

VIKTOR TROICKI RESPONDS TO SUSPENSION ANNOUNCEMENT

Can you explain what actually happened?

It happened in Monte Carlo this spring. I was feeling awfully bad on April 15th before, during and after the 1st round match against Jarkko Nieminen. I was selected for urine and blood test after the match and went to the doping control station after showering and stretching. I gave the urine samples and told the doctor I was feeling really bad and I believed that drawing blood would make me feel even worse. I always feel awful when I need to draw blood and that day I was scared I would end up in hospital.

The doctor in charge of the testing told me that I looked very pale and ill, and that I could skip the test if I wrote an explanation letter to ITF about it. She dictated the letter to me and let me go without giving blood. She was very helpful and understanding.

And what went wrong thereafter?

Now I am being charged for refusing to undergo a blood test without justification. This is a real nightmare.

I was 100% sure everything was ok, just like my coach Jack Reader who was in the doping control station room with me during at least half of the procedure.

Did you eventually have a blood test when you felt better?

Yes, I had a blood test from the same doping control officer the next morning.

Did you get the urine and blood test results back, and if you did what did they show?

Both negative, totally clean.

How often have you been tested in an out of competition?

I was tested 5 times for blood and many more times for Urine.

Have you ever missed a test before?

No, I never missed a test before.

Have you consulted with the ATP medical team to back you up?

No I haven't. The doping control officer doing the controls was a doctor herself. I asked her and she showed me all her diplomas. She checked me and told me I could skip the test and dictated me the explanation for it. After I left the doping control station I went straight to bed and slept all afternoon. I didn't see any reason to worry so I didn't look for any help.

What are your immediate thoughts, feelings?

I am destroyed and exhausted. The whole period I have been thinking only about this issue. And it is not over yet, so I can't really describe it. I am not even angry with the doctor. I believe that maybe she was told by her organization that she made a big mistake letting me go she backed up and tried to save her job.

Have you spoken to other players?

Yes, I spoke to my doubles partner Seppi and other players tonight. They are as shocked as me and they think it is ridiculous. It could have happened to anyone of them.

Will you be appealing?

Yes for sure. I put my trust in the Court of Arbitration of Sports in Lausanne, I really hope they will look for the truth and find it, which is only one.

The doping rules are pretty strict but do you feel there should be consideration for such situations?

The doping rules are strict and they must remain strict. But this was a clear mistake from the on-site doping control officer who was also a doctor, and the person in charge to decide. She let me go and reassured me. In my opinion once she found out that she didn't follow the procedures she turned her back on me.

Have you spoken to Novak and if so what has he said?

He said that he is sure it will end good because I am innocent, and that ATP should really back me up with this.

Is there anything else you would like to say?

I feel like I am being treated like a criminal and I have not committed anything at all. I have a fear of the needle and I always have troubles drawing blood. But I always did. I am clean and will always be clean throughout my career. I just had the wrong doctor who didn't tell me at all that I was risking anything. She showed me a letter of the ITF saying she is in charge of the decisions and I trusted her completely. I wish I had recorded the discussion, there would have never been a case if I did.

I am 100% sure that the court of arbitration in Lausanne will consider my good faith and my total innocence. But now, this enormous sanction makes me speechless. It feels like the world that I help building day by day has let me down. It is the worst feeling you can imagine.

What are you going to do now?

I really don't know. It is all fresh and I can't really believe it yet. I am a fighter and I will try to fight, together with my team and my lawyers, but I am quite destroyed now. I hope this nightmare will come to a good end, and I really want to continue playing. I don't deserve this.

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