

Safin Duels Fellow ‘Legends of Tennis’

By [Howard Amos](#)

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Marat Safin practicing his serve. **Howard Amos**

Once notorious for his on court emotion and racket-smashing antics, double Grand Slam winner and retired tennis star Marat Safin no longer breaks an average of 50 rackets a year.

“I’m not that pissed anymore,” he said. “I don’t need to win.”

But on Sunday, Safin will return to the tennis courts of Moscow for a show match where winning — and racket smashing — might be back on the agenda.

Safin will partner with Yevgeny Kafelnikov for Team Russia, captained by Shamil Tarpishchev. They will take on Goran Ivanisevic and Carlos Moya’s Stars of the World, captained by Björn Borg.

The players have 17 Grand Slam singles titles between them, 11 of which are held by Borg.

The event — Legends of Tennis — to be held at the National Tennis Center will feature four singles matches between the two teams (each player will take on both members of the

opposite team) and a game of doubles.

Each match will consist of a long set of nine games, and the winning team is the one that triumphs in at least three matches.

Although he has retired from professional tennis, Safin said he still plays regularly and is looking forward to the match against former greats.

Tournaments featuring big names like Sunday's are also important for attracting young people to tennis, which is currently struggling in Russia. Female Russian players like Maria Sharapova and Maria Kirilenko are household names, but few Russian men have made it into the sport's top flight in recent years.

Safin, who settled in Moscow two years ago, is keen to build tennis as a big sport in Russia again.

"We need to bring our [tennis] events to the mainstream," Safin said.

Legends of Tennis, a show competition featuring Safin, Kafelnikov, Tarpishchev, Ivanisevic, Moya and Borg, takes place at the National Tennis Center on Sunday, June 12, at 2 p.m. 45-47 Leningradskoye Shosse. Tel. 956-3360, www.tennis-legends.ru.

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