

NHL Grants Free Agency To KHL Suspended Player

Danis Zaripov, the former [Kontinental Hockey League](#) player who was suspended for doping, has received approval from the NHL to continue his hockey career in North America.

In a statement through his agent Dan Milstein, Zaripov said he was grateful for the decision of NHL to let him pursue a contract. Zaripov said he looks forward to continuing his professional hockey playing career in North America, and he is very grateful to the NHL for its decision, which provides him the opportunity to do so. The former KHL player added he wants to assure all that throughout his career had had been extremely careful never to take [prohibited substances](#), and he plans to continue his appeal at the Court of Arbitration for Sport to clear his name.

The 36-year-old winger tested positive for banned stimulants plus substances prohibited as diuretics and [masking agents](#). Zaripov was suspended in July from participation in all competitions or activities authorized and organized by IIHF and IIHF Member National Associations.

In a statement, the NHL said Zaripov has been made an unrestricted free agent and said this was because its banned substances list is not the same as the one used by the World Anti-Doping Agency. It also cited procedural irregularities in the adjudication process that may have resulted in prejudicing case of the player and affecting decision of the IHF and the lengthy career in both professional and international hockey of Zaripov without ever testing positive for doping as reasons to approve his application. The NHL added the three-time world champion is deemed eligible to sign and play professional hockey in the NHL, effective immediately, and without imposition of any NHL-imposed suspension or penalty.

Zaripov even agreed to submit to additional testing beyond what is normally required for NHL players, if he signs with an NHL team.

There are rumors that the New York Rangers could opt for him as the team could use another scoring winger if they are moving J T Miller to full-time center. The Vegas Golden Knights may also express interest in Zaripov after they already added one KHL star this summer in Vadim Shipachyov and may decide to find room for another.

One of the most productive players in the KHL over the past few seasons, the Russian professional ice hockey left winger is likely to be approached by NHL teams that are looking for veteran help on the wing. He had a very strong 2017 postseason with 15 goals and seven assists in 18 games as his team reached finals of the KHL. Zaripov played for Team Russia at the 2010 Olympics. The winger has spent his entire professional career in Russia, including the last four years with Magnitogorsk Metallurg. An accomplished goal scorer and point producer in the KHL, Zaripov has scored 20 or more goals in three of his last four seasons with Magnitogorsk. A regular contributor at the World Championships, Zaripov however would not be eligible for the 2018 PyeongChang Olympics as a result of his suspension.