

Konstantin Sivtsov continues to surprise

By Kirill Pirogov

Belarusian cyclist placed eighth overall at multi-day Critérium du Dauphiné Libéré

The sportsman skilfully used his good physical shape, gained during the multi-day Giro d'Italia race, to successfully perform on the French roads (cycling for the High Road USA team). The seven stage French event saw him 50 seconds behind the leader after first start but he improved after each stage, climbing from 161st to 8th overall. He was just 10 seconds behind the winner, Spanish Joaquin Rodriguez, cycling for Russian Katyusha, by the final seventh stage along the Pontcharra La Toussuire route. The overall winner was Bradley Wiggins of Great Britain, cycling for the Sky team.

Owing to his success in the Critérium du Dauphiné Libéré, which was first held from 1947 and has been around 1,065km long this year, the Belarusian cyclist now ranks 43rd in the International Cycling Union (previously, he was 59th in the world ratings).

Prize collection enriched

Second tennis doubles title this season earned by Olga Govortsova, partnering Russian Alla Kudryavtseva in Birmingham

At the AEGON Classic tournament, the Belarusian-Russian duo was seeded second and easily passed through the semi-finals to later face Australia's Casey Dellacqua and South Africa's Chanelle Scheepers in a tough match. Olga and Alla won the first set after equal play, but lost the second. The European tennis players finally claimed the day at the super tie-break.



Belarusian-Russian duo

In the final match, Govortsova and Kudryavtseva clashed rackets with Italian Sara Errani and Roberta Vinci. The Belarusian and Russian were defeated in the first set, as their opponents set the pace. In the second, the situation changed radically, with Olga and Alla taking the initiative to equalise the score. Govortsova and Kudryavtseva snatched the lead in the most important moments of the match to grab their second win together this season (the first being in Memphis).

In 2008, Olga won in Istanbul, partnering the USA's Jill Craybas, and, in 2009, won in Tashkent and Guangzhou, playing with fellow Belarusian Tatiana Puchek. Last year, she won again with Chinese Chuang Chia-Jung.

Even defeat yields positive emotions



Match between Belarusian and Danish teams

Bitterness at lost game against Swiss doesn't dash joy of Belarusian national team at their debut in European Under-21 Championship semi-finals

By Yuri Karpenko

The decisive stage in Group A of the European Under-21 Championship presented football players and fans with a whole range of emotions. The Swiss team earned the maximum amount of points across three matches, without a single missed goal, while the hosting Danish team was disappointed at failing to please fans by reaching the semi-finals. However, the brightest emotions were experienced by the Belarusian national squad. Despite being defeated 0:3, it managed to reach the semi-finals, due to Iceland beating Denmark 3:1. Previously, Belarus beat Iceland 2:0 and lost to the Danes 1:2.

The bitterness of loss and joy of participation in the semi-finals warmed the souls of the Belarusian footballers, as midfielder Pavel Nekhaichik notes, "It's always pleasant to leave the group in such an important tour-

namment, but we have mixed feelings. We are pleased we've left the group." He was returning to the field after a spell in hospital. "We feel strangely, having lost twice yet having reached the semi-finals... I can only thank the Icelanders. Whatever we say, it's the first time in our history that we've reached the semi-finals, so positive emotions prevail," adds Alexander Gutor, goalkeeper for the Belarusian squad.

Belarus has twice before reached the final round of the European Under-21 Championship. In 2004, Yuri Puntus' trainees lost in Germany, playing Italy, Serbia and Montenegro — who went on to reach the finals. Remarkably, in the first match of the group stage, Belarus beat the Italians, who later became the European champions. Two years ago, Yuri Kurnenin's trainees also failed to reach the semi-finals in Sweden, coming fourth in their group after Italy, Sweden and Serbia.

Precise shots at Sporting Club

By Kirill Karin

Belarus' Andrey Kovalenko and Lithuania's Ronaldas Račinskas win Minsk Grand Prix in classic trap shooting

Athletes from Belarus, Russia, Lithuania and Latvia have competed at the Minsk Sporting Club in the Olympic disciplines of skeet and trap. In the trap, Andrey Kovalenko

from Belarus won, with 133 hits out of 150 targets. Silver went to Russia's Alexander Smirnov and Aleksey Zareckij of Lithuania captured bronze. In the skeet, Ronaldas Račinskas from Lithuania was the best — hitting 140 targets of 150. Valery Kukobako of Belarus missed two targets, leaving him with silver, while bronze went to Belarusian Andrey Gerashchenko (being more accurate

than 2002 European champion Olga Panarina of Russia).

In mid-July, Slovenian Maribor is to host a round of the World Cup in trap shooting. Belarus will be represented by Andrey Gerashchenko, Valery Kukobako and Alexey Tortikov in the skeet. In the trap, Andrey Kovalenko, Nikolay Borovoy and Sergey Trostikov will be taking part.

Home volleyball tour

By Yuri Kovalev

Belarusian national volleyball teams play European League matches against Romania in Minsk

In its first two matches within the European League, the Belarusian national men's volleyball team has earned a third of all points. As Romania tops the tournament table, the prospect of facing the squad was somewhat alarming but all worries were unwarranted: after defeat in the first match (1:3) Belarus took confident revenge with the same score.

Titled coaches, who not so long ago won the Champions League themselves, were in opposition: Stelian Moculescu played for German Friedrichshafen in spring 2006, while Victor Sidelnikov played for Russian Dinamo-Tatransgaz in 2007. Their trainees, however, are hard to compare. Some Romanian players are regular participants of the Champions League with their clubs. Most of the Belarusian national squad play



Belarusian volleyball players attack

for Stroitel Minsk and usually reach no further than the third round of the less prestigious Challenge Cup.

This, however, makes our win over the formidable rival even more significant — especially after the disappointing defeat in the first match. Belarus lost its serve and lacked attacking skills but redeemed itself in the second match, where the team showed unwilling to share points with Romania. The squad is next to

play Slovakia and Turkey in a series of home matches.

Before the Belarusian-Romanian matches within the European League tournament's home round, the national women's team had been viewed as the undisputed favourite, having played well against Croatia. Moreover, Romania came to Minsk without three of their core players. Sadly, Romania claimed two well-deserved wins.

Two tournaments — two triumphs

Belarusian teams return from European Thai Boxing Championship and World Kickboxing Cup with first positions

It is no secret that Belarusian Muay Thai and kickboxing masters have now joined the international elite. Both girls and boys traditionally bring home whole sets of medals while athletes themselves admit that local events in Belarus compare well with international tournaments.

The Thai Boxing European Championship, held in Turkey, gathered more than 600 athletes from 32 countries. Belarus was followed on the medals podium by athletes from Ukraine and Russia. The personal achievements of Belarusian athletes comprised 7 gold, 8 silver, and 7 bronze medals.

More than 800 athletes from 25 countries arrived in Hungary to take part in the Kickboxing World Cup: K-1, low kick and full contact events. Belarus again became champion while silver and bronze went to Hungary and Poland respectively. Over all, Belarus captured 17 gold, 22 silver and 12 bronze medals.

In the near future, our athletes will be training for the next World Championship in Thai boxing, to be hosted by Tashkent in September. They will also be preparing for the next world kickboxing event, hosted by Macedonia in October.