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Putin Shelves ‘World Friendship Games’ Meant to Rival Olympics – Decree

By AFP

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Presentation of the mascot of the World Friendship Games. **wyffest.com**

Russian President Vladimir Putin has postponed until further notice the World Friendship Games, seen as Moscow's alternative to the Olympic Games and originally meant to take place this year, according to a Kremlin decree published Monday.

The competition — widely seen as Russia's response to being banned from the Paris Olympics due to its invasion of Ukraine — was meant to take place in Yekaterinburg this September but in the summer postponed until an unspecified date in 2025.

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The decree Monday said that the World Friendship Games were postponed "until a special decision" by the Russian president.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) had called the Friendship Games a "cynical attempt to politicize sport" and called on countries not to participate.

Ukraine had said Moscow wanted to use the event for "propaganda" purposes.

Russia had accused the IOC of "neo-Nazism" for banning its athletes and those of its ally Belarus from competing under their national flags in Paris.

Russia had last year said it would bring back the Friendship Games held in the 1980s in the Soviet Union, when some socialist countries had boycotted the Los Angeles Olympics.

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