



The Carolina Hurricanes and the Phoenix Coyotes will both face off against Kontinental Hockey League

(KHL) opponents in exhibition games as part of the 2010 Compuware NHL Premiere Challenge. Staged by the NHL and NHLPA in cooperation with the KHL, Russia's top professional league, the Hurricanes will play against

SKA St. Petersburg at Ledovy Arena in St. Petersburg, Russia, Oct. 4, while the Coyotes will play against Dinamo Riga at Arena Riga in Riga, Latvia on Wednesday, Oct. 6. SKA St. Petersburg and Dinamo Riga both play in the Bobrov Division of the KHL's Western Conference.

This will be the first time in 20 years that the NHL returns to Russia or Latvia for exhibition games. In September 1989 the Washington Capitals and Calgary Flames conducted a pre-season tour of the Soviet Union which included four games against Soviet National League clubs. Games were played in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and Riga. The NHL clubs finished with a combined 6-2 record against the top Soviet teams, including the Red Army club and Dynamo Moscow.

In September 1990, the fabled Montreal Canadiens, one of the League's Original Six franchises, joined the Minnesota North Stars in traveling to the Soviet Union for the "Friendship Tour '90". Again, games were played in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and Riga and again they were enthusiastically greeted by the Soviet public. However, this time the Soviet National League teams proved to be stronger, finishing with a 5-3 record against their NHL counterparts.

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Written by Maury Brown
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Following these exhibition games, the Carolina Hurricanes will open their 2010-11 NHL regular season by playing the Minnesota Wild in two games at Helsinki's Hartwall Arena, Thursday, October 7 and Friday, October 8. The Phoenix Coyotes will open their 2010-11 NHL regular season against the Boston Bruins at O2 Arena in Prague, Czech Republic, on Saturday, Oct. 9 and Sunday, Oct. 10.

Source: National Hockey League

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