

Russian Paralympic Team Barred From 2018 Winter Games Qualifiers

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Maxim Stulov / Vedomosti

Russia's Paralympic athletes have been barred from qualifying for the 2018 Winter Games in the South Korean city of Pyeongchang, the country's Paralympic Committee (RPC) has announced.

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) ruled on Sunday that Russia had not implemented reforms to stamp out alleged widespread doping among the country's athletes.

Russian Paralympians will not be allowed to compete in any of the qualification events leading up to the games, which are set begin on Feb. 9, 2018.

[In a statement on its website](#), the RPC insisted that Russia's Paralympians would continue to train for the games as normal.

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“The suspension of the RPC, which dates back to Aug. 7 2016, remains in place because the RPC has not yet met reinstatement criteria,” [the statement said](#).

“Should the RPC continue to co-operate fully with the IPC Taskforce and meet the reinstatement criteria in full before Pyeongchang 2018, then the IPC Governing Board will lift its suspension. In doing so it may then be possible for the RPC to enter athletes into qualification events.”

The RPC also stressed that the Russian government was not helping athletes to take performance-enhancing drugs.

“[The] fundamental position of the RPC [is that there should be] no doping in sport. Certain individuals guilty of anti-doping rules violation must suffer a severe penalty, there has never been and there is no state-sponsored doping scheme in Russia [sic].”

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Russia’s Paralympians were also barred from the 2016 Summer Olympics in Brazil’s Rio de Janeiro. The decision was taken after a report from the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) accused the Kremlin of carrying out an elaborate scheme to cover-up athletes’ use of performance enhancing drugs.

In the report, written by Canadian lawyer Richard McLaren, more than a thousand Russian athletes across 30 sports were connected with the use of performance-enhancing drugs or the concealment of positive urine samples.

Investigators found evidence that 12 Russian athletes who won medals at the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi had substituted their drug test samples.

The Kremlin has denied the claims, which it says are “politically-motivated.”

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