

WADA chief: Protect integrity of sport (Video)

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Provided photo

As athletes become increasingly more sophisticated at cheating, David Howman believes science alone will not be able to stop them. The director general of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) laid out a series of challenges facing anti-doping in sport at a talk hosted by Western Law's Distinguished Speakers Committee on Jan. 18.

WADA is an international independent agency charged with leading a worldwide campaign for doping-free sport.

Although WADA has put in rules making it much harder to cheat, Howman noted major challenges remain. "WADA has invested more than \$50 million in scientific research," he said, "but science alone can not eradicate cheating or sometimes even detect it."

He cited the case of disgraced former Olympic star Marion Jones, who was tested more than 160 times and did not return one positive result. She would be forced to forfeit all medals dating back to 2000 after she admitting in 2007 that she took performance-enhancing drugs as far back as the 2000 Summer Olympics.

"It was only during the investigation process and the eventual charge of perjury against her, that she confessed most and went to prison," Howman said.

The sharing of evidence gathered in investigations should form "an integral part of any effective and efficient anti-doping program."

Howman pointed to Major League Baseball, which has made significant steps in this area with each team now having a full-time investigator.

Among other challenges to keeping sport clean Howman listed the increased involvement of the criminal underworld, trafficking, a growing black market for pharmaceutical products and increasing costs of anti-doping programs.

Howman also focused on the rise of player unions as significant hurdle. "Player unions have seemed to have adopted positions that might be seen to be protecting aspects of doping rather than protecting the clean athlete."

Howman called on governments to take on more responsibility and disbar lawyers and ban doctors who are part of the cheating athlete's entourage.

"We need to create a more level playing field," he said. "We have to avoid complacency and ask the public, 'Do we want sport to be valued based?' Keeping the integrity of sport WADA's overarching goal."

[David Howman - "Current Challenges and Issues for Anti-Doping"](#) from [Western Law](#) on [Vimeo](#).