

Russian Athletics Coach Slams Doping Claims

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The head coach of the Russian national athletics team on Sunday denounced, claims that track and field in the country was rife with doping as unreliable.

With a month to go before Moscow hosts the world championships, the British newspaper The Mail on Sunday quoted Russian athletics figures who said competitors were forced to dope and also claimed that the head of the national drug test laboratory had faced criminal charges over allegedly distributing banned substances.

400-meter runner, Valentin Kruglyakov, then told local media that he had been stopped from going to last year's Olympics after refusing to pay \$1,500 to ensure a clean drug test.

"These are people who themselves do not have clean hands, who are themselves mixed up in doping cases," national team head coach Valentin Maslakov said, referring to the sources of the reports, and hinted at a conspiracy.

"I have a suspicion that behind them are certain people who are urging them into these actions."

The Russian Anti-Doping Agency and national laboratory are "independent structures," and there is no collusion between them and national team coaches, Maslakov added.

Maslakov specifically criticized coach Oleg Popov, who claimed in the British report that his former athlete Lada Chernova had been pressured to dope, as well as Kruglyakov.

"Popov is the coach of Chernova, who has twice been incriminated in taking banned substances," he said. "Kruglyakov was once suspected of these acts, then he was caught and disqualified at the Russian winter championships."

Javelin thrower Chernova was first banned for doping in 2008 and later had a second, lifetime ban overturned in court in February because of mistakes at the national laboratory in Moscow.

Kruglyakov achieved the qualifying time for London 2012 but was not selected following a positive doping test that was later overturned.

Earlier this year, Maslakov accused Kruglyakov of doping at the Russian winter championships.

The executive director of the Russian Anti-Doping Agency, Nikita Kamaev, said those making accusations against Russia's drug test regime had not provided sufficient proof of wrongdoing.

"Show facts, show your cards, gentlemen, and then we can judge it," he told R-Sport, and defended Grigory Rodchenko, head of the national drug test laboratory, who allegedly faced doping-related criminal charges in 2011.

"There are no problems whatsoever with our work with him," he said.

The world championships are the first major athletics competition in Russia since the 1980 Olympics and will run August 10 to 18.

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