

Swedish sports body says anti-doping unit hit by hacking attack

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Sports News

Updated

By Reuters Staff

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STOCKHOLM (Reuters) - Swedish sport's governing body said on Tuesday its computers had been hacked into by the Russian group Fancy Bears, who accessed and published the records of doping tests performed on its athletes.

A wide range of sports have been hit by doping controversies in recent years, while hacking attacks have also become more frequent - sometimes providing greater transparency into the doping problems in cycling, track and field and other events.

Russia was banned from sending a national team to the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang in February due to its systematic doping abuses. All Russian track and field athletes bar one and the weightlifting team were banned from the summer games in Rio in 2016.

“The information is mostly mail conversations, but material and lists from Swedish anti-doping work has also been published,” the Swedish Sports Confederation said in a statement.

It said the attack was by the Fancy Bears hacking group, which has been linked by Western governments and security experts to a Russian spy agency blamed for some of the cyber operations that marred the 2016 U.S. election.

Fancy Bears said on its website that the documents showed some Swedish athletes were breaking anti-doping rules. It did not immediately respond to an emailed request for more information.

The Confederation said the attack was aimed at discrediting its anti-doping activities.

Fancy Bears has been blamed for an attack on the IAAF, the governing body of global athletics, in early April.

The group was also blamed for an Olympics-related hack in 2016, when the World Anti-Doping Agency said it stole and published confidential medical information on athletes.

Western governments and security experts have linked Fancy Bear, also known as APT28, to a Russian intelligence agency and have blamed it for operations including an attack on the Democratic National Committee ahead of the 2016 U.S. elections.

Moscow has repeatedly denied its involvement in these intrusions.

Reporting by Simon Johnson and Olof Swahnberg; editing by Niklas Pollard and Hugh Lawson

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