

## **Anti-Doping Program Funding Increased By Tennis**

Tennis authorities will meet next week to plug a hole in the anti-doping efforts of the sport in the wake of concerns inside and outside of tennis of its relatively small budget for preventing doping in tennis.

According to an official of the [United States Tennis Association](#), the U.S. Open and the other majors would roughly double their current financial contribution from about \$150,000 to \$300,000 every year. Meanwhile, the International Tennis Federation will also be increasing its contribution to the fund, but it is unclear if the WTA and ATP Tour, which also help pay for the anti-doping program of the sport, will increase funding. The ITF, which runs the anti-doping program of tennis, has a budget of roughly \$1.6 million, according to previously published reports and it is not known how much it spends on anti-doping.

In the year 2011, the International Tennis Federation had conducted just 21 out-of-competition blood tests, which are the latest figures available. A founder and former chairman of the World Anti-doping Agency, Dick Pound, called the 2011 figure "very small" in an interview last fall.

Many top tennis players such as Roger Federer, Andy Murray, and [Novak Djokovic](#) have called for increased testing, especially out-of-competition blood testing, which is more costly but can better detect banned substances such as the blood-booster erythropoietin, or EPO, in the light of Lance Armstrong's admission of systemized doping. Top players expressed fears that tennis authorities are not keeping up with those seeking an unfair advantage, especially those using these drugs to increase strength and stamina to new levels.

In 2011, the majority of the 2,150 tests conducted were urine tests and only about 10% were done outside of tournament competition. New funds will beef up tennis's anti-doping program to tackle problems such as blood tests, out-of-competition tests in general and promote the need and importance of a biological passport program. Stuart Miller, who heads up the anti-doping program for the ITF, said that he expects those areas to be targeted, "subject to receiving the increased contributions."

ATP spokesman Simon Higson, said we fully support a rigorous program, and if that means more or different ways of testing, then we will be happy to support it and also remarked that we remain fully committed to ensuring a level playing field and a clean sport for our players, tournaments and fans, and will continue to evolve our program as necessary. Andrew Walker, a WTA spokesman, said the women's tour has been an "aggressive in advocating" for the ITF to explore and

implement any changes to strengthen the anti-doping program and added that the WTA is fully committed to a strong anti-doping program and we have been aggressive in advocating within the governing body group that oversees the program to explore and implement effective changes as required to strengthen the program.

"If they do take blood samples throughout the year I think that's OK," 18th-ranked Milos Raonic of Canada said this month while winning the SAP Open in San Jose, California "I just want the sport to be clean."