

## How much more can we take?

### Enough is enough.

This is the question that almost 120 weightlifting countries – if not more – **are asking**.

In the past, we used to have the Soviet Bloc. Now we don't have the Soviet Bloc anymore, now we have the Doping Bloc. Is it possible that these doping Federations don't want to understand that doping offences are ruining our sport and there is no way that 120 National Federations – or more - will put up with this total unacceptable situation in the future.

The IWF is taking a strong stance currently and it took a strong stance in the past, by applying heavy monetary penalties and individual disqualification and suspensions. But it appears that these weightlifting Federations have no difficulties in paying these heavy monetary penalties.

So, what is the alternative? Are the sanctions that the IWF apply enough? Obviously not, because they keep reoffending and it is getting worse. **Doping is like cancer. It is ruining our life and ruining our sport.**

So sanctioning the lifters, sanctioning the clubs to which the lifters belong, sanctioning the coaches who are coaching these lifters and sanctioning the national federations, to the point where they are even suspended from participating at the Olympic Games – maybe this is the answer. The question is, how many positives should warrant these type of actions – one, two or three maximum ?

These doping Federations have to realize, that there is no place for them in our sport, if they don't play the game clean and fair. The rest of the world is not stupid. We know exactly what is happening and we know that this cheating has been going on for years and years. Like cockroaches, you see one or two on top of the carpet, but you can be guaranteed that when you lift that carpet there are hundreds of them.

Look at the 94kg category at the London Olympics. The ninth place will now be receiving the bronze medal. Yet this particular lifter, was sent home from Rio 2016 after he failed a test for banned anabolic steroid nandrolone, at his National Championships in July. What games do they think they are playing here?

These Federations, who have endemic cheating have no remorse. They have no regard towards those clean lifters who have missed out their rightful opportunity of winning medals at the World Championships and Olympic Games. As a result the clean lifters, have missed out on opportunities of sponsorship, continued Government support and rightful international recognition.

The worst part about this, is that once these countries/individuals do get caught, the process of reanalysis, hearing, disciplinary decision, and medal reallocation seems to take forever. Whilst the clean athlete sits patiently waiting. Take our region's superstar **Ele Opeloge** from Samoa who placed 4<sup>th</sup> at the 2008 Beijing Olympics in the +75kg category. Earlier this year, everyone found out through the media that the second and third place in the +75kg category at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, had returned adverse analytic findings in the reanalysis of their samples. Seven months later, Ele, and Samoa is still waiting for something to happen. Ele retired from lifting a couple of years ago. She now lives with her husband and child in New Zealand. In the end what will this medal actually mean to her. Is it just an inclusion of her name in the adjusted list? Because this woman has missed out on every opportunity which would have been made available to her had she been the recipient of the Olympic medal in Beijing.



Ele Opeloge- Samoa, placed 4<sup>th</sup> at the Beijing Olympics.

What I cannot digest, is the promotion given to these drug cheats, in weightlifting magazines, making them superstars including their coaches, when we all know how these phenomenal results have been achieved. It is a disgrace.

The Oceania region has been criticised for many years, even from within the IWF, for not producing so called world class results. Our lifters are good, our lifters are clean, our lifters play the game fair. Let the cheats play the game fair and let see how good they are then, on an equal playing field.

The quicker we get rid of this cancer and these cockroaches, the better it will be for our sport.



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