

## Chinese Athletes Confess To Doping

Athletics' world governing body is investigating claims of state-sponsored doping of Chinese track athletes. This was after a letter attributed to a squad of ten athletes, including world record holder Wang Junxia, surfaced in the Chinese media.

Wang said she and her teammates were forced to take large dosages of illegal drugs over the year. In the letter that was reportedly penned in 1995, Wang, who set world records in the 3000 meters and 10,000 meters in 1993, remarked women on the team used to secretly throw away the pills forced on them and added coach Ma Junren used to [personally inject drug](#) into his athletes, which was known as "Ma's Army."

The letter said it is absolutely true that Ma forced us to take large doses of illegal drugs. It was further added by the athletes in the letter that we were sad when we revealed this to you, and seriously worried that might impair China's reputation, as well as it might devalue the gold medals we won and it was added but we must disclose these criminal behaviors because we don't want the same things happen to the next generation.

The letter under investigation and co-signed by nine of the teammates of Wang Junxia was sent to Zhao Yu, a journalist. The letter was addressed to Yu, who published a book titled *An Investigation of Ma's Army* in 1997. The letter, however, remained secret for close to twenty years until it was published on a leading Chinese online sports portal. Signatories, other than Wang Junxia, to the letter are Ma Ningning, Wang Yuan, Lu Ou, Wang Xiaoxia, Zhang Linli, Liu Li, Lu Yi, Liu Dong, and Zhang Lirong.

The Chinese Athletics Federation has been asked by the International Association of Athletics Federations for help to verify the letter. The athletes could be stripped of their titles and banned from the sport as well as face financial sanctions if the letter is verified as an admission of guilt by the athletes.

The Chinese women distance runners won three world titles and four world records in one month that changed the history of their sport. Wang took nearly 42 seconds off the 10,000 meter race record in Beijing and was awarded with a place in the Hall of Fame of the

IAAF for her notable achievements in the 1993 championships in Tianjin, Stuttgart, and Beijing.

The intense training regimen of authoritarian Ma involved his strict bans on long hair and dating, training regime on the high Tibetan plateau, and his use of exotic elixirs of caterpillar fungus and powdered seahorse. The team however mutinied against the chain-smoking super coach within months and accused him of keeping the three Mercedes cars and pocketing the cash prizes they had won for himself.

In the past, both Wang Junxia and Ma Jinren have denied doping. In 2012, a retired team doctor Yue Xinxian told Fairfax Media that the use of [anabolic androgenic steroids](#) and [human growth hormone](#) was "rampant" as part of a scientific training regimen in the 1980s and into the 1990s.