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World Cup Squad to be Finalized at 11th Hour

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Russia coach Fabio Capello criticized his side's poor finishing and defensive mistakes after a 1-1 draw with Norway in a World Cup warm-up friendly in Oslo on Saturday.

Russia took the lead through Oleg Shatov in the third minute, but wasted chances and was pegged back when Anders Konradsen equalized in the 77th.

"The game was played in hot conditions and we did not expect that," said the 67-year-old Capello.

"The Norwegians have a quick team and I had an excellent opportunity to once again look at my players, playing at international level. I must say that we have been lucky as none of the players have picked up an injury.

"We created four good goal scoring opportunities, but we were not able to take them. The Norwegian goalkeeper and their defense managed to keep them out. At the end of the second half, we gave our opponents too much space and then made a silly mistake, which

allowed the home team to equalize."

The Italian said he will wait until the last minute to name his final squad for the tournament in Brazil.

Although Russia is a team with plenty of veterans, only one of them has seen World Cup action.

Alexander Kerzhakov came on as a substitute the last time Russia qualified for the World Cup in 2002, and he will be in Brazil this year looking for more.

With Kerzhakov up front, Roman Shirokov will likely be the one to control the tempo of the game. And behind them they have Igor Akinfeyev, a goalkeeper who has been a mainstay in the team for a decade.

Here are five players to watch:

Igor Akinfeyev

CSKA Moscow goalkeeper Igor Akinfeyev made his debut for Russia when he was only 18 years old — the youngest newcomer to the national squad. He has been Russia's top goalkeeper since 2005.

Akinfeyev's father brought him to the CSKA football school when he was 4 and he has never switched to another club after making his professional debut in 2003.

Sergei Ignashevich

A stalwart of the Russia and CSKA Moscow defense, Sergei Ignashevich made his national team debut in 2002 against Sweden.

Ignashevich missed the 2004 European Championship because of injury but played in four of the five matches at Euro 2008, when Russia made the semifinals.

He played in all 10 qualifying matches for the World Cup in Brazil.

Vasily Berezutsky

Vasily Berezutsky joined CKSA Moscow from Torpedo-ZIL in 2002 and made his debut for Russia in 2003. His twin brother Alexei is also a CSKA Moscow and Russia defender.

Roman Shirokov

Fabio Capello's key playmaker, Roman Shirokov was called up by former Russia coach Guus Hiddink in 2008 but then dropped during qualifying for the 2010 World Cup.

Shirokov was back in the national team under Dick Advocaat and played in all 10 World Cup qualifying match under Capello, scoring three goals.

Alexander Kerzhakov

Alexander Kerzhakov is the only player on the current national team who played at the World Cup in 2002, coming on as a late substitute for Valery Karpin.

After joining Zenit St. Petersburg in 2001, Kerzhakov signed with Spanish club Sevilla in 2006 and won the Copa del Rey and UEFA Cup. But he was back in Russia in 2008 with Dynamo Moscow and then with Zenit in January 2010.

Kerzakov scored six goals in qualifying for Euro 2008, but former coach Guus Hiddink dropped him from the final squad because of poor form.

Capello's side will play one more friendly against Morocco in Moscow on June 6, before departing for Brazil.

Russia will play their first game of the tournament against South Korea in Cuiaba on June 17.

(Reuters, AP)

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