

FIFA Decision Spares Luzhniki Demolition

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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FIFA has agreed to City Hall's request to reduce the stadium capacity requirements for the 2018 soccer World Cup opening ceremony and final to 81,000.

The decision means that Moscow's Luzhniki stadium — which is more than 10,000 seats short of the 89,000 usually required by FIFA — will not have to be demolished and rebuilt, Acting Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said Monday.

The stadium was renovated as recently in the 1990s and Sobyenin was keen to avoid knocking down an "Olympic symbol" of Russia. Luzhniki was one of the main venues at the 1980 Summer Olympics.

However, the seating arrangements will be altered to satisfy FIFA requirements, because not all of the seats provide a good enough view of the pitch, Acting Deputy Mayor Marat Khusnullin said.

"The foundations, the walls and the roof of the stadium will be kept; the stands will be demolished and new ones will be built at a different angle," Khusnullin said in a report carried by Vedomosti.

City Hall will put 20 million rubles (\$600 million) toward the reconstruction, the report said.

Luzhniki will be the main arena for the World Cup in 2018. It will be the first time Russia has hosted the tournament.

Khusnullin said the stadium's reconstruction will take four years, but it needs to be completed in time for the 2017 Confederations' Cup.

City authorities are planning to close the stadium after the IAAF World Championships in Athletics finish on Aug. 18.

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