

## **Blood Bags To Be Destroyed In Doping Case**

The destruction of more than 200 blood bags seized in a raid of a major European doping ring that catered to elite athletes was ordered by a Spanish judge.

The decision by the judge in the trial of Eufemiano Fuentes is a huge setback for anti-doping agencies that have been trying hard to uncover possibly one of the [biggest doping scandals in history](#).

In her ruling, Judge Julia Patricia Santamaria said the bags of blood, plasma and red blood cells, along with accompanying evidence that were gathered in a 2006 raid of the office of Dr. Eufemiano Fuentes could not be released to anti-doping authorities because of the privacy laws of Spain.

Anti-doping agencies and sports federations, including the World Anti-Doping Agency and Spain's anti-doping agency (AEA) were making efforts to get the blood bags so they could try to identify athletes who had been Fuentes's clients and pursue doping cases against them. Till now, only cyclists have been identified as working with Fuentes in the doping case called Operation Puerto though the disgraced doctor himself testified that his clients also included athletes in tennis, soccer, boxing, and track and field.

Dick Pound, the former chief of the World Anti-Doping Agency, remarked the decision of the judge to keep the evidence from anti-doping authorities "seriously undermines the credibility of sport" and went on to add that Spain risks becoming a haven for dopers, unless it takes a harder line regarding athletes who use drugs to cheat. Pound added that this performance with the Fuentes case is typical of what we've seen with Spain and we have been asking them for years about the evidence but there was no cooperation at all from them and the courts were almost vigorous in making sure that none of the information saw the light of day. He added that this verdict could very well hurt Madrid's bid for the [2020 Olympics](#).

Fuentes was recently convicted of endangering public health for his role in doping athletes by helping them transfuse their own blood and supplying them with performance enhancing drugs. A one-year suspended sentence and a ban of four years was imposed on Fuentes from practicing medicine and fined \$6,000 though he was not charged with breaking doping laws because, at the outset of the case, doping was not illegal in Spain.

Ana Munoz, the head of Spain's anti-doping agency, said the agency was likely to appeal against decision of the judge to withhold the evidence. Munoz added that we don't consider this the end of the process and will now use all resources at our disposal to investigate further.

In a statement, WADA said access to this evidence motivated WADA's involvement in this case and Wada is currently fully reviewing the decision and any possible appeal or other action with its Spanish legal advisors, and the Spanish National Anti-Doping Organization (AEA).

UK Anti-Doping chief executive Andy Parkinson also expressed his sadness with the verdict and said it is massively disappointing because everything WADA has been about for the last few years is sharing information and making sure the global fight is fought at global level and what we've got here is a bunch of information that may or may not implicate people and we can't get our hands on it and that's really disappointing for clean athletes.