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U.S. Soccer Federation Denies Holding Talks With Russia

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Players from the Russian women's national team. **Mikhail Shapaev / RFS**

The U.S. Soccer Federation has denied reports that it is in talks with its Russian counterpart about organizing football matches between the Russian and U.S. national teams.

In December, the head of the Russian Football Union, Alexander Dyukov, told Russian media that his organization "had a series of contacts with the American Soccer Federation regarding matches between youth and women's teams" but said it was "premature to talk about any agreements."

Those remarks came after Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov had earlier said that discussions were underway to host a football match between the Russian and U.S. national teams as officials from Washington and Moscow met to discuss ending the war in Ukraine.

In a statement sent to The Moscow Times, U.S. Soccer Federation spokesman Brian Katzowitz

denied that such talks were taking place. He did not say whether the Russian Football Union had tried reaching out to the Federation about holding talks.

Related article: Officials Discussing U.S.-Russia Hockey Matches in St. Petersburg and Washington D.C., Sports Minister Says

Since returning to the White House last year, U.S. President Donald Trump has sought to broker a peace deal between Russia and Ukraine. Alongside negotiations to end the war, the president and other U.S. officials have indicated an interest in normalizing diplomatic relations with Moscow, but little progress has been made so far.

In April, the Kremlin said Trump supported President Vladimir Putin's idea to organize hockey matches between the two countries. The White House never confirmed that information, while the NHL said it was not involved in the alleged discussions.

The Russian and U.S. national football teams last faced off in November 2012 in the southern Krasnodar region, according to the state-run news agency TASS.

Russian national teams and clubs have been banned from participating in international tournaments since 2022 and are limited to international friendly matches.

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