The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Slutsky's Future Unclear as Russia Crashes Out of Euro 2016

June 21, 2016

Russia's Sergei Ignashevich and Wales' Gareth Bale in action, Stadium de Toulouse, France.

Russia's national football team has been kicked out of the European Championships after a crushing 3-0 loss to Wales in Toulouse, France.

The make-or-break match against the diminutive British nation was opened with Aaron Ramsey scoring for Wales in the 11th minute. Neil Taylor scored the team's second goal before half time, with Gareth Bale applying the finishing touch to Wales' victory in the 67th minute.

Russia now stands in last place in Group B with a single point, crashing out of the tournament in the opening stage for the second time in a row.

Russia's head coach Leonid Slutsky hinted that he could resign following the defeat.

"We are disappointed with our performance and that we failed to live up to our fans' expectations. I think we should change our coach. Everything else is a question for the The Russian Football Union (RFS) ," he said, as quoted by RIA Novosti.

Slutsky has been heading Russian national team since August last year, replacing Italian native Fabio Capello.

Leonid Fedun, owner of Spartak Moscow football club, was one of many speaking out in favor of Slutsky, calling the coach "the best in the country and "not to blame for the failure."

"Unfortunately, even when compared to Wales, Russian players aren't up to scratch in terms of speed and skills. This is not just the coach's defeat. This is the best coach we have, and the best players we have. It's just a real picture of our football," Fedun said to the Kommersant newspaper.

Sports Minister and head of the RFS, Vitaly Mutko, said that Slutsky's statement had been driven by high-emotions, and that he was happy for Slutsky to continue his work.

"I must admit that we don't currently have players of the highest level, but that's the situation we're in," Mutko said, the TASS news agency reported.

The team also spoke of their disappointment and apologized to the fans.

"Every time we come with high hopes, but unfortunately we always leave disappointing both ourselves and our fans," midfielder Roman Shirokov said to RIA Novosti. "Wales completely outplayed us."

"We lost badly," said Russian defender Vasily Berezutsky. "It's hard to even call that match football." He also advised Russian footballers to move to Europe in order to improve their performance.

"Playing in the Russian Premier League doesn't do you any good," he said.

The Russian team's quick exit comes after an already difficult tournament for fans. Violent fights of Russian and English supporters marred the start of the competition and made world news headlines. More than 35 people were injured as a result of the brawls, which led to Russia being awarded a suspended disqualification by UEFA. France also deported 20 Russian fans, including head of the Russian Supporters Union Alexander Shprygin.

Shprygin, who was deported from Marseille on June 16, was detained again during the Russia-Wales match, having snuck back into France over the Spanish border in order to attend the game, TASS reported.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/06/21/slutskys-future-unclear-as-russia-crashes-out-of-euro-2016-a53364