Written by Press Release Wednesday, 20 July 2011 16:16

The Rugby Union of Russia (RUR) has today announced a preliminary training squad of 50 players for Rugby World Cup (RWC) 2011 in New Zealand.

The squad, selected by the National Team Coaches, represents a historic moment for the Union and Rugby in Russia RWC 2011 will be the first time that Russia has participated at Rugby's showcase tournament.

The squad will meet for a national training camp in Sochi in July and each player will be intensely monitored before a smaller squad is selected to travel to England and Wales to play four preparation matches.

The squad will then return to Moscow to fine tune preparations before the final squad of 30 players selected to travel to New Zealand is announced on August 22. Russia will make its RWC 2011 debut against USA in New Plymouth on September 15.

Vyacheslav Kopiev, President of the Rugby Union of Russia said: "These players are creating history and they are honoured and proud to be doing so. They are representing Russia in our first ever participation in a Rugby World Cup. We wish them well in their training and have trust in each of them to strive to their maximum to gain selection to our Rugby World Cup Squad of 30."

National Teams Director Kingsley Jones and Head Coach Nikolay Nerush have committed themselves to ensuring the squad is made up of the very best players available to Russia with players coming from both the Russian domestic league and professional clubs in Europe.

The squad boasts a blend of experience and youthful talent. Age has been no barrier with Vyacheslav Grachev being the oldest player at 38 and Nikolay Zaporzhin being the youngest player at 19 years.

Kingsley Jones added: "We have carried out an International and Nationwide search to identify

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this squad. Selection has been made afresh and the squad is full of potential with many players with talent Ready for this stage'.

A further boost has been given with the return of Sergey Sugrobov, Vladimir Botvinnikov and Dmitry Gerasimov, who have all committed to representing their country on the highest stage despite not playing for the national team for some time.

Within the squad there are fresh players with Vladimir Boltenkov, Alexey Shcherban, Anton Ryabov, Grigory Tsnobiladze, Rushan Yagudin, Mikhail Sidorov, Denis Antonov and Vladimir Kondrashov having played less 10 matches for the National team.

There is also exciting new talent in the squad. Denis Simplikevich and Nikolay Zaporzhin. Denis showed himself very well in the IRB Junior World Rugby Trophies 2010 and 2011, being one of the leading players and try scorers. Nikolay has quickly made his mark on the IRB Seven's World Series, scoring 10 tries during in 3 Stages. Neither player has yet been awarded a cap.

Head Coach Nikolay Nerush emphasized: "The Rugby Union of Russia has been working hard on its planning for New Zealand. I am delighted that we are currently producing performances that are showing the progress that has been made through the hard work of the players and the coaches."

Russian fans will be very attentively watching the names of Kirill Kulemin and Alexander Yanyushkin – stars of Russian Rugby who are both going through rehabilitation after injury. Their progress is reassuring and both are hopeful that they will be on the plane to New Zealand.

Perhaps one of the main stories of the Preliminary Squad announcement is the inclusion Adam Byrnes, an Australian by birth, currently playing Super Rugby for Melbourne Rebels and previously played for Leinster. Byrnes has Russian roots and is very excited with the opportunity to represent the Country of his forefathers.

Two players within the squad, Vasily Artemyev and Andrey Ostrikov, have recently joined the English Aviva Premiership with Northampton Saints and Sale Sharks respectively. Both players

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are in their early rugby careers ,both born in Zelenograd, are determined to represent their Country with pride and show the supporters of Northampton Saints and Sale Sharks the talent that they and their National Team colleagues possess.

Vyacheslav Grachev, the oldest man in the Squad, is the only player who played in the USSR Championship. Two years ago he was suffered a bad injury playing in the French Championship. His rehabilitation has been a great success story not only to fully recover but also to gain selection to represent Russia again in 2011.

Vlad Korshunov, the Squad Captain, added: "The players are extremely proud and excited to be given this great opportunity. Rugby World Cup is the pinnacle for all Rugby players and we are committed to ensuring that not only will we arrive in New Zealand in peak condition, but that we will do Russia proud.

RWC NZ 2011 will unearth a lot of new stars, and we are intend that some of these will be Russian".

#### **Preliminary Training Squad of Russian National Team for RWC 2011**

Backs (22)			
Name			

Date of birth

Surname

Moscow Region

Written by Press Release Wednesday, 20 July 2011 16:16 Club Vasily Artemyev 24.07.1987 Northampton Saints England Mikhail Babaev 19.01.1986 VVA-Podmoskovye

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Wednesday, 20 July 2011 16:16 Andrey Bykanov 25.05.1980 Slava-ShVSM Moscow lgor Galinovskiy 08.11.1985 Krasniy Yar Krasnoyarsk Dmitry

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Wednesday, 20 July 2011 16:16 Gerasimov 16.04.1988 **Enisey-STM** Krasnoyarsk lgor Klyuchnikov 07.01.1983 VVA-Podmoskovye Moscow Region Vladimir Kondrashov

Written by Press Release Wednesday, 20 July 2011 16:16 03.08.1985 Slava-ShVSM Moscow Alexey Korobeynikov 13.11.1978 Enisey-STM Krasnoyarsk Yury Kushnarev 06.06.1985

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Wednesday, 20 July 2011 16:16 VVA-Podmoskovye Moscow Region Andrey Kuzin 29.10.1978 VVA-Podmoskovye Moscow Region Alexey Makovetskiy 27.03.1983 Krasniy Yar

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Wednesday, 20 July 2011 16:16 Anton Ryabov 04.04.1989 Krasniy Yar Krasnoyarsk Alexander Shakirov 20.01.1981 VVA-Podmoskovye Moscow Region Alexey

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Wednesday, 20 July 2011 16:16 Krasniy Yar Krasnoyarsk Alexander Yanyushkin 30.10.1982 VVA-Podmoskovye Moscow Region Nikolay Zaporzhin 29.12.1991 VVA-Podmoskovye

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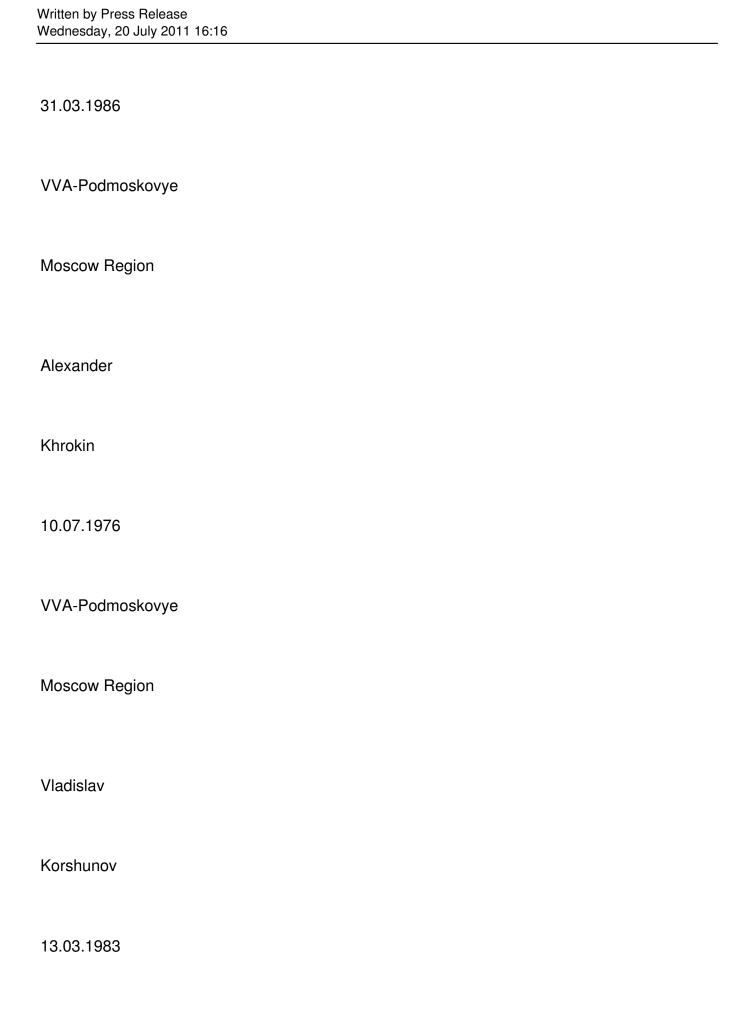
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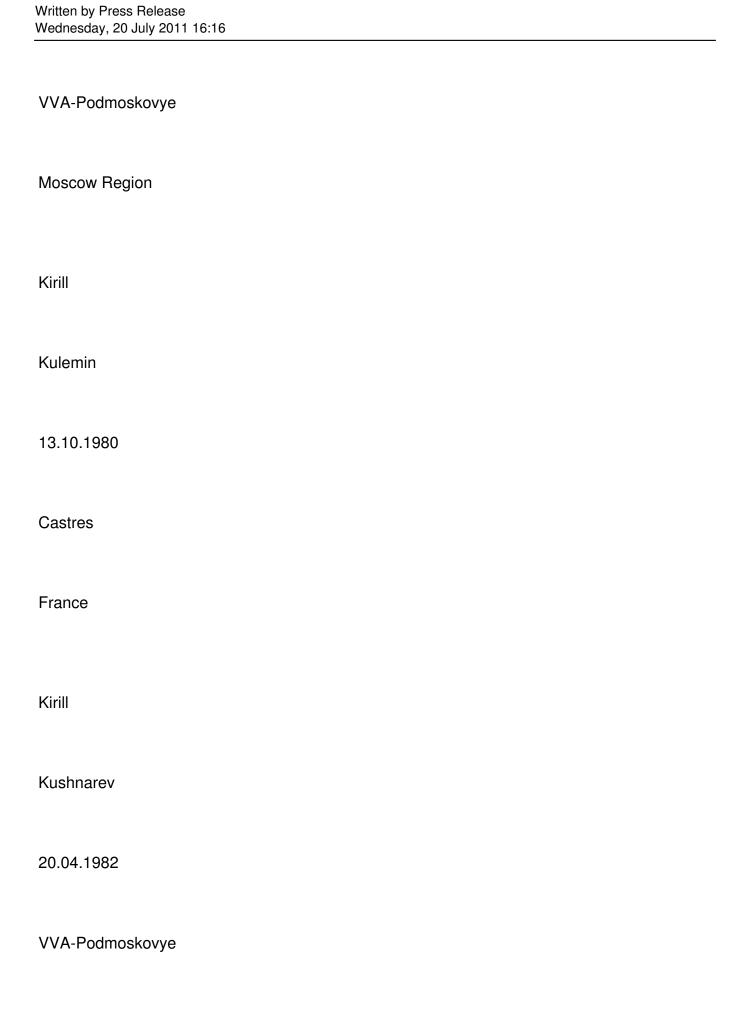
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Alexey Chernyshev 27.07.1984 Slava-ShVSM Moscow Artem Fatakhov 08.09.1979 VVA-Podmoskovye Moscow Region Andrey

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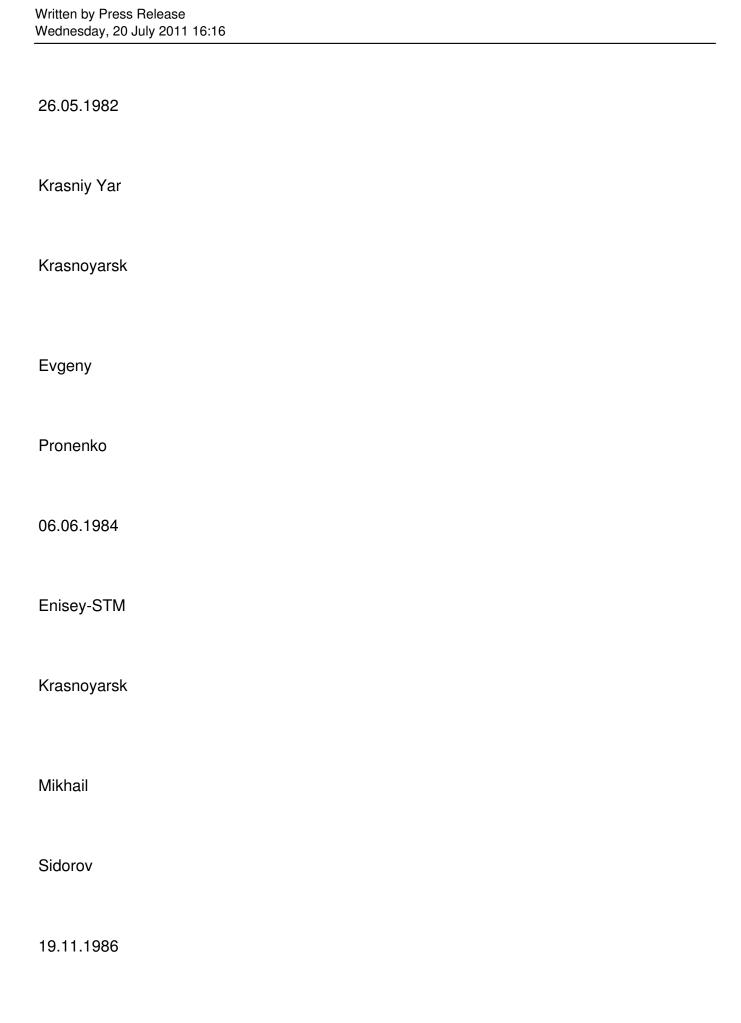
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Nikita Medkov 17.11.1986 Enisey-STM Krasnoyarsk Andrey Ostrikov 02.07.1987 Sale Sharks England Alexey

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