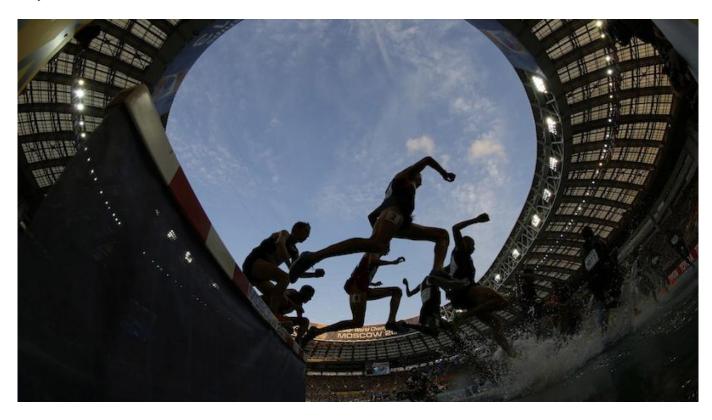


Russian Sport in the Dock But Others Will Not Escape Judgment

By Yevgeny Slyusarenko

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Matt Dunham / AP

The next⊠several days will make sports history. Russian athletics are facing⊠global accusations of the existence

of

a

state-sponsored

doping

system,

and

at

least

some

of

the charges appear grounded. The most outspoken opponents of doping recommend banning Russia from the upcoming Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, while international sports officials are trying to formulate

compromise.

For its part, the global sports community must make certain ethical decisions that, judging by the painful saga surrounding the revelation of widespread Russian doping, will not prove easy. Who should be held responsible for state-sponsored doping? Should the principle of collective responsibility be applied to world-class athletes, sepecially when participation in the Olympic Games is at stake? Should pole vaulters share responsibility with long-distance runners, and should the water polo team be punished now for those Olympians who substituted their urine samples two years ago? Should athletes who are only suspected of cheating be punished and barred from the Olympic Games, even without conclusive evidence of a crime?

One sentence from the IOC Executive Committee decision of July 19, 2016 best sums up the current dilemma: "It will explore the legal options with regard to a collective ban of all Russian athletes for the Olympic Games 2016 versus the right to individual justice."

Next, the ■Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne, Switzerland, must ■rule on a lawsuit filed by the Olympic Committee of Russia and the 68⊠athletes requesting permission to participate in the Rio games. Everyone, including the IOC, is eagerly awaiting that verdict.

journalist Hajo Seppelt titled "The Doping Secret: How⊠Russia Creates Champions" claiming the existence of asstate-sponsored system for doping and corruption in Russian track andfield sports.

To⊠investigate the allegations made by Seppelt, the World Anti-Doping⊠Agency (WADA) formed an Independent Commission. That body decided to suspend all Russian track and field athletes from international competitions for an indefinite period, including from the upcoming**⊠**Summer Olympics in Rio.

Russia⊠leveled serious criticisms against the report, noting in particular⊠what it considered a lack of facts and scanty evidence. Members of the Commission responded by saying that they had handed over specific **I** facts and names to Interpol for further action. However, nothing more was heard from Interpol on the subject.

The Commission recommended, among other things, the dismissal of Grigory Rodchenkov, who it implicated in fraudulent

schemes as

director

of

the

Moscow

Anti-Doping

Laboratory.

Rodchenkov

was

sacked.

That

obviously

came as a major blow to the 57-year-old professional who had worked in the laboratory for over 30 years. He moved to the United **States** in January 2016 and soon began

spilling the beans.

WADA⊠reacted immediately. It gave Canadian law professor Richard McLaren — ■who also participated in the Independent Commission for Track and ■Field — status as an "independent person" and a budget of \$1.2 ■million to investigate the charges, this time made by Rodchenkov.

McLaren⊠issued a 102-page report almost entirely based on Rodchenkov's⊠testimony and that, admittedly, looks very convincing.

The⊠investigation focused not on the particulars of Rodchenkov's claims — hardly mentioning, for example, the "cocktail" he created to ■help the athletes avoid detection — but on the essence of his ■story: Russian sport officials ran a system for substituting "dirty" ■doping samples for "clean" ones, and the state's intelligence ■agencies were directly

involved.

The IOC⊠has called these revelations "shocking," and WADA quickly⊠demanded the barring of all Russian athletes from the Summer Games in⊠Rio.

It seemed It se

Whatever⊠decision the IOC ultimately reaches, it will be both a difficult and⊠historic one. It will set a precedent, a new standard that the sports⊠bureaucracy will uphold in the future. More such cases are sure to⊠come.

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