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Russia Should Be Suspended Until Tests Completed, U.S. Doping Chief Says

By Reuters

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USADA chief Travis Tygart (Stephen McCarthy / Collision / Sportsfile / Flickr)

Russia should be declared non-compliant until testing is completed even if they do hand over doping data after missing WADA's hard deadline, the head of the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) said on Thursday.

After much stalling and feet dragging Russian authorities finally on Wednesday allowed a World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) inspection team into a tainted Moscow laboratory to retrieve data it had earlier been denied.

Access to the lab and data before a Dec. 31 deadline had been a condition of WADA's September decision to reinstate the Russian Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA).

A five-member inspection team was sent home from Moscow last month without the extracted data after Russian authorities said the team's equipment was not certified under

Russian law.

Once WADA is in possession of the data Russian authorities must also ensure that any re-analysis of samples is completed by no later than June 30, 2019.

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"Until that is done and the actual urine samples contained in the Moscow laboratory are seized by WADA as agreed, WADA should declare the Russians non-compliant for missing the hard deadline of December 31," said USADA chief Travis Tygart said.

"And to be reinstated they should be at a minimum required to cooperate with the dozens of international sport federations which have the responsibility to prosecute the thousands of individual cases," he added in a statement.

Even if Russia does turn over all the required data, WADA will proceed with a meeting at its Montreal headquarters on Monday and Tuesday where the Compliance Review Committee (CRC) will hear from inspection team.

The CRC will then submit a report to the WADA executive committee recommending whether RUSADA has met its obligations and confirm its conditional compliance or be ruled non-compliant and face new sanctions.

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RUSADA was suspended in 2015 after a WADA-commissioned report outlined evidence of state-backed, systematic doping in Russian athletics, allegations Moscow has denied.

"Of course if accurate, it is a good thing that the signals emerging from WADA are that its group has been allowed into the Moscow laboratory to retrieve the evidence of Russia's massive state-sponsored doping scheme," said Tygart.

"We remain vigilant to ensure a full public disclosure and accounting that the evidence obtained on the approximately 9,000 presumptive positive drug tests which exists in the laboratory is authentic and valid and that justice is served for clean athletes in each and every case.

"It is in the clear public interest that WADA does this openly and transparently."

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