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Russian Goalie Akinfeyev Apologizes for 'Childish' Error During Opening World Cup

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Russia's Igor Akinfeev reacts as the ball slips past his hands into his goal during their 2014 World Cup Group H football match against South Korea at the Pantanal arena in Cuiaba.

Goalkeeper Igor Akinfeyev has called his basic error during the Russian team's 1-1 draw with South Korea in Cuiaba on Tuesday "childish", but he can take comfort from team mates and the local media who have rallied around the 28-year-old.

"I want to apologize to everybody, it was a childish mistake on my part, a ridiculous goal," he said on the Russian Football Union's official website.

"The keeper of a national side should not let in such goals. It will not happen again."

The South Koreans took the lead in the Group H match in the 68th minute when substitute Lee Keun-ho unleashed a stinging shot from outside the box.

The experienced Akinfeyev appeared to have the situation under control, but he surprisingly

let the ball slip from his grasp and over his shoulder into the net. Alexander Kerzhakov's stabbed equalizer six minutes later saved at least some of his blushes.

"Kerzhakov scored just at the right moment," said forward Alexander Samedov. "As for Igor Akinfeyev, he was and remains a leader of the team."

In its day-after match analysis, Russian sports newspaper Sovietsky Sport opined that the country should not panic over the blunder, reminding readers of other goalkeeping errors at World Cups past and present.

"Did Casillas not help the Dutch destroy the reigning champions?" it asked, referring to Spanish keeper Iker Casillas's error-strewn display in the 5-1 humbling by the Netherlands in their opening Group B game.

The newspaper urged Russia coach Fabio Capello not to drop Akinfeyev on the basis of the mistake, recalling how a similar knee-jerk decision may have cost the Soviet Union's ice hockey team dearly at the 1980 Lake Placid Winter Olympics.

Just before the end of the first period of the game with the U.S., goaltender Vladislav Tretyak's uncharacteristic error allowed the home side to draw level at 2-2.

Tretyak never made it back on to the ice that day.

Though widely recognized as the world's best, coach Viktor Tikhonov famously replaced him with the inexperienced Vladimir Myshkin and the U.S. won 4-3 in the sport's biggest ever upset.

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