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Kremlin Welcomes Decision to Lift Ban on Russian Olympic Committee

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Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov. **Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency**

The Kremlin on Wednesday welcomed the International Olympic Committee's decision to provisionally lift its ban on the Russian Olympic Committee, but said that the full return of Russian athletes to international competition will require further work.

On Tuesday, the IOC announced that it had reversed its October 2023 suspension of the ROC to provide "equal access" to Russian athletes and teams ahead of qualifiers for the 2028 Los Angeles Summer Games and the 2028 Winter Youth Olympics in Italy.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov called the decision an "important step" toward restoring relations with the ROC and returning Russian athletes to "their rightful place in international competitions."

However, Peskov noted during a daily briefing that "work will continue through our sports authorities."

Russian Sports Minister Mikhail Degtyaryov said Tuesday that the reinstatement opens a "direct path" for international governing bodies to welcome Russian teams back.

According to Degtyaryov, 10 international federations already allow both adult and junior Russian athletes to compete, while more than 20 others permit juniors to compete under the Russian flag while keeping adult bans in place.

Related article: IOC Provisionally Lifts Ban on Russian Olympic Committee, Athletes to Return to International Competitions

Degtyaryov took over as head of the ROC in December 2024, pledging to tone down aggressive rhetoric toward international organizations and to secure pathways for Russians to compete either as neutral athletes or under their national flag.

IOC President Kirsty Coventry told reporters the committee does not foresee "any patchwork" or fragmented participation leading up to the Los Angeles Games.

Despite the IOC decision, several prominent bodies, including World Athletics, maintain bans on Russian and Belarusian athletes due to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Global soccer governing body FIFA said it would "analyze" the IOC ruling before deciding on reinstatement, though The Telegraph reported that both FIFA and European body UEFA have no immediate plans to readmit Russian clubs or national teams.

The move to provisionally lift the ROC ban follows an IOC push in December to readmit Russian and Belarusian youth athletes and the lifting of restrictions on all Belarusian athletes in May.

Ukraine's foreign ministry called the IOC ruling "troubling" and urged countries hosting upcoming events to maintain bans on Russian state symbols. The IOC stated it would decide on the use of the Russian flag, anthem and other national attributes "at the appropriate time."

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