

# Raiffeisen, Sberbank Accused of Misusing World Cup Symbols

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**Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency**

Russia's top state lender Sberbank and the Russian branch of Austria's Raiffeisen Bank International AG have been accused of improperly using the World Cup concept for promotional material.

Sberbank [launched](#) a promo offering higher interest rates for any deposits made around the time of Russia's unexpected victory over Saudi Arabia on June 14, [opening](#) almost 200,000 new accounts totaling \$1 billion in less than a week under the deal. Russia's subsidiary of Raiffeisen [offers](#) discounts at bars and restaurants during the World Cup and [gave](#) some card holders travel miles for each goal scored by the national squad.

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Both financial institutions were censured for their use of the World Cup to promote their

banks – one by FIFA, another by Russia’s anti-monopoly watchdog.

FIFA asked Sberbank to remove the “2018 FIFA World Cup” trademark from the deposit account’s webpage late last week, two unnamed sources familiar with the matter [told](#) Russia’s Vedomosti business daily on Wednesday.

Russia’s federal anti-monopoly watchdog, meanwhile, [opened](#) proceedings against Raiffeisen for violating federal World Cup [legislation](#) on promotional material that creates a “false impression” of FIFA’s affiliation.

The Federal Anti-Monopoly Service said in an online statement it set hearings for Raiffeisen’s alleged violation for Friday, June 29.

A Sberbank official told Vedomosti that it is working closely with FIFA on a solution to the dispute, but stressed that it was acting within Russian and international norms. By 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Reuters reported that Sberbank had agreed to remove references to the FIFA World Cup in its advertising.

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Vedomosti reported that the webpage for Sberbank’s deposit promo removed [trademarked](#) phrases but kept references to the tournament in Russia with the phrase “Advancing From the Group is Not the Limit.”

As of early Wednesday, the text on Sberbank website [references](#) Russia’s victory over Egypt in its second game of this World Cup: imagery of a bear and a sphinx representing Russia and Egypt sits alongside text saying “Figures That Will Go Down in History” with the numbers 3:1.

*Reuters contributed reporting to this story.*

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