Five 2005 World Medalists Caught

Five medal-winning athletes have been caught doping after samples from the 2005 World Championships were recently tested again.

One of the five was Belarusian shot putter Nadzeya Ostapchuk, who won gold in Helsinki and was stripped of her London Olympic gold medal for doping while the other two champions from 2005 were the hammer throwers Ivan Tsikhan of Belarus and Olga Kuzenkova of Russia. Long-jumper Tatyana Kotova, who won silver in 2005 and 2003 and Kotova also won gold at the 2002 European Championships, when GB’s Jade Johnson was fourth, is another caught. Vadim Devyatovskiy of Belarus who claimed silver in the men’s hammer, and countryman Andrei Mikhnevich, who did not win a medal in Helsinki but was world champion in 2003, were also caught.

Vladislav Piskunov of Ukraine who had finished 12th in the men’s Hammer Throw, and Neelam Jaswant Singh of India who was 9th in Group A of the women’s Discus Throw qualification, had already been sanctioned and disqualified for doping violations at the 2005 IAAF World Championships, Helsinki, Finland.

It is obvious that the substances involved in the doping cases will all merit sanctions in the serious doping category that includes anabolic steroids. This means that there would generally be an automatic ban of two years for first offenders and others with past doping history could face longer bans. Last year, the International Association of Athletics Federations retested samples taken in Helsinki and Nick Davies, deputy general secretary of the governing body, said the retesting had been carried out eight years after the event to capitalize on the latest equipment and technology. These samples had been transferred to the WADA-accredited laboratory in Lausanne, Switzerland following the World Championships for long-term storage in accordance with the IAAF retesting policy. Davies said we have an eight-year statute of limitations on anti-doping, so seven years past the event is really when you want to test, using the most up-to-date equipments. Athletes can be sanctioned for a violation up to eight years after they provide their urine or blood samples for a drug test under the World Anti-Doping Code.

About 100 samples were tested, from a range of events and nationalities, remarked Davies and explained that Russians were more likely to be tested than most nationalities due to the fact there were more of them in the IAAF testing pool. The deputy general secretary of the governing body remarked Russia is the second-most successful nation behind the United States and as a result we are testing more Russian athletes more often.
IAAF President Lamine Diack said the message of the International Association of Athletics Federations to cheaters is increasingly clear that, with constant advancements being made in doping detection, there is no place to hide and this re-testing is just the latest example of the IAAF’s firm resolve to expose cheating in our sport. The IAAF will continue to do everything in its power to ensure the credibility of competition, and where the rules have been broken, will systematically uncover the cheats. Diack says the findings confirm the sport’s commitment to rooting out those suspected of foul play.