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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

85% of Russians Expect Successful Winter Olympics, Internet Users More Skeptical, Polls Say

By The Moscow Times

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Medvedev visiting the Olympic facilities in Sochi on Monday.

Most Russians think the Winter Olympics in Sochi will be well organized and expect the country's athletes to be spending a lot of time mounting the podium, the state-run Russian Public Opinion Research Center, or VTsIOM, has found.

Eighty five percent of Russians said the Games will be a success and 73 percent think the Russian team will win the most gold medals, according to VTsIOM.

More than half of respondents think the Games will benefit the country as a whole, the state-run pollster said Monday.

However, a separate survey by the Social Networks Agency indicates that Internet users are much more skeptical about the Games. Thirty-four percent of bloggers doubt that the Games

will be well-run, while 16 percent said Russia isn't capable of organizing such a high-level event.

More than half of bloggers are convinced that Russia will fail to achieve good results. Twenty-eight percent said Russia will end up somewhere between third and fifth place in terms of medals, while only 7 percent expect Russia to top the medal table.

Five percent of bloggers said Russia's ice-hockey team has the highest gold-medal prospects.

Sixty percent of Internet users said the Games won't benefit Russia, the online survey showed.

The VTsIOM poll was conducted from Nov. 2-3 among 1,600 Russians. The margin for error did not exceed 3.4 percent.

The Social Networks Agency's poll was was conducted using search engines such as Google and Yandex, as well as the agency's own online search application. A total of 1,338 messages were analyzed as part of the study.

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