

Maria Sharapova returns to tennis

Five-time Grand Slam champion **Maria Sharapova** returns at the Porsche Grand Prix in Stuttgart, after her 15-month suspension for testing positive for the recently banned substance meldonium at the Australian Open in 2016



SHARAPOVA'S FALL FROM GRACE

■ **Jan 26, 2016:** Loses to long-term rival **Serena Williams** in Australian Open quarter-finals

■ **Mar 7:** Reveals failed drug test for **meldonium** – controversially added to WADA banned list on Jan 1, 2016 – which she has used for various health issues for 10 years

■ **Mar 8:** **Porsche, Tag Heuer** and **Nike** suspend lucrative sponsorship deals



■ **Mar 10:** Racquet manufacturer **Head** pledges to back Sharapova

■ **Mar 12:** Provisionally suspended. Asserts warnings about changes to anti-doping rules were not communicated effectively

■ **Mar 15:** **United Nations** removes Sharapova as goodwill ambassador

Meldonium is designed to treat **ischemia** – reduction in blood supply to body tissue – stimulating increased oxygen movement to muscles, with potentially positive effect on stamina and endurance

■ **Jun 8:** Banned for two years by International Tennis Federation – vows to appeal “unfairly harsh” decision at Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS)

■ **Oct 4:** CAS reduces ban to 15 months – finding Sharapova was not “intentional doper”

■ **Oct 10:** Plays at charity event to support **Elton John's** AIDS Foundation

■ **Mar 2017:** Players including **Andy Murray, Caroline Wozniacki** and **Angelique Kerber** speak out against Sharapova receiving wildcard entries for Stuttgart, Madrid and Rome

■ **Apr 26:** Set to play in Stuttgart, despite event beginning two days before suspension expires