

Howman: LIMS Cases a Milestone for Integrity in Sport

17 MARCH 2026, MONACO: Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) Chair, David Howman, has hailed the conclusion of the nearly decade-long pursuit of LIMS/McLaren cases in the sport of athletics as an "historic milestone", describing the AIU's successful pursuit of these cases as "a key achievement for global sports integrity".

Last November, the AIU announced the final 12 LIMS/McLaren decisions in athletics, ending a process that began in 2017 and resulted in a total of 66 cases – stemming from the elaborate state-sponsored Russia doping scandal – being successfully prosecuted. As a result of exhaustive investigations, which began with the work of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), and subsequent prosecutions by the AIU, several World and Olympic champions were stripped of their titles including racewalker Elena Lashmanova, shot-putter Nadzeya Ostapchuk, jumpers Svetlana Shkolina and Ivan Ukhov, 400-metres hurdler Natalya Antyukh and hammer thrower Tatyana Beloborodova.

Overall, 14 World Championships and Olympic medallists were sanctioned in athletics thanks to the LIMS/McLaren investigations, leading to an unprecedented large-scale reallocation of medals which fundamentally reshaped podiums across athletics showpieces stretching back to 2005.

"The pursuit of the LIMS and McLaren cases was not just about punishing historical offenses," contended Howman.

"By relentlessly analysing this data to catch offenders, years after the fact, the AIU sent an unequivocal message that time is not a sanctuary for dopers. There is no statute of limitations on the truth and certainly no boundaries to the AIU's persistence.

The AIU prosecutions were predominantly built from evidence uncovered in the WADA-commissioned McLaren Investigation of 2016 and important evidence recovered from the Moscow Laboratory by the WADA I&I team in 2019, namely the copy of the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS), associated analytical data and samples.

"The AIU would like to acknowledge and thank WADA for their highly effective and tireless forensic work both in the context of the McLaren Investigation and Operation LIMS which ultimately laid the foundation for bringing these cases in our sport," said Howman. "The outcomes in the sport of athletics show what can be achieved through genuine collaboration in the anti-doping movement."

The LIMS/McLaren cases were built on a foundation of forensic data and whistleblower testimony that exposed how hundreds of positive drug tests were intentionally concealed through the operation of a sophisticated doping scheme within Russia. The Moscow Laboratory was at the centre of the cover-up, serving to protect athletes who were doping, with support from state apparatus.

LIMS was a software database used by the Moscow Laboratory to track samples and test results. A whistleblower provided WADA with a copy of the 2015 LIMS database and when WADA subsequently secured the data in 2019, there was evidence of deliberate alterations, amendments and deletions intended to hide the improper activities carried out by the Moscow Laboratory, which had been outlined in the McLaren Reports.

The McLaren Reports, meanwhile, resulted from an independent investigation commissioned by WADA and led by Canadian law professor Richard McLaren, uncovering staggering evidence of the state-sponsored doping programme in Russia. In carefully and systematically building their cases against athletes, the AIU cross-referenced the LIMS data with the McLaren Reports and underlying evidence and reanalysed stored samples where relevant.

Triple jumper Anna Pyatykh, a double World Championships bronze medallist, was the first case to be brought by the AIU in 2017, based in part on the evidence from the McLaren Investigation, resulting in a four-year ban for the athlete after a re-testing of her samples from the 2007 World Championships in Osaka revealed the presence of Dehydrochlormethyltestosterone (DHCMT) metabolites.

Middle-distance runner Tatyana Tomashova, a two-time World champion and 2004 Olympic silver medallist, received the toughest sanction of the 66 cases – a 10-year ban upheld by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) for a second doping violation for the Use of a Prohibited Substance/Method. After initially finishing fourth in the women's 1500 metres final at the London 2012 Olympic Games, she was elevated to the silver medal in 2018 following the disqualification of the top two finishers for doping. However, she was subsequently stripped of that upgraded medal after evidence from the LIMS database proved that she too had committed anti-doping rule violations.

There were also eight-year bans for former hammer world record-holder Gulfiya Khanafeeva and middle-distance runner Yelena Soboleva; the latter being stripped of her silver medal in the 1500 metres at the 2007 World Championships.

Following is the list of Olympic and World Championship medallists who were stripped of their medals as a result of the AIU's prosecution of the LIMS/McLaren cases.

NAME	CHAMPIONSHIP	EVENT	MEDAL LOST
Nadezhda Ostapchuk (Belarus)	2008 Olympics	Women's Shot Put	Bronze
Natalya Antyukh	2012 Olympics	Women's 400mH	Gold
Tatyana Tomashova	2012 Olympics	Women's 1500m	Bronze
Russia (Antyukh)	2012 Olympics	Women's 4x400m	Silver
Nadezhda Ostapchuk (Belarus)	2012 Olympics	Women's Shot Put	Gold
Yevgeniya Kolodko	2012 Olympics	Women's Shot Put	Bronze
Ekaterina Guliyev	2012 Olympics	Women's 800m	Silver
Elena Lashmanova	2012 Olympics	Women's 20 km walk	Gold
Svetlana Shkolina	2012 Olympics	Women's high jump	Bronze
Tatyana Beloborodova (Lysenko)	2012 Olympics	Women's hammer throw	Gold
Ivan Ukhov	2012 Olympics	Men's high jump	Gold
Russia (Tatyana Firova)	2012 Olympics	Women's 4x400m	Silver

Nadezhda Ostapchuk (Belarus)	2005 World Champs	Women's Shot Put	Gold
Nadezhda Ostapchuk (Belarus)	2007 World Champs	Women's Shot Put	Silver
Yelena Soboleva	2007 World Champs	Women's 1500m	Silver
Russia (Tatyana Firova)	2009 World Champs	Women's 4x400m	Bronze
Anastasiya Kapachinskaya	2011 World Champs	Women's 400m	Bronze
Nadezhda Ostapchuk (Belarus)	2011 World Champs	Women's Shot Put	Silver
Tatyana Chernova	2011 World Champs	Women's Heptathlon	Gold
Russia (Kapachinskaya)	2011 World Champs	Women's 4x400m	Bronze
Aleksandr Ivanov	2013 World Champs	Men's 20km Race Walk	Gold
Elena Lashmanova	2013 World Champs	Women's 20 km walk	Gold
Svetlana Shkolina	2013 World Champs	Women's high jump	Gold
Tatyana Beloborodova (Lysenko)	2013 World Champs	Women's hammer throw	Gold

ABOUT THE ATHLETICS INTEGRITY UNIT

Link: [HTTPS://WWW.ATHLETICSINTEGRITY.ORG](https://www.athleticsintegrity.org)

The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) is the independent body created by the World Athletics that manages all integrity issues – both doping and non-doping – for the sport of athletics. The remit of the AIU includes anti-doping, the pursuit of individuals engaged in age or competition results manipulation, investigating fraudulent behaviour with regards to transfers of allegiance, and detecting other misconduct including bribery and breaches of betting rules. It is the AIU's role to drive cheats out of our sport, and to do everything within its power to support honest athletes around the world who dedicate their lives to reaching their sporting goals through dedication and hard work.



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