

Hockey Player Voynov Returning to Russia Over Domestic Violence Charges

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Two-times Stanley Cup-winning defenseman Slava Voynov.

Two-time Stanley Cup-winning defenseman Slava Voynov is leaving the Los Angeles Kings and returning home to Russia in the wake of domestic violence charges, the player said on Wednesday.

Voynov, who entered a plea of no contest in July to a charge of domestic violence against his wife, Marta Varlamova, had been suspended by the National Hockey League since his arrest last October.

Several hours after the Kings played an afternoon game, police said Voynov punched, kicked and choked Varlamova, sending her to an emergency room with injuries. Through the couple's lawyers, Varlamova later characterized the incident as an accident.

"Earlier today, I notified the National Hockey League, the National Hockey League Players' Association and the Los Angeles Kings of my decision to immediately begin the formal process of returning to Russia with my family," Voynov said in a statement released by his

agent.

"I sincerely apologize to those in and around the game of hockey, who have been affected by my situation, and I also wish the players of the L.A. Kings success in the future."

The 25-year-old defenseman, who played on the Russian ice hockey team that finished fifth at last year's Sochi Olympics, won Stanley Cups with the Kings in 2012 and 2014.

Voynov has been in the custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement for the last two weeks following a two-month stay in a California jail.

The Kings, who also suspended Voynov in June, said they had already determined to void Voynov's contract if the issue was not resolved by the time training camp opens on Thursday.

"As we have publicly stated since Mr. Voynov's arrest last year, the Kings organization will not tolerate domestic violence," the Kings said in a statement.

"As part of that commitment, we will soon announce a series of new Conduct Awareness Training Initiatives that reflect the values and principles central to our franchise."

(Reuters, AP)

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