

Six Russians Among Europe's Top Football Prospects

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Six Russian footballers have ranked among Europe's most promising young players in a report released this week by the Swiss-based International Center for Sports Studies' Football Observatory.

The report identifies four Russian goalkeepers in the under-20 age category — Vitaly Gudiev of Terek Grozny, Miroslav Lobantsev of Lokomotiv Moscow, Anton Mitryushkin of Spartak Moscow and Sergei Revyakin of CSKA Moscow — as among the top five prospects. The players were ranked on the bases of their position, age group, and the competitiveness of their league.

Elmir Nabiullin of Rubin Kazan ranks second among the best under-20 fullbacks for UEFA's seven "intermediate leagues," which also include the Dutch, Belgian and Turkish professional circuits. Lokomotiv Moscow's Alexei Miranchuk stands third among the top five under-20 attacking midfielders for these leagues.

No Russian nationals made the Football Observatory's list in the under-21, under-22 or under-23 age groups, although three foreigners playing in the Russian Premier League — Georgi Milanov and Ahmed Musa of CSKA Moscow, and Zhano Ananidze of Spartak

Moscow — are identified as top under-23 prospects.

The Football Observatory states that the players identified in its ranking are those most likely to join the world's top leagues, including the German Bundesliga, the English Premier League and Italy's Serie A.

The list was compiled using what it called "experience capital," a notion that designates the number of matches played in adult championships until the age of 23.

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