

# Putin Grants U.S. Hockey Player Russian Citizenship

July 27, 2023



Brennan Menell. **Sergei Savostyanov / TASS**

President Vladimir Putin on Thursday [granted](#) U.S. hockey player Brennan Menell Russian citizenship, allowing him to play for the country's national team.

Menell, 26, is a defenseman from Minnesota who [signed](#) a one-year contract with the Kontinental Hockey League (KHL) team Dynamo Moscow in September 2022, becoming the third U.S.-born player to ever join the team.

When Menell signed a three-year [extension](#) in April, Dynamo Moscow's athletic director [told](#) media that the American had expressed interest in obtaining Russian citizenship and playing for Russia's national team.

"He really likes Russia and Moscow, so he's ready to stay for a long time," Alexei Sopin, Dynamo's athletic director, told RIA Novosti at the time.

Menell receiving Russian citizenship "will be good PR for Russian sports," Sopin added.

**Related article:** [Poland Detains Russian Hockey Player Suspected of Spying for Moscow](#)

The Russian sports daily Sport-Express [reported](#) that Menell's paperwork for applying for Russian citizenship was submitted "immediately" after he arrived in the country earlier this month.

The outlet said Menell — who had spoken positively about his time in Russia and dismissed the U.S. Embassy's advisory to leave the country — is "actively" learning to speak Russian.

Menell's new citizenship will also free up Dynamo Moscow's slots for foreign players, which are limited to three per club according to KHL rules.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/07/27/putin-grants-us-hockey-player-russian-citizenship-a819>

84