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## Ukraine skeleton racer Heraskevych gets \$200,000 gift to support his career after Olympic DQ



AP Photo/Fatima Shbair

[The Washington Post](#)

KYIV, Ukraine — The Ukrainian skeleton racer who was disqualified from the Milan Cortina Olympics was given a gift of more than \$200,000 on Tuesday to help him keep competing and advocating for his country.

Vladislav Heraskevych was barred from Olympic competition last week because he insisted on wearing a “helmet of memory” adorned with images of more than 20 Ukrainian athletes and coaches killed during the country’s war with Russia.

Ukrainian businessman [Rinat Akhmetov](#) — the owner of the Shakhtar Donetsk soccer club and the Azovstal steel works in Mariupol — gave the money to Heraskevych from his charity foundation. The amount is equal to what the country’s Olympic gold medalists would get.

*“Vlad Heraskevych was denied the opportunity to compete for victory at the Olympic Games, yet he returns to Ukraine a true winner,” Akhmetov said in a statement. “The respect and pride he has earned among Ukrainians through his actions are the highest reward.*

*“At the same time, I want him to have enough energy and resources to continue his sporting career, as well as to fight for truth, freedom and the remembrance of those who gave their lives for Ukraine.”*

The money is set to be paid to the 27-year-old Heraskevych’s charity foundation “to ensure the athlete and his coaching staff have the necessary resources to continue their sporting career and their advocacy for Ukraine on the international stage,” a statement on behalf of Akhmetov’s foundation said.

Shakhtar Donetsk regularly plays in the Champions League despite being exiled from its home city and the \$400 million Donbas Arena since 2014, when the Russian-backed conflict began in eastern Ukraine.