

Doping Ban Of Maria Sharapova Reduced

The Court of Arbitration for Sport has reduced doping ban on tennis player [Maria Sharapova](#). The CAS announced the two-year ban on Sharapova has been reduced by nine months.

Sharapova remarked she had learned a lesson from the "tough months" behind her. In a message to fans on her Facebook page, Maria Sharapova said she feels in so many ways like something she loves was taken away from her and it will feel really good to have it back.

The International Tennis Federation (ITF) handed the original ban - backdated to start on January 26, 2016 to Sharapova, a five-time major singles champion, following her positive test for the drug [Meldonium](#). The 29-year-old Sharapova had termed the original ruling of the ITF as "unfairly harsh" as an independent tribunal had found that the tennis player had not intentionally violated [anti-doping rules](#).

Sharapova did admit to making use of Meldonium during the season's opening major in Melbourne but said she had been unaware that it had been banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). Sharapova went on to say that she started to believe the ITF tried to make an example of her by handing her a two-year ban after she tested positive for Meldonium. The substance was added to the list of banned substances of WADA at the start of the year after mounting evidence that it has the ability to improve blood flow and enhance athletic performance.

Sharapova was backed up by her attorney John Haggerty who criticized the ITF for their failure to properly warn his client. Haggerty remarked Maria took responsibility for her mistake and the ITF handled this matter poorly from start to finish. The attorney of Sharapova added it is time for the International Tennis Federation to take responsibility for its mistakes and change its procedures so that this can never happen to another player. Haggerty added the ITF has a lot to learn based on this ruling.

In response, the ITF issued a statement in which it remarked it had taken appropriate action to inform players, including Sharapova, of changes to the banned list. The world

governing body of tennis said it would continue to review the way it communicated with them. The ITF statement further reads it believes that the appropriate steps were taken to publicize any changes to the Prohibited List and added we have nonetheless reviewed, and will continue to review, our processes for communicating changes to the Prohibited List to players with the aim of ensuring that no player can claim that they had not been fully informed.

The CAS arbitration panel ruled she had committed an anti-doping rule violation for which "she bore some degree of fault". The panel also remarked the decision to reduce the ban concerned solely on the degree of fault that can be imputed to the player for her failure to make sure that the substance contained in a product that she had been taking over a long period remained in compliance with the anti-doping rules.

Maria Sharapova can now expect herself to be back in the court as early as the 2017 French Open, scheduled to begin on May 29.