

Russia Aiming for Bronze at the Olympics

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko said he doesn't think Russia can overtake the United States or China at the London Games. **Sergei Porter**

Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko thinks the Russian team will take third place at the London 2012 Olympic Games in the face of stiff competition from other frontrunners.

"We will fight for a place in the top three, but we won't be able to catch the Americans or the Chinese," Mutko said at a news conference Tuesday, Interfax reported.

"Our main competitor for third place will be the United Kingdom," Mutko said.

He said that the entire Russian team will consist of 440 to 445 athletes, with the final list to be confirmed by July 11. The athletes will begin to head to London on July 21, and the Russian flag will officially be raised in the Olympic Village on July 25.

Mutko also said he might resign if the team fares poorly at the games.

"I'm ready [to resign], if it turns out that I didn't work hard enough," he said, stressing that both he and Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Kozak had "done everything for a successful outcome."

Earlier, Russian Tennis Federation president Shamil Tarpishchev said that tennis star Maria Sharapova will be the standard bearer of the Russian national team at the opening ceremony of the London games, Rosbalt.ru said.

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