

IOC Issues First List of Russians and Belarusians Eligible for Olympics

By [AFP](#)

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Yuliya Efimova became the first Russian swimmer to be granted neutral status for the Paris Olympics.

[Yuliya Efimova's Instagram page](#)

A total of 14 Russian and 11 Belarusian athletes were included on Saturday by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on an initial list of "Individual Neutral Athletes" (AINs) eligible to compete in the Paris Games.

The athletes had to qualify for the Games and pass a double check, first by the international sports federations and then by the IOC, to prove they did not actively support the war in Ukraine or have any links with their countries' armies.

The athletes named on Saturday compete in four disciplines.

Sixteen are wrestlers. The IOC has also approved two weightlifters, three trampoline gymnasts and four road cyclists, including Aleksandr Vlasov, who was fourth in the 2021 Giro.

"Our cyclists passed the 'test'," Vyacheslav Ekimov, the President of the Russian Cycling Federation told Russia's state-run TASS news agency.

"The IOC allowed us to the Olympics, although I did not expect a different development. As for Vlasov, despite all his past statements, I think he will participate in the Olympics. And with great pleasure," Ekimov said.

The President of the Russian Trampoline Federation Nikolai Makarov told TASS he was not entirely happy.

"The fact that the IOC has decided to admit Angela Bladtseva to the Olympics is very good news," he said.

"But I don't understand why another one of our contenders for the only ticket — Yana Lebedeva — is not on the list. I hope that her name will be on the next list."

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Saturday's IOC statement also listed taekwondo, but that section included no names.

"It is absolutely true — none of our taekwondists will perform at the Olympic Games in Paris," Vadim Ivanov, Russia's taekwondo head coach told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

Ukraine's Sports Minister Matvii Bidnyi welcomed the absence of "outspoken propagandists" from the Games.

"The IOC listened to our evidence, which we, together with the National Olympic Committee of Ukraine and sports federations, submitted to the IOC," he said.

"We are very grateful for the help of investigative journalists and colleagues from the relevant government agencies in finding and verifying the evidence," Bidnyi added.

After initially banning the two countries' athletes from world sport following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the IOC adjusted their regulations to allow their participation under a neutral banner, subject to strict conditions and excluding team events.

Last March, the IOC said it was expecting 36 Russians and 22 Belarussians at the Paris Games "according to the most probable scenario," and a "maximum" of 55 and 28 respectively.

That would be far fewer than the 330 Russians and 104 Belarusians that took part in the last Games in Tokyo in 2021.

The IOC will update its list as the final qualifying results come in.

There will be no track and field athletes. World Athletics has banned all Russians and Belarusians.

Other sports have reinstated them so late that their presence is uncertain.

Meanwhile, Russian Tennis Federation chief Shamil Tarpishev told TASS that Andrei Rublev, Karen Khachanov and Liudmila Samsonova "will not play at the Olympics."

Opening ceremony

On Friday, Yuliya Efimova, who has three Olympic breaststroke medals, became the first Russian swimmer to be granted neutral status for the Games although she has not yet swum a qualifying time. She also said she did not yet have a visa to travel to France.

While Moscow has finally decided not to boycott the Paris Games, some athletes may opt to. Russia's gymnasts have said they will refuse to take part.

The neutral athletes will neither take part in the opening ceremony on the Seine nor appear in the official medal table.

In March, the IOC awarded them a dedicated flag, stamped with the letters "AIN" on an apple-green background, as well as a short composition without words, which will serve as their anthem if they win an Olympic title.

At the same time, the IOC set up the Individual Neutral Athlete Eligibility Review Panel (AINERP) to help decide which athletes to invite.

The expert panel "has been able to benefit from new information from various sources, in particular official lists of athletes affiliated to sports clubs of the armed and security forces, published on official websites in Russia and Belarus," said the IOC.

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