

# Three Russian Athletes Cleared to Compete Independent of Banned National Team

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**The  Moscow Times**

Breaking with a general disqualification of Russian track athletes, the international governing body for track and field has allowed three Russian athletes to participate in international competitions.

The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) will permit Anzhelika Sidorova, Kristina Sivkova, and Alexei Sokirsky to compete under a neutral flag, the RIA news agency [reported](#).

Allowing Russian athletes to compete independently "speaks to our desire to support the hopes and aspirations of all clean athletes, including clean Russian athletes who have become hostages of their national system," IAAF President Sebastian Coe said.

Russian track and field athletes were prohibited from competing in the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Brazil after the All-Russia Athletic Federation was disqualified from international competitions over allegations of doping. Only long jumper Daria Klishina succeeded in appealing the ban and received permission to compete.

However, the IAAF allowed Russian athletes to apply to compete as independent athletes. Out of 48 such applications from Russians, the federation has approved 28.

While IAAF approval removes the major formal barrier to competing, the federation noted that the athletes' ability to participate in international tournaments will depend on the specific rules of those competitions.

In December, an independent investigation by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) [revealed](#) that more than a thousand Russian athletes spanning 30 different sports used performance-enhancing drugs or were involved in the concealment of positive urine samples.

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

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