

# New doping provocation against Russia prior to 2020 Olympics

Kevin Reed  
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The Executive Committee of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) issued a new provocation against Russia on Monday by ruling that its athletes will be banned from participating in international competition for four years because data about the country's anti-doping program was found to be "neither complete nor authentic."

A press release issued by WADA said the committee "unanimously endorsed the recommendation made by the independent Compliance Review Committee (CRC) that the Russian Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA) be declared non-compliant with the World Anti-Doping Code (Code) for a period of four years."

The CRC is a six-member subcommittee within the WADA set up in 2015 to monitor the compliance of each country's anti-doping organization with the 2015 Anti-Doping Code. The CRC submitted a 26-page report to the WADA executive committee on November 25 that outlined its evaluation of the RUSADA data and the ban proposal. The basic claim is that the RUSADA falsified athlete test results submitted to the WADA as part of a previous compliance agreement stemming from doping charges in 2018.

At a meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland, the 12-member WADA executive committee voted unanimously to approve the ban which "includes a series of strong consequences and conditions of reinstatement in accordance with the International Standard for Code Compliance by Signatories (ISCCS)." Among the consequences are that Russian athletes and sports officials will be banned from participating in the upcoming Summer Olympics in Tokyo in 2020, the 2022 World Cup and the Winter Olympics in Beijing in 2022.

The anti-Russia character of the WADA decision was

expressed directly by the president of the organization, Sir Craig Reedie, who said, "For too long, Russian doping has detracted from clean sport." As though the international epidemic of athletic doping is exclusively a Russian problem in an otherwise pure and honest environment, Reedie said, "Russia was afforded every opportunity to get its house in order and re-join the global anti-doping community for the good of its athletes and of the integrity of sport, but it chose instead to continue in its stance of deception and denial."

In response, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said the decision would be appealed and charged the WADA with "an endless anti-Russian series" of accusations and hiding other countries' violations "under the table."

It should be pointed out that, although the WADA stands for the "World" Anti-doping Agency, one of the only athletic associations in the world that continues to block doping oversight and testing by the global organization is the American National Football League located in New York City. The NFL has refused to allow blood-testing for human growth hormones (HGH) among players and contact with the WADA was at stalemate as of September 2013.

The WADA decision contains provisions that will permit Russian athletes to participate in competition once they prove they are "clean." However, these athletes will not be permitted to represent any country or flag and must participate as "neutral" competitors. The WADA rules also allow the RUSADA to dispute the decision within 21 days. If Russia appeals, the final decision will be placed in the hands of the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

The WADA decision to ban Russian athletes for four years is an extension of a non-stop campaign against

Russian participation in international sporting events going back to the organization's founding in 1999. This campaign has particularly intensified over the past four years with charges emerging in 2015 that banned Russia from track and field events in the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio and the entire team from the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea.

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The most vociferous promoter of the campaign to ban Russia from international sports competition is the *New York Times*. On the day of the WADA announcement, the *Times* encouraged and amplified the anti-Russian campaign over the fact that the committee was going to allow some athletes to compete.

Under a headline of "What the Russia Global Sports Ban Means, and What It Doesn't," the *Times* wrote, "So Russia's flag, name and anthem will not be allowed at the Tokyo Summer Games and other events, but athletes from Russia not implicated in doping can still compete."

The latest provocation by the IOC and WADA against Russia—abetted by anti-Russia mouthpieces of the US military-intelligence apparatus like the *New York Times*—must be viewed within its broader geopolitical context. Under conditions of an imminent impeachment by congressional Democrats of President Donald Trump for endangering the national interest vis a vis the "hot war" between Ukraine and Russia, the banning of Russian athletes is an overt political act.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* stated two years ago about the IOC's banning of Russia in the lead up to the 2018 Olympics, "The decision is a political provocation. It has much less to do with steroid use by Russian athletes than with US imperialism's aim to humiliate and isolate Russia.... The purpose of all of this is to project an image of Russia as the ultimate pariah state."



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