



PRESS RELEASE

CYCLING

THE COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT DISMISSES THE APPEAL OF ALEJANDRO VALVERDE AND CONFIRMS THE TWO YEAR BAN IMPOSED BY CONI

Lausanne, 16 March 2010 – The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has dismissed the appeal filed by the Spanish cyclist Alejandro Valverde against the decision of the National Olympic Committee of Italy (CONI) suspending him for two years from all sports events organized on Italian soil. As a consequence, the suspension remains in force until 10 May 2011.

On 11 May 2009, the CONI Anti-Doping Tribunal suspended Alejandro Valverde for a period of two years from all sports events organized in Italy. The CONI ordered the suspension based on evidence found by the Italian judicial authorities. In particular, it was established that a blood sample obtained from the athlete on 21 July 2008 at an anti-doping control organized by the CONI on the occasion of a stage of the Tour de France 2008 (in Chiusa di Pesio) contained the same DNA as the blood contained in a bag seized by the Spanish Guardia civil at the premises of Dr. Fuentes in proceedings known as "Operation Puerto". The Italian judicial authorities had, indeed, obtained, on 30 January 2009, a sample from this bag which, according to an analysis performed by the Barcelona laboratory in 2006, contained EPO. The CONI Anti-Doping Tribunal then stated that its anti-doping regulations had been breached on the grounds of the use of a banned substance as well as the attempted use of a prohibited method.

On 17 June 2009, Alejandro Valverde filed an appeal with the CAS in order to request the annulment of the CONI decision. The case was submitted to a Panel of CAS arbitrators composed of Mr Romano Subiotto QC, United Kingdom (President), Professor Ulrich Haas, Germany and Mr Ruggero Stincardini, Italy. A hearing took place in Lausanne on 12, 13 and 14 January 2010 during which the parties, their counsels, witnesses and experts were heard.

The CAS Panel considered that the CONI had jurisdiction to render the decision under appeal before the CAS and that the evidence analyzed by the judicial authorities and used in the CONI proceedings was not only admissible but also relevant and could reasonably lead to the outcome determined by the CONI Anti-Doping Tribunal. Finally, the CAS Panel ruled that the sanction was proportionate to the violation of the CONI regulations by Alejandro Valverde.

The full award with the grounds (in French) is published on the CAS website (www.tas-cas.org).

For further information related to the CAS activity and procedures in general, please contact Mr. Matthieu Reeb, CAS Secretary General. Château de Béthusy, Avenue de Beaumont 2, 1012 Lausanne, Switzerland. Tel: (41 21) 613 50 00; fax: (41 21) 613 50 01, or consult the CAS website: www.tas-cas.org