

WADA May Get Blood Samples From Operation Puerto Evidence

There was a way for evidence contained in blood bags seized during the [Operation Puerto blood doping](#) trial to be shared with anti-doping authorities without breaking rules aimed at protecting a crime scene once the trial is completed, the lawyer representing the Spanish state said.

Lawyer Lucia Pedrero told the court the complete blood bags shouldn't be handed over because they are part of a crime, but yes, samples of them could be given and then later the evidence could be destroyed. However, the final decision on this rests solely with judge Julia Santamaria, who has said she will announce her decision after the trial ends on April 2.

A request for the same has already been made to the court by the World Anti-Doping Agency to release more than 200 blood bags seized by the Spanish police during raids to clinics and other places of doctor Eufemiano Fuentes, the alleged mastermind of a complex doping ring, in 2006. Meanwhile, the anti-doping watchdog of Spain has said it will do so as well when the trial is over.

The Spanish anti-doping authorities and WADA are hopeful that their analysis may lead to the identification of any cheating athletes, and uncover clues which most advanced tests available today could reveal. The World Anti-Doping Agency for years has tried and failed to get access from the Spanish courts to the blood bags found in the possession of Fuentes.

A report in *El País* has claimed that all 216 blood bags seized during the Operation Puerto have finally been accounted for and belong to 36 different athletes or cyclists.

Fuentes and five other defendants, including his sister and fellow doctor Yolanda Fuentes, are on trial for endangering the health of athletes they performed blood transfusions on with the goal of boosting their performance as doping in Spain was not illegal before 2006. The Operation Puerto blood doping trial involves defendants, including Fuentes and his sister, Manolo Saiz, former ONCE and [Liberty Seguros](#) team sports director, Vicente Belda and Ignacio Labarta, both of whom were associated with the former Kelme team. Fuentes and the other defendants did not follow health regulations by carrying out blood transfusions under improper conditions, argued lawyer Lucia Pedrero and said we are not judging specific sport practices but judging if they carried out or incited acts that broke regulations on blood transfusions, thereby putting at risk the public health. He added that it is not necessary to show that harm was done, it is enough to prove the mere creation of the risk. The doctor however denies the charges, saying his procedures were safe.

Meanwhile, the lawyer for the International Cycling Union asked the judge to hand out harsh punishments to set an example. Pablo Jimenez de Parga told judge Julia Santamaria we are before the largest trial against a doping ring in sport, not just in Spain, but possibly in the world and the moment has arrived for the entire world to know Spain's answer to this kind of behavior.

The trial is set to end on April 2 and the defendants stand to lose their professional licenses and face two years in jail.