

Russia's Sports Minister Cleared to Run for Football Union Presidency

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Vitaly Mutko

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has overturned a ban preventing the country's sports minister from concurrently occupying the position of president of the football union, news reports said.

The move could pave the way for Sports Minister Vladimir Mutko, who served as president of the Russian Football Union (RFU) from 2005 to 2009, to assume both positions. Last week he was nominated by the Volgograd football federation to compete in upcoming elections for the post, according to a statement on FC Rotor Volgograd's website.

Mutko confirmed Tuesday that he had met with Medvedev and that the prime minister had lifted the ban, state news agency RIA Novosti reported.

"Given the current situation in Russian football and realizing the importance of preparing the Russian team for the World Cup, the prime minister has allowed the sports minister to run in the RFU [presidential] elections," a spokeswoman for Medvedev told the Interfax news

agency Tuesday.

Former RFU president Nikolai Tolstykh left his position in June after facing criticism over the union's mounting debts. Elections to find his replacement are set to take place on Sept. 2.

Russian football is undergoing something of a shake-up this week following the departure of head coach Fabio Capello on Tuesday.

The Italian trainer was given a 930 million ruble (\$16.4 million) payout to release him from his three-year contract, news site R-Sport reported, citing an unidentified source involved in the discussions.

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