

Russian Biathletes Sue Doctor Who Alleged Widespread Doping

February 21, 2018



Bloomberg

(Bloomberg) — Three Russian biathletes sued the former head of the country's anti-doping lab for libel, calling him a criminal, liar and cheater who made up allegations of doping that destroyed their careers.

The three women won silver medals at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi that were eventually stripped after the lab director, Grigory Rodchenkov, alleged widespread doping by Russian athletes during those games. The complaint was filed Tuesday in New York State Supreme Court in Manhattan.

The New York Times reported earlier Tuesday that the suit is being backed by Russian billionaire and Brooklyn Nets owner Mikhail Prokhorov. In June 2016, the Times published a story based on interviews with Rodchenkov, who alleged that at least 15 Russian medalists in Sochi had used illegal steroids. The revelations led the International Olympic Committee to ban Russian athletes from this year's Winter Olympics.

Related article: [Moscow Upholds Drug Trafficking Charges Against Doping Whistleblower Rodchenkov](https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/02/21/russian-biathletes-sue-doctor-who-alleged-widespread-doping-a60580)

The three biathletes, Olga Zaytseva, Yana Romanova and Olga Vilukhina, said in their complaint that Rodchenkov has engaged in "systematic libel" that "began the process of destroying careers and reputations that had been decades in the making." They allege that Rodchenkov created a mixture of banned substances, sold clean drug tests to athletes and fabricated false test results against competing athletes for a fee.

"Rodchenkov's false allegations ultimately warped history and stripped the athletes of the lifelong accomplishments they had earned," the three women said in their complaint. They are seeking \$30 million in damages.

Jim Walden, an attorney representing Rodchenkov, said it will be a "joy" to defend the case and that he looks forward to a U.S. court upholding his client's credibility and forcing Russia to give up evidence of cheating.

"I also cannot wait to seek disclosure of all the individuals and entities footing the bill for this frolic and detour," Walden said.

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