

## SPORTS

## Kremlin declines to say who should be punished

## Russia blames political chicanery, not itself, for Olympic ban

MOSCOW, Dec 11, (RTRS): The Kremlin is blaming political chicanery, not its own sports officials, after doctored laboratory data resulted in a ban that means Russia will appear on the global sports stage without its flag or anthem for the next four years.

In the latest twist to the country's continuing doping scandal, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) on Monday handed Russia a four-year ban from top international sporting events, including the next summer and winter Olympics and the 2022 soccer World Cup.

The members of WADA's executive committee unanimously backed such a

## OLYMPICS

ban after finding Moscow guilty of supplying doctored doping-related laboratory data.

Russia's response, from President Vladimir Putin downwards, has been defiant and lacking in contrition.

Putin, speaking in Paris earlier on Tuesday, criticised the principle of collective punishment used to sanction Russia.

"I think there is every ground to suppose that the basis for such decisions is not a care about the purity of international sport, but political considerations which have nothing to do with the inter-



In this Nov 18, 2015 file photo, a man walking past the Russian Olympic Committee building, casts a shadow on a window in Moscow, Russia. (AP)

est of sport or the Olympic movement," Putin said.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, a Putin ally, said on Monday he recognized that there were still problems to be resolved, but again he said he saw other forces at work. The move to punish Moscow looked like "anti-Russian hysteria," he said.

When asked on Tuesday whether anyone in Russia should be punished over the doping scandal, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov did not name any names.

"Right now our main task is to express our disagreement," Peskov said. "The main thing is not to let collective responsibility violate the interests of our athletes. Everything else is secondary."

## British Olympic Association responds to athletes' legal challenge

LONDON, Dec 11, (RTRS): The British Olympic Association (BOA) says it has "formally responded" to a legal challenge over sponsorship rights brought by a group of its own athletes that could cast a shadow over its preparations for next year's Tokyo Games.

The group, which includes Mo Farah, Katarina Johnson-Thompson, Laura Muir and Adam Gemili, are seeking to challenge an International Olympic Committee rule that bars them from using their name, image or performance in advertising during the Games without the IOC's prior consent.

"The BOA can confirm it has formally responded to the recent legal challenge brought against the BOA's interpretation of the IOC's Rule 40 in the UK," a BOA spokesperson said.

The spokesperson said the BOA was trying to balance the

desire for individual athletes to maximise personal sponsorship revenue with the need to preserve and enhance the current system of selling rights collectively.

The BOA met with the athletes' representatives last week in an attempt to resolve the dispute.

"However, despite those encouraging conversations, we have been dismayed by the ongoing legal tactics being conducted in the background, which in no way reflects the spirit of the discussions held," the spokesperson added.

"Therefore we have been forced to respond fully and robustly to the legal challenge and have done so in the best interests of all of the athletes we serve.

"We reiterate that it is clearly not in the interest of any party to enter into a protracted legal dispute ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games."

Russian Sports Minister Pavel Kolobkov has sent mixed messages.

When asked on Monday who should be held responsible for the scandal, he said: "What should I answer now? Should I make excuses or point my finger at someone else? I completely and fully understand my level of responsibility."

He went on to add, however, that he had done everything right, having organized the transfer of the laboratory data to WADA.

"It was difficult, but we did it," he said. Last month he attributed the discrepancies in the laboratory data to technical

issues.

WADA's compliance review committee said the doctored laboratory data contained fabricated evidence to "support the argument now being advanced by the Russian authorities that it was Dr Grigory Rodchenkov and two co-conspirators who falsified entries."

Rodchenkov, the former head of the Russian anti-doping laboratory, revealed a vast state-sponsored doping cover-up scheme in 2016 after fleeing to the United States.

"Russia's falsifications and cheating continued in 2019 even when Russia was

under scrutiny," he said in a statement on Monday. "As usual, Russia has disregarded all of its promises and obligations to clean sport."

The supervisory board of Russian anti-doping agency RUSADA will convene on Dec. 19 to discuss whether to appeal WADA's punishment of Russia and bring the case to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

Yuri Ganus, RUSADA's head and one of the few official voices who has said Russia needs to change its sporting culture, has said he doesn't see any chance of winning an appeal.

## NFL Roundup

## Belichick unaware of Bengals filming

## Eagles' Jeffery out for season

NEW YORK, Dec 11, (RTRS): The Philadelphia Eagles' 23-17 overtime victory Monday against the New York Giants came with a heavy price.

Right tackle Lane Johnson is week-to-week with a left high ankle sprain, while wide receiver Alshon Jeffery's season is reportedly over with a foot injury. Coach Doug Pederson on Tuesday described Jeffery's injury as "a little more significant" than Johnson's, and ESPN later reported that Jeffery is done for the rest of the season.

Both players were carted off the field in the first half of Monday's win, which moved Philadelphia (6-7) into a tie with the Dallas Cowboys atop the NFC East with three games remaining.

Johnson, 29, has made the last two Pro Bowls and was an All-Pro first-team selection in 2017. Jeffery, 29, has 43 receptions for 490 yards and four touchdowns in 10 games this season.



Jeffery

Adam Vinatieri said he wishes he had surgery earlier to address the knee injury that forced the Indianapolis Colts to put him on the injured list, ending the legendary kicker's 24th NFL season.

Vinatieri, who turns 47 on Dec 28, connected on a career-low 68 percent of his field-goal attempts this season – down from 85.2 percent in 2019. And despite the drop in productivity, and the fact he'll be a free agent at the end of the league year, he told ESPN he hasn't discounted trying to return for a 25th season.

He will undergo knee surgery on Wednesday, according to ESPN.

New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick denied involvement with a team videographer who was caught filming the Cincinnati Bengals' sideline during last weekend's game against the Cleveland Browns.

Belichick addressed the situation during a conference call with Cincinnati reporters Tuesday morning. The Patriots host the Bengals on Sunday.

"I don't have anything to do with this at all, whatsoever," he said, per the Cincinnati Enquirer.

New Orleans Saints defensive end Marcus Davenport is reportedly done for the season with a foot injury.

According to NFL Network, Davenport sustained a "significant" injury on Sunday and will undergo season-ending surgery.

While the exact nature of the injury has not been revealed, Davenport went down without any contact in the fourth quarter.

Tampa Bay Buccaneers wide receiver Mike Evans likely will miss the rest of the season with a

hamstring injury suffered Sunday, ESPN reported.

He pulled his hamstring at the end of the first quarter of the Buccaneers' 38-35 win over the Indianapolis Colts as he made a 61-yard touchdown catch. It was the only reception of the game for the two-time Pro Bowl selection.

Evans ranks third in the NFL with 1,157 yards on 67 catches. He has eight touchdowns.

Washington Redskins cornerback Simeon Thomas was suspended without pay for the next four regular-season games for violating the NFL's substance abuse policies.

Thomas, mostly a special teams player, won't be able to play in the final three regular-season games for Washington (3-10) and will be eligible to return to a team's active roster after the first game of the 2020 season.

The Detroit Lions placed wide receiver Marvin Jones Jr on injured reserve. He made 62 catches for 779 yards and nine touchdowns in 13 games this season.

To replace Jones on the 53-man roster, the Lions signed defensive tackle Frank Herron from the Miami Dolphins' practice squad.

Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones denied meeting with former Ohio State coach Urban Meyer but fell short of dismissing the team's interest in him.

Jones said in a radio interview with 105.3 FM The Fan in Dallas the two sides have not met. Jason Garrett remains the head coach of the Cowboys, but his contract expires after the 2019 season.

The San Francisco 49ers put wide receiver Marquise Goodwin on injured reserve, ending his season.

Goodwin, 29, appeared in nine games this season, starting six, and finished with 12 catches for 186 yards and one touchdown.

The Cincinnati Bengals placed wide receiver Auden Tate on injured reserve due to a sprained left MCL. He sustained the knee injury Sunday while being tackled in the third quarter of the Bengals' 27-19 loss to the Cleveland Browns.

Tate, 22, caught one pass for 16 yards against the Browns and had 40 receptions for 575 yards and one touchdown in 12 games (10 starts) this season.

After the New York Jets ruled Le'Veon Bell out of last Sunday's game against the Miami Dolphins because of illness, the running back didn't exactly stay in.

On Saturday night, Bell was seen at a New Jersey bowling alley, despite the flu that kept him out of practice much of the week. Gase clearly wasn't thrilled about the outing when he addressed reporters, but he said Bell didn't violate team rules and wouldn't be disciplined.

## Bishop records 26 saves as Stars win after firing coach

Flames top Coyotes, remain unbeaten under Ward

DALLAS, Dec 11, (RTRS): Ben Bishop recorded 26 saves as the Dallas Stars posted a 2-0 victory over the visiting New Jersey Devils mere hours after firing coach Jim Montgomery.

Assistant Rick Bowness was behind the bench as interim coach in place of Montgomery, who was dismissed for "unprofessional conduct inconsistent with the core values and beliefs of the Dallas Stars and the National Hockey League," per general manager Jim Nill.

Radek Faksa and Joe Pavelski scored in the first period for the Stars, who improved to 17-4-2 in their past 23 games overall and 10-1-0 in their past 11 home contests.

Mackenzie Blackwood turned aside 33 shots for the reeling Devils, who dropped their sixth straight game (0-5-1) and were shut out for the fifth time this season.

Flames 5, Coyotes 2

In Glendale, Arizona, Michael Frolik and Zac Rinaldo each had a goal and an assist as Calgary defeated Arizona.

## ICE HOCKEY

Johnny Gaudreau, Sean Monahan and Milan Lucic also scored for the Flames, who improved to 5-0-0 under coach Geoff Ward since he replaced the fired Bill Peters. Goaltender Cam Talbot made 46 saves, one shy of his career high, set for the Edmonton Oilers at Boston in December 2015.

Jakob Chychrun and Phil Kessel scored for the Coyotes, who opened a three-game homestand. Antti Raanta stopped 24 of 29 shots.

Maple Leafs 4, Canucks 1

In Vancouver, British Columbia, John Tavares broke out of a scoring slump with two goals and an assist as Toronto defeated hosts Vancouver.

Auston Matthews and Zach Hyman also scored for the Maple Leafs, and goaltender Frederik Andersen made 38 saves. Andersen has won six of his past eight starts to improve to 15-7-3. Toronto earned its second win in a row after losing three of the previous four.

Kings 3, Rangers 1

In Los Angeles, Dustin Brown, Tyler Toffoli and Adrian Kempe scored goals, and Jonathan Quick was dominating in the net as Los Angeles returned home to earn a victory over New York and end a four-game losing streak.

Quick made 29 saves and earned his first win since Nov 27 against the New York Islanders. He lost his shutout with 31 seconds remaining when Artemi Panarin scored for the Rangers on the power play. It was Panarin's team-high 15th of the season.

Canadiens 4, Penguins 1

In Pittsburgh, visiting Montreal rode three second-period goals en route to a win over Pittsburgh.

Tomas Tatar, Joel Armia and Shea Weber scored the second-period goals, and each also had an assist. Brendan Gallagher added an empty-net goal and an assist for Montreal, which has won two straight and three of four since going eight games without a



New York Rangers' Kaapo Kakko (24) is defended by Los Angeles Kings' Drew Doughty during the first period of an NHL hockey game on Dec 10 in Los Angeles. (AP)

## NHL Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, Dec 11, (RTRS): Results and standings from the NHL games on Tuesday.

Tampa Bay	2	Florida	1	Dallas	2	New Jersey	0
Montreal	4	Pittsburgh	1	Calgary	5	Arizona	2
Buffalo	5	St Louis	2	Carolina	6	Edmonton	3
Anaheim	3	Minnesota (SO)	4	Toronto	4	Vancouver	1
Nashville	3	SanJose	1	Las Vegas	5	Chicago	1
Winnipeg	5	Detroit	1	Los Angeles	3	NY Rangers	1

Eastern Conference							Western Conference						
Atlantic Division							Central Division						
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	Pts		W	L	OTL	GF	GA	Pts	
Boston	20	5	6	107	78	46	St Louis	18	8	6	94	88	42
Buffalo	15	11	6	101	97	36	Colorado	19	8	3	111	84	41
Florida	15	10	5	106	101	35	Winnipeg	19	10	2	92	83	40
Montreal	14	11	6	101	103	34	Dallas	18	11	3	84	76	39
Toronto	15	13	4	104	104	34	Nashville	14	10	5	98	93	33
Tampa Bay	15	11	3	105	93	33	Minnesota	14	12	5	92	101	33
Ottawa	13	17	1	84	97	27	Chicago	12	13	6	84	98	30
Detroit	7	22	3	67	129	17	Pacific Division						
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	Pts		W	L	OTL	GF	GA	Pts	
Washington	22	5	5	117	93	49	Edmonton	18	11	4	100	99	40
NY Islanders	20	7	2	86	69	42	Arizona	18	11	4	91	80	40
Philadelphia	17	8	5	96	85	39	Calgary	17	12	4	91	98	38
Carolina	19	11	1	103	85	39	Las Vegas	16	12	5	98	94	37
Pittsburgh	17	10	4	104	85	38	Vancouver	15	12	4	104	95	34
NY Rangers	15	12	3	94	94	33	San Jose	15	16	2	89	114	32
Columbus	12	14	4	76	93	28	Anaheim	13	14	4	82	92	30
New Jersey	9	16	5	74	111	23	Los Angeles	12	18	2	80	103	26

Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L).

regulation win.

Lightning 2, Panthers 1

In Sunrise, Florida, Andre Vasilevskiy outduelled Sergei Bobrovsky, and Steven Stamkos scored his fourth goal in the past three games, leading Tampa Bay past Florida.

Vasilevskiy made 27 saves. Bobrovsky, his fellow Russian, had a season-high 46 saves.

Stamkos has a team-high 11 goals. Before this surge, he had gone six straight games with no goals and just two assists.

Sabres 5, Blues 2

In Buffalo, New York, Red-hot Jack Eichel scored twice as Buffalo defeated visiting St Louis. Eichel extended his points streak to 14 games (12 goals, 13 assists).

Sam Reinhart, Johan Larsson and Zemgus Girgensons also scored, and Linus Ullmark made 28 saves for the Sabres, who improved to 9-3-3 at home this season.

Jets 5, Red Wings 1

In Winnipeg, Manitoba, Blake Wheeler, Andrew Copp and Patrik Laine combined for three goals in a two-minute span late in the second period to spark Winnipeg to a victory over visiting Detroit.

Laurent Brossoit stopped 15 shots to record the win for the Jets, who have won two straight and are on a 9-2-1

run. The Red Wings, who sit at the bottom of the league standings, have lost 10 straight games in regulation and gone 12 clashes without a victory.

Hurricanes 6, Oilers 3

In Edmonton, Alberta, Sebastian Aho netted his 100th career marker in a two-goal night, and Carolina tallied three times on the power play while winning.

Aho, who had a hat trick in a five-point game Saturday, scored the contest's first goal to reach the milestone and had a power-play goal in the third

period. Nino Niederreiter and Ryan Dzingel added power-play tallies for Carolina, which opened a five-game road trip by winning its third straight.

Ducks 3, Wild 2, SO

In St Paul, Minnesota, Rickard Rakell scored in regulation and again in the shootout to lift Anaheim past Minnesota.

Cam Fowler also scored, and John Gibson made 22 saves for the Ducks, who won for the first time this season when out-shooting their opponent.

Golden Knights 5, Blackhawks 1

In Las Vegas, Marc-Andre Fleury made 28 saves, and Reilly Smith had a goal and an assist to lead Vegas to a victory over Chicago.

Fleury was making his first start since Nov 23 after taking a personal leave due to the illness and death of his father. He lost his shutout bid with just 27 seconds to go when Dominik Kubalik scored a power-play goal. Deryk Engelland, William Karlsson, Max Pacioretty and Ryan Reaves also scored goals for the Golden Knights, who snapped a two-game losing streak.

Predators 3, Sharks 1

In Nashville, Tennessee, Nick Bonino and Ryan Johansen scored third-period goals, and Jusse Saros stopped a San Jose penalty shot with just under 11 minutes left in regulation as hosts Nashville beat the reeling Sharks.



Winnipeg Jets goaltender Laurent Brossoit (30) makes a save on a Detroit Red Wings shot during the first period of an NHL hockey game, on Dec 10, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. (AP)

## Translation issues delay verdict in Sun doping case

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Dec 11, (AP): Translation problems in the doping case of Olympic swimming champion Sun Yang have delayed the expected verdict to January, the Court of Arbitration for Sport said Tuesday.

CAS said an "agreed-upon written transcript" from the hearing, including Sun's testimony from Chinese into English, is being prepared to help the judging panel who heard the appeal in open court last month.

## SWIMMING

"In view of these circumstances, the (verdict) is not expected to be issued before mid-January," the court said.

Sun is facing a ban from next year's Tokyo Olympics if the three-judge panel decides he broke anti-doping rules by refusing to cooperate with officials who visited his

home in China in September 2018. He disputed their credentials to take his blood and urine samples.

The World Anti-Doping Agency appealed against a ruling by swimming governing body FINA to simply warn Sun over the confrontational incident.

Lawyers and the three judges often had difficulty following proceedings, including cross-examination of Sun early in the 10-hour hearing.

CAS rules allow parties to provide their own translators, but those brought by the three-time Olympic gold medalist's team were replaced during the lunch break by a WADA staff member.

WADA asked the court to ban Sun for between two and eight years. It would be a second violation for Sun, who served a three-month ban imposed by Chinese authorities in 2014 after testing positive for a banned stimulant.