

Liam Morgan: European Weightlifting Federation would be prioritising finance and prestige over tackling doping if they move their Championships

Sports

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“By moving the Championships to allow the seven countries at the heart of weightlifting’s well-documented doping problem the chance to compete, there is no deterrent.” Photo: The IWF Executive Board

By Liam Morgan, Oct 7, 2017 When it eventually came, the International Weightlifting Federation's (IWF) decision to suspend nine countries for a year for their poor doping records was the right one. But a proposed move from the European body to move their Championships in Antalya in Turkey from March and April to the Autumn to allow banned countries to compete is plainly wrong. To go slightly further, it is shambolic and farcical. This week, reports circulated that the European Weightlifting Federation (EWF) were set to switch their flagship event to ensure seven of the nine countries, including Russia and the host nation, could take part despite the suspension. It came after Maxim Agapitov, the head of the Russian Weightlifting Federation - surprise surprise - claimed the Championships would be re-arranged in an interview with TASS, Russia's state news agency. The suspensions, handed out by the IWF after all of the nations involved registered three or more drugs positives following re-analysis of samples from the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Games in Beijing and London respectively, come to an end in mid-October, six months after the 2018 European Championships were due to conclude. As well as Russia and Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine have also been suspended from Europe, with Kazakhstan and China the other two countries to be sanctioned. The whole idea of a suspension in sport is the same as in other areas of society. It is a deterrent. In the same way you punish a child for misbehaving by banning them from playing their favourite computer games console or suspending their sweet privileges for an indefinite amount of time, the whole reason for it is to stop the offending party from doing it again. By moving the Championships to allow the seven countries at the heart of weightlifting’s well-documented doping problem the chance to compete, there is no deterrent. [⋮]
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