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Russia banned from 2020 Olympics, world championships by World Anti-Doping Agency

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Russia was banned from the Olympics and world championships in a range of sports for four years on Monday after the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) ruled to punish it for manipulating laboratory data, a WADA spokesman said.

WADA's executive committee took the decision after it concluded that Moscow had tampered with laboratory data by planting fake evidence and deleting files linked to positive doping tests that could have helped identify drug cheats.

The WADA committee's decision to punish Russia with a ban was unanimous, the spokesman said.

Russia, which has tried to showcase itself as a global sports power, has been embroiled in doping scandals since a 2015 report commissioned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) found evidence of mass doping in Russian athletics.

#### Doping woes

Its doping woes have grown since, with many of its athletes sidelined from the past two Olympics and the country stripped of its flag altogether at last year's Pyeongchang Winter Games as punishment for state-sponsored doping cover-ups at the 2014 Sochi Games.

Monday's sanctions had been recommended by WADA's compliance review committee in response to the doctored laboratory data provided by Moscow earlier this year.

One of the conditions for the reinstatement of Russian anti-doping agency RUSADA, which was suspended in 2015 in the wake of the athletics doping scandal but reinstated last year, had been that Moscow provide an authentic copy of the laboratory data.

The sanctions effectively strip the agency of its accreditation.

Sports Minister Pavel Kolobkov last month attributed the discrepancies in the laboratory data to technical issues.

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