

Fresh Twist In Row Over Gender Test Runner

The row over controversial runner Caster Semenya has taken another turn after the president and board of Athletics South Africa (ASA) were suspended.

The decision was made by the country's Olympic governing body in connection with how the athlete's gender verification tests were handled by ASA. The organisation has admitted wrongdoing and offered the 18-year-old runner an unconditional apology. It has emerged ASA was aware that the governing body of world athletics (IAAF) carried out gender tests on her before she was allowed to compete at the World Championships in August. ASA had previously denied any knowledge of a test prior to the 800 metres event in Germany, which Semenya easily won. The group's president Leonard Chuene admitted lying about the tests, saying he had wanted to protect the athlete's privacy. The South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) said Mr Chuene and the ASA board would be "suspended with immediate effect pending the outcome of a disciplinary investigation and further action". "The suspended individuals will appear before a disciplinary enquiry to answer charges of bringing ASA, the sport of athletics, SASCOC and sport in general into disrepute," the statement said. SASCOC said it was also considering "taking appropriate action against IAAF for its disregard of Ms Semenya's rights to privacy". No decision on the tests is expected until later this month. But the IAAF has declined to comment on a report in September which said Semenya had both male and female sexual characteristics.