

Waging War against Dope

One of the plagues of modern times is the disastrous practice of doping which unfortunately has been adapted to sport. The use of drugs and artificial stimulants nowadays are the chief evils from which one must protect athletes. It is strange to observe that it is not the responsible directive bodies of sports who are intervening to put down this danger, but the police. Yes... the police!

We do not wish to cite the case of the unfortunate Danish cyclist during the last Games in Rome, the medical and legal sport on whose death was communicated only to the family, so that we shall never know the real cause of this death. Whereas had this report be known, it might have been of great assistance to the responsible leaders of the cycling world. Let us recall the Galatti scandal, which occurred during the last World championships, held in Switzerland, when the police raided the cloak-rooms of the Zurich velodrome. One must, however, grant the fact, that the International Cycling Federation seemed to have taken the matter in hand most seriously and are fighting against the practice of doping. Meanwhile, the Swiss cyclist Willy Trepp has just been suspended till March 1962, for having broken the rules concerning the use of drugs and artificial stimulants. Last November,

during the six days trial of Ghent (Belgium), a raid, in connection with the control of dopes, was carried out by the Belgian police (bravo), during which they laid hands on an impressive stock of pharmaceutical and medical products. Fortunately nothing was found except various products with only a relatively distant connection to what is defined as dope. Nevertheless, by products of sulphate of benzedrine were found, but in minimum quantities. This artificial stimulant for the nervous system was used extensively during the last war by pilots sent on active missions. Nevertheless, the habitual use of this drug is dangerous. Thus, the Ghent episode confined itself to generalities as far as doping is concerned.

As for the International Olympic Committee, it contacted the International medical sport therapy federation in Rome, and its president: Professor La Cava in particular, with the view of taking action against the practice of doping. The main point is to determine just what does and what does not constitute doping. This matter is now being examined. Let us save young athletes who are often in the hands of trainers with what might be termed somewhat elastic consciences.