

Russian Player Changes Nationality to Avoid Wimbledon Ban – Report

By [AFP](#)

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Natela Dzalamidze of Russia. **Rob Prange / Zuma / TASS**

A Russian tennis player has avoided a Wimbledon ban on all competitors from her country by changing her nationality to Georgian, according to a report in The Times newspaper.

Natela Dzalamidze, a 29-year-old doubles player ranked No. 44 in the world, will compete in the women's doubles with Serbia's Aleksandra Krunic when the tournament starts on June 27.

Wimbledon organizers the All England Club announced in April that players from Russia and Belarus would be barred from competing this year following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

But an All England Club spokesman told The Times they were powerless to interfere in Dzalamidze's change of nationality, as this was a matter for the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) and the International Tennis Federation (ITF), and that she had satisfied the entry requirements.

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"Player nationality, defined as the flag they play under at professional events, is an agreed process that is governed by tours and the ITF," the spokesman said.

Wimbledon's ban on players from Russia and Belarus provoked a hostile reaction elsewhere in the tennis world, with the WTA and the ATP, its male equivalent, stripping the tournament of ranking points.

None of the other Grand Slam tournaments have followed Wimbledon's lead, with the U.S. Open announcing last week that Russian and Belarus players will be allowed to compete under a neutral flag.

Wimbledon's ban has ruled out a swathe of top players, including Daniil Medvedev, the men's world number one and the reigning U.S. Open champion, as well as two-time major winner Victoria Azarenka.

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