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Russian Cyclist Vlasov Turns Down Olympics Spot

By AFP

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Alexander Vlasov. **Massimo Paolone / LaPresse via ZUMA Press / TASS**

Russian cyclist Alexander Vlasov has turned down the chance to participate in the upcoming Olympic Games in Paris due to his "very busy calendar," a top Russian sporting official said on Thursday.

Vlasov, 28, was one of 14 Russian athletes approved by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) over the weekend to compete in the games under a neutral flag.

The IOC suspended Russia from the 2024 Games last year but gave the green light for its athletes to compete as neutrals as long as they did not actively support the Kremlin's war on Ukraine.

"The profile of the Paris track doesn't suit him," the head of the Russian Cycling Federation, Vyacheslav Ekimov, told the state-run TASS news agency. "And the athlete has a very busy

calendar."

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Vlasov won the 2022 Tour of Romandie and came fourth in the 2021 Giro d'Italia.

Fourteen Russians were included on the IOC's initial list of "Individual Neutral Athletes" eligible to compete in the Paris Games. More than half were wrestlers and the others were from trampoline gymnastics and road cycling.

The athletes had to qualify for the games and pass two checks — first by their international sports federations and then by the IOC — to prove they did not actively support the invasion of Ukraine or have any links with the Russian military.

The IOC will update its list as other sports complete their qualifying competitions.

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