

With Russia Out of the Tournament, Hosts' World Cup Fever Wanes

By [Reuters](#)

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Shamil Zhumatov / Reuters

With their national team out of the World Cup, interest among Russians in the football tournament is beginning to wane.

After far exceeding expectations in the early stage of the competition, Russia was knocked out by Croatia on Saturday in the quarterfinals, leading many in the host nation to stop following the tournament.

"That's it. There's no point watching the World Cup anymore," a woman identifying herself only as Vasilisa from Samara, one of the host cities for the World Cup, tweeted soon after Russia crashed out.

Another post doing the rounds on Russian social media compared the remaining teams in the tournament to guests who stay at a party after the host has gone to bed.

"It has cooled down. The interest has cooled. The main event has passed, Russia's victory, that's gone now," Russia supporter Sergei Cherevko said.

"But everyone is happy with what we have," he said, adding that he would still watch remaining games, supporting Belgium.

Russians from all walks of life had been swept up by the progress of their national team, which reached the quarterfinal despite starting out as the lowest-ranked team in the tournament. City bars were packed to capacity and emotions were high every time they played.

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Sixty eight percent of Russians surveyed by pollster VTsIOM said they watched the match against Croatia, while data from MediaScope showed the game attracted similar viewing figures to President Vladimir Putin's New Year address, traditionally one of the mostly widely watched programs on TV.

Tens of thousands of Russians gathered in Moscow on Sunday to cheer the national team, after its defeat to Croatia in a penalty shootout brought an unlikely World Cup run to an emotional end.

With 39 percent of Russians in the VTsIOM poll saying they would only watch World Cup matches in which their national team was playing, viewing figures are set to decline sharply.

Russia's team coach Stanislav Cherchesov told a television chat show on Monday that he would also no longer be following the tournament, but would support Belgium, as he was friendly with the team's coach.

The managers at two bars in Moscow that have been showing World Cup games said their venues had been packed to the rafters whenever Russia was playing, but that they did not expect the high demand to continue.

"Naturally there will be less people than for the Russia games," Darya, manager of the Katie O'Shea's pub in northern Moscow, said.

"There are reservations, but not as many," she added.

France faces Belgium on Tuesday for a place in Sunday's World Cup final while England take on Croatia in the other semifinal on Wednesday.

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