

More Doping Tests Coming, Says Tennis Boss

Roger Federer and Andy Murray have been criticized by Francesco Ricci Bitti, president of the [International Tennis Federation](#) (ITF), for their doubts about the anti-doping program of the organization.

Bitti also remarked that he is considering doing more tests next year, especially out-of-competition blood tests. The ITF head remarked that till a few years ago, players were complaining because they were being tested and now they are complaining they are not tested enough.

Doubts were expressed by Federer and Murray about the anti-doping program in the wake of Lance Armstrong doping scandal that has shaken cycling and sport in general. Federer recently said he feels like being tested less now than six or seven years ago and said he agrees with Andy that we do not do a lot of blood tests during the year.

A veteran Italian sports official who is also a member of the executive committee of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), Ricci Bitti, remarked in Prague during the Davis Cup final that what Federer said could be true of him, since testing is allocated by drawing lots but said he doesn't think they are right. However, Bitti remarked that they surely help us by making such remarks as it allows us to move in the direction in which we want to proceed ahead but still it is strange that they change their minds a lot.

The head of ITF further remarked that defining 'out of competition' in tennis is harder, because 'out' is rather before or after the competition but the Tennis Federation will try to increase the percentage of tests done out of competition, blood tests, and the number of tests in general.

Ricci Bitti warned that tests done out of competition, blood tests, and the number of tests in general are the three areas on which we are working with our partners (the Grand Slams, the ATP and the WTA) but the ITF needs consensus, because increasing the program means a lot of money. According to the latest statistics of the ITF, 2150 tests were carried out in the sport in 2011, of which only 131 were blood tests and only 21 were done out of competition of the latter. Ricci Bitti said we believe that our anti-doping program is absolutely good and our work is highly appreciated in terms of quality.

But the ITF head was quick to accept some criticism by saying that he believes that ITF is a little bit exposed in terms of quantity and remarked he is not pretentious as to think that we can catch all cheats but confident that tennis is a clean sport. He went on to remark that ITF needs to improve its program but he is pretty much confident that tennis cannot have an Armstrong case that was highly organized and scientific system, which is not the case with tennis.

Seven-time Tour de France champion [Lance Armstrong](#) was stripped of his titles by the ruling cycling body UCI after the United States Anti-Doping Agency said in a report he was involved in the "most sophisticated, professionalized and successful doping program that sport has ever seen."