Routledge Handbook of Drugs and Sport

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Publication details

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Published online on: 23 Jun 2015

How to cite:- Ian Ritchie. 23 Jun 2015, Understanding Performance-Enhancing Substances and Sanctions Against their Use from the Perspective of History from: Routledge Handbook of Drugs and Sport Routledge
Accessed on: 27 May 2019

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UNDERSTANDING PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING SUBSTANCES AND SANCTIONS AGAINST THEIR USE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HISTORY

Ian Ritchie

According to Justice Charles Dubin, drug use is the ‘antithesis’ of what sport should be about. Writing in the report of the inquiry into the use of performance-enhancing substances in Canada’s sport system in the aftermath of the infamous 1988 Ben Johnson scandal, he claimed that their use ‘threatened the essential integrity of sport and is destructive of its very objectives’ (Dubin, 1990: xxii). Of course, it may be argued that Dubin exaggerated the impact ‘doping’ had on modern sport, and more specifically on the Canadian sport system, perhaps in part as a way of legitimizing the importance of the Inquiry (Beamish, 2011: 113–31; MacAloon, 1990). However, Dubin’s comments were also prescient in that the ‘moral issue’ of the use of performance-enhancing substances and methods, or at least the use of those substances and methods that have been formally prohibited, has been of central concern in international sport ever since 1990. Dubin’s position reflected perfectly the position taken by contemporary anti-doping organizations and prohibitory codes, in that their central justification has been that doping is contrary to sport’s basic, essential nature or, in the words of the World Anti-Doping Agency’s (WADA) Code, its ‘spirit’ (World Anti-Doping Agency, 2009).

This chapter presents a historical account of the use of performance-enhancing substances and methods and the creation of the rules against their use. What follows is by no means a full chronological account, first because accomplishing such a goal is clearly impossible within a reasonable word limit, and second, and much more importantly, because replicating the history of doping and anti-doping would by no means do justice to the important theoretical points made by scholars who have carefully studied the ‘problem’ of doping. In the historical literature, interpretation, rather than chronology, has been much more important and illuminating. While there is some traditional accounting for chronological history from past to present, more general interpretations of events are favoured in the following analysis. If one were to chronicle doping
and anti-doping year-by-year, one might be left with the impression that, first, the use of banned substances has become more widespread over time and, second, that the various groups that have attempted to fight doping have done so with increasing vigilance based on sound rationale, principled ethics, and with just cause in the ‘fight’. One might fall under the impression, in other words, that there has been a gradual rise in ‘cheating’ in sport and that anti-doping authorities have been increasingly ‘fighting the good fight’. However, careful historical accounts alongside careful interpretations have demonstrated that this impression would be far from accurate.

This chapter builds three interrelated themes. First, doping practices and anti-doping rules and sanctions have varied historically; the use of various substances and methods and whether or not they are considered legitimate – with or without formal sanctions – have varied quite dramatically, and this has, as this chapter hopes to show, important implications for our understanding of this issue. Second, doping practices and the creation and application of rules and sanctions have emerged through a combination of social structure, including major trends in international, high-performance sport, alongside human agency, or in other words the real people who created statements in principle against doping and prohibitory rules. Finally, any analysis – historical or otherwise – of an important element of social and cultural life such as doping must attempt as much as possible to remain as objective as possible. One premise that all good historians take when looking at this issue is not to pre-judge the ‘morality’ of doping behaviour because doing so immediately clouds the analysis. Also, what historians have discovered and the implications of their discoveries are at times far removed from the formal policies and practices in the world of anti-doping, including those of WADA today.

What follows, then, is an historical account that attempts to provide the reader with a ‘template’ to understand this important issue. The chapter begins with the first signs of concerns with doping in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and ends with the creation of the International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) first anti-doping policies in 1967. This may seem like a strange point to stop the narrative but there are specific reasons for this. First, the values of the people that created the first anti-doping statements of principle and sanctioning rules, alongside the general social environment within which those principles and rules were created, are instructive in terms of thinking about the issue today. Second, as we will see, many of the contradictions and continued problems within the anti-doping movement today were created because of the assumptions built into the original prohibitions. Finally, other chapters in this volume are concerned with major events and policies since 1967. This includes chapters on the histories of major sports in addition to specific chapters on the Ben Johnson scandal and the ensuing Dubin Inquiry (Rob Beamish, Chapter 13), the 1998 Tour de France scandal (Christophe Brissonneau, Chapter 15) and the creation of WADA (Dag Vidar Hanstad, Chapter 18), arguably the three most important events in doping and anti-doping since 1967.

**Between open curiosity and amateur reactions: early anti-doping**

One of the first mistakes to avoid in any objective historical account of policies and practices is to assume today’s values can be applied to the past. This is because, just as sport in general is a social institution that varies over time, so too what constitutes a legitimate or illegitimate means of performance has also varied greatly over time. Gleaves (2011: 239) points out that what athletes, coaches, administrators, or for that matter the general public, think is ‘performance enhancing’ is really much more important than whether or not substances or methods actually do enhance performance – intent is more important than actual effects. Once we have this in mind, we can more objectively think of substances such as alcohol, strychnine, ‘purified oxygen’, tobacco or even ultraviolet rays as ‘performance enhancing’ because all of those substances were used
sometime during the period between the late nineteenth century and the start of the Second World War, yet hardly anyone today would think of them as truly performance enhancing. Also, once we have it in mind that what is considered immoral or not varies over time, we are able to more fully and objectively evaluate the past — or the present for that matter — because we avoid the pitfall of assuming that doping is ‘inherently’ contrary to some sort of natural ‘essence’ of sport, a point of view that is, quite simply, false (Beamish and Ritchie, 2006).

In terms of identifying a starting point for understanding the issue in modern times, Waddington (2006: 121), in his account of drug use in British sport, makes the very important point that various forms of drug use have been used in sporting contexts for thousands of years, yet it was only a very recent moment in time, roughly since the 1960s, that these practices received widespread moral condemnation. This raises important questions, Waddington continues, not the least of which is, in his words, ‘[w]hat is it about the structure of specifically modern sport, and of the wider society of which sport is a part, that has been associated with the development of anti-doping policies in sport?’ While Waddington’s observation that the post-Second World War period of time was important in that it represented a dramatic shift towards the greater moral condemnation of drug use and the creation of stricter rules against doping and procedures for testing athletes, recent historical evidence demonstrates that the pre-war period was both important and, in fact, set the tenor for anti-doping after the war and ultimately to the end of the twentieth century and beyond.

Dimeo (2007: 17–50) has shown that the period from the late 1800s up to the Second World War was an interesting one for nascent and emerging anti-doping attitudes. There tended to be a combination of concern alongside a general acceptance and open curiosity with respect to the potential impact various substances might have on athletes’ bodies. Alcohol, strychnine, kola, tobacco, ‘purified oxygen’, and other substances were used in varied athletic environments and while there were voices of disapproval based primarily on religious temperance, in general the use of these substances was supported and in fact made perfect sense, especially for ‘extreme’ long distance running, ‘pedestrian’ walking, and cycling events, all of which were relatively common at the time.

The lack of moral condemnation is buttressed by Hoberman who, in his classic text Mortal Engines: The Science of Performance and the Dehumanization of Sport (1992), makes the point that the involvement of scientists and medical personnel in sport dates back to the mid-nineteenth century during a time when bio-medical scientists began to study athletes but had little interest in enhancing their performance. Instead, they were more interested in the extremes to which some athletes would push their bodies in order to discern biological ‘truths’ about human beings as a whole. Indeed, the predominance from the mid-nineteenth century of the scientific doctrine of the conservation of energy, which dictated that humans had limited physical energy, meant that ‘expanding’ the human body’s potential in sport was probably not even considered a possibility (Beamish and Ritchie 2005; Bowler and Morus, 2005: 79–102; Rabinbach, 1990: 124–7 and passim; Ritchie, 2010) and this is one reason that drugs were typically used as one-off attempts to enhance performance on the day of competition. But the general assumption that the human body had limited potential, the fact that scientists themselves would never or rarely think it worthwhile to enhance performance through ‘external’ means anyway, the fact that what relationship did exist between bio-medical science and athletes was considered perfectly legitimate, alongside the lack of moral condemnation within the relatively small cadre of elite athletes or, for that matter, the general public who followed their exploits, made the performance-enhancing substances that were used generally accepted. Indeed, the condemnation of and moral panic about drugs would come much later in time, and under a very specific set of social and political circumstances.
Within the administrative ranks of high-level sport, the first few decades of the twentieth century witnessed informal statements against the use of ‘dope’ and ad hoc rules and public condemnations by administrators and others here and there, but few sanctions with any real power to punish athletes. The original rules against the use of ‘dope’ came not from the context of humans competing, but in the racing of horses. Interestingly, rules were created not because unscrupulous owners and trainers enhanced their horses but because they impaired them, seizing upon the opportunity to profit from fixed races in a sport in which gambling was common (Gleaves and Llewellyn, 2014). In human competition, a divide between ‘clean’ amateur athletes and ‘doped’ professionals emerged in the first few decades of the twentieth century (Gleaves, 2011). Given that the amateur versus professional social practices in sport were very much determined by class positions, the line between ‘clean’ and ‘doped’ ultimately had its roots in the class positions of athletes, and of those who were or were not criticizing their actions. ‘Anti-doping rules predicated on amateurism’s ideals’, Gleaves (2011: 241) points out, ‘would simply become another tool for excluding or otherwise marginalizing working-class professionals.’

Two examples highlight the class distinction. In the Olympic marathon, a sport that at the turn of the century was considered a borderline case between professional and amateur, runners Thomas Hicks and Dorando Pietri, who won the 1904 and 1908 Olympic marathons respectively, both took a combination of strychnine and other substances, yet both escaped moral condemnation from IOC officials because, as Gleaves and Llewellyn (2014: 844) point out, they ‘fell outside the moral code of amateur sport’. Second, in the Tour de France, a direct conflict emerged between many of the working class competitors who regularly took substances to help them push through the physically gruelling event – ‘we run on dynamite’ quipped one cyclist in 1924 – and wealthier promoters and managers, including one of the Tour’s founders Henri Desgrange, who wanted to enhance the prestige of the nascent event by portraying it as ‘clean’ (Gleaves and Llewellyn, 2014: 844).

The amateur versus professional division set the stage for the first anti-doping rules in human competition. While there were very minor statements against drug use made by the German Athletic Federation in 1927 and the German Amateur Boxing Federation in 1929 (Reinold and Hoberman, 2014: 873), the first major international organization to create a statement of principle against doping was the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF). During the IAAF’s 1928 Congress in Amsterdam, the central purpose in its policy discussions was to stem the tide of professionalism. In this context, the IAAF, which was headed by the staunch defender of amateurism, Sigfrid Edström, voted unanimously to adopt a rule against drugs or stimulants and then drafted a text for its Handbook that stated ‘Doping is the use of any stimulant employed to increase the power of action in athletic competition above the average’ and that infringement of the rule could lead to suspension ‘from participation in amateur athletics’ (cited in Gleaves and Llewellyn, 2014: 846).

Within the ranks of the IOC, two concerns motivated its reaction to the perceived problem of drug use in the pre-Second World War period: the health of athletes and keeping their bodies in a ‘normal’ state and, once again and more importantly, the defence of amateurism. Olympic founder Pierre de Coubertin did not see the amateur distinction as paramount for his movement, stating in his Memoirs in 1932:

[I]t seemed to me as childish to make all this depend on whether an athlete had received a five franc coin as automatically to consider the parish verger an unbeliever because he receives a salary for looking after the church.

*de Coubertin, 2000: 654*
Coubertin had grander values in mind than those represented by the amateur movement, including notions of athletic ‘honour’ that he gleaned from literature on knighthood chivalry during feudal times (Ritchie, 2014; Segrave, 2012). But within the day-to-day organization and development of the IOC and the Olympic movement, the defence of amateurism took on heightened significance during the decades leading up to the Second World War. Faced with increasing commercial pressures, the realities of organizers having to raise money to pay for facilities, debates over broken time payments, and a host of perceived social threats to the ‘purity’ of sport, the IOC adamantly defended amateurism and tightened its rules in the Olympic Charter (Ritchie, 2014).

In terms of anti-doping, two events in the 1930s presaged IOC action during the end of that decade. First, a controversy arose after the 1932 Los Angeles Games during which Japanese swimmers had surprisingly beaten their American rivals. Accusations by American authorities that Japan’s swimmers had used ‘purified oxygen’, even if they were premised more on nationalistic fervour on the part of the Americans than true concerns over the injustice of the practice (Dyreson, 2013), would have been witnessed and considered by IOC members, including American Avery Brundage, who was confirmed as an IOC member in 1936 and appointed to the Executive Board only one year later. Second, IOC members would certainly have been familiar with rumours and accusations following the 1936 Berlin Games that the National Socialists had ignored amateur restrictions and provided state resources to improve German athletes’ competitive potential leading up to the Games (Gleaves and Llewellyn, 2014: 8–9).

IOC vice president Sigfrid Edström, who was also instrumental in the drafting of the IAAF’s rule, suggested a committee be created to study the issue of doping in the Olympic movement. President Henri de Baillet-Latour – whose personal history included among other things owning horses, making him fully aware of the problems of ‘doping’ in that sport – drafted a letter in advance of that committee, stating that ‘doping’ was one of the central challenges to amateurism in the Olympic movement. Thought to be the first statement on doping by an IOC President, Baillet-Latour’s letter held that ‘amateur sport is meant to improve the soul and the body [and] therefore no stone must be left unturned as long as the use of doping has not been stamped out’. The IOC President went on to make the exaggerated claim that ‘[d]oping ruins the health and very likely implies an early death’ (cited in Gleaves and Llewellyn, 2014: 847).

The IOC created a special commission to study the topic leading up to its meetings in Cairo in 1938, and members of that commission included Edström and Brundage. Sometime shortly before the Cairo meetings, Brundage wrote: ‘The use of drugs or artificial stimulants of any kind cannot be too strongly denounced and anyone receiving or administering dope or artificial stimulants should be excluded from participation in sport of the O.G. [Olympic Games]’ (cited in Gleaves and Llewellyn, 2014: 849). A statement from the commission’s report replicated Brundage’s hand-written note almost verbatim. This was then submitted and accepted at the IOC’s Cairo meetings, alongside various other resolutions on amateurism, and subsequently published in 1938 in the IOC’s Bulletin. While not included in the Olympic Charter until 1946 because of the disruption from the war, the statement of principle against doping was included in the Charter under the heading ‘Resolutions Regarding the Amateur Status’. Indeed, this statement of principle – anti-doping as a subset of amateur values – would remain in the Olympic Charter until 1975 (Gleaves and Llewellyn, 2014: 849; Ritchie, 2014: 828–9). In short, the foundation of the fight against doping that would become stronger in the post-war era was laid by the pre-war assumptions about and defence of amateurism.
From health concerns to moral panic: the heady post-war years

The post-war period can accurately be summarized as a period of ‘mixed messages’ with respect to the use of substances and methods to enhance performance, but it was also a period during which, using Dimeo’s (2007) words, a ‘new ethics’ emerged. Dimeo points out that a ‘pep pill mania’ of sorts existed in several sports – both professional and amateur – during the 1950s and 1960s. The use of stimulants, including various amphetamine derivatives, was also part of a general social trend of ‘pill popping’ to create energy and ward off fatigue, perhaps most noticeably in the USA. ‘Amphetamines were not simply seen as a “doping” substance at this time’, Dimeo (2007: 62) points out, ‘but an acceptable and legitimate public medicine.’

Anabolic steroids had been identified and first synthesized in the 1930s, but during the late 1940s and 1950s there was general interest in their potential to strengthen and rejuvenate the body. This was perhaps best exemplified in Paul de Kruif’s 1945 publication *The Male Hormone*. *The Male Hormone* strongly defended the ability of the ‘newly discovered’ drug to enhance vigour and energy, build strength, combat fatigue, improve quality of life, and even to extend the duration of life. De Kruif, who had written several controversial texts on topics related to the history of scientific discoveries and the ability of science to enhance life, had a wide popular following (Summers, 1998). Popular accounts such as de Kruif’s, alongside the publication in respected journals such as the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology* of new evidence supporting the idea that steroids could enhance strength and athletic performance, made the leap from theoretical and popular evidence to real-life use in sporting circles a relatively short one (Dimeo, 2007: 72; Yesalis and Bahrke, 2002: 49).

In the context of the cold war, anabolic steroids became, as Dimeo (2007: 75) demonstrates, important weapons used by both sides in the attempt to gain sporting superiority. It meant for the USSR ‘a systematic application of doping medicine and science to the problem of achieving excellence’ while, in the USA, ‘sports physicians . . . made the connection between politics and doping: defeat in athletic competition to the communists had to be avoided at all costs’. While many have assumed that ‘doping’ in general flowed from east to west, with revelations about the systematic use of drugs in the former German Democratic Republic heightening those assumptions, Dimeo (71–6) shows that both sides of the ‘Iron Curtain’ were simultaneously committed to the use of anabolic steroids to improve performance and win medals. After the 1954 World Weightlifting Championships, American coach Bob Hoffman and the team’s physician John Ziegler were convinced that Soviet weightlifters were, as Hoffman later put it, ‘taking the hormone stuff to increase their strength’ (cited in Todd, 1987: 93). With the aid of the Ciba Pharmaceutical Company, which produced the synthetic steroid methandieone (Dianabol), Ziegler gave the drug to weightlifters at the York Barbell Club in Pennsylvania and by the 1960s the use of anabolic steroids was common in weightlifting circles but also spread to shot putting, hammer throwing, discus and several other Olympic, strength-related events (Dimeo, 2007: 76–8).

With rumours of growing use of amphetamines and anabolic steroids by both east and west bloc athletes, and with the foundation for the fight against doping having been set in the context of the defence of amateurism before the war, the IOC attempted to seize greater control of the situation. Importantly, Brundage, whose hand-written note had set the foundation for IOC anti-doping policy before the war, became Olympic President (1952–72) during these heady days. Concerns were intensified because of two incidents in the sport of cycling. First, Danish cyclist Knud Enemark Jensen collapsed and died during the road race in the 1960 Rome Summer Games, and subsequently British cyclist Tommy Simpson died during the 1967 Tour de France. Both, it was rumoured, died from amphetamine use. Recently, Verner Møller (2005; 2010:
37–42) has demonstrated that Jensen’s death was due to a series of factors – including extreme dehydration caused from excessive temperatures in Rome on the day of competition – and not to amphetamine use, yet in the early 1960s Jensen’s case and the assumption that he had died from a drug overdose put anti-doping squarely on the IOC’s policy agenda.

But even before Jensen’s death, reactions against doping along the lines of amateur versus professional that had begun before the war had intensified (Gleaves, 2011). American J. Kenneth Docherty wrote in the IOC’s *Bulletin* in 1960 that ‘our present code of amateurism could never bless such all-out efforts’ represented by athletes’ use of drugs but, interestingly, Docherty also pointed out that committing full-time to training regimes and accepting external rewards were also contrary to amateur ideals (cited in Dimeo, 2007: 96). Indeed, Brundage and others within the ranks of the IOC were far more concerned with preserving the general principles of amateurism; in this sense, doping was just a part of the more general problems facing ‘proper’ and ‘pure’ Olympic sport. During the IOC’s meetings in 1960, Brundage mentioned the issue of athletes using ‘Amphetamine Sulfate’, and in the same meeting Swedish delegate Bo Ekelund called for an investigation into drug use, but neither point led to subsequent action.

But just 15 days after Jensen’s death, Brundage and the IOC Executive Board met to voice their concerns. In 1962 Brundage organized a doping subcommittee under the direction of the head of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, Sir Arthur Porritt. Perceiving Porritt to be ambivalent towards the problem, Brundage replaced him with Dr Ferreira Santos and it was under his watch that an anti-doping statement was published in the IOC’s *Bulletin* in 1963. Reflecting inconsistencies in definition similar to the still-existent clause contained within the amateur restrictions section of the Charter, the 1963 statement defined doping as:

> an illegal procedure used by certain athletes, in the form of drugs; physical means and exceptional measures which are used by small groups in a sporting community in order to alter positively or negatively the physical or physiological capacity of a living creature, man or animal in competitive sport.

(*cited in Hunt, 2011: 15*)

Besides the fact that the statement had no formal sanctioning power – no formal means to discourage athletes – there were also quite obvious inaccuracies and vagueness contained within the statement. The fact that many practices undertaken by athletes were perfectly legal, and that it was not at all clear where ‘exceptional measures’ drew the line in terms of ethical versus unethical behaviour, are just two of the more obvious examples.

Porritt once again became the head of the subcommittee after Santos’s death, and he asserted a strong position on the issue of fighting doping during the IOC general meetings in Tokyo in 1965. He stated that the IOC should issue a formal and more carefully worded statement, create sanctioning procedures, and include a promissory clause that athletes would have to sign as a condition of participation. In April 1966, Porritt presented a report that included a list of banned substances that would be prohibited at the 1968 Mexico City Games and in that same report he opined that ‘only a long-term education policy stressing the physical and moral aspects of the drug problem would stop athletes from using drugs’ (*cited in Hunt, 2011: 22–3*). Importantly, during the IOC’s meetings in Tehran in May 1967, the IOC formally defined doping, voted to introduce drug and sex testing, and stated that athletes would be required to sign a promissory statement – a pledge – that they were drug free. The IOC formally defined doping as ‘the use of substances or techniques in any form or quantity alien or unnatural to the body with the exclusive aim of obtaining an artificial or unfair increase of performance in competition’ (*cited in Todd and Todd, 2001: 68*). Limited random tests were conducted at the
1968 Mexico City Games, and while a test for anabolic steroids at that time did not exist, those tests were developed in 1973 and testing for steroids was first implemented at the Montreal Summer Games in 1976.

If one were to take the history of doping practices and the creation of anti-doping policies out of their historical context, one might be under the impression that drug use in sport gradually emerged and became an increasing problem of greater moral concern to the point that, during the 1960s, international sports authorities began a rational and ‘just’ war against ‘cheaters’ and that the anti-doping movement has been constantly playing catch-up with increasingly sophisticated ‘cheats’ ever since. However, this would remove doping practices and the anti-doping movement from its proper historical context. More nuanced historical accounts give a very different impression.

First, in his text Drug Games: The International Olympic Committee and the Politics of Doping, 1960–2008, Hunt (2011) has demonstrated that several problems plagued the IOC from the start of the creation of the post-war policies and prohibitions, making the ‘fight’ against doping anything but coordinated or, for that matter, rational. The early days of prohibitions and testing were witness to conflicts between individuals involved in the administration of Olympic sport along with ‘turf wars’ between organizations such as Olympic Games Organizing Committees, International Federations, National Olympic Committees, and the IOC itself. Hunt also demonstrates that the very definition of ‘doping’ was always uncertain in the first place, and the various definitions of ‘doping’ cited here attest to this point – definitions were always faced with a series of contradictions and ambiguities. But a more important and revealing problem was the fact that anti-doping policies themselves were never rationally considered. The IOC – or other major sports organizations for that matter – never considered the ethical issue fully but instead reacted to what Hunt refers to as ‘focusing events’ – dramatic public cases that damaged either the image of the ‘purity’ of Olympic sport or the ideal of the Olympic athlete’s body as healthy: ‘[The IOC] tended to formulate doping policies with the idea of minimizing public controversy. Meaningful reforms were deferred while a series of scandals continued to plague the Olympic movement’ (Hunt, 2011: 3).

In A History of Drug Use in Sport 1876–1976: Beyond Good and Evil, Dimeo (2007) demonstrates that the decisions made by IOC members during the controversial years between the death of Jensen in 1960 and the decision to ban drugs and begin testing in 1967 were made by men heavily influenced by ideals of amateurism and the notions that Olympic sport was pure and beyond the realms of social and political affairs. What Dimeo describes as the protagonists’ at times fanatical and proselytizing approaches ‘were a subtle and implicit – but enormously powerful – force in setting the framework for anti-doping in the 1960s’ (Dimeo, 2007: 95). He shows that the crusade against drugs gradually shifted the emphasis away from concern about the health of athletes to a quasi-religious moral attack on the character of users and the ‘evils’ of their deeds, because the latter would more convincingly make the case both to sports administrators and also to the general public. Dimeo (199–20) also shows that the movement sought to return sport to its mythical original state; it was he says, ‘an exercise of power in which the authorities had to protect sport: that meant disseminating the myth of its purity’. An article by Arthur Porritt, published in the Olympic Review in 1965 under the simple title ‘Doping’, is perhaps the best example of this. Resorting to name-calling, Porritt (1965: 47–9) informed his readers that drug users had ‘weakness of character’, ‘inferiority complex[es]’, and that every one of us interested in the basic values of amateur sport [should] keep this matter under the closest surveillance and to remember always that the ‘dope’ in the American
sense – the mentally, physically and morally dulled individual – is to some degree at any rate the inevitable corollary of doping.

Leading up to the creation of the first prohibitions in 1967, the IOC was in fact concerned about a number of factors that seemed to be taking sport away from its perceived ‘foundation’. Brundage thought of doping as merely a subset of greater problems, including an accelerated emphasis on competition and the movement towards full-time, professional training in both the east and the west. Indeed, practices such as increased time and effort committed to training and competition, or in some cases athletes receiving money for performance, were becoming increasingly common and, from the perspective of some IOC members, it is understandable why – given the nineteenth-century set of values upon which the movement had been founded – they would perceive things as spinning out of control. However, the IOC could do little about many of these issues, and indeed by the early 1970s, amateur ideals were formally abandoned and relevant rules and restrictions were removed from the Charter (Beamish and Ritchie, 2004; Beamish and Ritchie, 2006: 11–30). But drug use was one aspect of sport that could be controlled, or at least certain members of the IOC perceived it could, and so rules were put in place and procedures for detection and punishment were implemented, and these continue to this day, albeit with greater scientific sophistication and the commitment of greater money and infrastructural resources. But because ‘ethics’ per se was never considered – because the IOC was trying to ‘turn back the clock’ and preserve images of Olympic purity in light of dramatic and embarrassing cases – the anti-doping movement was faced with a series of contradictions in its policies that, arguably, continue to the present day (Dimeo, 2007; Beamish and Ritchie, 2006; Hunt et al., 2012; Ritchie, 2014).

Conclusion

One key finding of careful historical studies of doping and anti-doping is the manner in which the ‘problem’ of doping in sport has been socially constructed (see Beamish, 2011). The various social agents who created the first anti-doping statements and rules were influenced by a particular set of values, reflecting their personal histories, the agendas of the organizations they represented and the general tenor of their times. Value judgements about performance enhancement, in other words, were a reflection of social structure and the individual agents who operated within that structure. A number of implications flow from this history.

First, while this chapter has only scratched the surface of the numerous figures who played important roles in anti-doping overall (see Dimeo, 2007; Hunt, 2011), some of the most important men identified here, men such as Sigfrid Edström, Henri de Baillet-Latour, Avery Brundage or Arthur Porritt, created the original and most important anti-doping policies based on their conservative world views and an image of sport that sought to maintain the institution’s ‘purity’ in the perceived light of forces of modernity that they saw as spinning the world out of control (Beamish, 2011). While a number of values and traditions influenced these men, the overriding one was amateurism and the belief that sport – Olympic sport in particular – should remain pure and that it could be used as a counterpoise to what Brundage referred to as the ‘cat force’ and ‘jungle’ of human social and political affairs (cited in Guttman, 1984: 115–16).

The ‘amateur thesis’, or the impact amateurism had on the creation of anti-doping prohibitions, is an emerging one in the historical literature (Beamish and Ritchie, 2004, 2006; Gleaves, 2011; Gleaves and Llewellyn, 2014). It has important implications for anti-doping policy today because amateurism was abandoned as cold war sport brought practices further and further away from anything Edström, Baillet-Latour, Brundage, Porritt or, for that matter, Olympic...
founder Coubertin himself could ever have imagined. If anti-doping was largely based on amateur sensibilities, what does this mean for the legitimacy of anti-doping historically? Beamish (2011: 71) states bluntly that the rules were ‘intimately tied to Coubertin’s original lofty principles, and indeed, the use of performance-enhancing substances was, within that context, cheating. . . [However] [o]nce the Olympic Games’ fundamental principles were removed, the IOC’s most principled rationale for a banned list vanished’.

Besides the fact that the original anti-doping rules tended to be based on a defence of sport’s ‘purity’, especially in the Olympic movement (Ritchie, 2014), there was, as Hunt et al. (2012: 55) point out, a more direct practical issue at stake. By defending sport’s ‘purity’, elite administrators within sport could convince the public and non-sport authorities, such as government leaders, that it was warranted to sanction drug users through private, rather than public legal means. The latter would not only entail complex legal procedures but, under the rules of law the accused was also entitled to the presumption of innocence. Hunt et al. point out: ‘[T]he idea that disputes should be resolved within the governance structure for sport rather than by public bodies became a fundamental tenant of anti-doping policy.’ This has direct implications for thinking about the manner in which anti-doping organizations – WADA obviously being by far the most powerful – operate today, including the accountability of such organizations.

In general, the summary of history presented here suggests that the scholarship that has focused on the historical forces that have led to doping practices and anti-doping policies needs to continue to flourish and to address important questions. What were the historical forces that led to the regular and systematic use of drugs? What were the historical forces that led to anti-doping policies? What were, and what are, the ethical foundations – if any – upon which anti-doping was, and is currently, based? These are important questions but, it should be pointed out, they are not questions being asked by the anti-doping establishment itself, where policies and rules are premised on the idea that the use of performance-enhancing substances and methods is contrary to abstract notions of the ‘spirit of sport’ (see McNamee’s chapter in this volume). The latter notion is by definition ahistorical; the idea that doping is contrary to a supposed ‘essence’ of sport takes a complex issue and pulls it out of historical context and therefore limits a full understanding of it. It also does not do justice to the fact that sport is a complex social and historical institution. So good historical scholarship helps inform us why anti-doping today tends to be quite fraught with contradictions, and good historical accounts are necessary to bring greater clarity to this complex social issue.

References


