

Russian Biathlete Withdraws Over Doping Test

One of Russia's brightest medal hopes in the Sochi Games has pulled out of the event over a [positive doping test](#). Irina Starykh, the athlete, termed the positive result as a "*misunderstanding*" and withdrew herself from the event.

Irina remarked she will leave the team for "*an indefinite period*." Irina wrote in a letter posted on the Russian [biathlon program](#)'s website that she finds herself in a difficult situation and think it is necessary to inform about her decision to leave the team for an indefinite period of time. She added it would be unacceptable to be on the team until the end of the proceedings because of the test.

The 26-year-old said she has asked the RBU to exclude her from the team until the end of the investigation and to inform all the concerned organizations about her decision. The athlete has meanwhile asked for the B sample to be tested and said she is extremely sorry that this doping story is linked to her name. Starykh, the sixth-ranked woman in the world, won the sprint competition in the European championships last year.

Recently, the International Biathlon Union remarked that one Lithuanian and two Russian biathletes have tested positive for doping. A statement by the International Biathlon Union revealed that the IBU in accordance with the WADA code therefore provisionally suspended the respective athletes from any IBU competitions until the decision of the [anti-doping hearing panel](#) is reached. The IBU however didn't release the names of the athletes or say whether they were members of their countries' Olympic teams.

Till a few decades ago, Russia was the frontrunner in biathlon but its team had lost its luster in the last few years. Russia has been overpowered by Norwegians and Germans. The country was still considered by many as a serious competitor for many medals in the Sochi Games. The national and international sports officials have appreciated the efforts of Russian Biathlon Union (RBU) president Mikhail Prokhorov, who is also the owner of the NBA's Brooklyn Nets, to clean up the sport. Prokhorov has spent heavily for preparing the biathlon team of Russia for the Olympics. Prokhorov has publicly vowed to resign if Russia does not win at least two gold medals. Prokhorov remarked the RBU would issue a detailed comment on the case only after receiving the records about the case from the IBU. He added we have tested 10 times more samples than WADA (world anti-doping agency) did in these years and we have tested our athletes in and after every training camp as it's a question of principle for us (RBU).

Meanwhile, Anders Bessberg, the IBU president, has remarked he was very pleased with the detection system. He also expressed his satisfaction over the time and money spent on catching cheats and remarked it is clear proof that we are doing a very serious job here. Max Cobb, president of the U.S. Biathlon Association, said if top-ranked athletes are involved, then it really calls into question the whole program and makes you really wonder about the results of the whole team. Cobb went on to add that he thought that with the new leadership that this was getting cleaned up and said it is very disappointing to see this, if it's all what it appears to be.