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Russian Football Commentator Calls for No 2018 World Cup in Russia

By Jennifer Monaghan

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Former player and commentator Vladimir Pereturin has become one of the first domestic names to advocate not hosting the World Cup.

While several Western politicians have voiced concerns over Russia hosting the 2018 World Cup, the country is now facing calls from within its own ranks to pass up the prestigious football tournament.

Former player and commentator Vladimir Pereturin, who worked for 19 years on the country's leading football show "Football Review," has become one of the first domestic names to advocate not hosting the World Cup, citing the spiraling costs involved in hosting the tournament.

"It is imperative to decline hosting [the tournament]. For us, it will be a very expensive championship. We must build bases, stadiums, telecenters. The World Cup is not the Olympics," Pereturin said Sunday in an interview with Russian journal Sport Weekend.

Russia, which earlier this year hosted the Winter Olympics at an estimated cost of $50 billion, looks set to spend another $20 billion on hosting the 2018 World Cup — making it the most expensive World Cup of all time.

"We are living in poverty, and the World Cup will cost several billion," Pereturin said.

Following Russia's annexation of Crimea in March and its perceived backing of separatists in the east of Ukraine, a number of Western politicians have called for the World Cup to be taken away from Russia.

Nick Clegg, deputy prime minister of the United Kingdom — a country widely considered to be the home of football — last week became the highest-profile voice in British politics to raise objections to Russia's hosting of the tournament.

"He [Putin] cannot constantly push the patience of the international community beyond breaking point, destabilize a neighboring country, protect these armed separatists in the east of Ukraine and still have the privilege and honor of receiving all the accolades in 2018 for being the host nation of the World Cup," Clegg told British newspaper The Sunday Times.

Horst Seehofer, the head of one of three parties forming the German coalition government, voiced a similar opinion to that country's Die Welt newspaper: "As long as Russia doesn't contribute to reducing the tensions [in Ukraine], it's hard to imagine holding any global sports events there."

Germany recently became World Cup champions for the fifth time after defeating Argentina 1-0 in the 2014 final in Brazil.

See also:

[Britain's Clegg Says Russia Should Lose Right to Host 2018 World Cup]

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