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Naryshkin Wishes Russian Football Team a Crimean Victory in World Cup

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Sergei Naryshkin has called on the Russian football team to continue the country's winning streak.

State Duma Speaker Sergei Naryshkin has called on the Russian football team to continue the country's winning streak in the upcoming World Cup — citing Sochi, the Ice Hockey World Championships and Crimea as examples to follow.

"Let's wish them all success in a year [when we witnessed] the magnificent and victorious Sochi Olympics, our outstanding victory on the ice in Minsk, and a year when Crimea and Sevastopol — quite rightly — became an integral part of Russia once again," Naryshkin told a sitting of the State Duma on Wednesday, Interfax reported.

The World Cup opens Thursday in Rio de Janeiro, with home nation Brazil kicking off the football tournament when it takes on Croatia in Sao Paulo.

Russia play their first game against South Korea on Tuesday, though pundits have not given the team much of a look-in — with British bookmakers offering odds of 100 to 1 for a Russian victory in the tournament.

"Despite all the criticism directed toward Russian football, let us wish our guys success," Naryshkin was quoted as saying by Interfax.

Russia, which has been ranked 19th in the world by football governing body FIFA, will also play Algeria and Belgium, with the top two teams in the group progressing through to the next round.

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