

Olympic Medalist Faces Doping Allegations

Olympic silver medalist and shooting star Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore has found himself embroiled in a doping controversy regarding a "failed" test that was conducted before the Athens Games in 2004.

Rathore had tested positive for 'A' sample ([Prednisolone](#)) in the 2004 World Cup in Bangkok, but the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) cleared him after the double-trap ace returned negative for his 'B' sample.

The ace shooter was surprised to learn about the issue getting resurfaced after a gap of nine years and felt it was the handiwork of the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) whose April 6 elections were declared "null and void" by the Delhi High Court. The decision of the single judge was challenged by the NRAI; the judge had allowed the plea of Rathore that the election was a "sham and be quashed" as he was denied an opportunity to contest.

In a statement, Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore said the events of today are a clear attempt to defame me to divert attention from Hon HC decision of nullifying NRAI elections and added that to rake up a non-issue from 9 years earlier is vendetta and a last ditch attempt to protect the stranglehold over the NRAI. The 43-year-old Colonel also remarked that the highest officials of the ISSF were absolutely convinced in 2004 about my credibility and had cleared me and he is amazed at the resistance of a few NRAI officials to allow free and fair elections. Rathore added that these things won't stop like-minded athletes from trying to clean up Indian sports.

On the other hand, NRAI President Raninder Singh claims that Rathore's allegations were baseless said that the body was "with" Rathore in 2004 and continues to "support" him even now and added we were with him back in 2004 and we are with him now. Raninder rubbished the claims of Rathore that this was a ploy to "deviate" the attention ahead of the Delhi HC's ruling.

The NRAI had filed an appeal in the Delhi HC after the court declared the elections of the shooting body as null and void and the procedure adopted for electing four representatives as life members on March 4, and April 6 NRAI polls, had been challenged by Rathore. The court had said taking note of the Rathore's plea that denying him the right to contest elections was not justified, which prompted the NRAI to take legal discourse.

The Indian shooter won the silver medal in Men's Double Trap at the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens and is the first Indian (post independence) to win an individual silver, after Norman Pritchard, a British origin born in India, who won two silver medals at the 1900 Paris Olympics.

In another development, the [International Shooting Sports Federation](#) admitted there had been lapses on its part in handling the case a few days before the Athens Olympics in 2004. ISSF secretary general Franz Schreiber admitted to yet another lapse on the international governing body's part and said this was a time when anti-doping, and the many new Rules and Regulations related to it, was still in its infancy, the ISSF then realized that in order to better comply with the ISSF Rules and the WADA Code it was best to assert the violations, convene a hearing and sanction the athletes in accordance with the

Rules. He further added that the athletes had no significant fault in the matter as they showed how the substance entered their system and that they gained no performance enhancing effect from its use and that they never intended to cheat the system.