

Russian Authorities Frustrate Doping Testers Before Olympics

UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) officials are facing huge challenges in their attempts to test athletes of Russia, which has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of tests that will be carried out before the Olympics.

The [World Anti-Doping Agency](#) (WADA) asked UKAD to take over [drug testing](#) earlier this year. This was after allegations of state-supported doping within Russian athletics emerged. The world governing body of athletics suspended Russia and athletes of the country were ejected from international events. Moscow's laboratory lost its accreditation to carry out tests and the Russian anti-doping agency was disbanded.

In January, UK Anti-Doping officials started testing Russian athletes but now it has emerged that Russian officials have been asking for 30 days' notice of tests and payments for doping control officers are being disputed by Russian authorities. In addition to this, significant delays are made at the end of Russian customs that are preventing blood samples' transportation to laboratories outside the country within the 48-hour window required for accurate testing. Due to this, the number of tests carried out by the UKAD-run team is falling well below the almost 1,000 tests per-month that were conducted by the Russian anti-doping agency.

These challenges will be brought into the notice of WADA board members when they will meet this week in Montreal. These revelations could further harm the chances of Russia of being readmitted to track and field in time for the Rio Olympics. Furthermore, these claims could possibly have a big impact on public confidence in Russian athletes across other sports who will compete in Brazil.

Reacting to these claims, the Russian sports minister Vitaly Mutko insisted Russian athletes should be allowed to travel to the Olympics and are cooperating with the UKAD operation. Mutko remarked there is no basis for our team not to be participating in the [Olympic Games](#) and added athletics is hugely popular in Russia, most of our athletes are honest. The Russian sports minister added we have been working with UKAD for four months and it took 67 tests the first month, the next month 150, now it is 200. Mutko added the amount of positive tests by the end of the year will be no larger than when we did it ourselves.

British athlete Paula Radcliffe, one of the most vocal advocates of clean sports, said it was not fair that Russian athletes in other sports had not been punished, sanctioned, or banned from competing in Rio. The world record holder for the women's marathon remarked it was obvious from the beginning this wasn't just an athletics problem. Reacting to troubles faced by UKAD anti-doping staff at the hands of Russian officials, Radcliffe said they know what they have to do if they want to get back in. The British athlete also commented they first of all have to accept that there is a problem, and then actively do something about it.

UK Anti-Doping declined to comment and the World Anti-Doping Agency remarked it would respond to these claims once the issues have been discussed by its board.