

SPORT IN RUSSIA



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YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW

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While Russia's tribute to the world's culture, science and political history is relatively well known, the domain of sport is more rarely mentioned in connection to the largest country on the globe. Nevertheless in this field of human activity Russia, as most of the other major world civilization has a lot to be proud of. In fact it is one of the most successful countries in history of sport.

Lets start form the history. The regular, organized sport first took place in the time of the Emperor Peter the Great, as a part of educational process of the new professional class, that Russia so needed in the time of the reform. By the second half of 19th century the sport began to spread to the broad masses such as students, clerks, municipal officers etc.



The most famous Russian sportsman of the Imperial Age was **Ivan Poddubny** – professional wrestler and

six times the world champion. He was born in a Cossack family in that part of the country which is presently independent Ukraine, and from early age was noted for his phenomenal power. His career lasted 40 years and he lost only twice during this time. In 1926 at the age of 55, when the most of the professional wrestlers already retired, he became the champion of the USA.

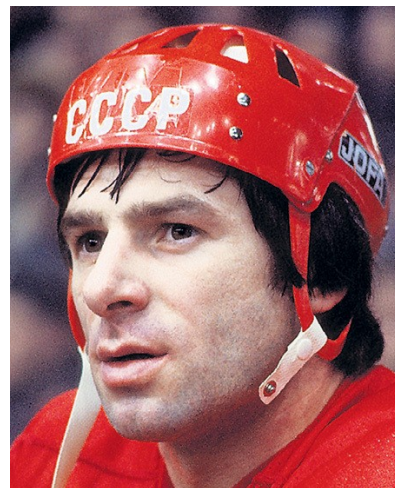
Since the end of the Second World war, Soviet and later Russian athletes never gained less then third place (and rarely below second) in the Olympic games.

One of the most popular athletes of the post



-war period was **Lev Yashin** – a great football goalkeeper. He was chosen on the FIFA Dream Team of the history of World Cups in 2002. In 1994 he was voted for the FIFA World Cup All-Time Team, and in 1998 as a member of the World Team of the 20th Century. Yashin was voted the best goalkeeper of the 20th century by the International Federation of Football History.

But the most popular sport in Russia was and still is the ice hockey. The Soviet team had almost completely dominated world's ice hokey throughout most of 1960s and 1970s. That was the time when it got the nickname "The Red Machine".

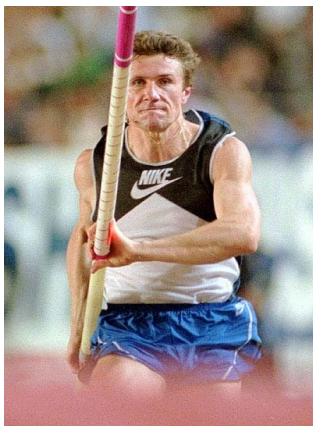


One of the most prominent players of the "classical era" of the Russian ice hockey was **Valeri Kharlamov**. He played for the Soviet Union at 11 World Championships, capturing 8 gold medals, 2 silvers and 1 bronze. He also participated in the Olympics Games of 1972, 1976 and 1980, finishing with two gold medals and a silver. He spent most of his career playing together with **Vladimir Petrov and Boris Mikhailov**, and this trio was considered one of the best in the history of hockey. Unfortunately the life of this great athlete was rather tragic and shadowed by two car accidents, in first he was seriously injured, in the second he died at 33.

In 1980s the famous trio was succeeded by "Larionov's pentad" or "The Green Line" as it was known in the West. These were **Igor Larionov, Vladimir Krutov, Sergey Makarov, Viacheslav Fetisov and Alexey Kasatonov**, who wrote new page in the history of the Russian hokey together with other players of that period. That happened, that Viacheslav Fetisov became the most honored of the



five, winning 7 World Cups, 2 Olympics and 9 Cups of Europe, not counting silver and bronze. He is included in the Hockey All-Star Team of the 20th Century. One more of the great hockey players of that period is the goalkeeper of the Soviet team **Vladislav Tretiak**. He is considered one of the greatest goalkeepers in ice hockey of all times and also was voted as one of six players to the International Ice Hockey Federation's (IIHF) Centennial All-Star Team. Tretiak won 10 World Cups, 3 Olympic Games and 9 Cups of Europe. Another sport that Russia achieved an excellence in is gymnastics. In female gymnastics the most notable name that comes to the mind is **Larisa Latynina**. She won 14 Gold Olympic medals (18 in total) during her career from 1956 to 1964. This record was unsurpassed during 48 years.



Sergey Bubka was one of the most successful pole vaulters in the history of the sport. He was twice named Athlete of the Year, and in 2012 was one of 24 athletes inducted as inaugural members of the International Association of Athletics Federations Hall of Fame.

His record of 6.15 meters

set in 1993 held for almost 21 years.

Yury Vlasov is a heavyweight weightlifter whose life had inspired Arnold Schwarzenegger to start his career. He won Olympics of 1960 and four World Championships, and was declared the "Strongest Man on the Planet". Vlasov has managed to recover

after a few spine surgeries and returned to the sport. But apart of that he was an intellectual, professional writer and journalist, breaking stereotypes of weightlifting sport.

In figure ice skating one for the outstanding names was **Irina Rodnina**. She was the only pair skater to win 10 successive World Championships (1969–78) and three successive Olympic gold medals (1972, 1976, 1980).



The new era of post-Soviet Russia brought into world sport new prominent and outstanding athletes, among them the names such as **Yelena Isinbayeva, Kostya Tsyu, Andrey Arshavin, Maria Sharapova, Evgeni Plushenko, Marat Safin, Alexander Ovechkin** and many others. Which assures that Russia remains a great country on the world sports map.

It's hard to deny that in the decades after the collapse of Soviet Union the Russian sport had suffered a lot of damage. But the highly successful perfor-



mance of the Russian team on the Winter Olympic Games of 2014 and increasing investment into sports in Russia in the recent years raise hopes that the future is bright for sport in Russia.

2016 ICE HOCKEY WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP



This is a great event for the fans of the Russia's most favorite sport. The 2016 IIHF World Championship will be hosted by Russia. The tournament will take place in Moscow and Saint Petersburg from 6th to 22th of May.

It is the 80th such event hosted by the International Ice Hockey Federation. It is the third Championship held in Russia since

the break up of Soviet Union (which also hosted four of the Championships).

Canada is defending her champion's title. Hungary will return to the Championship after a 6-year absence. Kazakhstan returns after a 1-year absence. Sixteen national teams will be competing for the hockey crown, eight of them start as Group A in St.Petersburg. The Group B plays in Moscow.

The official mascot of the Championship is a Laika dog.

St.Petersburg that hosts 28 round matches and 2 quarter finals has already painted buses of route #1 that runs in the vicinity of Yubileiny Hockey Arena in the design of the coming Championship. On some of the city trolley-buses will be installed screens that will broadcast the matches of the hockey tournament.



Group A (St. Petersburg)

-  Canada
-  Finland
-  United States
-  Slovakia
-  Belarus
-  France
-  Germany
-  Hungary

Group B (Moscow)

-  Russia
-  Sweden
-  Czech Republic
-  Switzerland
-  Latvia
-  Norway
-  Denmark
-  Kazakhstan

2017 BOBSLEIGH AND SKELETON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (SOCHI)



Bobsleigh (and its variety, the skeleton) is a spectacular sport that has many fans around the world. It is all about speed, team work and self-control, as well as about technology. It is a winter sport in which teams make timed runs down narrow, twisting, banked iced tracks in a gravity-powered sled.

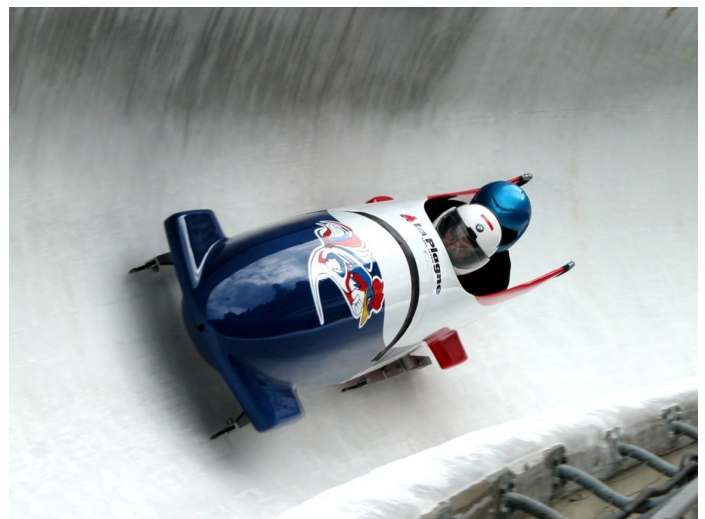
The world's first bobsleigh club was founded in Switzerland in 1897. By 1904, competitions were taking place on natural ice courses. Modern tracks are made of concrete, coated with ice. They are required to have at least one straight section and one labyrinth (three turns in quick succession without a straight section). Modern day sleighs combine light metals, steel runners, and an aerodynamic composite body. Competition sleighs can be 4-crew (up to 3.8 metres long) or 2-crew (up to 2.7 metres long).

The bobsleighs themselves are designed to be as light as possible to allow dynamic positioning of mass through the turns of the bobsleigh

course. A crew is made up of a pilot, a brakeman, and (in 4-man crews) two pushers. Athletes are selected based on their speed and strength, which are necessary to push the sleigh to a competitive speed at the start of the race. Pilots must have the skill, timing, and finesse to steer the sleigh along the path, or, 'line', that will produce the greatest speed. The pilot does most of the steering, and the brakeman stops the sled after crossing the finish by pulling the sled's brake lever.

Due to the high speed the sport can be potentially dangerous for the athletes as a number of fatal accidents occurred during the history of the sport (mostly in 1970-s and 1980-s).

Russia, as a hosting nation also is currently



the Olympic Champions in both two and four-man crews, and the state of the art sports facilities of the recent Winter Olympics capital Sochi will make the event unforgettable.

2018 FIFA WORLD CUP



**FIFA WORLD CUP
RUSSIA 2018**

Undoubtedly, the main sport event for Russia in the forthcoming years is the 2018 FIFA World Cup. It will be the 21st quadrennial world cham-

pionship of the football national teams from around the globe.

It will take place in various locations of Russia from 14 June to 15 July 2018. This will be the first World Cup held in Eastern Europe and the first to be held in both Europe



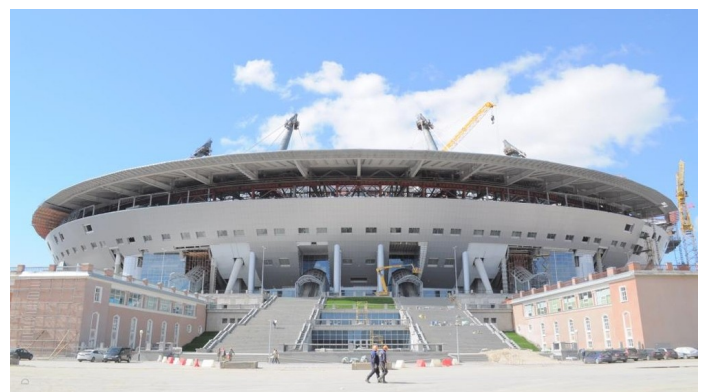
and Asia, as Russia spreads across those parts of the world.

The final tournament will include 32 national teams. 64 matches in total will be played in 12 venues located in 11 cities. The cities that will host the World Cup will be: Moscow (the final match), Saint Petersburg, Kaliningrad, Kazan, Nizhny Novgorod, Rostov-on-Don, Samara, Saransk, Sochi, Volgograd, and Yekaterinburg.

The main venue of the World Cup is Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow. It was originally built

in the Soviet Era in 1955-56 as the national stadium of the Soviet Union and was named at the time Lenin Stadium. It was the chief venue for the 1980 Summer Olympics. In 1992, the stadium was renamed the Luzhniki Stadium. An extensive renovation in 1996 saw the construction of a roof over the stands, and the refurbishment of the seating areas. In 2008 the Luzhniki Stadium was used to host the UEFA Champions League Final where Manchester United beat Chelsea. For the 2018 FIFA World Cup Luzhniki Stadium is undergoing another extensive renovation to provide 81,000 comfortable seats and the final match will be held there on July 15, 2018.

Another major stadium for the World Cup is Piter Arena (one of suggested names) in Saint Petersburg with capacity of 66,881 people. It is a new arena designed by famous



Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa's and nicknamed "The Spaceship". It is being built to replace the older one on the same place. When finished it will be one of the most expensive stadiums in the world. One of the semi finals of the World Cup will be held there and after that the stadium will be the home venue for the FC Zenit team.

The main hub of the recent 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi the Fisht Stadium will be also important part of the 2018 FIFA



World Cup. With the capacity of 47,659 people this state of the art stadium will host one of the quarter-finals. The other quarter-finals will take place in Kazan, Samara and Nizhny Novgorod.



The Kazan Arena was finished in 2013, two other stadiums in Samara and Nizhny Novgo-



rod will be built specially for the World Cup. All the cities to host FIFA World Cup are either in European Part of Russia or a bit further to the East to ensure reasonable time for travel between them. New high-speed railway will be built between Moscow and Kazan by 2018. Thousands of more conventional railways will be also reconstructed to increase the speed and safety.

The hosting cities' roads and transport system will be upgraded to provide more comfort to the tourists, visiting the event. But not only the 11 hosting cities will get benefits from improving infrastructure. 64 training bases for the teams will be built, mainly in the towns not hosting the matches.

The Russian visa policy will be significantly eased for the World Cup participants and fans allowing them to visit Russia without obtaining the visas before and during the World Football Championship

It is expected, that about 1 million people will come to the matches. 62 brand new hotels with 10 thousand rooms will be built to accommodate them. 3 billion people will be watching the World Cup on TV.

All in all the 2018 FIFA World Cup is going to be spectacular and splendid event for football fans and for general travellers alike.



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