

Putin Opens New Football World Cup 2018 Stadium in Moscow

By [The Moscow Times](#)

August 28, 2014



Russian President Vladimir Putin talks to young soccer players during a visit to Russia's newest World Cup 2018 stadium, the Otkrytie Arena in Moscow.

Russia's newest completed World Cup stadium, the Otkrytie Arena, in Moscow, was opened by the country's President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday.

The stadium, in the north west of the Russian capital, will be home to the city's famous Spartak club and will host matches at the 2018 World Cup finals.

Putin arrived by helicopter, accompanied by the Minister for Sport, Vitaly Mutko, the mayor of Moscow, Sergei Sobyenin, and Leonid Fedun, the owner of Spartak Moscow, who funded the stadium.

Russia's head of state was given a tour of the arena, which currently holds 42,000. He also met Spartak veterans and youth players.

Before leaving, Putin signed a football, which will be placed in the club's museum.

"This stadium is fit for one of the most loved clubs in Russia," said Putin. "The construction of sporting stadia like this helps to push development within the country."

The stadium took seven years to build and cost about 15 billion rubles (\$415.17 million).

The capacity can be increased to 45,000, which soccer's world governing body FIFA would prefer. The stadium will also host Confederations Cup matches in 2017.

The first game at Spartak's new stadium will be on Sept. 5 when the club will play a friendly against Red Star Belgrade.

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