The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Will Not Broadcast Paris Olympics – Reports

July 15, 2024



The Olympics volleyball venue fat the Eiffel Tower in Paris. **Lafargue Raphael / ABACA / TASS**

Russian television will for the first time in 40 years not broadcast the Olympics due to the near-total absence of its athletes, the news outlet sports.ru has reported, citing unidentified sources.

Russian and Belarusian athletes are only allowed to compete in the Paris Olympics this month as neutrals without national flags and anthems. Additional vetting procedures will ensure the athletes do not actively support Russia's invasion of Ukraine or have any links with their countries' armies.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) website shows that only 16 Russians and 17 Belarusians have accepted invitations to compete under a neutral banner at the upcoming summer games. That compares with 330 Russians and 104 Belarusians who competed at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020.

According to sports.ru, "a political decision has long been made that it's impossible to show

the Olympics without a flag and anthem on [Russia's top broadcasters] Channel One and Rossia 1 in the current realities."

Related article: Only 16 Russians Take up Paris Olympic Places

Russian officials have not officially confirmed or denied the report.

This would mark the first time that Russian television skipped broadcasting the Olympics since the Soviet Union boycotted the 1984 Olympic games in Los Angeles following the U.S. boycott of the 1980 Moscow games in protest of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Russia's Gazprom Media-owned sports broadcaster Match TV had mulled broadcasting some events, but the issue "fell off" after Russian wrestlers had rejected the IOC's invitation, said sports.ru.

"Millions [of rubles] spent on TV rights for 15 people in unpopular sports (except tennis) was considered an unjustified waste of money and nerves," the Russian website wrote.

Telesport Group — a joint venture between the National Media Group (NMG) headed by ex-gymnast Alina Kabaeva and the state bank Sberbank's entertainment branch — holds the rights to broadcast the 2024 Olympic Games.

Telesport Group head Pyotr Makarenko is in pre-trial detention for fraud.

Sports.ru reported that pirated live Olympics broadcasts are being advertised by groups on the popular social network VKontakte. VKontakte's press service said it will officially host content surrounding the Paris Games but does not plan to buy the broadcasting rights.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/07/15/russia-will-not-broadcast-paris-olympics-reports-a85711