

Ukraine Considers Boycott of Russia's 2018 Football World Cup

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Ariel Schalit / AP

Ukraine could boycott the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia should the country qualify for the tournament, the Izvestiya newspaper reported Wednesday.

"The Ukrainian government and its football officials are seriously looking at boycotting the upcoming World Cup should the team qualify," an unnamed source in the Ukraine Football Federation told the newspaper. Officials in Kiev do not believe that tense relations between the two countries will have subsided by the start of the tournament in June 2018, the source said.

The vice-president of Ukraine's Football Federation, Igor Kochetov, told Izvestia that he didn't want to bring politics into sport, maintaining that he hoped his country could successfully qualify for the competition. Ukraine began its qualification bid on Monday with a 1-1 draw against Iceland.

Currently ranked 30 in the world by FIFA, Ukraine traditionally struggles to qualify for major tournaments. The team has played in one World Cup, reaching the quarterfinals in 2006.

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