

Russia's World Cup Stint Over After Algeria Draw

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia's Alexei Kozlov shows dejection after a 1-1 draw with Algeria at the Baixada arena in Curitiba on Thursday.

Russia were poised to beat Algeria on Thursday and reach the second round of the World Cup for the first time but paid the price for a lack of discipline and sub par performances from key players.

Young striker Alexander Kokorin, under fire for missing an easy header in the previous match against Belgium, started the game and looked to have repaid manager Fabio Capello's faith with a magnificent header in the sixth minute.

Kokorin put his finger to his lips as he celebrated the goal in a clear signal to his critics.

But even though Russia looked to be in control against a nervy and toothless Algeria, there were already signs of trouble as the first half progressed.

The players had problems completing even simple passes, with midfielder Oleg Shatov guilty of several glaring errors.

At half time the Algerians had completed 74 percent of their passes and the Russians only 73 percent.

The Russians had run themselves into the ground against Belgium and faded suddenly in the last 10 minutes, conceding a goal in injury time.

It was no surprise therefore to see them playing a more controlled game against Algeria, pushing up when they sensed a chance and sitting back otherwise, happy to let their opponents take the ball.

Russia were easily holding their own as the hour mark approached and Capello will rue the moment when fullback Alexey Kozlov dragged down Abdelmoume Djabou in the 59th minute.

The Algerian whipped in the resulting free kick and unfortunately for Russia, goalkeeper Igor Akinfeyev made his second big mistake of the tournament, missing the ball and allowing Islam Slimani to head home the crucial equaliser.

In the first game against South Korea, Akinfeev had allowed a long range shot to bounce off his hands into the net.

His error meant Russia were suddenly in exactly the position they had hoped to avoid, needing to chase the game in the heat as their legs tired.

Capello's men pressed forward and although they occasionally looked dangerous, their lack of technical skills foiled them time and again.

At key moments passes went astray, corners were thumped right across the area and out of play while free kicks either sailed wide or landed in the arms of the goalkeeper.

Even the simplest tasks seemed beyond the Russian players.

With 10 minutes to go Kozlov took a throw-in so far from the correct spot that the referee awarded it to Algeria.

Capello, criticized for not making more use of attacking midfielder Alan Dzagoev, brought him on with 25 minutes to play but he failed to shine above the mediocrity.

Russia's underperformance will infuriate Capello, who knows his side blew a good chance against an Algerian team that often looked out of sorts.

See also: [Russia Underperforms at the World Cup](#)

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