

MR. JEAN-CHRISTOPHE, PRESIDENT
INTERNATIONAL ROWING
FEDERATION

Dear Jean-Christophe, Mr President,

We are writing to you on behalf of all the Russian Senior National Rowing Team.

Last week FISA decided to ban 20 of the 28 qualified Olympic Russian Rowing athletes from competing at the Olympic games in Rio. A fair decision you suppose.

We, the Russian Olympic Rowing Team have not commented negatively in the media about this decision and done our utmost to behave professionally and with dignity. However we find it hard to believe that FISA, our sport's governing body, could have come to a decision that seems ill-considered and prejudiced and disregards the concept of natural justice, transparency and athlete equality.

Russian rowers have been banned from the Rio Olympics based on what seems be very questionable criteria. Rowers who worked extraordinarily hard over the last 3 and a half years, waking up at 6 am and having 3 tough training sessions a day. Rowers who didn't have time to even think about doping, because their only thoughts were how well they could train well and how to get ready for the most important regatta in their life, the Olympic Games.

Over the past 3 years we have participated in one of the toughest, most rigorous and complex training program under the leadership of one of the best and most respected coaches in the world of rowing, Mr Mike Spracklen (who, judging by your actions, you do not trust).

The great majority of the time over the past 3 and a half years we have trained outside of Russia, we have filled all the forms on the ADAMS online system and were without fail available for WADA staff at all times. You accuse and charge us with something we could not have any influence on (drug testing by a non-Russian organisation) and you come up with this new and impractical criteria for only Russian rowers a week before Olympics, even when all the entries are closed.

We all agree that everyone and anyone that is guilty of a doping violation should be sanctioned. But could you please explain to us what we, the Russian rowers, are exactly guilty of? Can you explain how FISA, in what can only be described as a knee-jerk reaction, has, with one extraordinarily hasty and heart-breaking decision, overscored and disregarded our years of hard work, and our negative drug tests (at foreign training venues and international regattas) and thus deprived us of our right to participate at the Olympics? Can you honestly tell us that this decision is transparent, represents natural justice and embodies the true Olympic spirit?

We would like to remind you that every decision in our life comes back like a boomerang. We hope that you will always be treated fairly and with the respect that you deserve. We ask for nothing more then this ourselves.

Our wish is the same as yours, to promote rowing worldwide and for our sport to be drug-free. We all love the sport of Rowing and this will never change.

With kind regards, Russian Senior Rowing National Team:

Daniil Andrienko, rower
Ivan Balandin, rower
Aleksander Bogdashin, rower
Nikita Bolozin, rower
Alexander Chaukin, rower
Maksim Golubev, rower
Georgy Efremenko, rower
Alexandra Fedorova, rower
Alexander Kornilov, rower
Artem Kosov, rower
Alexander Kulesh, rower
Dmitry Kuznetsov, rower
Elena Lebedeva, rower
Nikita Morgachev, rower
Elena Oriabinskaia, rower
Julia Popova, rower
Ekaterina Potapova, rower
Mariia Krasilnikova, rower
Anastasia Karabelshikova, rower
Ivan Podshivalov, rower
Vladislav Ryabtsev, rower
Alevtina Savkina, rower
Alena Shatagina, rower
Maksim Telitsyn, rower
Anastasiia Tikhanova, rower
Aleksey Vikulin, rower
Anton Zarutskiy, rower
Semen Yaganov, rower
Pavel Safonkin, coxwain
Ksenia Volkova, coxwain
Sergey Verlin, chief coach of Russian rowing national team
Mike Spracklen, coach
Adrian Spracklen, coach
Vladimir Volodenkov, coach
Alexandr Ivanik, coach
Sergey Bukreev, coach
Alexander Zyuzin, coach
Olga Astakhova, team manager
Yana Talantseva, team manager
Fiona Gutschlag, medical staff
Gelena Verlina, medical staff
Ilyas Abashev, medical staff,
Alexander Taranenko, medical staff
Vladimir Sarbitov, medical staff
Artem Iuluev, technical staff
Ivan Mishin, technical staff