

Russian Steeplechaser And Heptathlete Banned, Bans For Skiing Champions

The Russian anti-doping agency RUSADA has announced that steeplechaser [Yulia Zaripova](#) has been banned for two and a half years for doping offences.

The 28-year-old was suspended after her [biological passport](#) showed abnormalities and her results from June 20 to August 20 2011 and July 3-September 3 2012 have been annulled. Zaripova set a new personal best by winning the gold in the women's 3,000 meters steeplechase at the London Olympics in 2012.

Zaripova also won gold in the world championships in South Korea in 2011. Her Olympics result has been annulled and she could lose the gold medal though she is allowed to keep her gold of world championships. The suspension imposed on Zaripova was backdated from July 2013 that leaves her eligible to compete in next year's Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. If she is stripped of the gold medal, it could go to second-placed Habiba Ghribi of Tunisia.

RUSADA also announced that heptathlete Tatyana Chernova has also been banned for taking illegal substances. Tatyana, the double Olympic bronze medalist, had a sample from the 2009 world championships in Berlin retested in 2013 following a request by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF). She tested positive for the banned anabolic steroid [Oral Turinabol](#) and has been suspended for two years, starting from July 22 2013. Tatyana's results from August 2009 to August 2011 have been annulled but she is allowed to keep her gold medal at the 2011 world championships.

The Russian anti-doping agency also announced that a ban of three months has been imposed on Yuri Gavrilov, the cross-country skier, after he tested positive for a banned substance.

Gavrilov received the three-month ban backdated to September 23, 2014, by the Russian cross-country skiing federation. The ban imposed on Gavrilov is the third to emerge in the last few days after reigning national junior champion Nikita Mashkin and another skier, Arina Kalinina, received doping bans of two years each for unspecified breaches of anti-doping rules. Nikita, the 20-year-old reigning national junior cross-country skiing champion over 50 kilometers from Russia, and female youth skier Arina Kalinina, were banned for anti-doping violations.

Recently, three Olympic walking champions, Olga Kaniskina, Valery Borchin and Sergei Kirdyapkin, as well as 2011 world champion Sergei Bakulin and silver medalist Vladimir Kanaykin were suspended for doping offences.

Russia has been under clouds of doping suspicion after a German TV documentary revealed recorded statements of athletes including 800-meter gold medal winner Maria Savinova and bronze medalist Ekaterina Poistogova who admitted to taking banned substances. Investigations have been opened by the World Anti-Doping Agency and the IAAF into the accusations made by the German broadcaster ARD program that alleged Russian athletics bosses oversaw systematic doping and RUSADA officials covered up positive tests.

In a statement, Russia's Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko said the doping bans imposed on Chernova and Zaripova proved that the existing system of doping controls was working despite a series of scandals. Mutko said we are of course very upset with our top athletes' doping violations but added on the other hand it shows that the system of doping control in our country works well. The Sports Minister also remarked we work hard to protect the young generation of honest athletes, to show them that every doping offence will be sooner or later penalized.