

Doping Cover-Up Denied By IAAF

The [International Association of Athletics Federations](#) (IAAF), the international governing body for the sport of athletics, such as running, jumping, and throwing, has vehemently denied any cover-up of the use of performance enhancing drugs by Italian 50km race walker Alex Schwazer.

The New York Times recently alleged that officials of the IAAF “had evidence” against Schwazer but made no effort to prevent him from competing in last summer’s Olympic Games in London. The leading newspaper added the revelation had stemmed from an investigation being conducted by prosecutors in Bolzano, Italy, into Dr Giuseppe Fischetto, the medical director for the Italian track and field federation and a member of the international track organization’s Anti-Doping Commission.

The report claimed that IAAF authorities had obtained e-mail messages indicating that as early as April 2012, officials for track and field’s world governing body, known as the IAAF, were aware of abnormal doping test results for the racewalker Alex Schwazer, who won gold at the 2008 Beijing Games. It was further revealed that Thomas Capdevielle, the medical and anti-doping manager of the I.A.A.F., sent Fischetto the results of an out-of-competition blood test conducted on Schwazer and emphasized that the values recorded in Schwazer’s blood were high and the email conversations disclosed that Fischetto restated his belief that Schwazer was using illegal performance enhancing drugs.

It was further disclosed in the newspaper that Italy’s paramilitary police force, the Carabinieri, recently searched the home and office of Fischetto, as well as those of two other officials of the Italian track and field federation in Rome and they are accused of covering up the doping practices of Schwazer. The prosecutors, in their search warrant, accused Fischetto of complicit behavior that consisted in not activating any anti-doping control against the athlete, in fact allowing him to take illegal performance enhancing substances. The office of the Bolzano chief prosecutor, Guido Rispoli, said in a search warrant request this circumstance can only be explained by the desire to ‘preserve’ a national track and field star for the 2012 London Olympic Games, in the expectation that he would perform well for Italy both in the 20 and the 50 km walk race.

In response to the allegations, the IAAF said in a statement that it is aware of and shocked by the accusations made against it in the *New York Times* concerning the ongoing investigation in Italy regarding the case of the sanctioned Italian race walker [Alex Schwazer](#) and the world athletics’ governing body categorically refutes these claims in the strongest possible terms. The statement added that the case outlined involved abnormal blood results with respect to an Athletes Biological Passport and was handled in strict accordance with IAAF rules and those of WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency).

While training for the London Olympics, Schwazer eventually failed a doping test conducted by WADA and the Italian anti-doping court banned him for three and a half years for testing positive for the blood booster EPO (erythropoietin). Schwazer was removed from the Italian team before he had the chance to defend his Olympic 50km title. The racewalker later admitted to using the blood-boosting hormone EPO during a televised news conference.