

Zidlicky Guides Czechs to Win Over Latvia in Olympic Hockey

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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SOCHI — The Czech hockey team inflicted a 4-2 defeat on outsider Latvia on Friday to record its first win of the Sochi Winter Olympics.

New Jersey Devils defenseman Marek Zidlicky claimed a goal and an assist to propel the Czechs to Group C victory and bounce back from Wednesday's opening 4-2 loss to Sweden.

Martin Erat put the Czechs into the lead on 10:10 but Janis Sprukts was quick to equalize three minutes later, sending the puck into an unguarded corner on a power play.

With 30 seconds left in the first period, Jaromir Jagr, the only survivor of the Czech's 1998 gold medal-winning team, hit the left corner of Edgars Masalskis' goal with a blistering wrist shot to put his team 2-1 up.

Three minutes into the second, Herberts Vasiljevs leveled the scores from the very same spot as Jagr. Finally the Latvians were broken by two unanswered goals from Jakub Voracek, five minutes later, and Zidlicky at 37:02.

Both teams missed a string of good chances in the third period, with the Latvians failing to convert a five-on-three advantage at the end of the game.

The leader of Group C will be determined in the game between Switzerland and Sweden later in the day. The Swedes were rocked earlier Friday by the withdrawal of captain Henrik Zetterberg because of a back injury. In Group B, Canada will test Austria, while Finland faces Norway.

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