

AIU Bans Kipruto For Six Years For ABP Violation

5 JUNE 2024, MONACO: World Championship 10,000 metres bronze medallist and 10-kilometre road-running world record-holder, Rhonex Kipruto, has been banned for six years by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) after a Disciplinary Tribunal ruled irregularities in his Athlete Biological Passport (ABP) resulted from doping.

After considering submissions from experts, the Tribunal rejected Kipruto's defence, concluding the "cause for the abnormalities in the ABP is more likely to be due to blood manipulation" such as through the use of recombinant human erythropoietin (rEPO), while pointing out there was "no other plausible explanation" for the abnormal values.

The 24-year-old Kenyan was provisionally suspended on 11 May last year under the World Athletics Anti-Doping Rules (ADR) – ADR 2.2 relating to the "Use or Attempted Use by an Athlete of a Prohibited Substance or a Prohibited Method" – after irregularities were detected in his ABP dating back to July 2018. He is now banned until 10 May 2029 and will have some top honours disqualified.

Between 9 July 2018 and 15 March 2022, 32 blood samples from the athlete were collected and analysed to create his biological passport. Three experts subsequently analysed the passport, while also reviewing the athlete's Whereabouts along with his competition schedule and deemed in a unanimous opinion that doping was "highly likely" based on a number of "abnormal haematological patterns".

Kipruto denied the Anti-Doping Rule Violation (ADRV) charge, contending that his ABP abnormalities were due to multiple factors such as natural and specific characteristics of his body, various medical conditions and health conditions.

"Having reviewed and considered carefully the totality of the Athlete's evidence, the Panel is comfortably satisfied that (the AIU) has discharged its burden of proof and established that the Athlete has committed an ADRV," the panel of the Disciplinary Tribunal concluded.

In reaching its decision, the Disciplinary Tribunal said "the Expert Panel thoroughly analysed all arguments put forward by the Athlete and clearly demonstrated each time, by presenting supporting scientific evidence, why the Athlete's arguments could not explain the abnormalities in the Passport".

In the Panel's view:

- the Athlete was involved in a deliberate and sophisticated doping regime over a long period of time in order to artificially enhance his performance through doping.
- Several abnormalities found in the Athlete's ABP were linked to important competitions including the Valencia Half Marathon in 2020 and Kenyan Olympic Trials in 2021.
- Blood doping outside of competitions can also be used to gain an advantage as it permits more intense training and this has an obvious effect on performance even after a significant period of time. This is corroborated by the fact that in recent years many athletes have been found positive for EPO far outside of competition.

Considering the case's aggravating circumstances, the Tribunal imposed the maximum period of ineligibility of six years and also disqualified Kipruto's competitive results from 2 September 2018 to 11 May 2023. This means the athlete's 10-kilometre road-running world record in Valencia in 2020; 10,000 metres bronze medal in the 2019 World Athletics Championships in Doha and 10,000 metres victory in the 2019 Stockholm Diamond League, among many other honours, will be annulled.

"The ABP is a critical tool in the quest to combat doping in elite athletes and this decision upholds important principles relating to ABP cases," said AIU Head Brett Clothier.

"It can be difficult to directly detect the substances or methods used by sophisticated dopers, but the ABP gives us a chance to observe the telltale signs of blood doping over time. For this reason, the AIU conducted more than 4,700 ABP tests in 2023 on elite athletes and we will continue to invest heavily in our ABP programme going forward."

The ABP, introduced in 2009 to fight blood doping, is an electronic record that collects an athlete's biological data over time to indirectly detect the effects of doping. The ABP collates data including an athlete's haemoglobin concentration and percentage of immature red blood cells (reticulocytes) and identifies unusual variations using a statistical model. The anonymised data is analysed by independent experts and, for a case to proceed, three of them must unanimously conclude that doping is likely.

This decision is subject to appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

Details here: <https://bit.ly/World-Athletics-v-Rhonex-Kipruto-Decision>

ABOUT THE ATHLETICS INTEGRITY UNIT

Link: [HTTPS://WWW.ATHLETICSINTEGRITY.ORG](https://www.athleticsintegrity.org)

The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) is the independent body created by the World Athletics that manages all integrity issues – both doping and non-doping – for the sport of athletics. The remit of the AIU includes anti-doping, the pursuit of individuals engaged in age or competition results manipulation, investigating fraudulent behaviour with regards to transfers of allegiance, and detecting other misconduct including bribery and breaches of betting rules. It is the AIU's role to drive cheats out of our sport, and to do everything within its power to support honest athletes around the world who dedicate their lives to reaching their sporting goals through dedication and hard work.



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