

Tougher Anti-Doping Penalties Introduced By Marathon Majors

The organizers of the [World Marathon Majors](#) (WMM), the series that brings together six of the world's top races, said on Friday that stricter anti-doping penalties will be applied to elite athletes.

Elite athlete contracts have been collectively revised by Tokyo, Boston, London, Berlin, Chicago, and New York to include new provisions that include the right to suspend payment and demand repayments of prize money, appearance fees, and performance bonuses. WMM said in a statement, the sanctions will be triggered for any athlete "found in violation of a criminal offense involving drugs, anti-doping rules, or if for any other reason the athlete's result has been nullified by a relevant governing body."

The new provisions in WMM elite athlete contracts will include that the athlete acknowledges that his/her right to receive payment is conditional upon remaining fully compliant with all applicable anti-doping rules. Also, if the athlete is found - before, during or after the term of the agreement- to have committed a criminal offense involving drugs, or an anti-doping rule violation, or if for any other reason the athlete's result in the [marathon](#) is later nullified by a relevant governing body, then the marathon organizers will have the right to reduce or suspend payments due to the athlete, or to terminate the agreement with immediate effect and the right to repayment from athlete of all or part of the money paid to the athlete under the agreement.

The move was applauded by the women's world record holder Paula Radcliffe and she hopes all major events would follow suit. Radcliffe remarked the cheaters need to understand that they are not welcome in our sport and will be caught and made to pay and this announcement is a step forward in increasing the deterrent and showing athletes and managers that cheating won't be tolerated. She went on to add that having to pay back all money won while cheating is common sense and a logical element that has been missing for a long time and it is clear that any money won while cheating are tantamount to fraud and should be returned.

On Sunday, Tokyo is making its WMM debut with Kenyan Dennis Kimetto holding the fastest time in the men's field while compatriot Michael Kipyego is the defending champion. In 2006, the Marathon Majors series was founded with the men's and women's winners each receiving \$500,000 in prize money at the end of a two-year cycle. The World Marathon Majors said it has supported increased and more frequent out-of-competition drug tests in Kenya and Ethiopia, the two countries which provide a majority of top competitors. Any athlete found guilty of a doping offense will not be invited back to their races, all the six member marathons have agreed.

Last week, Kenya's three-times world 3,000 meters steeplechase champion Moses Kiptanui said doping was taking place in Kenyan running camps. In the past, allegations that athletes from Kenya were using drugs surfaced ahead of last year's London Olympics when German television broadcaster ARD reported systematic doping by elite athletes in the country who train at camps in the Rift Valley region.