

## **Carolina Kostner Banned For Aiding Doping Of Schwazer To Make A Return**

Olympic bronze medalist [Carolina Kostner](#) of Italy will be back in action this month after serving a ban of 21 months after being guilty of being complicit in the cover-up of her former boyfriend and doping cheat Alex Schwazer.

Kostner has taken on Russian coach Aleksei Mishin as she makes a comeback after serving a suspension for helping Schwazer evade doping tests. Mishin has coached Olympic skaters Alexei Urmanov, Alexei Yagudin, and Evgeny Plushenko, who joined Kostner in an ice show in Italy last month. The Olympic bronze medalist finished second at an invitational in Japan in January, her first competition in nearly two years because of the suspension.

The 29-year-old has not competed since March 29 but is due to take part in the International Skating Union (ISU)-sanctioned Golden Spin competition in Zagreb in Croatia from December 7 to 10. Kostner will also take to the ice in the Italian Championship Egna, a few kilometers from her hometown of Bolzano, from December 14 to 19. A six-time World Championships medalist, Carolina hopes to compete at the European Championships in Ostrava in the Czech Republic from January 25 to 29.

The Italian figure skater is a seven-time Italian national champion and is also a medalist at five other World Championships (2005, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2014), four other European Championships (2006, 2009, 2011, 2014), and three other Grand Prix Finals (2007, 2008, 2010), the 2003 World Junior bronze medalist.

In January 2015, Kostner was initially suspended for 16 months for helping Beijing 2008 Olympic race walking champion Schwazer but her ban was later extended to 21 months. Schwazer was recently banned for eight years after he failed a drugs test just weeks after he made a return from a three-year and nine-month doping suspension. The Italian tested positive for [Erythropoietin](#) (EPO) shortly before London 2012 but a May 12 retest of a January 1 doping sample showed positive traces of the [anabolic steroid Testosterone](#). Schwazer confessed to going alone to Turkey for buying the banned blood booster before he stored it at the home he shared with Olympic figure skating bronze medalist Carolina Kostner.

The 2012 world champion and the Olympic bronze medalist in the singles event Sochi 2014 admitted she had lied to drug testers when they arrived to test Schwazer in July 2012. However, Kostner denied any involvement with her former boyfriend's doping. She told inspectors according to lawyer Giovanni Fontana that Schwazer was not home, in order to respect his privacy, before he was subsequently caught by testers in Italy.

Originally, anti-doping prosecutors had called for a ban of four years on Kostner that would have ruled her out of the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang before they settled on the agreed 16-month term.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) had declared her eligible to compete from January 1 this year after Kostner settled a dispute with the CONI and World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). The CAS said the suspension of Carolina Kostner was backdated to April 1, 2014, based on procedural delays that are not attributable to Kostner.