

International Sports Court Overturns Ban on Russian Ice Hockey Teams

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Russian ice hockey players. **Dmitry Belitsky / Moskva News Agency**

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) on Friday [overturned](#) the International Ice Hockey Federation's (IIHF) decision to exclude Russian national teams from upcoming world championships, marking the latest step toward reintegrating Russia into global sporting events.

IIHF [banned](#) Russia and Belarus from its competitions in response to the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, after which the Ice Hockey Federation of Russia submitted an appeal to CAS.

The Switzerland-based court operates independently of any sports organization and handles significant sporting cases.

A three-person CAS panel “found that the IIHF arguments citing safety, security and other concerns were not supported by sufficient evidence,” the court said in a statement.

The ruling requires organizers to allow Russia to participate in the World Junior

Championship, which kicks off in Canada later this year, as well as the Men's World Championship, which Germany hosts in May.

The decision did not address whether Russian teams should be allowed to compete with their national flag and anthem or other issues that were not subject to the appeal, CAS said.

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IIHF [expressed](#) disappointment with the ruling, saying the move would create a slew of additional challenges for tournament organizers, "including a review of competition formats, schedules, travel and accommodation arrangements, and safety and security measures."

"While the IIHF respects the authority of CAS and will act in accordance with its ruling, the outcome does not remove the concerns that informed its assessments," the world ice hockey governing body said.

Meanwhile, Russian Sports Minister Mikhail Degtyaryov welcomed the CAS ruling, [saying](#) it "puts an end to the issue, as it's final and not subject to appeal."

He acknowledged that "challenging work lies ahead" in returning Russian hockey players to IIHF competitions in line with the CAS decision.

The court ruling follows the International Olympic Committee provisionally lifting its suspension of the Russian Olympic Committee in July, a step seen as advancing Russia's gradual return to international sport.

The ROC was suspended in October 2023 after recognizing regional Olympic councils in the Russian-occupied Ukrainian territories of Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia as its own.

The National Olympic Committee of Ukraine has appealed to CAS against the IOC's decision.

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