

Football Club to Be Kicked Out of League Over Debts

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Spartak Nalchik Football Club will cease to exist as a professional team amid financial and political problems, an official announced Thursday in another blow to sport in the troubled North Caucasus.

Nalchik finished sixth in the Russian top flight as recently as 2010, but were relegated two years later and have been plying their trade in the second tier.

So far this season, fellow North Caucasus club Anzhi Makhachkala have seen an exodus of star players and are now battling relegation from the top flight along with Chechnya's Terek Grozny. Another club from the region, 1995 champions Alania Vladikavkaz, are teetering on the edge of bankruptcy.

Sporting success has been a rare source of positive headlines in recent years for the North Caucasus, large parts of which are plagued by poverty and violent unrest.

"With the situation that's come up, the club has no possibility of competing under the status of a professional club," said Aslan Afaunov, the top state sports official in Nalchik's home region of Kabardino-Balkaria. The club's "debts to players, to clubs" are too high for the regional government to support, he added.

Politics appears to have played a role in the club's collapse. The main sponsor, billionaire banker and politician Arsen Kanokov, pulled his financing last month after resigning as the head of the regional government following nine years in charge.

Spartak were 12th in the second-tier with seven wins from 23 games. Their withdrawal means that their opponents for the rest of the season will earn automatic 3-0 wins in any games against them.

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