

## Ashenden Hits Back At IAAF Presidential Candidate

Michael Ashenden, who was one of two anti-doping experts to be enlisted by the Sunday Times, has hit back at IAAF Presidential candidate Lord Sebastian Coe. Ashenden accused the world governing body of athletics in an open letter to Coe accusing the [International Association of Athletics Federations](#) of lacking the drive to clean up the sport.

Ashenden recently analysed leaked data belonging to the IAAF that included more than 12,000 blood tests from 5,000 athletes. The two scientists concluded that hundreds of athletes had recorded suspicious test results that were not followed up. The under-fire IAAF recently criticized Ashenden and fellow expert Robin Parisotto and Coe was particularly outspoken. The IAAF Vice-President, who is fighting against Sergey Bubka for the Presidential post, called the scientists "so-called scientists" and branded the allegations of widespread doping as a "declaration of war" on athletics.

In the open letter, Ashenden asked Coe whether the IAAF was pursuing its anti-doping mandate with the same single-minded, all-consuming dedication that athletes adopt in their pursuit of winning. Ashenden commented he does not believe that the IAAF has done a fair and commendable job after looking at the leaked database.

In December, Coe admitted that doping in sports as serious as those sparked by the Ben Johnson and BALCO doping scandals. The former London 2012 chairman had remarked then that allegations of systematic doping among Russian athletes had added to ghastly days for athletics. At this time, Coe had also remarked that he had no knowledge about a list of 150 athletes with suspicious blood test results referred to by ARD, the German broadcaster. The list, produced between 2006 and 2008 by an IAAF official, included the names of three British athletes including one household name considered to have suspicious blood values.

The Sunday Times added the winners of 34 major marathons around the world - one in four - during the period of 12 years should have faced investigation or censure due to their test results, with those athletes collecting more than £3million in prize money. The Sunday Times also reported that London Marathon was the worst affected with seven wins, six second places and seven third places out of 24 men's and women's races allegedly involving suspicious blood results.

Reacting to doping allegations, London Marathon chief executive Nick Bitel criticized the IAAF and remarked race organizers are very much concerned by claims made by ARD and the Sunday Times that seven winners in a 12-year period recorded suspicious blood scores. Bitel added we continue to be at the forefront of anti-doping measures for marathon runners as we are determined to make marathon running a safe haven from [doping](#) but we cannot do it all on our own and rely heavily on the IAAF.

Earlier this week, Liliya Shobukhova was stripped of her three [Chicago Marathon](#) titles and 2010 London Marathon win, with all her results from 2009 onwards annulled. In 2014, Shobukhova was banned because of irregularities in her biological passport. The ban on Shobukhova was extended after the IAAF made a successful appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport. It was argued by the IAAF that her ban should be extended; the ban now lasts until March 23, 2016.