

Losing FIFA Cities Mull Their Exclusion

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Downcast officials in Krasnodar and Yaroslavl tried to stifle their disappointment Monday after their cities failed to make the list of host sites for the 2018 World Cup.

Some in Yaroslavl were quick to link their marginalization with the humiliation of the ruling United Russia party during mayoral elections earlier this year.

"It's very bad that we won't see the 2018 World Cup," said Igor Bolkhin, adviser to Mayor Yevgeny Urlashov, news portal Gazeta.ru reported Monday. "The main reason for Yaroslavl's exclusion from the list of those hosting the World Cup is, more likely than not, the recent change of leadership in the city and the region."

Others blamed Yaroslavl's proximity to the capital.

"We're next to Moscow," Yaroslavl Governor Sergei Yastrebov said, Interfax reported. "That shadow Moscow casts on the whole event probably influenced our result."

Recriminations in Krasnodar were also bitter, though there was no suggestion that recent high-level criticism of governor Alexander Tkachyov had played a role.

"Without Krasnodar, there can be no World Cup. It's just not possible; it's awful," president of Krasnodar football club and owner of retail giant Magnit Sergei Galitsky wrote on Twitter on Saturday.

Krasnodar is the only Russian city outside Moscow to have two teams in the country's top football league.

The 13 prospective host cities for the World Cup were visited this summer by a delegation from football's international governing body, FIFA, and their report was officially submitted for consideration on Sept. 26.

Each city was assessed on its infrastructure, level of socioeconomic development, investment programs and post-tournament "legacy" planning. The final decision by FIFA was based on those criteria.

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