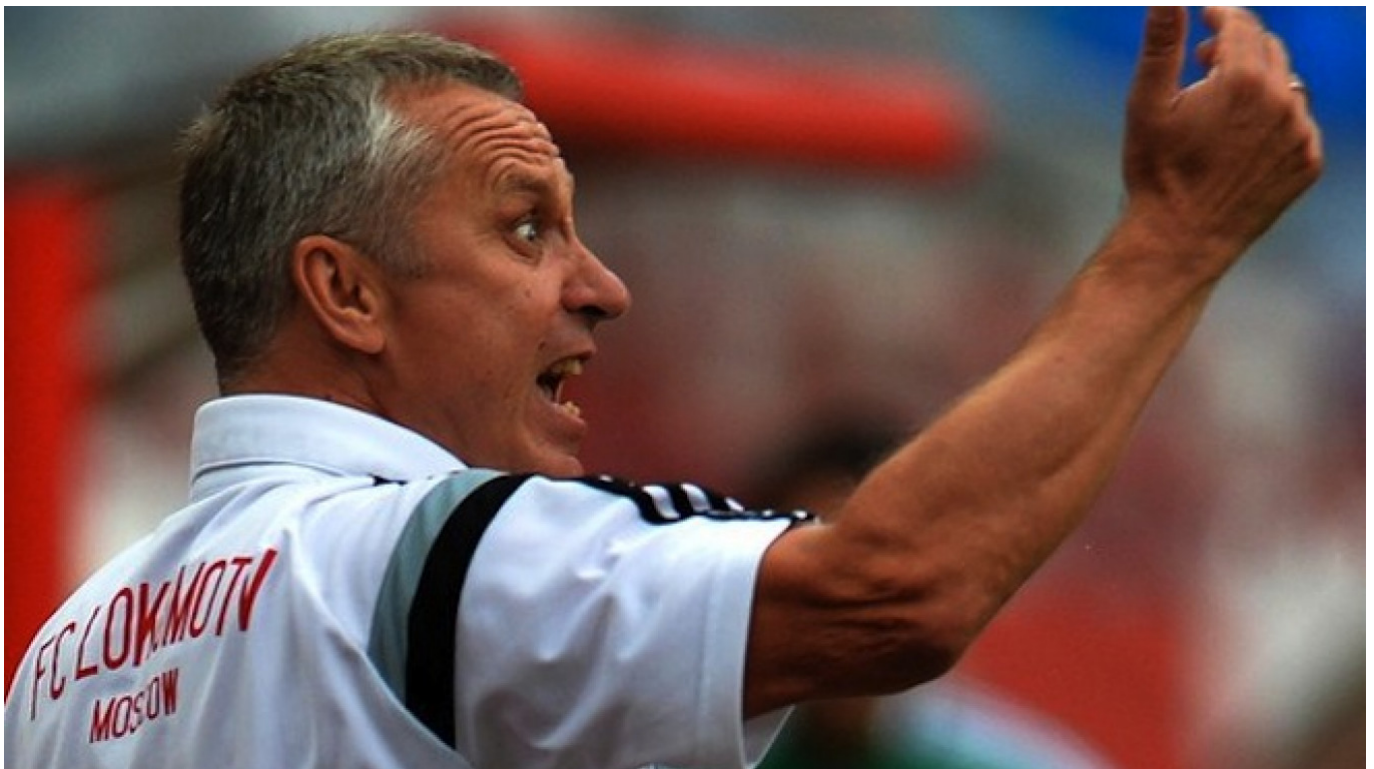


Moscow's Lokomotiv Football Club Sacks 'Impossible' Coach

September 18, 2014



Moscow's Lokomotiv Football Club have fired Leonid Kuchuk.

A struggling Lokomotiv Moscow have fired Leonid Kuchuk, making him the first managerial casualty of the new Russian Premier League season.

The Belarussian, 55, helped the club to third place last season but has paid the price for a poor start to their new campaign as well as dressing room discontent.

The Railwaymen are currently languishing ninth in the table having picked up nine points and suffering three consecutive defeats late last month.

The defeat in the qualifying stages of the Europa League against the Cypriot side, Apollon Limassol proved to be the final straw, as the two time Russian champions crashed out following a 4-1 defeat in the return leg.

Kuchuk was also involved in bust-ups with a number of high-profile players, including Lassana Diarra, who went on strike, saying he would not play under the manager again.

"It wasn't just how the game was played, but it was the reaction to the game," said Vladimir Yakunin, President of Russian Railways, Lokomotiv's main sponsors.

"It was evident that with Kuchuk there were serious discontent between the coach and the players. It's impossible to work under such conditions."

Igor Cherevchenko has been named as Lokomotiv's caretaker boss, while the local press has linked former Manchester City coach Roberto Mancini to the position.

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