

2004 Annual report from Euro Meetings Board.

Friends,

Another exciting year has passed, again the sport of Track & Field athletics has provided many highlights & grabbed media attention (perhaps sometimes for the wrong reasons). The Olympic Games always provides our meetings with extra focus and so it was again this year, we saw many World Records as the athletes tried to prepare for the best possible level of achievement for Athens.

Of course, the doping issue was to dominate much of the news. We must continue to be very strong on this scourge within the sport and take every opportunity to eradicate this culture. We, as meet directors cannot do this alone, we are only pieces in the jigsaw that makes up the season. It is therefore essential that we demand from our National Federations and our leaders at the Federations and IAAF more affirmative action against transgressors and Federations which are reluctant to pursue and prosecute drug cheats.

The IAAF can change rules and regulations, quickly if required (we have seen this on the field of play where new circumstances have been adopted for starting, pole vaulting etc. Rules which are leading to a supposedly better competition). Well in regards to doping control, the IAAF needs to take some very large steps forward to show an absolute "no compromise" attitude to doping control... a situation that needs to be rectified immediately.

Over the years, many of us have been caught in situations where we have issued prize-money to a doped athlete. Despite rumblings for many years, we have yet to solidify an approach to deal with this circumstances. The facts are that someone has to take responsibility.... The managers/Federations/the IAAF. We must work together to establish a contingency plan that safeguards our meetings and their integrity.

We are desperate for new stars and heroes following Athens, we may have found some! But they need more exposure and publicity if they are to assist in the promotion of the sport at our level. (we are looking for household names !)
The WAF in Monaco a unfortunate fact..... how many of the Olympic Gold Medalist from Athens competed in Monte Carlo ?

It is noticeable that athletes who supported our season, had difficulty qualifying for WAF, yet competitors who stayed in areas not within our scope (IAAF Indoor& Cross Country Championships/Road Racing/Olympic Games etc) had little trouble securing a place in the final. Is this system totally fair ? It does not support the athletes that support us during the season, so we think that this has to be changed if IAAF is going on with the WAF in the future.

Similarly we as European meets need the support of the IAAF to ensure that quality athletes are engaged in our meetings, rather than just show up at major events and a smattering of meets that reflect their management rather than a conscious attempt to assist meetings and promote the circuit.

It is now time (more than ever) to look to the future and how we can improve in this ever more competitive market. At the same time it would be nice to be able to share in the IAAF's vision of the future for competitions. Since involving itself in the seasons through meeting classifications, GP, GL and WAF, the IAAF has shown considerable determination to develop this area of our sport.

Now with lucrative contracts expiring they too must look to the future, it would be appropriate if together a strategy could be developed that can see us both flourish in the coming seasons.

There is always a challenge for us, we have a whole new list of Olympic Champions to work with but we will need all our resources to survive in this turbulent world.

In closing this report, we the board, will congratulate everyone of you with the excellent work you do for our sport, we have this year seen more fans coming to our meets than for many years and that make us believe in our sport.

Thank you to all of you and good luck for 2005.

October 10th 2004

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