

YULIYA STEPANOVA WRITTEN STATEMENT – JULY 25, 2018

Thank you very much for inviting me to share with you some of my journey as an elite track and field athlete inside of Russia's doping system and now a whistleblower hoping to make sports clean.

I would like to begin by apologizing about my past. Unfortunately, I cannot change my past. I was in the Russian doping system, I cheated and now I am talking about it.

When I was 14 years old, I watched the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. I saw all the Russian Olympians as gods, - as the people out of this world. While watching them, I would get emotionally attached. I cried when they lost and felt happiness when they won. Back then I could not imagine that I could be one of the athletes representing my home country in international competitions and become like one of my athletic heroes.

I started running when I was 17 years old and started hearing about doping from other athletes. I asked my coach, what is doping? He explained to me that doping is like vitamins for athletes. All athletes use it and if I want to run fast I must use it.

When I was 20 years old, I got very sick and spent three months in the hospital. Even though many people around me were telling me that I will not be able to run again I kept dreaming that I will get healthy because at that time I could not live without running. Later, my coach told me that he spoke to the doctor about giving me some prohibited substances, and the doctor said they would probably lead to a faster recovery. After getting out of the hospital I slowly started running again and the first 6 months I was training lightly and taking only pills that were prescribed to help recover from tuberculosis.

The following winter my coach decided to give me testosterone. That's where it began. I was soon doing EPO injections, taking oral turinabol and more. My PRs got faster and I became a real member of the Russian National Team. I didn't feel like I was doing anything wrong because everyone was doing it.

The most shocking thing that I learned during this time was that members of the Russian National Track and Field team could compete completely dirty at the National Championships. So, I could do EPO and testosterone injections while competing in the national championships and then just text my urine sample number to the head of the Russian track and field medical commission and there would not be a positive test. The anti-doping lab and the Russian Anti-Doping Agency, with the approval of the Russian Ministry of Sports, did not report to WADA about dirty samples. And there were hundreds of positives just in track and field that were never reported. In the end, the main goal was to make sure that those athletes were clean two to three weeks after national competitions and during major international competitions.

In the spring of 2012, The Russian Track and Field Federation was not happy with my performances at international competitions because I was not winning medals. But they gave me one last chance. I decided that I need to train harder but soon I started to feel pain in the upper part of the anterior thigh. The pain got stronger every day, but I kept training.

Soon, I understood that I could not continue to run as I had pain even when I was walking. My coach wanted to help me recover faster and advised me to do infusions with Creatinolfosfate sodium and Mydocalm. So, I infused the substances and shortly after, my heart rate started to increase rapidly. My heart was beating stronger and stronger with every second.

I was scared that my heart would stop and I would die. The ambulance came, and they injected something to get my heart rate down. My heart had withstood the effects of these drugs and I survived. After this, I was scared to do injections and infusions on my own.

Today, I still have health problems after using all these substances. My Ferritin level is 20 times more than it should be and I have a stone in the right buttock from doing iron injections the wrong way. Doctors said that my training helps me to use extra ferritin from my body but when I stop my training, I have to find a solution for this problem or I could die from Iron Poisoning.

In the beginning of 2013 I was facing a ban. At that time, Vitaly, my husband, helped me to see the world through different eyes and offered me a choice. I could act like most of my teammates did – cry a little and continue to listen to the lies of the Russian sports officials and while being sanctioned continue to get paid by the Russian Police, Russian Ministry of Sports and Russian Regional sports organizations. Or we could try to fight the system together. Most athletes in Russia do not have such choice, as there is still not a single organization in Russia that truly fights corruption in sports. I want to continue to run and compete without doping and not lie and listen to lies again.

The Russian doping system does not hate people that stay in the system and get caught. It hates people that fight the system. And we decided to fight it. We are now traitors to Russia, but we know we've done the right thing.

From January 2013 until November 2014 I gained evidence by recording sport officials, coaches and athletes discussing the existing doping system in Russia. In December 2014, I gave some of this evidence to German investigative journalist Hajo Seppelt, and he made it public. In 2015, the World Anti-Doping Agency Independent Commission investigated the situation in the Russian track and field, and in November 2015, the WADA Independent Commission report confirmed my and my husband's statements and used a lot of the evidence that we provided them. This report helped to move things forward and Dr. Rodchenkov decided to tell the truth about the doping situation in Russia as well.

From the beginning, it was our hope that we would be able to get people to tell the truth. But we understand why others have not become whistleblowers and are still inside of the system as the fight against doping and corruption in Russian sports is not easy. You will lose your job, your career and even fear for the safety of you and your family. You will be called a liar and a traitor if you stand up against the system, that unfortunately still exists in Russian sports today.

Vitaly and I could never imagine that we would get this far in raising our concerns about the doping situation in Russia. We were not able to find much support inside of Russia, but we were happy to see that most Russian sports officials were not right. Not every country's goal is to cover up doping use of athletes of their own country. In fact, rules do matter, and ethics matters in sports.

I am glad to say that our efforts did not go unnoticed, and we are glad that the situation in Russia is being discussed globally. We feel that we are in a fight that is still not over yet and we thank you for allowing us to share our story with you. The best part for us over the past few years was to learn that there are people that care about fair competition. We just wish those people were louder and stronger because clean athletes need to see it and feel it. A special thank you to investigative journalists and the United States Anti-Doping Agency for not staying away from the problem and for making sports cleaner not just in the USA but in Russia as well.

I believe that criminalizing doping and strongly punishing those that cheat in Olympic sports is a necessary step to make sports better. We, as parents, deserve to know that our children that participate on any level of competition are in safe hands and gaining positive and ethical experiences. Sports officials, coaches, managers, doctors, and anyone that decide to take advantage of our children, the Olympic values, and anti-doping rules must be strongly punished and banned from sports for life.

Thank you very much.