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Russia Defeats U.S. in Moscow Ice Hockey Match Aimed at Normalizing Ties

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AmCham Russia President Robert Agee (center-left) poses for a photo with players at the U.S.-Russia hockey match on July 1, 2026. **championat.ru**

Russia defeated the United States 10-6 in an inaugural ice hockey match that organizers hoped would help thaw bilateral relations frozen since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Russian media reported.

The match took place on Wednesday at the Kristall ice palace within Moscow's Luzhniki Olympic Complex. Organized by the chambers of commerce of both countries, the invite-only event was held at a small venue capped at 500 spectators, according to Sports.ru.

"This game will become part of a wider business dialogue," Russian presidential aide Anton Kobyakov said ahead of the puck drop.

President Vladimir Putin first proposed holding hockey matches between Russian and

American players during a phone call with U.S. President Donald Trump in March 2025. The Kremlin said at the time that Trump had "expressed support" for the idea, though the White House never confirmed that.

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AmCham Russia President Robert Agee said the match was made possible after he learned that some U.S. hockey players were planning to visit Moscow for a "personal event," according to the Financial Times.

However, the U.S. roster remained mostly anonymous, with the sole exception of captain Scott MacPherson, the former general manager of a Beijing-based team in the Russia-dominated Kontinental Hockey League (KHL).

According to FT and Agee, the rest of the roster was filled by retired players and executives from the Moscow offices of U.S. corporations.

Russia's team featured seven active NHL and KHL stars, Hall of Famers, as well as amateurs that included government officials and musicians. Roman Rotenberg, the son of billionaire and Putin friend Boris Rotenberg, was also on the roster.

Soviet hockey legend and current State Duma lawmaker Vyacheslav Fetisov, who suited up for the Russian team, said ahead of the game that Putin's original vision for professional matches between Russia and the U.S. would still need "two to three years" to materialize.

He claimed a second match will "likely" take place in the United States.

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