

EWF President Attacks IWF Leadership After IOC Warning

Antonio Urso, the President of the [European Weightlifting Federation](#) (EWF), has criticized those in charge of the sport after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) gave a December deadline to address "massive" doping problems.

The IOC's Executive Board in Lausanne last Friday cut a total of 64 [weightlifting](#) quotas from the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. A men's weight category, which still has to be decided, will also have to be removed following the recommendation by executive board of the IOC. In the last few months, a total of 49 weightlifters have been caught for [doping](#) in the retesting of samples from the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Games in Beijing and London, respectively.

The IWF is likely to be omitted from the sports program for the 2024 Olympic Games if it fails to satisfy the IOC that improvements have been made by the December deadline.

Urso, who stood unsuccessfully to replace Tamás Aján as the President of IWF at an Electoral Congress in Bangkok late last month, criticized the way the sport of weightlifting has been operated in recent years.

Urso wrote in a letter, published on the EWF website, in which he said the IOC has presented the IWF with a bill, in a timely, surgical and drastic manner, but it will be the entire weightlifting world who will suffer the consequences, not just Aján and those who re-elected him. Urso also commented that a tough, drastic response and there is no going back and also said a curious follow up to the election of a person who has always boasted that weightlifting is in a strong position and not in any danger.

The President of the European Weightlifting Federation also said it is definitely the worst start for a new four-year Olympic cycle, regardless of who is at the helm of the International Federation. Urso also said there is however no need for dissection or sarcasm, nor for exceptional political skills to observe that this is by no means great acknowledgement for the work done, apparently not so impeccably, in terms of development in favor of this sport, by the re-elected President.

The EWF President also said he must admit that this news from the IOC has left me utterly saddened, because if certain people had been a little more farsighted and a lot less thirsty for power, today we would be talking about something different. Urso also remarked this sport obviously needs to be completely reset in order to start over again with new rules and, more importantly, new people.

In a conciliatory statement, the IWF promised that a "high level task force" will recommend the different measures and initiatives to accomplish the due goals. The statement reads the Olympic Movement and weightlifting was indeed shocked by the result of the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Games reanalysis and we recognize our responsibility as governing body of the Olympic sport of weightlifting. The statement also reads that the Executive Board is this time again ready to adopt immediate actions and sanctions stating that the IWF has always been fighting with determination against doping and those willing to affect the integrity of weightlifting sport. It was further said that the IWF, recognizing that there is always way for

improvement, aims to strengthen the collaboration between the IOC, NOCs, and Member Federations that is vital for an effective common fight and prevent such situations.