

World's Oldest Olympic Torchbearer Dies in Siberia Aged 102

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Alexander Kaptarenko

Alexander Kaptarenko, who last year became the oldest ever Olympic torchbearer, has died in Siberia at the age of 102.

The former international table-tennis referee died Saturday morning in his home city of Novosibirsk, the RIA Novosti news agency said Monday, citing a spokesman for the local sports department.

Kaptarenko was one of hundreds of torchbearers to carry the Olympic flame ahead of the 2014 Winter Games held February in the Black Sea resort of Sochi.

But the centenarian, who was born while Russia's last tsar was still on the throne, was the only one able to boast of becoming the oldest person to ever carry the flame, when at the age of 101 he jogged with the torch through the Siberian city of Novosibirsk.

Kaptarenko told RIA he had prepared for the run by attending table-tennis training three

times a week and had practiced jogging with a dried fish that mimicked the weight of the Olympic torch.

Kaptarenko, who was also a representative of Novosibirsk City Hall's sports department and penned several children's books throughout his lifetime, said in a January interview that the key to his longevity was humor.

"I think the simpler your attitude to life is, the easier life will be. Do not grieve for anything, especially if you cannot change anything. And also, you must be able to take pleasure from everything that surrounds you," he was quoted as saying by RIA.

Kaptarenko, who was born in 1912 in St. Petersburg, moved in 1941 to Novosibirsk, where he lived for the rest of his life.

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