

Olympic Dreams for Russian Basketball in Jeopardy After Federation's Suspension

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The Russian Basketball Federation has been suspended by governing body FIBA, putting their participation in the 2016 Olympics in doubt.

The federation published a letter from FIBA on their website on Wednesday stating that the Russian federation had been immediately disqualified from competition.

This comes after years of instability at the federation, which culminated in a June court decision that forced the federation to hold new presidential elections.

The suspension, if still in place, will rule them out of the European Championship in September, which doubles as a qualifying competition for the Olympics.

"Russia's participation in the European Championship in the autumn and the 2016 Olympics is under a real threat," the honorary president of the federation Sergei Chernov told TASS.

"We all need to think together how to find a way out of this situation. This includes

the Russian Basketball Federation, the sports ministry, the Russian Olympic Committee. They all need to think," he added.

Yulia Anikeeva was elected the federation's president in Aug. 2013, but the results of the vote were later contested and a court told the federation to hold new elections.

These are due to take place on Aug. 25 and former NBA player Andrei Kirilenko is set to stand as a candidate.

FIBA said in their letter that interference in the running of the federation was behind their decision.

That claim was challenged by Russian Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko, who said they would be prepared to contest the suspension at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

"I will fly there myself to meet with them (FIBA) and take care of the situation. You can't deal with Russia like this," Mutko told TASS.

"We will go to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne. I don't see anything that could get in the way of this. Yes the situation is not very nice, but there is no interference.

"We live under the country's laws. If the court implements a ruling, we need to enforce it. I can't understand what the problem is."

The federation's general secretary Andrei Arkhangelsky said that the organization would have an opportunity to get the suspension reversed at a FIBA meeting in August.

"During FIBA's Central Commission's meeting in Tokyo from Aug. 8-9 we must try and find a way out of this situation. If this is approved by the federation, the disqualification will be rescinded," he said.

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