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McLaren report shocks Athleten Deutschland

Berlin, 9th June 2021. The results of the recently published McLaren report on the wheelings and dealings of Tamás Aján, former president of the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF), have come as a shock to Athleten Deutschland. The report reveals that for decades Aján ruled an autocratic system that secured his power by buying votes and bullying opponents and included extensive doping cover-ups, corruption and alleged money laundering.

Jürgen Spieß, athlete representative of the German Weightlifting Federation and member of Athleten Deutschland, is almost relieved despite the scandal: *"The investigations finally confirm by an independent source what has been an open secret in the weightlifting community. It is also clear that the results probably reveal just the tip of the iceberg. I now expect comprehensive investigations from all countries and one hundred percent cooperation from the IWF."*

Spieß and Athleten Deutschland demand a comprehensive personnel and structural re-launch of the federation. *"We need to create opportunities for the next generation of weightlifting athletes. Instead of personal gain and preservation of power of single officials, athletes must finally be the focus of the federation and thus of any reform efforts."* For this purpose, an effective and democratic representation of athletes at eye level is necessary. A credible new start can only be achieved if the rebuilding of the federation is accompanied by an independent committee. Numerous IWF officials were noted for their lack of cooperation or obstruction of the investigations.

The IWF had initiated the investigations itself after the German public broadcaster ARD had brought Tamás Aján's practices to the attention of the public in the documentary film "The Lord of the Lifters". The fact that once again it took journalists to uncover a scandal and not organized sport itself causes deep concern to Athleten Deutschland.

Maximilian Klein, Representative for International Sports Policy and Organizing at Athletes Germany, says: *"The IOC never gets tired of emphasizing that 90 percent of its revenues flow back into sports and therefore a direct participation of athletes in the multi-billion-dollar revenues is not appropriate. The blatant case of the IWF is just one of many in international sport, where millions earned through the marketing of images and the hard work of athletes are misappropriated and are not benefiting the athletes as the last link in the chain. It is obvious that the auditing systems of the IOC are not effective. Otherwise, how is it possible that USD 23.2 million which the IOC paid to the IWF from 1992 to 2008 were not fully declared in the IWF balance sheets and some USD 10 million paid during the period under review are missing? The finances and money flows within the Olympic Movement must be fully investigated, traceable and transparent."*

About Athleten Deutschland e.V.:

Athleten Deutschland was founded in 2017 to give Germany's top-level athletes a real say for the first time in the sporting system. The association is committed to deep changes in the German and international sport system. Effective athletes' representation as well as athletes' development and protection are always at the heart of our activities.

Together with our members, we strive for world-class conditions that offer them the opportunity to develop their sporting and personal potential. We stand up for fair and clean sports, free of abuse and violence, manipulation and mismanagement. To fulfil our mission, we cooperate with various actors from public authorities and political stakeholders, business, science and civil society, as well as with likeminded partners in Europe and the world.

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