

First Meldonium Track And Field Case Exposed In Russian Athletics

Nadezhda Kotlyarova, the 2013 European Championship silver-medalist, has tested positive for [Meldonium](#). The 26-year-old Russian track-and-field athlete is the first athlete to test positive for the recently-banned drug and her positive test heaped further pressure on the athletic federation of Russia as it fights hard to get readmitted to international competition in time for the Olympic Games.

Kotlyarova said she failed a drug test at last month's Russian indoor championships in Moscow. The athlete raced at World Championships last year in Beijing and reached the semi-finals. Kotlyarova was also part of the Russian relay team which won silver in the 4x400m at the 2013 European indoor championships.

The case of Kotlyarova for Meldonium is the first for a Russian track and field athlete and the third worldwide after former world 1,500m champion Abeba Aregawi of Sweden and the former European indoor 800m champion Nataliya Lupu of Ukraine tested positive for the substance.

The athlete remarked the concentration of the substance which was found is very small - 25 nanograms and she stopped taking this stuff long before it was banned. Kotlyarova added she considers herself innocent and said we are victims of circumstance. Commenting on the timing of her test result, Kotlyarova said it is a real shame as this is an Olympic year, and this is how they knock people off their tracks.

At least 100 athletes from multiple countries have tested positive for Meldonium ever since former world tennis number one Sharapova admitted using the drug. Meldonium is prescribed for treating health complications such as diabetes and low magnesium and its use is associated with [increased sporting performance](#). The drug is particularly common in Russia and the former Soviet Union and was invented in Latvia and was used to help Soviet soldiers in the 1980s to fight at high altitude.

The anti-ischemic drug developed at the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis was designed to inhibit carnitine biosynthesis for preventing the accumulation of cytotoxic intermediate products of fatty acid beta-oxidation in ischemic tissues and for blocking this

highly oxygen-consuming process. Use of this drug is believed to increase the formation of the gamma-butyrobetaine esters. This drug is used for treating brain circulation disorders by neurological clinics and has the ability to improve mood of patients and make them more active.

The Russian Athletics Federation (ARAF) has claimed it repeatedly warned coaches and athletes not to take Meldonium before the drug got banned but the trainer of Kotlyarova remarked he was not given all the necessary information. Coach Sergei Vorobyev said no one told us how long this drug remains in the body.

Thirteen Russian sportsmen and women have tested positive for Meldonium since it was banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency on January 1, 2016, including speed skating Olympic gold-medalist Semion Elistratov and world tennis star [Maria Sharapova](#).

Last week, Russian Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko said Meldonium had nothing to do with athletics in his country despite warnings issued by sports officials that a number of other Russian competitors could have taken the substance.