The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
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Russian Paralympians Appeal Ban Individually

August 26, 2016



Six Russian athletes have appealed the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) to judge their entry to this year's Paralympic Games on a case-by-case basis, the RIA Novosti news website reported Friday.

The IPC placed a blanket ban on the entire Russian Paralympic squad from competing at the Games earlier this month after receiving reports of widespread state-sponsored doping across Russian sport. The Court for Arbitration in Sport (CAS) went on to uphold the ban in a ruling on Tuesday.

Cyclists Alexei Obydennov, Svetlana Moshkovich and Natalia Yanuto, track-and-field athletes Alexei Ashapatov and Margarita Goncharova, and swimmer Olesya Vladykina all sent letters to the IPC asking for their cases to be considered individually.

The athletes claim that they have been repeatedly tested for performance-enhancing drugs outside of the Russian system and have been found “clean.”

Their cases could mirror Russian long-jumper Darya Klishina, who was allowed to compete in this summer's Olympic Games after the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) banned the country's track-and-field team from taking part. The IAAF ruled that because Klishina trained and had been extensively tested in the United States, she had not been “tainted” by the Russian system.

The letters emphasized the need to punish cheats and the “real perpetrators of the dirty system,” Sputnik News reported. “I do not want to lose to cheaters and I don't want to compete with cheaters, even Russians," the athletes wrote, Sputnik reported. "However, I believe even more strongly that innocent people should not suffer for the actions of cheaters."

Russian Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko has announced that the Russian Paralympic Committee will be appealing the CAS ruling in the Swiss Federal Court.

The IPC's decision has caused widespread backlash across Russia, with officials calling the ban “cruel and inhumane.” Several prominent Russians, including Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, have called the ruling “politically motivated.”

“A number of states and their sporting establishments were looking for a traditional enemy, and they found one,” Medvedev wrote on Facebook Tuesday.

An investigation by the World Anti-Doping Association (WADA) found that 35 doping-test samples related to Paralympic sport in Russia had shown inconsistencies believed to be signs of cheating.

The Paralympic Games start Sept. 7 in Brazil's Rio de Janeiro.

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