

Alexander Hleb's return

By Kirill Karin

Captain of Belarusian national football team Alexander Hleb returns to German Stuttgart from Spanish Barcelona

After the end of the season with Barcelona, halfback Hleb, 28, had to shift to Inter Milan. However, things failed to work out and he signed a 10-month contract with the German Bundesliga club (for whom he played from 2000 to 2005 as a squad leader). Alexander joined Arsenal following his early years with Stuttgart and, in 2008, signed a 4-year contract with Barcelona. Sadly, in the recent Spanish championship, he only played in 19 matches — mainly as a substitute. In the Spanish Cup, he participated in only eight matches and just seven in the Champions League (although Barcelona won each of its matches).

At the press conference dedicated to his return to Stuttgart, Hleb noted, "I feel as if I'm coming home. I have a lot of friends here, so I can relax in a pleasant atmosphere. I need this season in Germany to gain some positivity and boost my self-confidence, to play more consistently and prove that I'm fit for the top teams of Europe. I'll do my best to help Stuttgart achieve the highest summits in the Bundesliga and in the UEFA Champions League."

Stuttgart's head coach Markus Babbel pointed out, "Alex will help our team to fulfil its targets. He suits us, since he can act as halfback in several positions. Hleb will play a leading role in the team. Our young players will definitely take him as an example and gain experience from playing with him. Alex is still young but has managed to play among the world's strongest footballers in English Arsenal and Spanish Barcelona."

Bernd Stange noted, "As the head coach of the Belarusian squad, it is very important for me that our captain has good experience on the field. Alexander's shift to Stuttgart is an excellent way of overcoming the problems he faced with Barcelona. Moreover, he feels at home there."

Three gold medals from Landskrona

Sweden hosts World Junior Weightlifting Championship

The Belarusian team took three gold medals, ranking second behind Russia, with Romania placed third.

Kazimir Fitsner (under 77kg) took gold after lifting 327kg, beating Poland's Krzysztof Zwaric and Russia's Albert Sayakhov. Our Belarusian girls brought home two gold medals. Yulia Novakovich won the under 75kg — while Oksana Karpenko of Russia took silver, and bronze went to Yulia Vlasenko of Ukraine. In the under 69kg category, Marina Shkermankova took first place after lifting 217kg, followed by Russia's Maria Zubova and Germany's Nina Schrott.

Alexander Makarenko came fourth (under 94kg) as did Natalia Kolos (under 58kg).

When victory does not bring joy to footballers

BATE Borisov is knocked out of qualification round of Champions League, after matches against Ventspils Latvia, but goes on to UEFA Europa League



BATE footballers attacked hard in Borisov but failed to achieve the desired result

By Yuri Karpenko

The Latvian champion came to Belarus with a strategic advantage — having defeated BATE (1:0) at home. Before the match, BATE faced a definite target — needing to defend its goal and score at least once, preferably twice. The team

was well-balanced, with all its leading players present — skilled footballers who had managed to beat formidable Juventus. Moreover, they had the ardent support of the home fans.

Beforehand, the teams' coaches refrained from speculating but the match answered all questions in

full. Five-time Belarusian champion BATE took the initiative at the beginning of the match, defending its goal well. However, in the 14th minute, the guests played a beautiful combination with a corner ball, scoring their first goal. BATE then took total control, attacking repeat-

edly. In the second half, the scenario continued, with BATE speeding up a little. Forward Sergey Krivets sent a double and the squad pushed hard to score its third goal — which would certainly take it through to the Champions League finals. Alas, luck stayed with Ventspils. BATE won — 2:1

— but the Latvian team is going through to the next stage of the Champions League.

"If we had played with such enthusiasm and support in the first match, we would have won," noted BATE's head coach, Victor Goncharenko, at the after-match press conference. "After last year's triumph, we had great expectations and, after the draw, we felt confident of reaching the play-offs. Nevertheless, we failed — though the team was our equal. I hope that, after this disappointment in the Champions League, our team won't be discouraged. We want to make progress."

So, BATE Borisov did not repeat last year's success in being the first Belarusian team to reach the group stage of the Champions League. Despite its failure, BATE is still playing in the UEFA Europa League and is due to face a two-round duel against Bulgarian Litex to enter the group stage of this tournament — the second most important European football event.



Young sportsmen to please Minsk fans of figure skating

Patterns on Minsk ice

By Yuri Kovalev

Best young figure skaters from all over the world to visit capital of Belarus in September

Belarus has never hosted a major figure skating event, although popular Russian TV stars Irina Lobacheva and Evgeny Plyushchenko have given master classes to our rising skaters in the past. However, fans will soon be able to enjoy ice dancing — from September 23rd to 27th at Minsk's Palace of Sports. The stadium is to host a Junior Figure Skating Grand Prix round.

Athletes from 36 countries are attending and, although young in

years, will no doubt later be seen in adult events in the years to come. Their jumps, spins, death spirals and other tricks are sure to delight; even novice skaters seem able to do such things these days.

Belarus will be represented by three boys, three girls and three dance pairs. Unfortunately, we are yet to boast any pairs likely to win but local fans will enjoy supporting athletes from other countries.

The international skating season begins in late summer, with the first (of seven) Grand Prix round being held in Budapest in late August. Minsk's round is being included for the first time and is to be the fourth in a sequence.

Trip-tickets to Berlin

By Kirill Pirogov

Line up for national athletics team heading for World Track and Field Championship in Germany is defined

The 12th World Championship, scheduled for August 15th-23rd in Berlin, will see 26 Belarusian athletes compete — 13 women and 13 men. Olympic champions Ellina Zvereva, Yulia Nesterenko and Oksana Menkova are among them, as are Beijing silver medallists Andrey Kravchenko and Natalia Mikhnevich and bronze winner Andrey Mikhnevich.

For the first time, 15 young athletes are to participate in the World Championship. These include 2008 Olympic finalists Darya Pchelnik and Vladimir Kozlov, the winner of the Junior European Championship and World Universiade 2009 — Yuri Shayunov, European Junior Championship silver medallists Anastasia Mironchik and Denis Simanovich and a bronze holder of the same event, Alena Kievich.

The coaches of the Belarusian national team are expecting the squad to bring home two or three medals from the nine day competition. An impressive 2,000 athletes from 200 countries are taking part. The last event at which our Belarusian athletes were able to show their skills was that dedicated to Mechislav Ovsyannik, held at Staiki Olympic Com-

plex, near Minsk. Men and women from Qatar, Slovakia, Ukraine and Turkey took part in the tournament, at which Oksana Menkova stole the limelight. Triumphant at Beijing 2008, Oksana demonstrated a series of excellent results — the best of which (76.32m) repeated her Beijing gold throw. Menkova's career is once more on the up and she is in excel-



lent physical shape, going to Berlin in high spirits. Marina Novik set a national record in javelin throwing at Staiki (63.25m) and is also ready for success. Her coach had been preparing her to become a master of sports at international level but she has achieved a much higher result — setting a national record.