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Russian Football Player 'Refuses' to Speak in Russian to Journalists, Media Report

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Denis Cheryshev (Dmitry Golubovich / TASS)

A member of Russia's World Cup squad has sparked controversy among Russian sports journalists for refusing to speak with them in Russian after the team's last friendly ahead of the tournament.

Villarreal midfielder Denis Cheryshev, who grew up in Spain, is one of three Russian national team members who play outside the country. The 27-year-old told Spanish-speaking media after a tie with Turkey on Tuesday that the Iberian side was one of the favorites to take home the trophy next month.

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"I have to go," Cheryshev was heard as saying after being asked to speak in Russian by a

sports journalist from the Kremlin-funded RT news network after the game, as seen in a video posted on Twitter.

“Absolutely shameful. Cheryshev refused to speak in Russian,” RT journalist Alina Matinian tweeted after the incident.

Embed:

> Тот самый момент, когда Черышев отказался общаться со мной на русском ☒☒☒☒ pic.twitter.com/TehXqi0f9P
>
> — Ksenia Rahnovskaya (@xx_Xenon_xx) 5 июня 2018 г.

The incident was covered by Russia’s Sport-Express and Sport24.ru news websites, both of which noted that Cheryshev answered Spanish reporters’ questions but refused to speak Russian.

The Russian squad was widely criticized for its disappointing 1-1 draw against an experimental side fielded by Turkey in what was the last game for the World Cup host country before the tournament kicks off on June 14.

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