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Lifelong Doping Ban for Russian Racewalking Coach Viktor Chegin Upheld

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A Russian sports court has upheld the lifelong ban of former celebrity racewalking coach Viktor Chegin for encouraging dozens of athletes to violate doping regulations.

The Russian Court of Arbitration for Sport ruled on Aug. 19 that Chegin's lifelong suspension would remain in place, according to a statement published online by Russia's anti-doping agency (RUSADA) on Thursday.

"In the course of a 1.5-year investigation, RUSADA specialists have gathered a large amount of evidence confirming Chegin's

involvement in the violation of anti-doping rules at the Olympic Training Center of the Republic of Mordovia," the statement said.

Chegin, who enjoys celebrity status in Russia, has long been at the heart of a far-reaching doping scandal in Russian racewalking.Numerous athletes trained by him, including Olympic gold medalist Sergei Bakulin, have been caught using performance-enhancing drugs.

Chegin was suspended for his role in the doping scandal in February and top sports officials, including Russia's Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko, have repeatedly reassured the public that he is no longer working with athletes. A documentary by Germany's ARD television in June claimed that it had obtained evidence that Chegin was still active as a coach through facial recognition technology.

Russian track-and-field athletes have been banned from international competition since November following extensive allegations by the World Anti-Doping Association of state-sponsored doping.

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