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All UEFA EURO 2008™ doping tests prove negative

Total of 286 out-of-competition and in-tournament tests conducted

UEFA has taken an important step in the fight against doping by introducing systematic blood controls, in addition to urine doping controls, during UEFA EURO 2008™. In the testing programme, a total of 286 urine and blood tests were conducted by UEFA doping control officers, and the good news for football is that all of the tests proved to be negative

Before the start of the final tournament in Austria and Switzerland, and during the weeks of preparation, all 16 teams were tested, totally unannounced. Ten players per team were drawn, which meant that a total of 160 players were tested out-of-competition. The WADA-accredited laboratory of Seibersdorf near Vienna then analysed all samples (both blood and urine samples) and all the results proved negative.

Then, during the final tournament, players were selected at all 31 matches and tested. Two players per team were randomly drawn to undergo the doping control and, in addition, some players were target tested. The WADA-accredited laboratory of Lausanne analysed all the samples (both blood and urine samples) and again all results were negative.

No sports federation has gone so far with detection methods such as the ones used at UEFA EURO 2008™. All the usual prohibited substances and methods were searched for in urine tests - stimulants, anabolic steroids, diuretics, corticosteroids and erythropoietin (EPO). In addition, IRMS (isotope ratio mass spectrometry) was conducted on all samples collected in-competition, which is a method that allows testers to identify whether a substance found is endogenous (produced by the body naturally) or exogenous (not capable of being produced by the body naturally).

Thanks also to the actual detection methods used for the blood testing, further prohibited substances and methods can be detected, such as blood transfusions, artificial haemoglobin (HBOC), and human growth hormone (hGH). The current method for detecting human growth hormone was accepted by WADA shortly before UEFA's out-of-competition programme began, and was therefore something of a 'world premiere' for UEFA. All results will be communicated to WADA in preparation for the Olympic Games of Beijing, where this method will also be used.

Dr Michel D'Hooghe, Chairman of the UEFA Medical Committee, said after his visit to the WADA-accredited laboratory in Lausanne: "I was impressed, not only by the high-class equipment the laboratory uses, but also by the impressive range of examinations they can do in a short period of time. Everything is done in 24 hours (...) The work done here is world-class."

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