# Olympic Skater Rival Yagudin Criticizes Plushenko for Pulling Out

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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**Maxim Bogodvid**

Russian figure skating star Yevgeny Plushenko's decision to pull out of the Olympic men's competition and hang up his skates, blaming injury, was criticized Friday by his old rival and former gold medalist Alexei Yagudin.

Plushenko, 31, pulled out of the men's short program in Sochi on Thursday, blaming a back injury he said he had suffered during the warm-up. Yagudin, who beat Plushenko to gold at the 2002 Olympics, said it would have been better for him to compete anyway.

"I support people who go to the end," Yagudin said. "We were expecting a bitter fight by Zhenya Plushenko with other strong skaters, but we didn't get it."

"I think [he] will understand my words: We always competed through the pain."

Plushenko helped Russia to gold in the inaugural team event Sunday, but his ability

to compete in the men's event had long been in question, given that the injury–plagued skater would have to perform four programs in eight days.

Long troubled by back and knee problems, Plushenko said he has had 12 operations since winning silver at the 2010 Olympics.

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