

Update on the suspension of Russian and Belarusian players from WDF sanctioned competitions

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News

In March 2022, the World Darts Federation (WDF) announced that, based on a resolution made by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), it would no longer be permitting Russian and Belarusian players or officials to participate in WDF events or ranked tournaments with immediate effect and until further notice.

In the almost two years since then, the WDF has continually reviewed the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine and it has remained a regular topic of conversation in WDF Executive meetings.

In December 2023, the IOC stated that athletes from Russia and its ally Belarus would be able to compete in the 2024 Paris Olympics as neutrals, outside of team events and as long as they did not actively support the conflict with Ukraine.

This announcement detailed a Recommended Condition of Participation but also stated that it was at the sole discretion of each international sports event organiser to review its own rules and statutes and then decide if Russian and Belarusian athletes should be allowed to return to their sport.

Following this update to the IOC's stance, the WDF Executive conducted a heavy review of the restrictions on Russian and Belarusian players and officials in their first meeting of 2024. Following those conversations, the decision was taken to uphold the current suspension on Russian and Belarusian players and officials participating in WDF sanctioned events.

The decision to uphold the suspension is based on a number of factors.

The IOC's statement has been met with considerable opposition within sporting governance circles, with many leading figures stating that it does not fulfil the intent of the original suspension imposed.

In a recent conference call with a number of agencies World Athletics President Sebastian Coe confirmed that his organisation will still not be permitting Russians or Belarusians to compete in athletics disciplines in Paris this year. Coe said "There is no change. The most important thing is that everyone is starting to realise that the

autonomy and independence of international federations to make these judgments is important.”

A number of Ukrainian athletes have also raised objections, with appeals made to the French President, the Mayor of Paris, the French Minister of Sports and the organisers of the Paris 2024 Olympics.

As per the International Sport Press Association, Ukrainian sports lawyer Yuriy Yurchenko has filed an appeal with the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

His aim is to overturn the IOC's decision to give Russian and Belarusian athletes the green light to compete as neutral athletes at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

In light of the challenges being made to the IOC's statement, the ongoing nature of the Russian-led conflict in Ukraine, other sporting federations upholding their bans on Russian and Belarusian players and officials and the considerations and views of many of the WDF's 80 Member Countries, the WDF has decided, with the best interests of our sport and Member Countries in mind, to uphold the measures we took in March 2022 until further notice.

It is also important to understand that, as detailed in the WDF Bye-Laws, a person can play under the flag of their current residence provided that they have resided within that national entity for at least three years and haven't played for a WDF Member Darts Body of his/her nationality or another WDF Member Darts Body for at least three years.

The WDF Executive will continue to monitor the situation and advise of any changes as they arise.