

Successful rehearsal in Stuttgart

By Kirill Karin

Belarus' national team wins silver at European Mixed Table Tennis Championship

The first stage of the tournament in Serbian Subotica brought together 20 pairs from 10 countries, divided into four groups — five pairs in each group. Two winners from each group received 'tickets' to the finals, where an 'Olympic system' is used. Belarus was represented by three pairs: Vitaly Nekhvedovich and Veronica Pavlovich; Alexander Kuchuk and Alexandra Privalova; and Yevgeny Shchetinin and Victoria Pavlovich. The first two pairs failed to go through to the next round, with only Yevgeny and Victoria achieving the top eight. After four victories in the group tournament, they sailed through the ¼ and final rounds, but lost in their decisive match against Ruta Paskauskiene of Lithuania and Aleksandar Karakasevic of Serbia.

The head coach of Belarus' national team, Alexander Petkevich, is pleased with the results, saying, "We viewed this event as a preparatory stage for the European championship and Yevgeny and Victoria have demonstrated brilliant play on its eve."

Knocked out of Champions' League

Failing to get to the Champions' League major round, Minsk Dynamo handball players switch to EHF European Cup

In the Champions' League first qualifying group, held in Macedonian Skopje, Belarus' champion came second, losing to local Vardar in their decisive match — 24:34. At the beginning of the first half, the Dynamo players led but the hosts gradually seized the initiative. The teams were fighting to break the draw. During the second half, our squad began making mistakes and Vardar, strongly supported by its fans, took ten points. Vitaly Kozhenevsky and Sergey Onufrienko were the most successful on the Belarusian team, each scoring five. Previously, Dynamo had beaten Budućnost of Montenegro 35:27 and Turkish Beşiktaş 32:25.

The handball players from Vardar will continue their matches in the Champions' League while our Minsk players will perform in the lower tournament — the EHF European Cup. In the second qualification round, Alexander Malinovsky's trainees will twice meet Turkish Milli Piyango in October.



Minsk handball players attack

Time to build new team

Belarus' national football team plays qualifying matches for 2010 World Cup, to be held next summer in the South African Republic



Match between Belarusian and Ukrainian national teams in Minsk proves uncompromising struggle

By Yuri Karpenko

After the unconditional defeat of the Belarusian team by Croatia slightly over a month ago (1:3), it seemed that nothing extraordinary would happen at the next match in Zagreb. The host team was too strong and a wide gap separated it from Bernd Stange's team in the FIFA ratings. However, an away match at Maksimir Stadium and a further home match against the Ukrainians brought excitement for Belarusian fans, who were pleased with the results.

In Zagreb, in contrast to the home match, the Belarusian team demonstrated more substantial play, despite the absence of leaders Alexander Hleb and Vitaly Kutuzov. They deserved a draw, if not victory. Our advantage was

especially evident in the second half, when BATE Borisov half-defense men Igor Stasevich and Sergey Krivets and forward Leonid Kovel joined the match. Three advantageous moments were set up by them but haste and insufficient technical mastery foiled their plans. Moreover, Croatian goalkeeper Vedran Runje did an excellent job of defending his net, deservedly winning the title 'hero of the match'. The Belarusians disappointingly managed to score an own goal in the middle of the first half, when defenseman Dmitry Verkhovtsov deflected a long range shot — putting the score at 0:1.

Belarus' head coach Bernd Stange noted that, after the match in Croatia, his team received many compliments, adding, "It's pleasant when you win but this

defeat eliminates our chance to reach the next round. Alas, we haven't achieved our target."

The next qualifying match in Minsk against the Ukrainian team didn't give any tournament 'dividends' to our squad, while the guests only needed three points to continue their struggle for a 'ticket' to the South African Republic. The red-and-green team significantly complicated the task for the Ukrainians (claiming 2nd place in Group 6). The teams know each other well and immediately rushed into attack, both setting their sights on victory. Most of the first half saw a hurricane tempo and beautiful combinations from both teams.

Despite the absence of scored goals, the goalkeepers were forced to keep their eye on the ball. In the first half, the two star captains

— Andrey Shevchenko of Ukraine and Alexander Hleb of Belarus — showed their worth. Active play from both sides continued after halftime, with the Belarusians succeeding in creating many dangerous moments near the Ukrainian net. However, they failed to turn these into goals, bringing the match to a 0:0 draw.

"Ukraine should have won and Belarus wanted to win," noted Stange at the after-match conference. He believes that this and the previous match in Croatia demonstrate that the Belarusian national team can play at a high level. "We were showing ourselves to be the best twice, but failed to turn this into goals. In these matches, we were on the verge of scoring four times. This is the point where major football begins. If we are to make the team of the future, much work needs to be done." According to him, before the match, the team planned to fight for third place in the group, but now can only aspire to finish the tournament worthily. Before the end, two more matches lie ahead: against Kazakhstan in Brest on October 10th and against England in London on October 14th. The English team has already secured itself first place in its group, defeating Croatia at home 5:1 and placing itself out-of-reach of its rivals in terms of points.

Mr. Stange believes that, although his team has failed to reach the 2010 World Cup finals, it has now gained valuable experience at a high international level, playing against strong teams. Alexander Hleb, Vitaly Kutuzov, Yuri Zhevnov, Timofey Kalachev and Sergey Kornilenko are the top players, leading their younger colleagues to the next qualifying stage of the European Cup. Many have already tested their strength in the finals of the UEFA European Junior Football Championship. The Belarusian team could reach the Euro-2012 finals, held in Poland and Ukraine.

Crusade aiming for Gagarin Cup

Continental Hockey League Championship kicks off, uniting best clubs from Russia, Belarus, Latvia and Kazakhstan

By Yuri Kovalev

This season, the 24 CHL teams were divided into four divisions by geography, with Eastern and Western conferences — similar to the North American NHL — divided into two divisions each. Each team plays four times against the teams of its division and twice against the other teams, for a total of 56

games per season.

In the Bobrov Division, Dynamo Minsk is joined by Dynamo Moscow and Dynamo Riga, as well as Spartak (Moscow), SKA (St. Petersburg) and CSKA (Moscow). The Minsk players held their first match in St. Petersburg.

The task of the Belarusian team for the forthcoming season is to reach the top

10 in the play-offs and to get through to the Gagarin Cup's second round. Dynamo Minsk head coach Glen Hanlon has appointed Finnish national team forward Ville Peltonen as captain while Canadian Byron Ritchie and Belarusian Andrey Mikhalev (the team's captain last season) will be assistants.

The Chairman of the



Dynamo starts new CHL season with a match against St. Petersburg SKA

Belarusian Hockey Federation, Vladimir Naumov, noted pragmatically before the beginning of the season, "It'll be difficult for Dynamo to win the Gagarin Cup or the highest medals. It takes time to put a solid team together and this squad is in its infancy. Everyone knows

that it's impossible to create a good team in a couple of months, especially when it's a hockey squad. I think, this year, Dynamo will perform at a middling level in the CHL championship. However, anything is possible in sport and we can hope for miracles."