

Russia, U.S. Come Out on Top in Ice Hockey

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia's Alexei Tereshenko challenges for the puck with Slovenia's goaltender Robert Kristan in the two teams' opening fixture of the men's Olympic hockey tournament. **Alexei Kudenko**

Russia got the Olympic men's ice hockey competition off to a rollicking start with a 5-2 win over feisty Slovenia on Thursday to keep the host country's gold medal dreams on track.

Going up against a Slovenian team making their Olympic debut, it was supposed to be a leisurely beginning to the tournament for the mighty Russians whose lineup features some of the world's top talent.

But Slovenia, with just one National Hockey League player on their roster, briefly threatened to pull off the biggest Olympic ice hockey upset since the 1980 Lake Placid "Miracle on Ice," until Russia showed their class with a third period burst.

Clinging to a 3-2 lead going into the final period, Valery Nichushkin and Anton Belov scored

to put Russia back in charge and settle nerves at the soldout Bolshoi Ice Dome.

Alex Ovechkin, a three-time NHL Most Valuable Player, Yevgeny Malkin, another NHL MVP and Ilya Kovalchuk scored the other Russian goals.

Ziga Jeglic scored twice for Slovenia.

The U.S. also got off to a good start Thursday, kicking off their quest for the men's ice hockey gold medal at the Sochi Olympics with a 7-1 rout of Slovakia.

The U.S., looking to improve on their silver from the 2010 Games, scored six goals in the second period to snuff out any hopes Slovakia had of pulling off an upset.

Slovakia, who made an unlikely run to the bronze medal game in 2010, made a decent start and drew even at 1-1 with a goal 24 seconds into the second period.

However, they were unable to keep pace with the U.S., who responded with a goal a minute later before pulling away to complete the rout ahead of the intermission.

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