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World Gymnastics Lifts Ban on Russian and Belarusian Flags and Anthems

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Gymnast Varvara Pronina at the Russian Gymnastics Championships in Moscow. **Arthur Novosiltsev / Moskva News Agency**

Russian and Belarusian gymnasts will be allowed to compete under their national flags and anthems again, the sport's governing body, World Gymnastics, announced on Monday, fully restoring membership rights stripped after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Russia's Gymnastics Federation welcomed the decision, calling it "an important step toward strengthening the unity of the global gymnastics community and protecting athletes' interests."

Federation President Oleg Belozyorov, who also serves as president of Russian Railways, personally thanked World Gymnastics President Morinari Watanabe for "his consistent position, constructive approach and support for the principles of open international sport."

The reversal applies to all five disciplines at World Gymnastics: artistic, rhythmic, trampoline, acrobatic and aerobic gymnastics.

Russia's Gymnastics Federation confirmed that athletes across these disciplines are now eligible to represent their countries at world cups and championships scheduled for this summer and fall.

The first to compete under the restored status will be sports acrobatics athletes at a World Cup event in Burgas, Bulgaria, later this month.

Following the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the International Olympic Committee recommended blanket bans on Russian and Belarusian national symbols, only gradually allowing vetted athletes to return as neutrals if they proved no ties to the military or security services.

The return of national symbols to international gymnastics follows similar reinstatement decisions by other governing bodies, including World Aquatics and United World Wrestling.

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