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After Injury, Ovechkin Won't Play for Russia's Hockey Team

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Nick Wass / AP

Russian hockey star Alexander Ovechkin won't be playing on Team Russia this year, after the 31-year-old Moscow native suffered lower body injuries during NHL playoffs.

Ovechkin sustained the injuries during the first round of the Stanley Cup playoffs, when his team, the Washington Capitols, faced the Toronto Maple Leaves. Ovechkin was hip checked by an opposing player, and had to be removed from the rink. However, he returned at intermission and finished the game.

Ovechkin went on to play for the rest of the post-season, but spent less time in the rink as the tournament went on.

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During the NHL seasons, Ovechkin plays for the Capitols. However, in the off season, he

usually plays for Russia's National Hockey Team.

But this year that hip check is coming back to haunt him. Ovechkin will not be immediately joining Russia's national team.

On May 11, Team Russia coaches announced in a press release that Ovechkin's fellow Russian teammates from the Capitols, Dmitry Orlov and Yevgeny Kuznetsov, will be playing with the Russian team this summer. Orlov, a defenseman, and Kuznetsov, a forward, both played on Team Russia last summer.

However, Ovechkin could return to the rink later in the season. According to the press release, he wants to play as soon as possible and "doesn't want to let the team down."

Before being drafted by the Pittsburg Penguins in 2003, Ovechkin played for team Dynamo here in Moscow. Since then, he has played on Team Russia 12 times. In the last round, he was a captain.

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