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Russia to Consider Criminal Penalties for Doping, Sports Minister Says

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Russia may introduce harsher penalties for doping, possibly making it a criminal offense, Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko said at a press conference, the RIA Novosti news agency reported.

"There are a number of measures we can take," Mutko was quoted as saying by RIA Novosti on Wednesday. "We can introduce new kinds of tests, moving away from quantitative indicators ... to the biological passport, which practically rules out manipulation."

"We want to take a serious look at toughening civil penalties, and perhaps even think about introducing criminal ones," he said, RIA Novosti reported.

According to Mutko, the ministry also plans to extend the responsibilities of sporting federations.

"They are independent organizations," he said. "It is always said that the state should not

meddle [in sport], but they [the sports federations] should take responsibility."

He also said that the results of previous Olympic games should not be revised based on the analysis of doping samples, the BBC's Russian service reported.

The Moscow Anti-Doping Center had its accreditation suspended by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) on Tuesday, after a WADA commission report accused its officials of intentionally destroying samples against the organization's express wishes.

The ban took immediate effect, prohibiting the lab from carrying out any WADA-related activities.

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