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Russian Athletes Told to Put Anthem Ringtone on Silent

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Lucy Nicholson / Reuters

Russian track-and-field athletes will have to cover up tattoos containing Russian symbolism and switch off their Russian anthem ringtones when they compete at the World Athletics Championships in August, the TASS state news agency reported on Tuesday.

"The rules are extremely harsh. You're not allowed to have [Russian symbols on] uniforms, bags, makeup, hair bands, or bracelets," champion hurdler Sergei Shubenkov was cited as saying. "Even tattoos will be covered with scotch tape. An anthem as a ringtone is also not allowed."

The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) suspended the membership of the Russian Athletics Federation in November 2015 when the country's national team was accused of systematic doping.

But while the Russian athletics federation remains barred from the international body, 19

Russian athletes were cleared to compete in London at the biannual world championships in August under a neutral flag, provided they do not to display any signs that associate them with their home country.

“It sounds stupid, but it follows the logic of the International Association of Athletics Federations,” Shubenkov said. “According to them, Russia should not exist in international athletics.”

Russian Sports Minister Pavel Kolobkov has earlier said that Russia’s membership in the IAAF could be restored by the start of 2018. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) will hold a monitoring visit to Russian facilities in September, which is expected to influence the final decision.

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