

# THE AMA AND THE FIM

By Rob Dingman



In June of this year, AMA Supercross Championship promoter Feld Motorsports, Inc., notified the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme that it would not be renewing its international sanctioning agreement. This agreement, which made the series a world championship, had been in place for the last two decades and expired at the completion of the 2021 AMA Supercross season earlier this year.

As most loyal AMA Supercross fans are aware, the series had been dual sanctioned by both the AMA and the FIM since the 2003 season. This dual sanction made the series both the AMA's National Supercross Championship as well as an FIM world championship. Early in this relationship, each Championship within the series was governed by its respective rulebook, which across the board were not harmonized. On occasion, this resulted in the crowning of different champions within the same series, with an AMA National Supercross Champion being crowned by the AMA and a World Champion being crowned by the FIM. Needless to say, this created a great deal of confusion among the teams, sponsors and fans.

Early in my tenure as AMA President and CEO I insisted the series be governed by one rulebook. The AMA contract with the series promoter provided that the series would be governed by the AMA rulebook, but the AMA had allowed the FIM to impose its rules on the series. It was agreed that the FIM would be invited to provide input to the rules-making process, but the AMA would have final say over the rules and the series would be governed by the AMA rulebook.

The exception to this were rules that were specific to all FIM world championships, such as requirements for FIM licenses for certain officials and riders, and compliance with the FIM's anti-doping code. The FIM is bound through an affiliation with the International Olympic Committee to adhere to rules established by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

WADA'S penalties are based on the four-year cycle of the Olympics, and in my opinion aren't appropriate for motorcycle racing. Their one-size-fits-all approach does not take into consideration the relatively short career span of most motorcycle racers. This has been compounded by the FIM's well-documented mismanagement of their own anti-doping program under the previous FIM administration.

The AMA entered into a new agreement with Feld Motorsports, Inc., in July of 2019 to continue sanctioning the AMA Supercross series through the 2034 season. And since the AMA Supercross series had been governed by the AMA rulebook and had been operated by AMA officials even while dual sanctioned with the FIM, teams, sponsors and fans should see little difference in the series going forward.

One significant difference will be in the rules pertaining to anti-doping. We intend to work with the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) to develop a program that's more appropriate to the sport.

It is important to point out, however, that USADA is also affiliated with WADA, as is the AMA as a member federation of the FIM. It remains to be seen how much latitude we will have to improve the rules. Since, however, the program will be completely administered here in the U.S., that alone will address some of the major shortcomings of the FIM's anti-doping program.

The bottom line is this: The future is bright for AMA Supercross. Feld Motorsports is a terrific promoter and the relationship between Feld and the AMA is stronger than ever. Even though the series will no longer be designated as a world championship by the FIM, the AMA Supercross Championship is the world's premiere Supercross series, and will continue to attract the most talented Supercross riders in the world.

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*Rob Dingman, a Charter Life Member, is president and CEO of the AMA*

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