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England's FA Concerned Over Russian Cyber-Attacks Ahead of World Cup

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Paul Childs / Reuters

The English Football Association (FA) has asked FIFA to shield its national team from Russian cyber-attacks ahead of the 2018 World Cup in Russia after emails between the football associations were reportedly hacked.

The Associated Press said the request was made after emails between the FA and FIFA discussing doping were leaked by the Fancy Bears hacking group, which is widely suspected of ties to the Russian security services.

The Aug. 22 leaks revealed that international footballers, including five from the Argentinian team, had been given medical approval for the use of banned drugs during the 2010 South Africa World Cup.

A FIFA spokesman responded to the concerns saying the organization "remains committed to preventing security attacks" adding an investigation into the hack was ongoing.

The Fancy Bears has previously targeted athletes including tennis players Rafael Nadal, Serena and Venus Williams, gymnast Simone Biles and swimmer Cate Campbell.

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The group is thought to be seeking retribution for the Russian doping scandal when the World Anti-Doping Agency found evidence of widespread state-sponsored doping among Russian athletes.

"The hacks have neutralized the West's accusations against Russia," said Dmitry Trenin of the Carnegie Center think tank in comments to the Moscow Times.

"The narrative is: You showed us our flaws, and we've uncovered your flaws. No one's better than anyone else. We're all roughly the same."

England has reportedly warned its players, coaches, and technical staff against using public wifi in Russia to prevent private information from reaching potential hackers.

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