



PRESS RELEASE

CYCLING

THE COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT (CAS) IMPOSES A TWO YEAR BAN ON THE ITALIAN CYCLISTS PIETRO CAUCCHIOLI AND FRANCO PELLIZOTTI

Lausanne, 8 March 2011 - The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has ruled today on the appeal of Pietro Caucchioli, and on those of Franco Pellizotti and the International Cycling Union (UCI). The CAS has confirmed the decision of the CONI to suspend Pietro Caucchioli for a period of two years starting on 18 June 2009. In the case of Franco Pellizotti, the CAS has partially admitted the appeal of the UCI and has imposed a two-year ban on the athlete starting on 3 May 2010, as well as the disqualification of all his results obtained as from 7 May 2009.

Caucchioli case

In the framework of its "Athlete's biological passport" program, the UCI examined many blood samples belonging to the Italian cyclist Pietro Caucchioli between April 2008 and May 2009. On 17 June 2009, the UCI informed the athlete of the violation of the anti-doping regulations prohibiting methods of enhancing oxygen transfer (blood doping). The next day, the cyclist was suspended from competition by its team "Lampre". On 3 June 2010, the CONI Anti-Doping Tribunal suspended Pietro Caucchioli for a period of 2 years starting on 18 June 2009.

On 23 July 2010, Pietro Caucchioli filed a statement of appeal at the CAS to request the annulment of the CONI decision. The Panel of CAS arbitrators constituted in this matter has carefully examined all arguments raised by the parties, including those relating to the reliability and the interpretation of the results analyses.

With the assistance of the experts appointed by the parties, the CAS Panel has reviewed in detail the biological passport program applied by the UCI and has found that the strict application of such program could be considered as a reliable means of detecting indirect doping methods. The CAS Panel also examined all the objections raised by the athlete concerning possible pre-analytical and analytical irregularities which could have been committed by some laboratories and which could, in turn, have affected the reliability of the results. After a thorough examination, the CAS Panel found that the "irregularities" put forward by the athlete could not have affected the results.

On the basis of the evidence provided by the parties, the CAS Panel has considered that the anti-doping authority of CONI had successfully established the use of prohibited doping methods. More particularly, the variations in the haemoglobin concentration values during the period between April and October 2008 could not be considered as physiological but on the contrary were characteristic of blood taking thus demonstrating the blood manipulation in view of doping. Consequently, the CAS has confirmed the CONI decision of 3 June 2010 providing for the suspension of Pietro Caucchioli for a period of two years.

Pellizotti case

The CAS has also ruled on the appeals filed by the Italian cyclist Franco Pellizotti and the UCI against the decision rendered by CONI on 21 October 2010 exonerating the athlete of any doping infraction. The UCI appealed against that decision at the CAS to request that a suspension of a minimum of two years be imposed on the athlete. Furthermore, Franco Pellizotti asked the CAS that his costs before the CONI Antidoping Tribunal be reimbursed. The parties were heard at a hearing held at the CAS headquarters in Lausanne on 2 March 2011. At the request of the athlete, the CAS has accepted to render its decision at the end of the arbitrators' deliberations and before the drafting of the grounds for the arbitral award.

In its decision rendered today, the CAS has partially admitted the appeal filed by the UCI and has annulled the CONI decision. The CAS Panel has noted the violation by Franco Pellizotti of the anti-doping rules prohibiting the enhancement of oxygen transfer and has imposed on him a two-year ban starting on 3 May 2010, date corresponding to his temporary internal suspension. Furthermore, the Panel has ordered the disqualification of all results obtained by Franco Pellizotti as from 7 May 2009. Finally, the athlete has been ordered to pay an amount of €115'000 to the UCI as financial sanction.

The full award with the grounds will be notified to the parties concerned in the coming weeks.