

Plushenko Set to Skate in Individual Program

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Former Olympic and world champion Yevgeny Plushenko is set to get Russia's only slot in the individual ice skating program at next month's Sochi Games, R-Sport news agency reported Tuesday.

The 31-year-old finished second behind 18-year-old Maksim Kovtun in the Russian championships in December and said he only expected to skate in the Olympic team event.

Kovtun, however, finished fifth at this month's European Championships in Budapest, an event Plushenko missed, handing the Turin gold medallist a lifeline.

Three-time world champion Plushenko performed a test skate behind closed doors on Tuesday in front of Russian officials and leading judges.

Plushenko said his test skate "went great" and that he landed two quadruple jumps,

the toughest element in the sport.

"I skated the program clean with all the elements," he told R-Sport. "I am pleased, my team is pleased, we did a great and successful job."

Russian Figure Skating Federation President Aleksander Gorshkov, however, said it was not certain that Plushenko would skate in the men's event in Sochi.

"Plushenko put in a great performance," he said. "The test skate was undertaken after a request from Aleksey Mishin [Plushenko's coach]. An official decision concerning who will go to the Olympics will be announced Jan. 23."

Plushenko has suffered from a back injury this season and his last major competition was last year's European Championships in Zagreb, an event which he failed to complete after pulling out ahead of the free skate.

The Russian won a silver medal at the Vancouver Olympics, finishing behind Evan Lysacek who, unlike Plushenko, failed to perform a quadruple jump.

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