

Russia Loses Bobsled And Skeleton World Championships

The International Bobsled and Skeleton Federation (IBSF) has announced this season's biggest Bobsled And Skeleton competition has been pulled out of Russia.

The Bobsled and Skeleton World Championships was slated to happen over the last two weeks of February in Krasnaya Polyana, Russia, on the track used for the 2014 Sochi Games.

The IBSF announced the decision to avoid what would have almost certainly been a widely boycotted World Championships. This was after a big number of competitors said they would not compete in a nation so enveloped in a [doping scandal](#). The International Bobsled and Skeleton Federation will announce a new site, with [Germany and the U.S.](#) as potential hosts, in the coming days. The decision was widely and immediately praised by sliders and decried by Russian officials.

The IBSF move came in the wake of the latest scathing report from World Anti-Doping Association investigator Richard McLaren revealed the depth of tampering and doping by Russia during the 2012 and 2014 Olympic cycles. McLaren's report showed that some Russian gold medalists from the Sochi Games were tainted by the state-sponsored doping program. The country won gold medals in two-man bobsled, four-man bobsled and men's skeleton at those Olympics, though none of the athletes who got those victories has been implicated by any known positive or tampered-with tests. Alexander Zubkov, who drove to wins in two- and four-man and is now president of the Russian Bobsled Federation, was one of the medalists.

The IBSF was urged by some of the world's best sliders — including reigning Olympic medalists Steven Holcomb, Matt Antoine and Meyers Taylor of the U.S., Martins Dukurs of Latvia and Lizzy Yarnold of Britain — for weeks to take a strong action.

The national skeleton team of Latvia recently became the first nation to confirm it will boycott the bobsleigh and skeleton world championships in Russia. In a statement, the Latvian skeleton team said enough is enough. The statement further reads that we will be glad to race in World Championships at any track of the world, but we are not

participating in World Championships in Sochi, Russia — a place where Olympic spirit was stolen in 2014. The four-man bobsleigh team of Latvia is the reigning world champions. They also won silver in the four-man bobsleigh at the 2014 Games – a feat matched by Martins Dukurs in the men's skeleton.

Austria, the United States, and South Korea were also considering such a move.

U.S. women's bobsled pilot [Elana Meyers Taylor](#) said she is ecstatic about the decision. Elana added this is a monumental decision by the IBSF and the right move to protect clean athletes and to tell the world that state-sponsored doping is unacceptable.

Elana Meyers Taylor and Lolo Jones both indicated they would withdraw if the event isn't relocated, mentioning doping control, personal safety and information security among their concerns.

USA Bobsled and Skeleton CEO Darrin Steele said this was a serious decision and one the IBSF did not take lightly. Steele added it might not have come as quickly as many would have liked, but it received the careful attention it deserved.