The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Where Can Russian Athletes Compete After the IOC's Provisional Ban Lift?

By Ned Garvey

September 18, 2026

International Handball tournament "Friendship Cup 2026" in Moscow. **Vasily Kuzmichenok / Moskva News Agency**

Russia's return to international sports competition was already well underway long before the International Olympic Committee (IOC) provisionally lifted its ban on the Russian and Belarusian Olympic Committees this July.

The shift began in September 2025, when the International Paralympic Committee voted against maintaining its ban on Russian and Belarusian athletes, paving the way for them to compete at the 2026 Milano-Cortina Paralympic Games, where Russian competitors won eight gold medals.

By December, the IOC recommended that international federations lift their bans on Russian and Belarusian youth athletes.

However, some individual governing bodies acted even earlier. The International Judo Federation became the first to restore full participation rights to senior Russian athletes in November of last year. World Taekwondo followed this January by approving the full return of both junior and senior athletes from Russia and Belarus.

Since then, eight additional Olympic sports federations have restored full participation rights to Russian athletes and teams, allowing the use of the Russian flag, national anthem and team uniforms.

Below is a list compiled by The Moscow Times detailing where and how Russian athletes can currently compete on the international stage:

Federations that allow full senior and youth participation

Archery: On August 14, World Archery reinstated Russian athletes, allowing them to compete under their national flag and bringing their status in line with Belarusian athletes, who were reinstated in May.

Aquatics: The World Aquatics Bureau lifted its ban on senior Russian and Belarusian athletes on April 13, 2026, two months after it lifted its ban on Junior athletes.

In its statement, World Aquatics President Husain Al Musallam said, “Over the last three years, World Aquatics and the AQIU have successfully helped ensure that conflict can be kept outside the sporting competition venues. We are determined to ensure that pools and open water remain places where athletes from all nations can come together in peaceful competition.”

Boxing: On July 30, World Boxing announced that it was restoring full participation rights to all Russian athletes.

"The Executive Committee accepted that Russian athletes would now take part in World Boxing competitions like boxers from any other national federation. However, World Boxing will strictly monitor the behaviour of Russian delegations during events as well as compliance with anti-doping protocols," the statement read.

World Boxing previously lifted its restrictions on Belarusian athletes on May 12.

Equestrian: The International Equestrian Federation (FEI) will lift restrictions on Russian riders and officials starting Oct. 5 and once again allow international competitions to be held in Russia, the governing body has said.

FEI had already approved a return to competition for junior athletes from Russia and Belarus on May 19, 2026, but did not change its stance that senior athletes should compete with neutral status at that time.

Fencing: The International Fencing Federation (FIE) reinstated Russian and Belarusian athletes on June 2, 2026.

“The decision reflects the FIE’s commitment to the fundamental principles of the Olympic Charter, including non-discrimination, equal treatment and the universality of sport, as well

as the objectives and principles set out in the FIE Statutes," FIE's statement read.

On July 28, Russian fencer Pavel Graudyn won gold in the Men's individual sabre at the World Fencing Championships in Hong Kong, marking Russia's first gold at a major championship since the International Fencing Federation lifted its restrictions.

Field Hockey: On Sept. 17, the Russian Field Hockey Federation announced that it had received a letter from the International Hockey Federation (FIH) lifting all restrictions against its athletes and national teams.

Gymnastics: The Executive Committee of World Gymnastics released a statement on May 18, 2026, that it had decided to lift all restrictions on Russian and Belarusian gymnasts.

On July 28, 2026, European Gymnastics voted to bring itself in line with World Gymnastics in allowing Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete with their national symbols.

Handball: On July 15, 2026, the International Handball Federation (IHF) lifted its ban on Russian and Belarusian teams and officials, citing the IOC's recommendation.

"The IHF reiterates its longstanding commitment to the Ukraine Handball Federation and continues to stand in solidarity with Ukraine. It strongly condemns the ongoing war in Ukraine and its devastating consequences. It is the IHF's sincere hope that the conflict will soon come to an end, paving the way for a return to peace, the restoration of normal sporting relations and the resumption of peaceful international cooperation," the IHF statement said.

"At the same time, the IHF remains committed to safeguarding the values of sport, promoting dialogue within the international handball family, and ensuring that its decisions continue to reflect the recommendations of the IOC and the interests of the global handball community"

Judo: The International Judo Federation, calling sport the "last bridge for reconciliation and peace," was the first to allow Russian and Belarusian senior athletes back, doing so on Nov. 27, 2025.

"Athletes have no responsibility for the decisions of governments or other national institutions, and it is our duty to protect the sport and our athletes," the federation's statement said.

"Sport must remain neutral, independent and free from political influence. Judo, rooted in the values of peace, unity and friendship, cannot allow itself to become a platform for geopolitical agendas. The decision to reinstate full national representation reflects the IJF's confidence in its ethical safeguards, as well as in the strength and integrity of the sport," it continued.

Modern Pentathlon: The International Union of Modern Pentathlon lifted its ban on Russian athletes on July 13, 2026, citing the IOC's recommendation.

Taekwondo: The World Taekwondo Council allowed Russian and Belarusian athletes back into the fold on Jan. 31, 2026, at a meeting in the United Arab Emirates.

Triathlon: Mikhail Degtyarev, head of the Russian Olympic Committee and the Russian Minister of Sport, said on Aug. 21 that World Triathlon had granted Russian athletes full

participation rights.

World Triathlon lifted its ban on Russian and Belarusian junior athletes in April 2026, while senior athletes continue to compete as neutral athletes.

"This was made possible by the restoration of the Russian Olympic Committee's status. Earlier in April, World Triathlon already admitted Russian junior and para-athletes," Degtyarev said.

Volleyball: The International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) announced on July 8, 2026, that Russian teams and athletes would be restored to the World Ranking with the same World Ranking points they had at the time of the initial ban.

“The FIVB remains deeply concerned about the ongoing war in Ukraine and strongly condemns all forms of violence. We continue to hope for a peaceful resolution as soon as possible and remain committed to supporting the Ukrainian volleyball community through the FIVB Volleyball Empowerment programme,” FIVB added.

Weightlifting: The International Weightlifting Federation decided on June 26, 2026, to reinstate Russian and Belarusian athletes.

“The IWF remains committed to promoting fair competition, safeguarding the integrity of the sport and ensuring that athletes have the opportunity to compete in an environment that respects the principles of neutrality, inclusion and excellence,” the decision read.

Wrestling: United World Wrestling announced on May 15, 2026, that Russian and Belarusian wrestlers would be able to compete without restrictions starting with immediate effect.

Federations that allow full youth participation

Baseball/Softball: On Jan. 19, 2026, the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) reinstated Russian and Belarusian youth athletes. However, senior athletes remain banned.

Chess: The International Chess Federation (FIDE) lifted its ban on Russian and Belarusian youth chess players on Dec. 14, 2025. Senior athletes may compete under a neutral designation.

Curling: World Curling announced on Jan. 30, 2026, that, following the IOC’s recommendation, Russian and Belarusian junior athletes would be able to compete in international competition. Senior athletes remain unable to compete.

Sailing: The Russian Sailing Federation published a statement on June 9, 2026, announcing that the World Sailing Federation had approved a return to competition for Russian junior athletes.

Ski Mountaineering: The International Ski Mountaineering Federation (ISMF) reinstated Russian and Belarusian youth athletes.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/09/18/where-can-russian-athletes-compete-after-the-iocs-pro

visional-ban-lift-a93324