

Sharapova's Rio Olympics Ambitions Dashed

Russian professional tennis player [Maria Sharapova](#) has been ruled out of the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro after a ruling on her appeal against a two-year doping ban was postponed until September.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport remarked the International Tennis Federation and Sharapova had agreed to defer the decision that had been due to be issued by next Monday. It was also remarked by CAS that both parties asked for more time to prepare their cases and also cited “scheduling conflicts” with a verdict now expected by September 19. Both parties previously had agreed to an “expedited procedure” allowing the CAS to issue a ruling this month and decide on the ban that could have made Maria eligible for the Olympics in August.

In a statement, the CAS said the parties have agreed not to expedite the appeal due to the parties requiring additional time to complete and respond to their respective evidentiary submissions, and several scheduling conflicts. Sharapova's lawyer, John Haggerty, remarked the decision was by mutual agreement and will give Maria's team additional time to prepare its case. Haggerty added CAS is the court of final appeal and this extension will be helpful and also commented that we are hopeful Maria's suspension will be reduced, but in all cases, these additional two months will not impact our expectations of what can be achieved.

Sharapova was named as one of four Russian players to compete in the women's singles in Rio Olympics alongside Svetlana Kuznetsova, Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, and Daria Kasatkina. In her absence, Sharapova's place will now be taken by Ekaterina Makarova, the fifth-ranked Russian woman.

Last month, Sharapova filed an appeal to reduce or overturn the suspension imposed by the world governing body of lawn tennis. Sharapova failed a drug test at the 2016 Australian Open and admitted to using [Meldonium](#), which is a banned substance under the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) code since the start of this year. [Maria Sharapova](#) was suspended from playing tennis for a period of two years on June 8, 2016 by the ITF. This was despite Maria claiming that she took the drug before it was banned and for health reasons only on the recommendation of her doctor over a period of ten years.

A five-time Grand Slam champion and former No. 1-ranked player lost all ranking points and prize money she earned in Melbourne. Maria termed the decision of the ITF to ban her for two years "*an unfairly harsh*" punishment. The ban on Sharapova is due to end on Jan. 25, 2018, which would keep her out of eight Grand Slam tournaments, along with the Olympics.

Maria was the 2004 Wimbledon champion at age 17 and took no. 1 in the rankings at 18; U.S. Open champion at 19 and became Australian Open champion at 20. The former No. 1-ranked

player is one of 10 women in tennis history with a career Grand Slam and was named one of the "100 Greatest of All Time" by Tennis Channel in March 2012. Maria was named highest paid female athlete in the world for 11 consecutive years by Forbes and earned US\$285 million including prize money since she turned pro in 2001.