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Russia Outruns Doping Scandal at European Athletics Championships

By The Moscow Times

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Winner Anzhelika Sidorova of Russia celebrates after the women's pole vault final during the European Indoor Championships in Prague on March 8, 2015.

Russian athletics, in the dock after recent allegations about widespread doping among their elite performers, was back on top of the medal table at the European Indoor Championships on Sunday.

In the first major international athletics event since the scandal emerged last year, Russia finished the three-day championships at the O2 Arena in Prague with six golds — twice as many as any other country —and two silvers.

France were the next best with three golds.

Russians topped the podium three times on Sunday, with Daniyil Tsyplakov winning the high jump with a 2.31-meter leap, Ilya Shkurenyov taking the heptathlon title with 6,353 points

and Yekaterina Koneva leaping 14.69 meters in the triple jump.

World indoor champion Koneva, who started out as a sprint and long jump specialist, came back from a two-year doping ban in 2009, having failed an in-competition doping test in 2007.

It was alleged in a German television documentary that Russia had been funding a comprehensive state-backed doping program for athletes that had been covered up at national and international level.

Last month, the International Association of Athletics Federations said Russian athletes involved in the scandal would face disciplinary proceedings. IAAF President Lamine Diack called it "a difficult crisis."

Among the highlights of the final day in Prague was Richard Kilty's triumph in the 60 meters. The British sprinter, whose victory in the world indoor championships last year was considered a major shock, felt he had proved a point as he comfortably dispatched his opposition to win in 6.51sec.

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