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Russian Gravediggers Defy Coronavirus to Throw Speed-Digging Contest

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Each contestant was required to dig a 1.6-meter-deep hole. **Screenshot Mash / Telegram**

Russian gravediggers broke out their best shovels for the first-ever speed-digging competition in Siberia after organizers postponed the initial contest this summer due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"Grave Mayhem 2020" was initially due to take place in Russia's Far East before organizers made several location and scheduling changes.

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Eventually, gravediggers from Tomsk some 3,500 kilometers east of Moscow took shovels into their own hands and made the contest come to life.

"The goal is primarily to rate the diggers, improve service and quality," Alexander Sharabayev, who heads the Tomsk region's integrated emergency funeral services dispatch,

told the local vtomske.ru news website.

“We want to understand how much time they spend on work,” Sharabayev said.

Five teams from across the region descended upon a local cemetery over the weekend to dig holes 2 meters long, 0.8 meters wide and 1.6 meters deep, with judges rating their performances.

The winner, a Tomsk hometown kid, dug his grave in 52 minutes while the loser clocked in at 68 minutes.

“We’ll be definitely holding new and more large-scale contests,” Sharabayev told vtomske.ru.

The original speed-digging contest organizers, meanwhile, still have their cat meme-inspired invitational poster and another competition penciled in for next May in Novosibirsk.

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