

Russian Champion Skaters Killed in U.S. Plane Crash

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Russian pair skaters Yevgenia Shishkova and Vadim Naumov at the 1994 Lillehammer Olympics.
Vladimir Bezzubov / TASS

Russian figure skaters including world champion couple Evgenia Shishkova and Vadim Naumov, who won the 1994 pairs title, were on board a U.S. passenger jet that crashed in Washington on Wednesday, Russian state news agencies reported.

The plane carrying 60 passengers and four crew collided midair with a military helicopter as it was approaching Reagan National Airport on Wednesday evening, plunging into the freezing Potomac River. U.S. officials [said](#) that they believed no one survived the crash.

The state-run TASS news agency [reported](#), citing anonymous sources, that Shishkova and Naumov, who won the 1994 world pairs title, were on board the plane. Former Soviet pairs skater Inna Volyanskaya was also [reportedly](#) on board.

“We see that this sad information is being confirmed. There were other fellow citizens [of Russia],” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov [told](#) reporters.

“We express condolences to the families and friends who lost our fellow citizens,” Peskov said, describing the tragedy as “bad news from Washington.”

Retired figure skater and current Russian lawmaker Irina Rodnina [noted](#) that the passengers' identities have not yet been officially confirmed.

U.S. Figure Skating [said](#) several athletes, coaches and officials were aboard the flight, which was returning to Washington from an event in Wichita, Kansas.

Shishkova, 52, and Naumov, 55, competed at six world championships between 1991 to 1996, winning gold, silver and bronze medals.

The peak of their career was winning the 1994 pairs title at the world championships in Chiba, Japan.

The couple, who married in 1995, ended their careers after failing to qualify for the Nagano Winter Olympics in 1998.

After becoming professionals, they moved to the United States to become coaches, first in Connecticut then in Boston since 2017.

Their 23-year-old son Maxim Naumov, the U.S. junior champion in 2020, had recently placed fourth in the U.S. national championships in Kansas.

Russia's Figure Skating Federation said it was "shocked and deeply saddened by the tragedy."

"Some of them were our compatriots and in their time made a significant contribution to domestic figure skating," it said, without naming any of the victims.

Several members of the U.S. figure skating community were also passengers, the sport's national governing body confirmed.

They had been taking part in a training camp for top juniors that was held after the U.S. championships, which took place in Wichita, Kansas, at the weekend.

AFP contributed reporting.

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