

Putin Rushes to Congratulate Russian Hockey Team With Victory Over U.S.

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President Vladimir Putin has congratulated the Russian hockey team following their victory over the U.S. — a win that saw Russia lick its wounds after suffering a painful defeat against its hockey rival during the Sochi Olympics.

Monday's preliminary match in Belarus had the Russian team beat their U.S. opponents 6-1, marking the country's third straight victory at this year's ice hockey World Championships.

Putin, along with the team's unofficial curator, tycoon Arkady Rotenberg, phoned the locker room just five minutes after the game's end to congratulate the players, the [Russian Hockey Federation](#) said Tuesday on its website.

The match at the Minsk Arena took place as tensions between the U.S. and Russia remain high over the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, with the U.S. national team skating out to a chorus of boos in front of a largely pro-Russian crowd.

Since Russia annexed Crimea in March, the U.S. has levered economic and travel sanctions against several Russian companies and individuals, including Rotenberg, who is widely seen

as having close ties to the Kremlin.

Nikolai Kulemin opened the scoring in Monday's game in Minsk, before captain Alexander Ovechkin converted a penalty to put Russia 2-0 up by the end of the first period.

Viktor Tikhonov grabbed a third for Russia just twenty seconds after the restart, before the U.S. pulled a goal back through Justin Abdelkader. Goals from Yevgeny Kuznetsov, Sergei Plotnikov and a second from Tikhonov completed the rout, and made it three wins in three for the Russian national team.

Following victory over the U.S., the Russian team sits atop group B and will take on Kazakhstan in its next game on Wednesday.

See also:

[Putin Plays in Sochi Hockey Match](#)

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