



MEDIA RELEASE

ANTI-DOPING

THE APPEAL OF THE BELARUS CANOE ASSOCIATION IS UPHELD BY THE COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT (CAS) – ONE YEAR SUSPENSION OVERTURNED

Lausanne, 23 January 2017 – The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has issued its decision in the arbitration procedure between the Belarus Canoe Association (BCA) & senior men’s canoe and kayak team members (the “Appellants”), and the International Canoe Federation (ICF). The appeal was directed against the ICF Executive Committee’s decision of 15 July 2016 in which it imposed a one-year suspension on the Belarus senior men’s Canoe and Kayak teams for all international competitions (including the 2016 Olympic Games) due to alleged multiple anti-doping rule violations. The appeal has been upheld and the decision issued by the ICF Executive Committee is set aside.

In April 2016, a BCF training camp held in Le Temple-sur-Lot, France, was raided by French Police and Customs who confiscated various substances, medication, material and medical equipment. In addition, seventeen athletes from the Belarus canoe team underwent doping controls and meldonium was found in the samples provided by five of the athletes. Further to its investigation and a hearing with a Belarusian delegation, on 15 July 2016, the ICF Executive Committee issued a decision in which it suspended the Belarusian senior men’s canoe and kayak teams, including coaches, medical staff and entourage for all international competitions for one year, as from 13 July 2016.

On 18 July 2016, the Appellants filed a statement of appeal at the CAS, including a request for a stay of execution of the ICF Executive Committee’s decision which was rejected by the CAS as it did not address the criteria set out in the CAS rules. The arbitration was conducted by a panel of CAS arbitrators: Prof. Dr. Michael Geistlinger, Austria (President), Mr Romano F. Subiotto QC, Belgium/UK, and Prof. Dr. Martin Schimke, Germany. The Panel heard the parties and their experts at a hearing which took place at the CAS headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland on 7 November 2016.

On the basis of the evidence and arguments submitted by the parties, the CAS Panel found that there was insufficient evidence to uphold several of the alleged anti-doping rule violations. Accordingly, in the absence of multiple anti-doping rule violations, the Panel found that there was no justification to uphold the imposition of a one-year ban on the Belarus senior men’s Canoe and Kayak teams and decided to set aside the decision taken by the ICF Executive Committee.

The Arbitral Award will be published on the CAS website in a few days.