

How Russia Would React to Canada Hockey Team Slight

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Canada's team celebrate with the trophy after defeating Russia in their Ice Hockey World Championship final game at the O2 arena in Prague, Czech Republic May 17.

How would Russia have reacted if the ice skate had been on the other foot during its hockey clash with Canada over the weekend, and Russia had won the Ice Hockey World Championship final only to see the Canadian players breach etiquette by leaving the ice before the Russian national anthem was played? The Moscow Times believes it would have been reporting something very similar to what follows.

Russia's Investigative Committee has opened a case into the Canadian national hockey team's early exit from the ice after Russia's 6-1 win in the final of the Ice Hockey World Championship on Sunday, a gesture prosecutors view as inciting hatred against the Russian nation.

Most Canadian players retreated to the dressing room, refusing to stick around to listen to the

Russian national anthem and see the victors' tricolor flag be hoisted in Prague's O2 Arena after their stinging loss to the star-filled Russian squad. Only three Canadian players — all of whom had played in the Russia-based Kontinental Hockey League (KHL), where they learned to handle defeat graciously — remained on the ice for the traditional post-game celebrations.

See the photo gallery: [Canada Demolishes Russia in Ice Hockey Championship](#)

Prosecutors claim that Canada's refusal to stay for the Russian anthem constitutes a criminal offense equivalent to the desecration of the national flag. If found guilty of affronting national symbolism, the Canadian squad could be forced to install toilet seats in all KHL rinks across Russia.

The head of the Canadian hockey federation said the players had not meant to disrespect the victorious Russian squad, claiming organizers had led the players to believe they were free to vacate the rink and wallow in defeat.

"We respect the winners. We congratulated them and shook their hands," he said.

But Canada's attempts to downplay the incident have done little to assuage Russia's hurt and anger toward yet another example of the West's blatant disrespect for the country.

Russian officials have drawn parallels between the Canadians' dressing room retreat and the absence of Western leaders at Victory Day celebrations earlier this month, an insult to the Soviet Union's leading role in the defeat of Nazi Germany.

"Those Canadians — like all Westerners, for that matter — just couldn't stand the sight of a Russian victory," Alexei Pushkov, head of the State Duma's Committee on Foreign Affairs, wrote on Twitter. "The West is only satisfied when Russia is on its knees."

Dmitry Rogozin, deputy prime minister responsible for Russia's defense and space industries, threatened to add the Canadian roster and coaching staff to the list of individuals sanctioned over the Ukraine crisis.

"Walking out on Russia is as condemnable as lecturing us for saving the Crimean population from fascism," Rogozin wrote on Twitter. "I suggest that the Canadian team be banned entry onto Russian territory. No Sochi getaways for them."

Russian hockey analysts have suggested that Rogozin's proposed ban could help Team Russia breeze through next year's World Hockey Championship, which will be held in Moscow and St. Petersburg. The Russian Hockey Federation has already appealed to the sport's international governing body to have Canada's silver medal revoked over the incident. The medals should be given to World War II veterans, one lawmaker suggested, so they can be traded for medication they have not been able to afford since the currency crisis. The silver could also be melted to make dental fillings and teeth caps.

Russian journalists joked that Canada certainly could have used 56-year-old rookie Stevie Harper, who had to relinquish his spot on the team because of his professional obligations as the country's prime minister. The flying quinquagenarian scored eight goals in an inspiring display of manliness at a charity game held last week in Canada's maple tree-laden resort

town of Niagara Falls.

After the Russian team realized that the sweet fragrance of maple syrup — and not the habitual musk of damp hockey equipment — was emanating from Team Canada's dressing room, Russian media reports were rife with rumors that the Canadian players were filthy, sugar-loving cheaters.

"Doping is for losers," Russia's Anti-Doping Agency said in a statement following the team's commanding win. "We need to teach our youth that consuming banned sticky substances leads nowhere, as we saw with Team Canada's disastrous loss. Real champions, like our Russian team, don't resort to artificial performance-enhancing substances."

The Russian national team had also scoffed at a pre-game threat made by an obscure member of the Canadian squad: "We will teach you KHL kids a lesson."

Television commentators criticized Team Canada's unimaginative play and its lack of energy, while Canadian commentators lauded their squad's goaltender for having had the courage to stay between the posts until the end of the game and not hide behind the bench.

"Our team is the second best in the world," a spokesperson for the Canadian Prime Minister said after the ignominious loss, adding that the prime minister's Cabinet would not release an official statement on the defeat.

The general manager of the Canadian team wept at a press conference at which he apologized to the nation of 35 million for their beloved team's inexcusable performance. The head of the country's hockey federation passed him a tissue and admitted that the team's lackluster record was a new reality hockey fans just have to accept.

"It's pointless to try to live in the glory days of Canadian hockey, when the most important thing was winning gold," he said, suggesting that all players at the Ice Hockey World Championship should be given a participation certificate.

No Canadian fans greeted their squad at Toronto's Lester B. Pearson International Airport where the players arrived, tails between legs, on the red-eye from Prague.

This is a satirical editorial by The Moscow Times in which some quotes were imagined and others imaginatively attributed.

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