

# In a First, Aeroflot Will Sponsor N.J. Nets

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Devin Harris going for a shot in the Nets' 101-98 win over the Pistons. **Bill Kostroun**

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey — New Jersey Nets owner Mikhail Prokhorov said the NBA team has entered into a sponsorship agreement with Aeroflot, marking the first alliance the airline has made with a professional sports team in the United States.

The deal was announced Wednesday, less than three weeks after the Nets and vodka company Stolichnaya agreed to a five-year alliance with the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York, where the team is scheduled to move in 2012.

The alliance between the Nets and Aeroflot is for the next two years, while the team plays its home games at the Prudential Center in Newark.

The Moscow-based airline will receive television-visible courtside signage during Nets home games that will be broadcast in Russia, and on-screen branding during select YES Network broadcasts of Nets away games.

Select games will air on NTV television this season.

"We're proud to announce that one of Russia's blue-chip companies and best brands is becoming a Nets corporate sponsor, and we're looking forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship with Aeroflot," Prokhorov said.

Nets chief executive Brett Yormark hopes to extend the agreement with Aeroflot once the team moves to Brooklyn.

"They are an airline going through the same things we are, in terms of a lot of positive change, a new fleet and more direct flights from JFK [airport] to Russia," Yormark said. "This is an opportunity to build their brand here but also to reinforce it in Russia."

Yormark went to Russia last month and visited with representatives from more than 30 companies. He expects to announce more sponsorships deals in the near future.

"[Prokhorov] is the connector to the marketplace," Yormark said. "The NBA opened an office in Russia in August, and it's a market that we'll be working and looking to develop. But I think without Prokhorov, these deals don't exist."

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