

Sharapova Will Carry Russian Flag at Olympics

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Former tennis world No. 1 Maria Sharapova will be Russia's first female Olympic flag-bearer at the London Games later this month, the national Olympic committee confirmed Tuesday.

"Sharapova will carry our flag," Alexander Zhukov, president of the Russian Olympic Committee, told reporters following an executive board meeting of the committee.

"She was the most worthy candidate among all our athletes. In June, she claimed her fourth grand-slam title" at the French Open, he said.

Russia broke with tradition by naming Sharapova, who also won Wimbledon (2004), the U.S. Open (2006) and the Australian Open (2008) for the rare honor. Since the Russians first took part in the 1952 Summer Games in Helsinki as part of the Soviet Union, the honor was traditionally given to famous male athletes such as Greco-Roman wrestler Alexander Karelin and swimmer Alexander Popov, who have won numerous Olympic titles.

“I am so honored, and especially excited, as it will be my first Olympics in my career,” the Florida-based Russian said when she first heard the news about her nomination last month.

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