Russia Detains Its Olympic Goalie, Who Had Signed With the Philadelphia Flyers

By **David Waldstein**

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A Russian hockey player who recently signed with the Philadelphia Flyers has been detained in Russia on charges that he planned to evade military service, according to reports from Russian news outlets.

Ivan Fedotov, a 6-foot-7 goalie, signed with the Flyers on May 7 and was expected to compete for a spot on the roster at training camp in the fall. He played for the Russian Olympic Committee in this year's Winter Games in Beijing, where he helped the team earn a silver medal.

A spokesman for the National Hockey League said the league was aware of the situation but would not comment further.

Chuck Fletcher, Philadelphia's president of hockey operations and general manager, said in a statement that the Flyers "are aware of the reports and are investigating the situation."

Fedotov was apparently detained on Friday, the same day that the American basketball star Brittney Griner's trial began in Russia.

Griner has been held by the Russians since February, when she was detained at a Moscow airport for carrying what Russian officials said were vape cartridges bearing traces of hash oil in her luggage. Griner's supporters say that the Russian authorities are using her as a bargaining chip with the United States, which has supported Ukraine during Russia's invasion of the country.

Fedotov, 25, was born in Finland and grew up in Russia. He spent last year with CSKA Moscow, a team that has a history of ties with the Russian army. It is also one of the top club teams in the K.H.L., Russia's premier hockey league.

According to reports from Russian news outlets on Friday, Fedotov was arrested at a St. Petersburg hockey rink and taken to an army enlistment office. Young Russian men are required to complete one year of military service.

Russian goalies have emerged as the elite netminders in the N.H.L. in recent years, led by stars like Andrei Vasilevskiy of the Tampa Bay Lightning, Igor Shesterkin of the Rangers and Sergei Bobrovsky of the Florida Panthers. Many N.H.L. teams are eager to find the next great Russian goalie, though Fedotov's detainment may raise concerns about the future of that pipeline.

This year, Fedotov helped CSKA Moscow to the Gagarin Cup, the K.H.L.'s championship, and was widely recognized as the best goalie in the league with a 2.00 goals against average. On the day the Flyers signed him, Fletcher noted his recent success and improvement since the team drafted him.

"Ivan is a player we have followed closely and are very pleased with his development," Fletcher said at the time. "He's put a number of strong seasons together in the K.H.L., culminating this year when he captured an Olympic silver medal and a K.H.L. Championship."