

FIFPro: 'Italians have outrageous doping penalty'

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'Scandalous' was the reaction of FIFPro lawyer Wil van Megen to the intention of the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) to impose a fine of €100,000 on any athletes found guilty of doping during the coming Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

'It is an outrageous measure', says Van Megen. 'The powerlessness of the athlete is once again confirmed by this decision. A sportsperson is condemned irrespective of how a substance entered his or her body, you can even be found positive by turning up late for a test. As a result of this principle of strict liability, a sportsperson is denied an honest process and this measure by CONI only makes things

worse.'



The measure which was announced by CONI on Tuesday is unique in the sporting world. The Italian committee is making all its 109 participants sign a contract in which they promise to abstain from the use of performance-enhancing substances.

'Whoever doesn't sign will not be going to Vancouver', declared CONI chairman Giovanni Petrucci emphatically. He explained that the amount of the fine is intended to serve as a deterrent. 'We have taken this measure in order to show how serious we believe the battle against doping to be.'

Should an Italian competitor be found guilty of doping during the games in Vancouver, he or she cannot only expect a hefty fine; such athletes also risk a suspension.