

Alex Schwazer Relieved By Doping Ban

Gold medal-winning race walker [@Alex Schwazer](#) gave a tear-filled press conference after he was kicked out of the London Games for blood doping. The defending Olympic gold-medal champion race walker said he was actually happy that he had been caught making use of illegal substances.

In an emotional press conference, Schwazer said it is not nice to lock yourself in the bathroom and inject EPO in the veins while the girlfriend is going for training. He added he was not made to use drugs or deceive people but enough is enough for him and he is actually elated that the whole thing has finally come to an end.

Schwazer's blood sample was taken just before the opening of the Olympics and tested positive for erythropoietin or EPO that can enhance oxygenation of the blood. After this, the race walker was suspended by the National Olympic Committee of Italy (CONI). The test indicated the presence of the prohibited substance recombinant erythropoietin (rhEPO); Schwazer was to compete on Saturday 11 August, at 09:00 in the Men's 50km Walk Race. After the initial sample tested positive, the walker requested for the analysis of the B sample that happened on 7 August 2012 at the WADA Accredited Laboratory in Cologne. On August 8, 2012 he admitted to buying EPO in Turkey for 1500 euros at a local pharmacy and said he last injected EPO on 29 July 2012 and accessed the internet for using EPO and how to buy it.

The [drug](#) has been a recent favorite with endurance athletes. The race walker said he only took EPO in the month leading up to the London Olympics. The drug was obtained in Antalya, Turkey and Schwazer stored the drug in the refrigerator he shares with his girlfriend, world-champion figure skater Carolina Kostner. Schwazer told Carolina that his EPO stores were actually vitamins for months.

The Italian race walker was the Olympic 50k walk champion but retired during the 2012 Olympics after testing positive for EPO. Born on December 26, 1984, Schwazer won the bronze medal in the 50 km race at the 2005 World Championships with a national record time of 3:41.54 hours. Alex Schwazer was the runner-up at the 2008 IAAF World Race Walking Cup and went on to win gold at the 50 km walk at the 2008 Summer Olympics after setting a new Olympic record with his time of 3:37:09. He won the Gran Premio Città di Lugano in an Italian record time and the Coppa Città di Sesto San Giovanni in 2010. In 2012, he walked an Italian record of 1:17:30 hours to win at the Memorial Mario Albisetti 20 km walk and won at the Dudinska patdesiatka.

The IOC suspension means that Schwazer shall have his Olympic identity and accreditation card immediately cancelled and withdrawn. Schwazer denied getting EPO from the Italian doctor, Michele Ferrari, who in 2002 was banned by the Italian Cycling Federation and also was a consulting physician for seven-time Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong. The IOC has opened an investigation and may test the samples of the 2008 gold medalist from Beijing though Schwazer said he was clean at that time.