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Host Russia Names Preliminary Squad for 2018 World Cup

By Reuters

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Russian Football Union

Hosts Russia named their preliminary 28-man squad for next month's World Cup, with head coach Stanislav Cherchesov counting on young players to fill the gaps left by injured footballers.

Russia are hoping to make it to the knockout stage for the first time in the post-Soviet era. The country hosts the tournament from June 14 to July 15 in 12 venues spread across 11 cities including Moscow, St. Petersburg and Sochi.

There are only three players on the squad who play outside Russia -- Brugge goalkeeper Vladimir Gabulov, Fenerbahce defender Roman Neustadter and Villarreal forward Denis Cheryshev -- and six returning players from Russia's 2014 World Cup squad.

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Rubin Kazan defender Ruslan Kambolov, investigated by FIFA over alleged doping violations, also made the squad. His lawyers said last month that FIFA had closed the case against him.

Zenit St Petersburg forward Alexander Kokorin, one of Russia's top strikers, was not included because he is still recovering from a right knee injury.

Defenders Viktor Vasin and Georgy Dzhikiya were also ruled out with the same injury.

Strikers Artem Dzyuba, who had been left out of recent international matches, and uncapped 20-year-old Fyodor Chalov of CSKA Moscow were included. They will join two-time Russian Premier League top scorer Fyodor Smolov of FC Krasnodar and 22-year-old Alexei Miranchuk of Lokomotiv Moscow, the club that clinched its first title in 14 years last week.

Russia will play friendlies against Austria on May 30 and Turkey on June 5. At the World Cup, they will face Saudi Arabia, Uruguay and Egypt in Group A.

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Preliminary squad and reserve list:

Goalkeepers: Igor Akinfeev (CSKA Moscow), Vladimir Gabulov (Brugge), Soslan Dzhanaev (Rubin Kazan), Andrei Lunev (Zenit St. Petersburg)

Defenders: Vladimir Granat, Ruslan Kambolov, Fedor Kudryashov (all Rubin Kazan), Ilya Kutepov (Spartak Moscow), Roman Neustadter (Fenerbahce), Konstantin Rausch (Dynamo Moscow), Andrei Semenov (Akhmat Grozny), Igor Smolnikov (Zenit St. Petersburg), Mario Fernandes (CSKA Moscow)

Midfielders: Yuri Gazinsky (Krasnodar), Alexander Golovin, Alan Dzagoev (both CSKA Moscow), Alexander Erokhin, Yuri Zhirkov, Daler Kuzyaev (all Zenit St. Petersburg), Roman Zobnin, Alexander Samedov (both Spartak Moscow), Anton Miranchuk (Lokomotiv Moscow), Alexander Tashaev (Dynamo Moscow), Denis Cheryshev (Villareal)

Strikers: Artem Dzyuba (Arsenal Tula), Alexei Miranchuk (Lokomotiv Moscow), Fyodor Smolov (Krasnodar), Fyodor Chalov (CSKA Moscow)

Reserve list:

Goalkeeper: Marinato Guilherme (Lokomotiv)

Defenders: Vladislav Ignatyev (Lokomotiv Moscow), Dmitry Kombarov (Spartak Moscow)

Midfielders: Denis Glushakov (Spartak Moscow), Anton Shvets (Akhmat Grozny)

Strikers: Anton Zabolotny, Dmitry Poloz (both Zenit St. Petersburg)

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