

Russian Tycoon Alisher Usmanov Petitions to Allow Tricolor at 2018 Olympics

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Alisher Usmanov / Kremlin Press Service

Russian business magnate Alisher Usmanov has written an open letter to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) asking the sports body to reconsider sanctions on the Russian team ahead of the 2018 Winter Games.

The IOC on Tuesday ruled to ban the Russian Olympic team from participating in the Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, over allegations of doping.

Individual Russian athletes without a doping record will be allowed to participate in February, however, if they are vetted by an IOC panel. But they will compete under the Olympic flag and anthem.

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In a letter addressed to IOC President Thomas Bach, Usmanov, a close ally of President Vladimir Putin, argued the ruling contradicted the Olympic Charter by putting "clean Russian athletes in unequal conditions compared to athletes from other countries," the Interfax news agency [reported](#).

"Athletes dedicate their short life in sport for a single moment — to see the flag of their country in the sky and to hear the anthem of their homeland," Usmanov, who is also the head of the international fencing federation, said.

"Let's at least give Russian medal winners at the 2018 Olympics a chance to reach the peak of their sporting dreams and see the flag of their homeland in the Pyeongchang sky."

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