

FLAU President Defends Anti-Doping Measures

Ihor Hotsul, President of the Ukrainian Athletics Federation (FLAU), has come out strongly to justify improvements made by his organization to improve its anti-doping procedures.

The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) last year placed Ukraine along with Belarus, Ethiopia, Morocco, and Kenya on a special monitoring list. The National Anti-Doping Agency of Ukraine was briefly declared non-compliant by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) before it met a series of conditions in March last year.

In recent years, dozens of Ukrainian athletes have been tested positive for banned performance enhancing drugs. The list includes Heptathlete [Lyudmila Blonska](#) who failed a drug test for Methyltestosterone and was stripped of her Beijing 2008 silver medal.

Shot putter Yuriy Bilinog was stripped of his Athens 2004 Olympic gold after traces of [anabolic steroid Oxandrolone](#) were revealed in retests. Oleksandr Pyatnytsya, London 2012 javelin silver medal winner, was retrospectively disqualified after testing positive for [Oral Turinabol](#).

Hotsul said there will be further improvements in the anti-doping procedures of the Ukrainian Athletics Federation following a pledge of support from the Government. Recently, the law was officially passed through Ukrainian Parliament.

Hotsul said the loss of many sponsors and partners made it hard for the FLAU to reimburse the costs of sample analysis through its low budget. Hotsul thanked the world governing body of athletics and its President Sebastian Coe for their support. He further commented that around 10 urine and 70 blood samples taken from the 2016 National Championships in Lutsk have already been analyzed this way by a testing group from Global Sports GmbH. The FLAU President said these examples clearly show the positive dynamics of measures taken in order to fight doping and also commented that we are very grateful to the IAAF for understanding our situation and for the support regarding testing and promoting the new edition of the anti-doping law. Hotsul also said we would like to emphasize once again that our Federation takes a tough and uncompromising approach to the fight against doping and it makes every possible effort for its successful implementation.

Ukraine Sports Minister Igor Zhdanov had previously remarked that his country will take the "necessary decisions" after they studied observations of the IAAF. Zhdanov had also remarked we are working closely with WADA and further commented that we had some problems but we have no systemic problems.

IAAF Sebastian Coe remarked at the end of the IAAF Council meeting in last March that Kenya, Ukraine, and Belarus have been put on a monitoring list for 2016 to strengthen their anti-doping regimes and make sure their journey to compliance is completed by the end of the year.

Morocco and Ethiopia are among the top countries in the world for middle and long-distance running. Since 2003, a lot of Moroccan athletes have been accused of doping and 37 of its athletes were suspended by the IAAF, the majority of them in the last four years. In the last three years, more than 40 Kenyan athletes have been caught up in drug scandals. Athletics Kenya chief executive Isaac Mwangin was suspended for corruption involving cover-ups.