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Luzhniki to Be Completely Rebuilt, Mayor Says

By The Moscow Times

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Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said in an interview published Wednesday that the iconic Luzhniki stadium would be completely rebuilt for the 2018 FIFA World Cup, but the mayor's spokeswoman quickly issued a denial.

Luzhniki "must meet modern requirements," Sobyanin told the Sovietsky Sport newspaper. "A football stadium is very different from a track-and-field facility in terms of the slope of the stands and in a number of other requirements. We are currently working on the project."

Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko said in early December that there were two options to get the stadium ready for the 2018 World Cup. The first option was to keep the walls intact, but break down the internal infrastructure. The second option was the complete demolition of the stadium and a construction of a brand-new facility.

Mutko said that Luzhniki could be demolished after it hosts a track-and-field championship

in August 2013. The new arena would be able to accommodate 80,000 viewers, which is about 2,000 more than current capacity.

But Gulnara Penkova, Sobyanin's spokeswoman, said Wednesday that officials are not working on a proposal to reconstruct the stadium and that the decision on its fate will be made after a meeting of an expert council, Interfax reported.

In addition to the planned facility on the Luzhniki site, Moscow will get a Spartak stadium in Tushino. Construction of that stadium is also expected to be completed by the championship in 2018.

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