

**The Danish oarsmen who took part in the European Championships at Milan in 1950 were they drugged?**

We have no intention to interfere with the divided opinions published concerning the point of view of the Faculty, as regard to the dispositions taken by the Danish oarsmen's official doctor at the European Championships in Milan in 1950.

Anyhow on the basis of the enquiry held, as well as from the information obtained up to the present time we consider it highly important to give to all sportsmen an objective statement of the facts as they really happened.

The first point of capital importance for sportsmen in general and oarsmen in particular, consists in showing forth the exact procedure followed by the Danish Federation of rowing clubs in this affair and to define its responsibilities.

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In 1948, when the Danish oarsmen were chosen for the Olympic Games, the Danish Federation of rowing clubs applied to the doctors of the Danish Federation of Sports for the help of a competent practitioner. In acting in this way, the Danish Federation of rowing clubs meant to secure all possible guarantees to safeguard the health of the chosen oarsmen put to such severe tests. Thus Dr. Axel-F. Mathiesens, doctor of the Danish Federation, was made responsible for the physical condition and the health of the Danish oarsmen at the London Games in 1948. We must point out that Dr. Axel Mathiesens was not only the adviser of the Danish oarsmen but was also the official medical sportive supervisor of all Danish athletes taking part in the London Games of 1948.

The Danish Federation of rowing clubs followed the same line of conduct in 1950,

when the Danish oarsmen had as medical adviser Dr. Axel Mathiesens, himself a former oarsman and practitioner of thirty years standing.

It seems therefore that the Danish Federation of rowing clubs had taken all necessary precautions in order to give the utmost guarantee to its oarsmen. From then on it held no longer any responsibility, which now lay entirely in the hands of the official doctor: neither could it intervene in any of the measures taken by the latter.

The preceding clearly shows that there can be no question about the responsibility of the Danish Federation of rowing clubs and that, in this particular matter, it had taken all the necessary steps to protect its oarsmen against any surprise with regards to their health and physical fitness.

We are now coming to the second point which is far more subtle. It concerns the divergent opinions of certain members of the Faculty about the food question or rather as to the additional food which might be prescribed by a medical sport adviser.

As laymen we shall not take the liberty of adopting a position in this matter but we protest formally here and now that the administration of glucose vitamins etc., or the application of ultra-violet rays should be considered as « doping ».

The Danish doctor Dr. Ove Boje who started this most unfortunate press campaign against the Danish Federation of rowing clubs holds the opinion that the taking of these nutritious foods and the application of ultra-violet rays must be considered as « doping ».

Furthermore, certain journalists went as far as to accuse the Danish oarsmen of having taken poison in order to be able to win the European Championships of 1950. Luckily, on the whole, the press viewed this delicate matter with prudence and objectivity, but a few journalists, certainly a minority, have taken advantage of the situation and garbled the facts when maintaining that the Danish oarsmen had actually collapsed and fainted at the close of the races.

M. O. Heller, went as far as to claim that if it can be proved that the doping has actually occurred the F. I. S. A. should compel the Danish oarsmen to hand back the medals that they won in Milan. It is against such erroneous assertions, that we do protest with the utmost energy, for they fail to comply with the actual facts.

Our Enquiry revealed that the responsible men of the Federation of the Danish oarsmen have been of good faith, on the whole line, have acted with perfect integrity, correctness and sense of fair play. It is now within the power and up to the members of the Faculty to decide if Dr. Axel-F. Mathiesens has exceeded his powers and to settle if the fact of having prescribed to the Danish oarsmen a daily dose of three tablets of Androstin during twelve days can be considered as « doping ».

This latter question must be settled by the Medical Faculty and it is the Association of the Danish doctors who have been entrusted with the task to settle the dispute once for all. The Danish Sports Federation will not fail to submit the detailed and final report which shall be published as soon as the Association of doctors will have made their decision known. To conclude the Danish Federation of rowing clubs and their oarsmen are exonerated and we have but to wait for the verdict of the Faculty regarding the divergence of opinion of certain doctors.

The Executive Council of the  
*Fédération internationale des sociétés d'aviron:*

The Chairman:	The Secretary:
<i>Gaston Mullegg.</i>	<i>Henry Montandon.</i>

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