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Vasily Tikhonov, Son of Legendary Soviet Coach, Dies Aged 56

By The Moscow Times

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Former San Jose Sharks assistant coach Vasily Tikhonov, who was part of one of Russia's great hockey families, died Wednesday outside his home in downtown Moscow.

Investigators said Vasily Tikhonov plummeted from his fourth-floor apartment on 23 Novy Arbat while trying to repair a protective screen. He was 56.

The Russian Ice Hockey Federation confirmed the death early Wednesday in an online statement.

"We share our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Vasily Viktorivich," the federation said.

In an interview with R-Sport, federation executive director Valery Fesyuk called Tikhonov a "legend of Russian hockey."

Tikhonov, a Moscow native, served as an assistant coach with the San Jose Sharks from 1993 to 1996, then another two with the Kentucky Thoroughblades. He moved the family to Finland for a three-year coaching stint in the SM-liiga and made a one-year sojourn in the Swiss league before taking a job at the helm of CSKA Moscow in the old Russian Superleague.

He returned to the bench in 2010 as Avangard Omsk's assistant after five years as a consultant with CSKA. Tikhonov also had a stint Ak Bars Kazan from 2011 to 2012.

Avangard sporting director Konstantin Bilan remembered Tikhonov as a wily tactician, who helped guide the club to a league-best 118 points in the 2010-11 season while primarily in charge of defensemen.

"He was always calm, considerate and had respect for the team," Bilan told R-Sport.

Tikhonov, however, lived largely in the shadow of his father Viktor, who led the Soviet Union to 10 world championships between 1977 and 1990 and is widely viewed as Russia's all-time greatest national team coach. The elder Tikhonov also won gold at the Calgary Olympics in 1988 with the Soviet Union and with Russia at the Albertville Games four years later.

More recently, Vasily Tikhonov's son, also named Viktor, was the family's flag bearer — a first-round draft pick of the Phoenix Coyotes in 2008, Viktor played 61 games over a single NHL season, scoring eight goals and eight assists. The 25-year-old is heading into his third season with SKA St. Petersburg in the KHL.

Vasily Tikhonov is survived by his wife and son.

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