

Sharapova Doping Ban Appeal's Decision By CAS In Early October

A decision on the appeal by former tennis world number 1 [Maria Sharapova](#) against a doping ban of two years will be issued in the first week of next month, the Court of Arbitration for Sport said.

The 29-year-old was banned in June by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) following a positive test for the banned drug [Meldonium](#) during January's Australian Open. The five-time grand slam winner was named in the official entry list of Russia for the [Olympic Games](#) in Rio de Janeiro but the Court of Arbitration for Sport decided in July to defer its decision on her appeal against the ban.

Meldonium was added to the list of banned substances of the World Anti-doping Agency at the start of this year after evidence emerged that the drug can boost blood flow and enhance athletic performance. Made in Latvia and only distributed in Baltic countries and Russia, Meldonium is used to treat Ischaemia. The drug is not approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use in the United States and is not authorized in the rest of Europe.

In January, Maria Sharapova disclosed she had used Meldonium for health issues after being given it by her family doctor. The tennis star said she did receive an email on December 22 from WADA that was meant to remind her of alterations to the list of banned substances but added that she did not click on the link provided.

Sharapova had called the ruling of ITF as "unfairly harsh" as it was found by an independent tribunal that she had not intentionally violated anti-doping rules. The ITF however ruled that the use of Meldonium by Maria Sharapova is only consistent with an intention to boost her energy levels.

In a strongly-worded statement, the International Tennis Federation had remarked there was in 2016 no diagnosis and no therapeutic advice supporting the continuing use of Mildronate (Meldonium) whatever the position may have been in 2006. The ITF had also remarked she would have consulted a medical practitioner if she had believed that there was a continuing medical need to use Mildronate. The ITF statement also said it may be

that she genuinely believed that Mildronate had some general beneficial effect on her health but the manner in which the medication was taken, its concealment from the anti-doping authorities, her failure to disclose it even to her own team, and the lack of any medical justification must inevitably lead to the conclusion that she took Mildronate for the purpose of enhancing her performance.

Sharapova has been ranked world No. 1 in singles by the WTA on five separate occasions and earned silver for Russia in women's singles at the 2012 Summer Olympics in London. She was named one of the "100 Greatest of All Time" by Tennis Channel in March 2012 and has been named highest paid female athlete in the world for 11 consecutive years by Forbes. The Russian professional tennis player is the only Russian to hold the career Grand Slam.