

## **Doping Will Be Eliminated Soon, Claims Russian Athletics Chief**

Russia's Athletics Federation (VFLA) president Valentin Balakhnichev has remarked that doping will be eliminated from [Russian athletics](#) in the near future.

Balakhnichev said the VFLA takes around 4,000 [doping samples](#) every year and not one federation in the world has such a widespread anti-doping program. Recently, a German television documentary alleged that doping was widespread among Russian athletes. The VFLA chief added he will guarantee we will clean our hands of this dirt after carrying out a difficult process in the near future. He went on to remark that the Russia's Athletics Federation is not working to support doping but is fighting against it.

Balakhnichev also remarked that he would not take responsibility for banned Russian walkers taking part in official events. Recently, the world and Olympic 20km champion [Elena Lashmanova](#) competed in the Mordovian winter championships in Saransk though she is suspended until 2016 after failing a drugs test. Balakhnichev remarked two other sportsmen apart from Lashmanova also competed who had no right to do so -- Sergei Bakulin and Yekaterina Medvedeva and added we have sent all three an official letter and we are waiting for their responses as well as those of the organizers of the competition.

Lashmanova, a gold medal winner for the 20-kilometer race walk at the 2012 London Olympics, was banned for two years for testing positive for a banned substance in January 2014. She now faces a ban from next year's Olympics for doping after it was found that she competed illegally in a December 30 meet in Russia with 2012 world junior champion Ekaterina Medvedeva, another banned athlete. An official in the Russian program who was behind the event said the photos were actually taken in 2012, not this past December but the claims were refuted by a Canadian race walker who said the clothing worn in the photos was not available in 2012.

The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) is presently looking into the allegations. Balakhnichev remarked the IAAF has already got in touch with us and we must send them some official documents, including photographic evidence and added that we will comply with this request. Balakhnichev also remarked the competition in Saransk was not an official VFLA event and remarked this incident is connected with

separate sportsmen and not our federation. The VFLA chief also said he cannot run after everyone and make sure they are not breaking the rules.

In the last six years, twenty Russian walkers have been disqualified for doping offences and each of them trained at the Olympic Training Centre in Saransk under Coach Viktor Chegin.

Balakhnichev remarked the coaches have even more responsibility than the sportsmen. He further added they should be more actively making sure that the anti-doping controls from Russia's anti-doping agency RUSADA are being enforced and also said we should be concentrating our focus on particular individuals and not on particular sports. The VFLA chief also said the Lance Armstrong case saw the sportsman punished and not the American cycling federation.