

17 Months After Jeers, Putin to Attend a Sporting Event

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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President Vladimir Putin holding a Soviet hockey jersey with Ice Hockey Federation president Vladislav Tretyak. **Mikhail Klimentyev**

Correction Appended

President Vladimir Putin was to attend his first public sporting event in Russia since he was jeered by spectators at a boxing match in 2011.

Putin promised to go to the opening of the world junior hockey championship in Sochi on Thursday after watching the movie "Legend No. 17" about Soviet hockey star Valery Kharlamov on Wednesday night.

It was unclear whether Putin, who is on a working visit to his Sochi residence, will attend the game itself or just the opening ceremony.

The president, who watched the movie with Russian hockey legends and players from the

national junior hockey team, praised it for being filled with "talent and emotion," Interfax reported.

He said the filmmakers successfully conveyed the atmosphere of overwhelming public support for the national hockey squad during the Soviet period.

"My mother used to scold me for getting involved in sports," he told the gathered hockey legends.

"But as soon as our legendary trio stepped on the ice — and I won't tell you what nicknames she gave to all three of you — she turned around and began to watch hockey," he said.

Legendary goalkeeper-turned-State Duma Deputy Vladislav Tretyak said the movie was "educational" and could relate to any sport.

At the end of the movie, Putin said: "We will see you tomorrow at the tournament's opening."

The Russian junior hockey team faces the formidable U.S. team in the opening game of the tournament Thursday evening.

Putin last attended a public sporting event in Russia on Nov. 20, 2011, when he stepped into the center of the boxing ring at the Olimpiisky stadium to congratulate the winner of the match. But his appearance was greeted with loud heckling by some members of the audience.

Several analysts and opposition members said the reaction was a genuine sign of displeasure from a public tired of what they saw as Putin's flashy publicity stunts. The heckling occurred weeks after Putin announced that he would run for a third term as president.

Correction: An earlier version of this story said the hockey event that President Putin planned to attend was on Friday. In fact, it was on Thursday evening.

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