

Putinka Vodka Sponsors U.S. Women's Bobsled Team

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Putinka logo will appear on the bobsled during trial runs.

The U.S. women's bobsled team will be hoping everything goes down smoothly at the Sochi Olympics and may look to their new sponsor, Putinka vodka, for inspiration in avoiding the sting and watery eyes of defeat.

The bobsled duo, Jamie Greubel and Emily Azevedo, will wear the Putinka logo on their uniforms and feature the brandname on their sled during practice runs November ahead of the Games in February.

The deal between Putinka and the U.S. athletes seems to be an unlikely marriage, not in the least because the brand's name is almost identical to that of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

According to marketing executive Stanislav Kaufman, head of the advertising agency behind the campaign, the association is a positive one.

" Even if someone associates the brand with the president's name, that's not necessarily a contradiction. No matter what one thinks of him, Putin is a global player," he told news website RBK.

Some Americans might feel otherwise, however, with a survey conducted by Gallup in September concluding 53% of those in the U.S. polled hold an unfavorable opinion of the Russian leader, and only 19% see him in a favorable light.

Lenny Kasten, who manages the female bobsleigh team, says they accepted the sponsorship deal because they didn't receive enough funding from the U.S. government. " This is why we are ready to cooperate with any enterprise," he said.

"If one of the contract's provisions will abide us to drink a vodka shot — we definitely will," he told RBK.

The bobsled sponsorship deal is an example of the creativity of Russian alcohol manufacturers in finding ways to bypass legislation that restricts advertising for alcoholic beverages to shops, restaurants and other retail venues.

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