

Russian Hockey Team to Stick With Homegrown Coaches Despite Early Elimination

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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SOCHI — Russia will not consider appointing a foreign hockey coach after its surprise elimination from the Olympics, Hockey Federation head Vladislav Tretyak said Thursday.

Russia's 3-1 loss to Finland in the Olympic men's quarterfinals Wednesday was a shock for the host nation, which had been expected to fight for gold in an event many Russians consider the most important of the Winter Games.

Following the defeat, some Russian pundits called for the hiring of a foreign coach to reform the team, along the lines of the non-Russian trainers who have led the country's football team to success over the last decade.

"I can't imagine a foreigner in this post," said Tretyak, a legendary Soviet goaltender before he took the federation job. "I think that one of our guys should coach the Russian team."

Current coach Zinetula Bilyaletdinov has said he wants to stay in charge. Tretyak described him as "one of the strongest" coaches around but would not be drawn on his future with the national team.

"He wants to stay. We haven't discussed that with him yet. After the match we had completely different conversations," he said.

Immediately after the Russian defeat to Finland, Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko said that any questions over coaches' futures would be dealt with "after the Olympics," seen by many as a signal that Bilyaletdinov could lose his job.

The next task for Bilyaletdinov or any prospective replacement would be to guide Russia through the world championships in Belarus in May.

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