

Bill Against Match-Fixing Passes in First Reading

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The State Duma on Tuesday gave preliminary approval to legislation designed to toughen punishment for match-fixing that could send offenders to jail for up to seven years.

In January, President Vladimir Putin submitted to the lower house of parliament the legislation seeking to ban officials and players from betting on sports events they participate in.

According to the draft law, published on the Duma's official website, offenders also face fines of up to a million rubles (\$32,500).

Match-fixing and corruption are rife in Russian sports, experts say, as the country prepares to host several major events including the 2014 Winter Olympics and soccer's World Cup in 2018.

However, rarely has anyone been convicted or brought to trial, and only one team, second division Iriston Vladikavkaz, has been found guilty of attempted match-fixing.

It was thrown out of the league in 1997 but later reinstated in a lower division.

FIFPro, the global union for professional players, published a survey of nearly 3,400 players from Eastern Europe this year that said match-fixing in Russia was as high as 43.5 percent.

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