and entering in the lists of Alexandra Caso Sierra, the younger sister of Carmen Rosa and without having had the least competence or experience in high-level Volleyball competitions.

Alexandra Caso Sierra would figure as the protagonist of an adventure that surpasses all limits of the imagination and that very well clashes with every foundational principle of organized Volleyball.

Respecting the political practice of the Dominican Federation, its President, Ramon Alexis Garcia registers Carmen Rosa Caso Sierra to participate in the Girl's Youth World Championships with the first name of her younger sister, Alexandra Caso Sierra who at that time would have been 14 years old. It is thus that the Dominican Federation allowed the older sister to participate in the competitions in Croatia with a false first name, where the maximum age for participation should have been 19 years old.

It was thus and henceforth, that Carmen Rosa's first name was in fact changed to Alexandra thus violating existing regulations. And so in 2002, and being 21 years old, Carmen Sierra participated in the Girl's Youth Tournaments of Salt Lake and played with her team in the Continental Youth Championships.

In 2003 and still using the false first name, she participated in the Pan-American Games, in the Continental Olympic Senior Qualification Competitions, and then in 2004 in the Grand Prix and in the intercontinental competitions which would qualify them to the Olympic games in Athens.

When in 2006, the younger sister Caso Sierra turned 19 years old, Mr. Cristobal Marte, Manager of the National Team and of the Dominican Republic Grand Prix, decided to give back to Carmen Rosa her first name and the inherent rights of her age. It is highly surprising that the International Volleyball Federation, proprietor of an extremely important database concerning its female players, never noticed anything with respect to this young girl's 14 years old and who participated in the 2001 World Championships when the required age should not have been more than 19 years old and on the other hand, that her 25 year-old sister played

in a « Grand Prix » without ever having participated previously in any international competition whatsoever.

Appeal to the WADA and the Ethics Commission of the IOC

Before such serious facts, the president of the « world sport – ethics commission » has chosen to reach out to the leaders of the World Anti-doping Agency and the Ethics Commission of the International Olympic Committee, so that Volleyball, a formative discipline and carrier of hope to numerous nations, would at last be freed of such practices. It is with confidence that Professor Graf and those who stand up for ethics and moral values in sports, await the response of these two great institutions that today are indispensable for the correct governing of sports on a world scale.

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