

7.2 Brief Julia an WADA, 27.2.2013

Dear WADA,

My name is Julia Rusanova and I'm a Russian professional runner. I love running, I love competing and I hope that my admittance of doping (I'm not sure if "confession" is an appropriate word in my case [comment from June 2016 – a lot of the things that are mentioned in this statement are already known to WADA and that's why I do not use word "confession"]) can somehow help the fight against doping and make athletics a better sport.

When I was 14 years old I watched the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. I, like many people in the world, watched it on TV. When I was watching Russian athletes compete, I was getting very emotional, I looked at them as gods, as the people out of this world. I was crying when they were losing and felt happiness when they were winning. I felt a lot of respect for our country and the people who compete in the Olympics. Back then I could not imagine that I can be one of the athletes representing Russia in international competitions. I was absolutely sure that to be a professional athlete you need to train since your childhood. I was 14 and passed my childhood, so I could only watch these athletic heroes.

When I was 17, in 2003, I was going to a college in my hometown Kursk and like many people in my physical education class had to pass running normative to pass the class. I always loved physical education classes and always did better than most of my classmates in passing running normative. I was faster. Between different colleges there was a running competition and I and a couple others were sent to compete for our college. In these competitions, I came 3rd and did not receive a medal. Only the winner received a medal. I decided to find a coach, train, and the following year to win the same competition. This is when my sports career started. My physical education teacher from school, after listening to my plans, advised me to go to middle distance coach Vladimir Mokhnev. I was sure that after training for one year and getting a medal I will quit training. But I started to like training. I was making new friends and I was doing well at training. As a result I was getting faster and faster. In a year, the college competition that I was training for was cancelled, but by that time I was already a top 3 runner in my city and in my region. I started going to national competitions for my age group but was always far away from medaling. The girls from my age group were running a lot faster than I. I consoled myself with the thought that I cannot compete with those girls yet because I had not trained enough yet. About the same time my running friends started telling me that those girls run so fast not because they are so talented or they train more but because they take some prohibited pills that they get from their coaches. In fact all top level athletes take those pills. After training for 3 years and continuing losing at national competitions I started asking my coach to give me those pills as well. He was telling me that it's too early for me because my base training is not at the necessary level yet. During my first 2 years of training I didn't take any medicine or supplements at all. During my third year I started taking general vitamins, extra iron, B12, inosine, ascorbic acid, carnitine, actovegin, mildronat, potassium orotate, glucose. Some of those medications were injected by my coach.

In March 2006 I got very sick and was diagnosed with tuberculosis. 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 and will be able to run again, which by that time became something that I loved doing and could not live without. I was lucky. The doctor that was assigned to me in the hospital turned out to be a very good man and promised me that I will be fine and will be able to run again. Later my coach told me that he spoke to the doctor about giving me some prohibited substances. And the doctor answered that probably it will even help for a faster recovery. After getting out of the hospital I slowly started running again and the first 6 months or so I was training lightly and was taking only pills that were prescribed to help recover from tuberculosis. The following winter my coach decided to give me testosterone propionate (virormone). A 2ml ampoule was divided in 7 equal parts. Each part was injected subcutaneously (under skin) every third day. I was told that it is detectable for 5 days after the last injection. In January 2011, Mr. Portugalov (later I will write about this person in more detail) told me that testosterone injections are good only when the ampoule is opened and there was no point dividing the ampoule in 7 parts as only the first part actually did something. And testosterone is used for intramuscular injection only. So, many things that I did as my coach told me later turned out to be incorrect. And really it's hard to tell at some points of my career whether my result was getting better because I trained more or because I used some medicine or because I thought that I'm taking some medicine and I must be faster. Before doing testosterone injections the wrong way my PR in 800m was 2:13, after my PR was 2:08.47.

Summer 2007 was the first time when my coach gave me Oral Turinabol pills and EPO injections. My PR moved to 2:03.47 in 800m. I was 7th in the Nationals for my age group. Oral Turinabol I took every day for 15 days from 12.05.2007 to 26.05.2007. At that time it was known by athletics coaches that Oral Turinabol is detectable for 40 days. EPO injections (1000 ME) – subcutaneously every other day from 30.05.2007 to

10.06.2007. I was told that EPO is detectable for 9 days after the last injection. As I was told by my coach there is always doping-control and National Championships and his whole preparation (training and prohibited substances) was calculated the way that I was clean while competing.

Winter 2008 I took Oral Turinabol pills every day from 17.10.2007 to 31.10.2007 (first course) and from 08.12.2007 to 23.12.2007(second course). EPO injections (1000 ME) I started doing on 02.01.2008 and did 15 injections every other day. I did testosterone injections the same way as the previous winter. Also I took non prohibited substances. My PR moved to 2.01.96. I won the National Championship at my age group and became a member of a National team (20-23 age group).

The following few seasons my preparation didn't change much. The new substances were Oxanabol (Oxandrolone) and Parabolan.

The more I trained the more pharmacological help my body needed to keep improving. Sometimes from taking prohibited substances my muscles were getting very tightened and I just couldn't run. Sometimes my blood was getting very thick. I had to keep training through those problems as I thought that all athletes are going through this. And in the end, most of the times by the time when I was competing at the Nationals and I was not taking anything prohibited my body, my muscles were beginning to act normal and I was competing well. Later, when I met Mr. Portugalov it turned out that most athletes don't go through the same problems and my coach just wasn't knowledgeable enough about the ways to avoid such problems. I continued preparing by taking the prohibited substances but by the time I was competing at the National Championships I was always clean and I never failed a doping test.

Usually at National Championships first places get athletes from Moscow and Moscow region. Being from Kursk region, I could only dream about winning and qualifying for European or World Championships. I just couldn't understand why athletes from Moscow and Moscow region are stronger than from other regions. I was taking the prohibited substances just as they were doing but I couldn't win. Everything came in place when ARAF head coaches and managers finally noticed me and decided to take me under their control. During 2010 Summer National Championships athletes were qualifying for the European Championships. Since Mariya Savinova already qualified only 2 other 800m runners could qualify. I was running in the final and finished 3rd by losing just 0.01 to Svetlana Klyuka. That is when the head endurance coach, Mr. Melnikov, finally started taking me seriously. About one month before the National Championships Mr. Melnikov called my coach and told us to compete at European Athletics Outdoor Classic Meeting "Znamensky Memorial" near Moscow. My coach answered that I'm preparing for the National Championships and will run only if Mr. Melnikov guarantees that I will not be tested. Mr. Melnikov didn't like how Mr. Mokhnev answered.

Sometime after the National Championships one of the coaches, while being drunk, said that I tested positive at the Nationals and I will be sanctioned. Of course, my coach started calling people that he was buying the prohibited substances from, who knew Mr. Rodchenkov, the lab's director, to find out if the information is true. And those people and Mr. Rodchenkov decided to make some "cash" on this talk. I do not remember exactly how everything happened, as it was 2.5 years ago but I personally took about \$1000 to Mr. Rodchenkov's friend and he guaranteed that I do not have anything to worry about. Later the same day Mr. Rodchenkov called to my coach directly and explained how everything happened but since we paid money nothing will come out. After all this happened my coach and Mr. Melnikov still found a way to communicate and Mr. Melnikov decided to give me a chance by preparing me for the 2011 winter season. Mr. Melnikov told me to meet with Mr. Portugalov who was a person responsible for pharmacological (doping) preparation of most top level athletes. Mr. Portugalov was responsible for such pharma preparation in many other sports as well. During one of my first visits to him I had to wait for a long time while he was talking to swimming coaches. Mr. Portugalov's office is in the same building with the Russian lab. My first meeting with him was a long one. It happened in December 2010. He wanted to know exactly what I took before. He told me what to take (prohibited and not prohibited) while preparing for this winter season. Then he gave me prohibited and non-prohibited medicine and told me exactly how much I have to pay for this visit. I always paid to him in cash. Mr. Portugalov said that I can always call him on his cell phone if I have any questions of if something is going not as planned. Mr. Portugalov gave me Oxastenon. He explained that it is combined Oral Turinabol and Oxandrolone and it is detectable for about 35 days. Mr. Portugalov also told me how to take Oxastenon. He told me to start with one pill per day and if my muscles are fine then to start taking 1.5 pills. If my muscles tighten and I have hard time training then go back to taking 1 pill per day. I took Oxastenon from 05.12.2010 to 25.12.2010. Mr. Portugalov was right - 1.5 pills was too much for me as my muscles were tightening too much. I went back to less dosage and it let me train normally. My coach, Mr. Mokhnev, didn't realize the previous years that some dosages were just too much for my muscles and my body.

Of course the most interesting part of the meeting with Mr. Portugalov for me was that I no longer had to be clean for the National Championships. He said that we had to make sure that I'm clean at European Champi-

onships. I could run dirty at the nationals. I guess the main reason why ARAF decided to give me a chance was the fact that I was able to run clean faster than dirty top Russian runners.

When I came back from Portugal training camp in December, I met with Mr. Portugalov again. He told me to do 3 injections (1/2 ampoule each) of testosterone. I thought that this is just way too much for me, but since I always listened to what he told me, I did as he told me to. I did it on 29 and 31.12.2010 and 03.01.2011. Also he gave me Oxandrolone and told me to take it from 03.01.2011 to 24.01.2011. From January 10th he told me to start doing EPO injections – on 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 17th, 19th, 21st – 2000ME each day. With EPO he told me to do VENOFER. My blood results on 19.01.11 were Hb – 156, Ht – 47, Re – 0,25, Fe – 11,2. Later my results were even higher. On Feb 6th while running 600m at IAAF Permit Meeting “Russian Winter” in Moscow I was very close to breaking a world record – 1:24.04. Later that evening Mr. Portugalov told me to do 1 ampoule of Testosterone and don't do any hard work outs for 3 days as I could tear my muscles. Often he was telling that this is the way most countries in the world prepare their athletes and that the dosages that I'm taking are nowhere close to what others are taking. And in general they use more prohibited substances. I did more EPO (2000 ME) injections on 07.02.2011 and 10.02.2011. On 10.02.2011 I did last ½ ampoule of Testosterone as well. My blood results on 11.02.2011 are Hb-165, Ht-50. On Feb 16th and 17th I competed at National Indoor Championships. I won my heat with the time 1:59.98 and won the final 1:58.14. After the final I was tested by Rusada. Once I exited doping control station I sent an SMS with a number of my sample to Mr. Portugalov. I still have all pink copies from my doping controls. And as for many others that were preparing directly for the European championships my sample was clean. One week before the European Championships Rusada tested us again. This is called “away” doping-control. It is always requested by the Russian Ministry of sports for any sports to make sure that all the athletes that are going to compete internationally abroad are clean. Of course if someone for some reason is not clean at such doping-control then that person stays in Russia and doesn't compete or that person gets tested again a few days later to make sure that he is finally clean. On 25.02.2011 my blood results were Hb-164, Ht-50. As I understand now, Mr. Portugalov, Mr. Melnikov and others back then did not understand the whole point of blood passport and kept preparing people the old way and their main goal was to make sure that the sample is clean by certain dates. In France on March 3rd 2011 I gave blood for my blood passport for the first time. My results were Hb – 161, Ht – 48.5, Re – 0.31, Off-s – 127.6 . Those were abnormal results and I probably could have been or should have been sanctioned back then. But I continued competing.

Preparing for Summer 2011 was similar to Winter 2011. I was doing everything that Mr. Portugalov and Mr. Melnikov were telling me. Oxastenon, EPO, competing dirty at National Championships. After I finished 3rd at European Championships during winter Mr. Portugalov was disappointed. I really don't know if he was joking or not but he told me that he bet some money on me as he was sure that I will win. And I didn't. So, for summer 2011, Mr. Portugalov didn't really want to prepare me but Mr. Melnikov insisted that I should be one of the 6 athletes at 800m that are being prepared for the World Championship in Daegu. The five others were – Savinova, Kosteckaya, Kotulskaya (Kofanova), Kluka, Zinurova. So, for 3 places to qualify for the World Championships were 6 runners that were able to compete dirty at the Nationals. I was 2nd in the final – 1:56.99, losing only to Savinova – 1:56.95. During Summer preparation, ARAF was taking a closer look at our blood results but still didn't completely understand what IAAF is looking for. As Mr. Melnikov said later, the actual time when they were able to understand blood passports results was spring of 2012.

In February 2012, after I qualified for World Indoor Championships, Mr. Portugalov decided to stop preparing me completely. I had questions about using Altitude Sleeping Systems (Hypoxico) and he wasn't answering to me for 3 days and then I received an SMS from him that he changed his job and cannot help me anymore. It was strange and I don't know the exact reason for his action, but it could be because of my husband. He used to work at Rusada from 2008 to 2011 and really tried fighting doping, and many people, including Mr. Portugalov, didn't like him because he did not want to be a part of corrupt doping system. Maybe Mr. Portugalov didn't want to work with me because IAAF sent the lists of athletes with abnormal blood results and I was in those lists. Anyways, he continued working with other athletes and I was the only one he stopped working with.

Mr. Portugalov did not believe in Altitude Sleeping Systems. He was saying that it is a waste of money and it is much better and easier to use EPO for increasing endurance. For the preparation under the supervision of Mr. Portugalov I had to pay him 5% of all the money that I earned at IAAF meets and in the case of medaling at European or World Championships: \$1600 for gold, \$1000 for silver, and \$700 for bronze.

In the spring of 2012 I was injured and was not able to compete during the summer season at all. Before the Olympics I decided to change coach and asked Mr. Kazarin, who is a coach of Mariya Savinova, if he would take me. He said that he would gladly take me. But Mr. Melnikov and Mr. Portugalov didn't want me to change the coach before the Olympics. They told Mr. Kazarin that I'm very problematic and I have a husband who doesn't fit in our system. Mr. Kazarin apologized and told me to wait until the end of London Olympics.

Mariya Savinova won the Olympics and Mr. Melnikov let Mr. Kazarin to take me in his group. Once I started training with Mr. Kazarin, we started having pharmacological preparation talks. In general, everything was the same as with Mr. Mokhnev. Only Mr. Kazarin was very surprised that I did not use any HGH under the preparation with Mr. Portugalov. Mr. Kazarin said that it could be a big plus in the future as I still have room for improvement.

Unfortunately in November, when I was supposed to start taking Oxanabol and Primobol tablets it turned out that my blood passport results are not very good and I could be sanctioned sooner or later. Mr. Melnikov told Mr. Kazarin not to prepare me for this winter season and see how everything turns out. In December, I got injured again. I was trying to recover as soon as possible but still every day I was nervous and uncertain about my future. From January 28th to February 8th I was in Ukraine at mud cure resort trying to recover from my injury. On February 5th, 2013 I called Mr. Kazarin to find out if there is any news and he informed me that I must visit Mr. Melnikov as soon as I'm in Moscow. He said that I will probably be sanctioned for 2 years. When I came to visit Mr. Melnikov, Mr. Kazarin came to his office as well. Mr. Melnikov was being nice to me while talking, it almost sounded like that he is apologizing for the fact that I will be sanctioned. The rest about me agreeing with sanctions you already know.

Now I will tell a little about athlete preparation in Russia. Basically it is all about trying to still money.

Top level athletes usually receive monthly salaries at 3-7 different places. It is just plain salary as being athlete-instructor and does not include bonuses for winning medals. Each salary varies from \$500 to \$3000. So, the total amount can go from \$1500 to \$12000 monthly. Those places are:

1. 1 or 2 or 3 regions that they compete for at national competitions. It is strange – but yes an athlete can compete for 3 regions at the same time. It's called parallel point system. So, if an athlete gets first place and it's worth 15 points, all 3 regions get 15 points each. Supposedly it was made this way in the 90s by Rossport, so good athletes don't run away from poor regions to rich regions. They were just able to continue to compete for a poor region, while getting a salary from poor and rich region. So, it was made to balance things but instead, just like many things in Russia it turned into a corrupt scheme. The way it works now, if top level athlete goes to a national team training camp then ARAF pays for it. Coaches or other "managers" from the regions that this athlete competes for still organize the same training camp for the same athlete and just keep the money and provide fake documents. There are different ways that coaches and "managers" can do it, but this is basically how it works.

2. Center of sports preparation under the Ministry of sports.

3. Police or ARMY or Gazprom or all three at the same time.

In my case, I compete for 2 regions and receive a salary from police and center of sports preparation.

Mr. Melnikov told me that the best way for female athletes to go through disqualification is by getting pregnant. This way, under the Russian law, a pregnant person or a mother with a small child cannot be fired. So, it means that if I get pregnant fast enough then I can probably still receive salaries even though I'm sanctioned. Actually, even though the whole sports system in Russia is very corrupt and there is no fairness at all, the fact that Mr. Melnikov didn't just turn away makes it somewhat positive. Mr. Melnikov also promised that if he is still the head endurance coach in 2 years, I will be able to come back in 2 years and he will give me a few more chances to prepare for main international events.

Russia doesn't hate people that stay in the system and get caught, Russia hates people that try to fight the system. And this is where I and my husband are moving if some of the information that I provided to you becomes publicly announced.

My first coach, Mr. Mokhnev, was a member of USSR national team. Back then they used steroids that were a lot stronger and he always told me that he is fine now and he had kids and that the use of steroids didn't really affect his life at all.

Many younger athletes don't know that they are taking steroids as coaches tell them that they are taking vitamins. The more faster athletes a coach has the more money he/she gets. In general, our coaches are preparing athletes the same way as it was done in 80s and 90s as they don't know any other ways to prepare athletes. I was lucky that my coach didn't hide from me what I'm taking and didn't really push me with running faster when I just started training. Mr. Mokhnev told me that before Mr. Maslakov, head coach of Russian National team, and Mr. Melnikov the head coach of Russian team was Mr. Kulichenko. He tried to control everything and he was only preparing athletes that were buying doping directly from him at very high price. He also was telling athletes when and how to use the prohibited substances and in case of doping violations he was the one who directly contacted the lab's director to make sure that bad urine sample doesn't come out. He left the team in 2007 because of a doping scandal but nothing really changed after him. Mr. Maslakov

is responsible for preparing sprinters and field events, Mr. Melnikov is responsible for preparing endurance runners, Mr. Portugalov is responsible for pharmacological preparation. And Mr. Balakhnichev is the president of ARAF and he's been there for over 20 years. Usually before each season Mr. Menikov and Mr. Maslakov decide who will be prepared for main events and those athletes will be able to compete dirty at national events. Usually the amount of athletes that can run dirty is 5-6 for each event. But Mr. Melnikov said that this number will probably go down to 3 as it is getting harder to not get caught. Mr. Melnikov always tells his athletes to keep frozen clean urine in refrigerator, in case an unexpected doping-control comes. This is being done to make sure that the story with 7 Russian athletes from 2008 doesn't happen again.

Some Russian athletes say that in cases with doping problems of Russian Olympic and World Champions the money to cover the problem are being paid directly to the President of IAAF. As I understand, it is just a big business with political issues. I understand that by telling my story I might not be able to change anything in better direction. Probably, for a good change many many years must go by, and a small confession about the situation in Russian sports will not change well-organized doping system of preparing athletes. To our country, the main goal is to get as many medals as possible and how it is being done is not very important. And to ensure that the athletes would not be greatly offended, when suddenly happen such situations as happened to me, there are good salaries. Athletes understand that it is unlikely that they can make more money by doing something else and leave from sport in silence for 2 years and just as quietly come back and continue to be part of a well-developed system.

When I just found out about being sanctioned, the world that I imagined to myself collapsed in front of my eyes, and it was very bitter to understand that I'm being sanctioned and the people that set up such doping system in Russia will not be punished at all, and will continue to prepare athletes the same way. My first reaction to all this was everyone who deserves to be punished must be punished. Why should I be punished, but they are not? I thought that my sports career is over, and people will be angry at me. But actually, people around me were not angry. When small information appeared in the media, all friends and athletes looked at it with understanding, because it is Russia and everybody understands how our country is preparing athletes.

I and my husband would love to make athletics cleaner and we are willing to do anything to try to make a change in a better direction. But I also understand that our world is built on compromises. I understand that may be the most that I can do is to share my story with you and continue living in Russian reality. It's like, I live in Russia by Russian rules and the doping fighting is in Canada. And Canada seems like a different planet at this point.

If I cannot really change anything then I will try to fully recover from all of my injuries and become a mother. And in 2 years I plan to come back and do what I enjoy doing the most – run. I hope that in 2 years WADA will find a way to make a change in a better direction and I will be able to compete in Russia and internationally fairly.

Yuliya Stepanova

PS. Attached is the photo of tablets that Mr. Kazarin gave me in November 2012.

