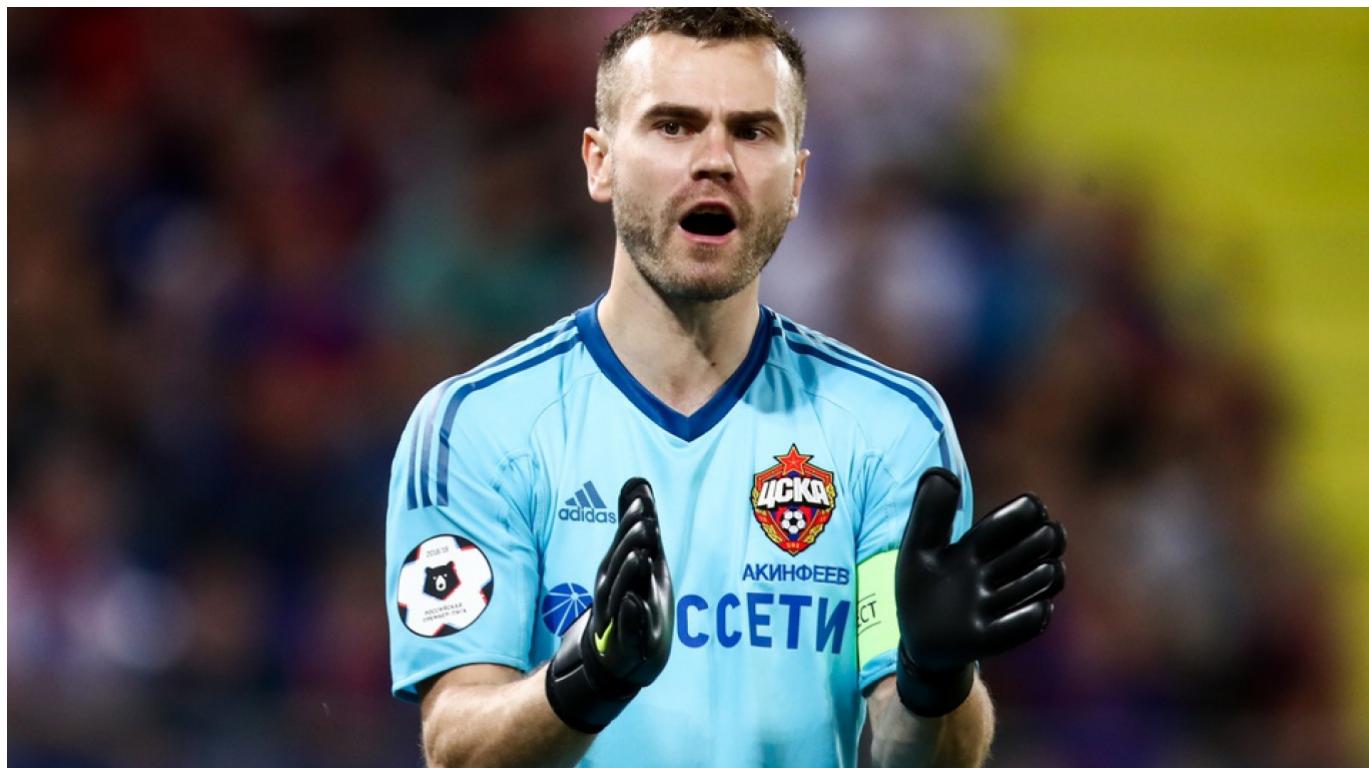


Igor Akinfeyev, Russia's 'Foot of God' World Cup Hero, Announces International Retirement

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Valery Sharifulin / TASS

Igor Akinfeyev, the goalie and captain of Russia's national football team whose tip-of-the-toe save at the World Cup this summer earned him the status of national hero, has announced his international retirement after 15 years in the team.

Social media dubbed Akinfeyev's toe the "[Foot of God](#)" after his crucial penalty-shootout save against Spain helped Russia advance to the quarterfinals of the World Cup for the first time since 1970. Russia, the lowest-ranked side before the World Cup kicked off, then lost on penalties to eventual finalist Croatia.

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“Every story has its beginning and its end. My story with the national team has also come to its logical conclusion,” Akinfeyev, who will continue playing for the CSKA Moscow football club, said in an announcement on the team's website.

Having played 112 games for the national squad, Akinfeyev said he had “come to the realization it's time to make way for the younger colleagues and focus on my hometown club.”

“We must believe in young players and support them in every possible way. And let this generation prove to be much more successful than ours,” the captain said in a parting message.

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