

## IOC Orders To Return Medals Defied By Russian Athletes

Russian three-time Olympic silver medalist [Tatyana Firova](#) has decided not to return her silver medals in defiance to orders issued by the International Olympic Committee.

The 33-year-old 400m runner, who failed a re-examined drugs test from the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, argued that “bureaucrats” must share responsibility for the [doping scandal](#). Firova said we sportsmen are performers and we follow the rules that are given to us by the system. The three-time Olympic silver medalist added a normal person can take banned substances if they want to but the athletes are not allowed to.

Firova, who also has to surrender her 4x400-meter relay silver medal from London after the samples of a teammate were retested, remarked she was sentimentally attached to her Olympic hardware.

Meanwhile, the IOC has commented it had already received a number of medals and was in contact with the relevant Olympic committees about the issue.

Former decathlete Alexander Pogorelov, who was stripped of his Olympic diploma for a fourth-place finish in Beijing after Turinabol was found in his sample, said he does not know whether he had lost the medal or not but he has not seen it in a while. Pogorelov, who now heads the sports committee of the city of Bryansk, commented he probably wouldn't give it back even if he did find it because he thinks he earned it honestly.

In a recent report, an International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) task force monitoring reforms at the Russian federation said it had yet to demonstrate that it has established a strong [anti-doping culture](#) within its sport, or that it has created an open environment that encourages whistleblowing. Russia has never acknowledged state support for doping though it has pledged to cooperate with global sports bodies over its anti-doping program. A big majority of Russian officials, athletes, and coaches do not still believe that there was wrongdoing and are of the view that their country is being unfairly targeted.

Some athletes commented that they had not returned the medals as the Russian federation had not simply asked for it. Russian athletics federation president Dmitry Shlyakhtin denied these claims and said they are lying about the fact they were not notified. Shlyakhtin insisted it had contacted them by phone, e-mail, and mail.

The issue of medals not being promptly returned was downplayed by Russian Sports minister Pavel Kolobkov. The Sports minister said many athletes do not give back their medals, not only athletes in Russia.

Organizers of other sports events have also faced obstacles in reclaiming prize money or medals from Russian dopers. The London Marathon has been trying to reclaim money from Liliya Shobukhova, who won the 2010 title and was runner-up in 2011 before she was banned for doping. Shobukhova was sued in Britain and organizers of the marathon are now waiting for a hearing in Russia to have the judgment

applied there. The race's chief executive Nick Bitel said we will spend whatever money it takes to pursue her and get the money back, even if it makes no commercial sense.