

14 August 2016
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Dear Russian Senior National Rowing Team,

We have received your recent letter. We apologise for the delay in response.

Firstly, we have noted your professional and dignified behavior during this whole period.

As fellow rowers, we understand the terrible disappointment you are experiencing, due to the decisions related to Russian participation at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. However, we hope that you understand that actions had to be taken following the very serious problems revealed in the WADA Independent Person report by Professor Richard McLaren.

WADA reported on 18 July as follows:

“Today’s 103-page Report outlines the following key findings that meet the standard of beyond reasonable doubt:

1. The Moscow laboratory operated, for the protection of doped Russian athletes, within a State-dictated failsafe system, described in the Report as the Disappearing Positive Methodology.

2. The Sochi laboratory operated a unique sample swapping methodology to enable doped Russian athletes to compete at the Games.

3. The Ministry of Sport directed, controlled and oversaw the manipulation of athletes’ analytical results and sample swapping, with the active participation and assistance of the Federal Security Service (FSB); the Center of Sports Preparation of National Teams of Russia (CSP); and, both Moscow and Sochi laboratories.”

The WADA statement continues

“WADA’s Executive Committee strongly regrets that there was public speculation made by certain NADOs as to the Investigation’s outcome, in the absence of the facts, in the days leading up to the Report’s publication. Today, the McLaren Report corroborates the following evidence; on which basis, WADA’s Executive Committee has come to the following conclusions. The Executive Committee strongly requests the Sports Movement to seriously consider the facts and the following sanctions:

1. Given that the Russian Ministry of Sport orchestrated systematic cheating of Russian athletes to subvert the doping control process; and that, the evidence shows such subversion in 30 sports, including 20 Olympic summer sports and Paralympic sports, the presumption of innocence of athletes in these sports, and in all Russian sports, is seriously called into question.

Accordingly, WADA recommends to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) to consider, under their respective Charters, to decline entries, for Rio 2016, of all athletes submitted by the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) and the Russian Paralympic Committee. Furthermore, any exceptional entry of a Russian athlete should be considered by the IOC and IPC for participation under a neutral flag and in accordance with very strict criteria.

WADA also recommends that Russian Government officials be denied access to international competitions, including Rio 2016.

2. The Investigation determined that a high number of Olympic sports, non-Olympic sports and Paralympic sports benefited from the system orchestrated by the Russian Ministry of Sport. The presumption of innocence from Russian athletes in these sports is therefore seriously called into question.

Accordingly, WADA recommends to International Federations (IFs) to consider their responsibilities under the World Anti-Doping Code as far as their Russian National Federations are concerned. (It is noted that a number of IFs have already taken steps under their rules in this regard.)

WADA's Executive Committee urges the Russian Government to ensure that all those involved in this system be dealt with appropriately forthwith."

The revelations, supported by independent corroboration, have identified a critically serious and devastating problem for the entire world of sport, and the International Olympic Committee as well as the International Paralympic Committee have had very difficult decisions to take to try to re-establish equal treatment for all athletes at the Rio2016 Olympic Games.

The IOC Executive Board's decision of 24 July 2016 stated

"...all Russian athletes seeking entry to the Olympic Games Rio2016 are considered to be affected by a system subverting and manipulating the anti-doping system...Under these exceptional circumstances, Russian athletes in any of the 28 Olympic summer sports have to assume the consequences of what amounts to a collective responsibility in order to protect the credibility of the Olympic competitions, and the "presumption of innocence" cannot be applied to them."

As you know, the decision of the IOC Executive Board was to exclude all Russian athletes from the Rio Olympic Games and required that each international sport federation establish criteria and a process for any re-inclusion of Russian athletes that would help re-establish a "level playing field" for all athletes, sport by sport. The FISA Executive Committee takes this

responsibility very seriously for the sport of rowing and for all the rowers at the Games. In establishing the criteria, the FISA Executive Committee was required to balance the interests of all athletes. However, in relation to the Olympic Games, FISA accepted the IOC directive that the athletes of Russia should face a reverse onus of establishing their eligibility for the Olympic Games. Accordingly, taking all of the above into account, the criteria were established for re-inclusion in the Games and which obviously affected your team.

The IOC also directed the IF s to prevent those specifically identified in the McLaren report from entering the Games, and this step was taken and was upheld upon appeal by the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

The reaction of the International Paralympic Committee was to suspend the entire Russian Paralympic Games team from participating at the Rio2016 Paralympic Games. IPC President Phillip Craven was quoted as saying

“...tragically this situation is not about athletes cheating a system, but about a State-run system that is cheating the athletes.” “I believe the Russian government has catastrophically failed its Para athletes. Their medals over morals mentality disgusts me. The complete corruption of the anti-doping system is contrary to the rules and strikes at the very heart of the spirit of Paralympic sport.”

It is extremely important that you fully understand the environment that Russian sport is in right now. We respect the work that has been undertaken by President Veniamin But who has engaged very well-known coach Mike Spracklen, a new administration of the Russian Rowing Federation and a new medical staff. This is well appreciated and noted by FISA. This work must continue in order to change the system which only hurts the athletes. Those who support a system which promotes cheating must know this system will not and cannot be tolerated. Athletes who want to be clean should also know this. We hope we can assist the clean athletes in Russia in this fight.

Unfortunately, currently you are a part of this system described above and you are experiencing the consequences of the actions of certain individuals which appears to include government and political officials. Further investigation is ongoing in this respect.

We know that no words can soothe the disappointment that you have right now but it is important that you are aware of and understand the background for the lack of trust that exists now in the world of sport towards Russia. Although we feel that you must have been as shocked as we were by the revelations of such an organised system which allowed doping to flourish in Russia, it is important to acknowledge that such a system is unacceptable in any country of the world. Introspection is required to ensure a change in thinking so that this system is eradicated.

We look forward to working with those who believe in clean sport to ensure the safety and success of all athletes.

Sincerely,

FISA Executive Committee