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Putin Drops By USA House and Canada House in Sochi

By The Moscow Times

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Putin meeting with members of the U.S. Olympic Committee in Sochi on Friday.

President Vladimir Putin on Friday stopped by both USA House and Canada House in Sochi's Olympic Park to visit the teams and enjoy some red wine and backslapping.

Putin spent about 30 minutes in USA House, in which time he spoke to a number of athletes and team officials, thanking them for their support for the Games.

USOC chairman Larry Probst in turn complimented Putin on the Games as well as the work of the volunteers in Sochi, describing them as "fantastic and full of enthusiasm," Interfax reported.

Putin was offered wine, and opted for a glass of red.

"The wine is good," he said.

Hockey was one of the main topics of conversation, with the Russian men's team taking on their U.S. counterparts in Group A on Saturday, and Putin hinted that he may even attend the match, which starts at 4:30 p.m.

USOC CEO Scott Blackmun said the team was delighted by the visit and added that nothing political was discussed.

"All we talked about was sport and that's appropriate given that that's all we do," Blackmun told USA Today.

During his next stop-off, Putin told the Canadian sportsmen and women that he hopes Russia meets reigning champions Canada in the final of the Olympic men's hockey tournament.

The Canadians responded with chants of "Russia! Russia!"

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