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Calls To Ban Russia From 2018 World Cup Are 'Absolutely Unacceptable' — Football Union

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Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency

Russia's Football Union (RFU) has hit back over new proposals to ban the country's team from the upcoming World Cup over allegations of doping.

Norwegian Football Association president Terje Svendsen said over the weekend that Russia should be forbidden from playing on its own soil at the 2018 FIFA World Cup this summer if claims of doping abuse were proven to be true. FIFA announced last month that it would test the samples of Russian soccer players, including the entire 2014 FIFA World Cup squad, for performance-enhancing drugs.

Related article: FIFA to Test Russian Soccer Team for Suspected Doping

“RFU considers the statements made by the president of the Norwegian Football Association absolutely unacceptable,” acting RFU head Alexander Alayev told the state-run TASS news agency on Sunday.

He stressed that Russia’s Football Union was “directly involved” with FIFA’s ongoing doping investigation and noted that it “has the right to fight libel in the legal plane.”

“We are now also discussing the possibility of filing a complaint against the president of the Norwegian Football Federation with the FIFA Ethics Committee,” Alayev said.

As part of its investigation, FIFA submitted questions to Russia’s doping whistleblower Grigory Rodchenkov, the whistleblower’s legal counsel told The Daily Telegraph on Sunday.

Alayev, who temporarily replaced the embattled head of Russia’s Football Union — Vitaly Mutko — last month, charged that Svendsen called for the ban “to discredit Russian football” as it prepares to host the 2018 FIFA World Cup between June 14 and July 15.

“Besides, it is obvious that our Norwegian colleagues did not set this goal on their own,” he added without elaborating.

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