

Sport — world of kind-hearted and good friends

Charity match between Belarus' top tennis player, Victoria Azarenko, and world's number one seed Caroline Wozniacki proves heart warming event

By Victor Mikhailov

Sport embraces the whole world, gathering hundreds of thousands of fans at stadiums and millions of spectators in front of their TV screens. It is a world of records and defeats, of passions, of determination and of great will. Sporting achievements imbue us with a feeling of success while spiritually strengthening us. It is especially important for youngsters in poor health, who can enjoy the successes of great athletes as their own, feeling optimism and faith in the future, despite their own loneliness and weakness.

The event in Minsk had obvious importance, featuring two famous sportswomen who undoubtedly inspire many Belarusian children — but especially those in need of help and assistance. Funds raised by the charity match between Victoria Azarenko and Caroline Wozniacki have been transferred to the National Children's Oncology and Haematology Research Centre. The meeting between its patients and the tennis players was just as essential as this financial aid. This was Ms. Wozniacki's first trip to Minsk. Both tennis players travelled over before their match to chat to the young patients in Borovlyany, creating memorable impressions; it was easy to find a common language.

The participants of the charity match learnt that President Lukashenko had transferred his salary to the National Children's Oncology and Haematology Research Centre. "It's wonderful that our President



Arrival of famous tennis players to Minsk becomes a true holiday for children, bringing them many positive emotions

has joined the charity event," said Ms. Azarenko, adding that she hoped other people would make similar donations. "Generating funds to assist unwell children can be a challenge, but we'll do our best to help again in future," stressed Victoria. Meanwhile, Caroline noted that she has been glad to join the campaign to support children with illnesses. "I'm always pleased to take part in charity matches. As soon as I have the opportunity, I always agree," explained Ms.

Wozniacki. Of course, all those watching the match at the Sports Palace that day made donations via their ticket purchase; they also took part in a charity auction, which offered items from both sportswomen's tennis outfit and equipment. The funds raised as a result of the match and auction have been transferred to the National Children's Oncology and Haematology Research Centre.

A truly festive atmosphere

reigned at the Sports Palace that evening, with the players offering an autograph session and master classes for young tennis players. The match itself was fascinating, demonstrating professional elements of tennis playing. This was the first time that Minsk had hosted such a tennis event, although the Belarusian capital has previously seen matches between professional tennis players of the Davis Cup World Group. This time, old friends, rather than

outstanding rivals, appeared on court; however, their friendship didn't stop the sportswomen from playing to their full ability. The match was attended by President Lukashenko, whose great interest in sport, particularly tennis, is well known. However, this time, his presence highlighted the charity action of the event, rather than the sporting outcome.

Certainly, Ms. Azarenko had been working hard to ensure the event came together.

On receiving congratulations from the Belarusian President on her recent victory at the Kremlin Cup, she promised to invite some of the world's top tennis players to Minsk. She kept her word, persuading her friend Ms. Wozniacki, the world's top seed, to take part in the charity match.

The evening will be long remembered by the audience, who were far from disappointed at seeing their idols in person. We'd like to express gratitude to all those who took part in the charity campaign by attending the match. Of course, an even greater number of people were able to watch via a live television broadcast on a central TV channel. For several hours, youngsters countrywide felt the tension of a sporting event, as well as human kindness shown toward those who need it so badly.

Some may secretly dream of one day reaching the same sporting heights, with accompanying popularity and fame. Others will have been admiring the efforts of their countrywoman, Victoria Azarenko, and Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark.

Sport unites those who are strong, bold and determined but is far more beautiful when kind-hearted people occupy the world. Perhaps sport embraces the warmth of humanity more than we realise, since athletes always leave their legacy: not only a collection of cups and medals but their charity work. Just such an event has been hosted by Minsk, featuring Ms. Azarenko and Ms. Wozniacki.

Border opens up to neighbours

By Yekaterina Nechaeva

House of Representatives' deputies ratify inter-governmental agreement between Belarus and Poland on rules of cross-border movement, at sixth session

According to Belarus' Deputy Foreign Minister, Valery Voronetsky, Belarus will be able to start implementing the treaty from April 2011. Residents of the border territories of Belarus and Poland will be able to enjoy simplified border crossing within 30km of the common border. A list of cities and towns situated within the border area is set out in the agreement's appendix:

Grodno, Brest, Vysokoe, Pruzhany, Zhabinka and Malorita in Belarus and Biala Podlaska on the Polish side.

The agreement applies to residents of border areas who have lived there for at least three years, allowing them to purchase a 20 euro special permit for cross-border movement. These are issued for a period of two to five years and allow the right to stay in the territory of the other state for up to 90 days within any six month period. However, all citizens must register within the territory of the neighbouring state, according to established procedure.

The Deputy Foreign Minister tells us that the treaty



Control at Varshavsky Most checkpoint

will positively influence the development of bilateral relationships, while intensifying economic collaboration in the border areas. Contacts between local public authorities and business circles should be strengthened. However, the treaty could also bring problems, such as longer queues at border checkpoints, attempts at illegal migration and shuttle

trade in goods which bear different prices in Belarus and Poland. According to Mr. Voronetsky, such consequences could be 'minimised by taking necessary preventive measures'.

Poland has already informed Belarus that it has passed all inter-state procedures necessary for the implementation of the agreement.

Inhabitants of old forest kept safe

Underground passes for aurochs to be built under new road through Belovezhskaya Pushcha

A ring road is being constructed around the Belovezhskaya Pushcha, following Belarusian scientists' strict recommendations regarding the migration routes of animals; they have guided builders as to where underground passes should be situated.

The General Director of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, Nikolay Bambiza, explains that 32 such passes are to be built along the road for amphibians and reptiles. The site has experience in this field already, and plans another four tunnels to be laid especially for large animals — such as wild boar, roe, deer and aurochs.

Following their instinct, animals migrate through the Pushcha using the same routes at certain times of the year, following paths which may have existed hundreds of years ago and have now changed use. In fact, a village was built on the route of some Pushcha frogs but this did not stop them from pursuing their path. To avoid death under the wheels of passing cars, an underground road was constructed below the central street.

Trees and bushes are being planted by the road to ensure comfort for migrating animals, which can eat their fruit and leaves. Moreover, the tunnels will be covered with sound-absorbent materials, so that the noise of passing cars won't frighten the animals.