The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia to Host 2013 Rugby Sevens

September 15, 2011

Vasily Artemyev taking a high ball Thursday in Russia's World Cup debut against the Americans. Russia lost 13-6. **David Gray**

NEW PLYMOUTH, New Zealand — Russia will host the Rugby World Cup Sevens in 2013, a world championship for the condensed seven-a-side format three years before its Olympic debut.

Meanwhile, the Russian Bears came up short 13-6 in their first-ever match in the Rugby World Cup, a 20-nation tournament for the traditional 15-a-side game, against the United States on Thursday.

The Rugby Union of Russia and the International Rugby Board made the sevens-tourney announcement on Thursday ahead of the country's match.

Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Zhukov, in New Zealand for Thursday's match, said "Russians are taking to rugby like our bears to honey."

"The secret is out, there is a revolution taking place in Russian rugby ... a sport that suits the Russian character," he added.

Sevens rugby will be on the Olympic program for Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2016.

Dates for the tournament in Moscow, which will not be part of the IRB Sevens World Series, were not announced.

The IRB said the 2009 championship in Dubai set record attendance and broadcast figures. The event was the first to incorporate a 16-team women's competition alongside a 24-team men's competition.

Zhukov pledged government support for his country's tournament.

"The IRB has led the way in displaying great trust in our vast potential," Zhukov said. "It has recognized our progress."

IRB chairman Bernard Lapasset said he is expecting Moscow to host an exceptional event.

"The IRB is committed to growing the game in emerging and new territories, and the awarding of Rugby World Cup Sevens 2013 to Moscow underscores our commitment to this process," Lapasset said.

• • •

World Cup rookie Russia came up seven points short to the United States on Thursday, as the U.S. side registered its third win ever at rugby's marquee event.

Fly-half Yury Kushnarev notched the country's first-ever points in the tournament, though he also missed three penalties before center Konstantin Rachkov took over to slot a late penalty.

"We tried to show our best. It was our first game, and we tried to prepare for it as much as possible. But it was very tough," lock Alex Voitov said.

"It was a tough game," he said. "It was unlucky with the loss but we will try to show our good game the next games."

Russia had waited 24 years to reach the World Cup, but it took just two minutes to earn their first points when Kushnarev slotted the penalty.

But the Americans rallied to take a 10-3 half-time lead. Heavy rain drenched the stadium in the second half, restricting scoring to one penalty apiece.

Konstantin landed the penalty in the 77th minute to get the Russians within a converted try after a sustained period of pressure, but the Americans held firm for the last three minutes to ensure the win.

Russia picked up its first World Cup competition point for losing by a margin of fewer than seven.

The Americans next face two-time champion Australia on Sept. 23.

(AP, Reuters)

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/09/15/russia-to-host-2013-rugby-sevens-a9570