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Doping decision shows figure skating needs fixing

By [Robert Weiner](#)

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By Robert Weiner, Ting Cui, and Gene Lambey

On January 29, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) [banned](#) Russian figure skater Kamila Valieva for four years due to a positive drug test for Trimetazidine. The controversy arose during the 2022 Olympics when Valieva's sample from the Russian Nationals Championships in December 2021 revealed the doping violation. The ban, effective retroactively from December 25, 2021, nullifies all results after that date.

The prolonged two-year case has deprived over a dozen athletes of their rightful medals in the figure skating-team event.



The CAS [ruling](#) tasks the International Skating Union (ISU) with deciding the results of the 2022 Olympic figure skating-team event in Beijing. The ISU's press release on January 30th ranked the U.S. first, Japan second, and Russia third, relegating Canada to fourth place. Skate Canada aims to appeal, citing ISU rule 353, which mandates that competitors below the disqualified athlete move up in their placement.

If the ISU follows their own rule, every woman who finished below Valieva in the Team Event would ascend one spot and earn an extra point for their team. Consequently, Canada would secure the Bronze medal.

US Anti-Doping Agency CEO Travis [Tygart](#) told USA TODAY Sports on Tuesday that "It's nonsensical for Valieva to get four years and Russia keep Olympic bronze."

Canada's appeal is substantiated, yet the ISU has been silent. With the 2024 World Figure Skating Championships approaching in Montreal on March 18-24, Canadian athletes deserve justice.

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The Valieva incident underscores the randomness of sports drug enforcement. Athletes traditionally succeed through hard work, willpower, and determination. The use of performance-enhancing drugs by nations disrespects the efforts of clean athletes who uphold the integrity of the Olympic movement.

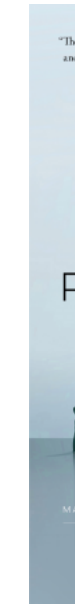
Russia, in particular, has a notorious history of doping through its state-sponsored operation. The country alone has had more than 150 athletes caught doping at the Olympics and 48 medals stripped, [according](#) to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). This is four times the number of the next highest country and more than 30% of the global [total](#).

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