

Boycott Of Sochi Championships Sought By US Skeleton Athletes

The *New York Times* has reported U.S. skeleton athletes are thinking about boycotting the World Championships in Sochi next year as protest at the [Russian doping scandal](#).

The newspaper, referring to matters about doping control, information security, and personal safety, said memos have been distributed by athletes. In the memo, they have called for a boycott of the Skeleton and Bobsled championships in the Southern Russian resort where the 2014 Winter Olympics was held.

The *New York Times* reported further added that memos of the skeleton athletes showed they had support of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) that is undertaking to hold the 2024 Summer Games in Los Angeles. However, the USOC remarked it did not support “blanket boycotts”. USOC spokesman Patrick Sandusky said the U.S. Olympic Committee supports rights of athletes to choose when and where they compete. The spokesman added we support their right to choose not to compete and added the USOC does not, and will not, support blanket boycotts of any event.

[Kyle Tress](#), an American skeleton racer, said it was time athletes made a stand. Tress remarked this has been passed down the line from the very highest level of sport, and now it is fallen into the lap of athletes. The American skeleton racer added there is tremendous support to skip this event, and said he thinks it is the right decision. Tress also remarked there is politics and money and sponsors involved, but this is an opportunity to come out in favor of clean sport.

U.S. Olympic skeleton racer Katie Uhlaender said the fact that nothing has been done about the Sochi scandal and the fact that we are still going to race there - it doesn't make us feel secure, or that they're taking the situation seriously.

The *Times* reported Tress and other members of his sport's athlete advisory committee recently voted unanimously to endorse a boycott. They are likely to push through with the sanction if the competition was not moved outside of Russia.

A WADA-commissioned report this year described how Russia that lavished some \$50 billion on the Games and finished top of the medals table managed to smuggle positive

samples from athletes in a clandestine night-time operation out of a laboratory through a hole drilled in the wall, and then replaced with clean samples. The report further revealed that Russia operated a state-sponsored doping program for four years across the "vast majority" of summer and winter Olympic sports. It was disclosed this [doping program](#) was "planned and operated" from late 2011 including the build-up to London 2012 Olympics and continued through the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics until August 2015.

Many Russian athletes have been stripped of their medals this year because of doping offences at the 2008 and 2012 Summer Olympics but so far none from Sochi. Many anti-doping advocates believes the upcoming December 9 publication of the second investigative report by Canadian lawyer Richard McLaren will lead to further disciplinary action by the International Olympic Committee.