

Ovechkin Ready to Forget Olympic Experience

By [The Moscow Times](#)

February 26, 2014



Alex Ovechkin sitting on a bench at a practice of the Washington Capitals. **Carolyn Kaster**

ARLINGTON, Virginia — Hockey star Alex Ovechkin returned to the Washington Capitals on Tuesday determined to forget his bitter Olympic experience and help his National Hockey League club secure a spot in the playoffs.

Ovechkin scored just one goal in five games for Russia and never reached the podium in Sochi, while Swede Nicklas Backstrom, a fellow Capital, was denied a chance to play in Sweden's gold-medal game after he failed a drug test.

"I feel sorry for my countrypeople," Ovechkin told reporters after practice at the Capitals' training facility in suburban Washington. "Everybody was excited, could not wait for the game to start. The fans were supporting us and we lost."

"First of all, I want to say sorry to the fans. It is a once-in-a-life opportunity to represent

your country in the Olympics and we did not get any medal. The fans, the media and all the people that supported Russia was upset but life goes on. Right now, we are here and we will do our best to take a playoff spot and win the [Stanley] Cup."

Backstrom was forced to sit out Sweden's 3-0 loss to Canada in the title game after testing positive for a higher-than-permitted level of an IOC-banned substance found in an allergy medication.

The 26-year-old center said he has been taking the medication, which is not banned by the NHL, since joining the Capitals in 2007.

Capitals coach Adam Oates said he feels "very sorry" for Backstrom and that testing for drugs is an imperfect science. The NHL levies no sanction for the level of medicine Backstrom ingested.

"From my perspective that sounds wrong," Oates said. "So you have a player who took a drug that he is allowed. He talked to the team doctor, who has accepted responsibility. I feel bad that it is gotten to this position for everybody."

Washington is currently on the outside looking in at a playoff spot but Oates said he was confident Ovechkin and Backstrom would be able to put the Olympics behind them.

"They are going to move forward fine," he said. "They are both professionals. What happened is very difficult, no question. Ovi's country was the host country with huge expectations and the team did not play very well."

"And Backie's situation is borderline unfair. But it is our job to get them through it and refocus on the Capitals for the rest of the year."

Ovechkin, the 28-year-old three-time NHL Most Valuable Player, said he is his own worst critic of his Sochi performance. Despite being a pre-tournament favorite, Russia was eliminated 3-1 in the quarterfinals by Finland.

"It was my job to score goals," said the gap-toothed winger. "I scored one on my first shot. The most criticism will come from me. I had the chance to score goals and I did not.

"I blame me. There is nothing more you can say."

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/02/26/ovechkin-ready-to-forget-olympic-experience-a32498>