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Russia to Challenge Paralympic Ban in Swiss Federal Court

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Russia is to challenge the blanket ban on its athletes competing at the upcoming Paralympic Games in the Swiss Federal court, Russian Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko announced Thursday.

Russia's Paralympic team lost its appeal against the ban in the Court for Arbitration in Sport (CAS) in Switzerland on Tuesday.

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) excluded all Russian athletes from the competition earlier this month after damning reports from the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) alleged that an extensive state-sponsored doping program was in operation across Russian sport.

In a statement to journalists, Mutko said that a hearing in the Swiss Federal court would determine whether individual Russian athletes could submit cases.

WADA alleges that 35 positive doping samples from Paralympians were covered up by Russia's sporting authorities, of which only 15 related to Russia's team, he said.

He also reiterated his belief that the ban was politically motivated and claimed the CAS ruling against Russia's Paralympic team was "not entirely based on legal principles."

"The decision is absolutely political. It's hard to believe an organization who should be working to develop Paralympic sport could make that decision," he said.

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