

Russian Athletics Chief Apologizes For Doping Scandal

Dmitry Shlyakhtin, head of the Russian athletics federation (RusAF), has issued an apology in an address to the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) Congress meeting ahead of the [World Championships](#).

Shlyakhtin rendered the public apology for the Russian doping scandal that has seen Russia barred from international track and field competition. The RusAF head remarked the situation with athletics is very difficult indeed and outlined that the Russian athletics federation had been totally overhauled since he took charge in early 2016 and that “radical changes” have been introduced. Shlyakhtin added the initial period was not sufficient to understand the scale of the crisis happening in Russia and added he had delved into this situation and understand that the decision by the IAAF and Council to ban Russia was indeed the right one.

The head of the Russian athletics federation said he would like to apologize to all athletes who have had gold and silver medals snatched from them at competitions. Shlyakhtin also said he wants to assure everyone that his new team will fight doping and what happened will never happen again.

IAAF president Sebastian Coe termed the apology as “a very candid response”. Coe remarked the whole Congress was pleased to recognize that the Russian federation recognized themselves that they have been through some pretty torrid times that they are doing everything they possibly can to make sure that the federation started doing the hard yards of changing the culture around coaching systems and endemic systems that have served, very badly, the athletes. The IAAF president also commented that progress is clearly being made.

Rune Andersen, independent chairman of the IAAF Taskforce looking into [doping in Russia](#), hailed the apology. Andersen remarked it is fair to say that the path has not always been completely smooth and added there have been some bumps along the way, usually in the form of political statements or interventions that have not been entirely helpful. The IAAF Taskforce chairman said he would want to pay tribute to Dmitry Shlyakhtin and the colleagues he brought with him when he was elected as RusAF president in early 2016.

Andersen added Dmitry clearly understands the need to change the doping culture that clearly existed in Russian athletics in the past and also remarked he understands the harm that culture has cost clean athletes everywhere as the apology he just extended to those cheated out of medals demonstrates. Andersen also commented that it is a measure of the man and an important step on the road to rehabilitation of Russian athletics that he is willing to acknowledge that offence publicly. Andersen insisted that the timeline of return of Russia to international action in November was possible.

Last year, Russia was accused of widespread state-sponsored doping. The athletics team of Russia was barred from last summer’s Rio Olympics and will also miss the IAAF World Championships. The world governing body of athletics however permitted some [Russian athletes](#) to compete as neutrals after they had successfully met the exceptional eligibility criteria, essentially demonstrating that they have come through transparent anti-doping testing.