

# ENFORCEMENT IN CONTEXT

## *Anti-Doping And The FIM*

**F**requently, I use this space to keep AMA members informed about the things that occupy my time, and 2019 has been a busy and eventful year.

Although I have recently found myself saying it every year, this year's AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days had to have been the biggest ever. There were vehicles parked in places I have never seen vehicles parked before. Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course was bursting at the seams. With proceeds benefitting the American Motorcycle Heritage Foundation and the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame, I want to thank everyone who made this year's event so wildly successful, including all of you who attended, our sponsors and our AMA staff who work so hard throughout the year to make the event happen.

Something that has occupied an exorbitant amount of my time, has been helping three AMA Supercross riders navigate the anti-doping adjudication process of the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme. In February, I wrote in this column about some of the shortcomings of the FIM's anti-doping program and the efforts of new FIM President Jorge Viegas to fix them. Unfortunately, the three riders in question were already mired in the existing process, complete with these shortcomings. Navigating that process has proven to be challenging and quite frustrating.

The FIM is affiliated with the World Anti-Doping Agency and derives its authority to administer its anti-doping program from WADA. It must therefore comply with the anti-doping code and procedures established by WADA. WADA can and has appealed decisions by the FIM in the past for not being strict enough. This has paralyzed the FIM

and its process because it is afraid of the consequences of another appeal by WADA. This is not a good recipe for a successful anti-doping program.

Without exception, each of these riders acknowledges his mistakes. Each recognizes that there should be a penalty for not taking the proper precautions to ensure that any post-race test would not result in an "adverse analytical finding"—WADA-speak for a bad test. The process itself, however, should not feel like part of the punishment. As an FIM Board member, I am probably out on a limb criticizing the FIM's process, but I intend to continue to work with President Viegas to bring about the changes necessary to improve it.

I have read a number of comments online questioning why the FIM is even involved in AMA Supercross and why the AMA doesn't just kick the FIM out of it. I will attempt to answer both questions. First, it is not up to the AMA whether or not AMA Supercross is sanctioned by the FIM and is therefore a World Championship series. This is the prerogative of the promoter, Feld Motor Sports.

This explanation is, however, a bit of an oversimplification as the AMA does share some responsibility for the situation as it exists today. At one point in the 1990s, the AMA decided to award the promotional rights to AMA Supercross to an entity that was not the then-current contracted promoter, Feld's predecessor organization, Clear Channel Motor Sports.

As the established Supercross series promoter at that time, Clear Channel planned to continue the series in direct competition with the AMA series and its new promoter. Clear Channel sought and received a sanction from the FIM for its series. The OEMs represented on the

AMA Board at the time decided that two competing series would be a disaster for them and used their influence with the promoter and the AMA to have the AMA once again sanction the series.

This description, too, is an oversimplification, as there was litigation involved, but the end result was that both the AMA and the FIM would sanction the series that is today promoted by Feld Entertainment. After a number of years with two championships conducted within one series—that had at times resulted in different champions—the series has now been unified and is today governed by one rulebook, the AMA rulebook. In light of the series status as a World Championship however, certain FIM rules that apply to world championships, such as the Anti-Doping Code, are enforced.

The dual sanctioning of the series has not been without complications, but for the most part we have been able to make it work. The AMA has long questioned the appropriateness of a World Championship series that takes place entirely within one country (with the exception of an occasional round in Canada). Worse, however, would be if the series weren't united and there were two competing ones. This would be a disaster for the sport. Also, with an FIM sanction, Feld Motor Sports has the ability to bring the series to international destinations.

The AMA's continued involvement in Supercross is important to the legitimacy, status and continuity of the championship. I'm happy to report that in July I completed another project I've been working on for some time, and that's a long-term extension of the AMA's agreement with Feld Motor Sports. This agreement puts the AMA on more solid financial footing as the series sanctioning body and ensures that the AMA Supercross Championship will continue to be promoted by Feld Motor Sports well into the future.



**By Rob Dingman**

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