Varlamov to Start for Russia in Opening Match

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Goaltender Semyon Varlamov has been handed a starting berth for Russia.

SOCHI — Goaltender Semyon Varlamov, who saw an assault charge against him dropped in December, has been handed a starting berth for Russia in the host nation's Olympic hockey curtain-raiser against Slovenia on Thursday, a team spokesman said.

Russia is spoiled for choice in the goaltending department, with Colorado Avalanche star Varlamov winning out over Sergei Bobrovski of the Columbus Blue Jackets and Dynamo Moscow's Alexander Yeryomenko.

Bobrovski will back Varlamov up in the opening game at the Bolshoi Ice Dome, said Russia team spokesman Mikhail Zakharov.

This season, Varlamov is fourth in the NHL with 1,436 saves made in 46 games, while Bobrovski has a 2.52 goals against average and a .918 save percentage.

Yeryomenko, for his part, has led Dynamo to 22 wins in 27 games this season, registering a .932 save percentage and 1.84 goals against average.

Unspecified health issues have left him off the ice for the last six weeks, however.