

Ukraine Apologize Over Embarrassing Amnesty Claim For Drugs Cheats

Ukraine has been forced to apologize to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) following an embarrassing mix-up.

The Ukrainian Athletics Federation (FLAU) recently posted on its website that a month-long amnesty period is due to expire on April 3. The amnesty offered a promise to athletes that they would avoid punishment if they admitted using banned drugs. The website promised athletes would avoid any public sanctions apart from a temporary suspension from competition for the period taken for traces of banned substances to leave the body if they "voluntarily confess" to taking drugs.

It is now claimed by the FLAU that it was a mix-up and they were not trying to operate outside the rules.

IAAF spokesman Chris Turner remarked we sought clarification from the Ukrainian Federation and they replied that this was a bad summary of an athlete seminar held last month and they would never do anything to break the WADA Code or that did not follow IAAF rules. Turner remarked they have apologized for the miscommunication and have removed it from their website.

Last year, Ukraine was placed on an IAAF monitoring list and it is currently being reviewed on a monthly basis. The doping situation in Ukraine is likely to be discussed by the ruling council of IAAF during a two-day meeting that begun at the Marriott West India Quay.

FLAU President Ihor Hotsul had previously claimed Ukraine have a zero tolerance policy regarding all forms of doping following criticism at the last IAAF Council meeting in Monte Carlo in February.

Last December, Ukraine was one of the 15 countries out of 197 members who failed to back the reform package by IAAF President Sebastian Coe. The package included several measures specifically designed to help combat anti-doping. The country never specified why it voted against the reforms even though former world pole vault record and 1988 Olympic champion Sergey Bubka, the country's most famous athlete, is the senior vice-president of the IAAF.

The country has the second worst doping record in athletics behind Russia. Six Ukrainian athletes have been retrospectively disqualified from the 2012 Olympics in London following re-analysis of their doping samples and the biggest name was [Oleksandr Pyatnytsya](#), the silver medalist in the javelin before he was stripped of it in February 2016. The list of other doping cheats included Lyudmyla Yosypenko and Tetyana Hamera-Shmyrko, fourth and fifth respectively in the heptathlon and marathon at London 2012. Svitlana Shmidt and Anna Mishchenko have already lost the silver medals they had won in the 1500 and 3,000 meters steeplechase respectively at the 2012 European Championships in Helsinki following the retests.

In the past, shot putter Yuriy Bilinog was stripped of his Olympic gold medal from Athens 2004 after retests showed traces of anabolic steroid [Oxandrolone](#). Two-time world champion sprinter Zhanna Pintusevich-Block was implicated in the Bay Area Laboratory Co-operative scandal and was given a ban of two years. Heptathlete Lyudmila Blonska was stripped of her Beijing 2008 silver medal after she failed an anti-doping test for [Methyltestosterone](#), another anabolic steroid.