

Skater Kamila Valieva Loses Neutral Status

By [AFP](#)

September 10, 2026



Figure skater Kamila Valieva. **Natalia Kolesnikova / AFP**

Russian figure skater Kamila Valieva, who returned to competition in January after a long doping ban, has once again been barred from competing in international events after losing her status as a neutral athlete, the International Skating Union (ISU) said Thursday.

Valieva, who was at the center of a doping scandal that rocked the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, is among 234 Russian and Belarusian athletes who applied for neutral athlete status, the sport's global governing body said in a statement.

Russian and Belarusian skaters were banned from international competition following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, although they were authorized to take part in events in the 2026/2027 season on the condition that they compete under a neutral flag.

To be granted this neutral status, athletes must meet three criteria: they must not be

members of the army or security services of Russia or Belarus, must not have taken part in the war waged in Ukraine, and must never have publicly supported the war against Ukraine.

Mark Kondratiuk, the 2022 European individual champion, also had his neutral status revoked.

The ISU said two other Russian skaters, Alexandra Stepanova and Ivan Bukin, do not meet the neutral status requirements. It did not specify which criteria Valieva had failed to meet, but the skater's social media pages contain posts supportive of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

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Russian Sports Minister Mikhail Degtyarev said Thursday that the four skaters will challenge the decision at the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne.

"The Figure Skating Federation of Russia and our skaters, who have been unfairly deprived of the right to compete in international events under the auspices of the International Skating Union, will soon file a claim against the ISU with the CAS," Degtyarev said.

Valieva returned to competition in January, four years after the Olympic doping scandal that led to her lengthy suspension. She was a 15-year-old prodigy and became the first skater in history to land a quadruple jump at the Olympics, winning gold in the team event.

However, it later emerged during the Beijing Games that she had tested positive for the banned heart medication trimetazidine following the Russian championships in December 2021. Valieva claimed it was the result of accidental contamination.

After multiple appeals, she was suspended for four years dating back to December 25, 2021.

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