

## Mikhail Grabovsky surpasses the rest

**Forward of national Belarusian team and of Canadian Toronto Maple Leaves named best 2010/2011 Belarusian hockey player**

An annual poll among hockey experts and sporting reporters has named Mikhail Grabovsky, 27, as Belarus' top hockey player, way ahead of his nearest rival, Sergey Kostitsyn. The latter also plays in the forward position — for Belarus' team and USA's Nashville. Andrey Mezin, the Belarusian national team's goalkeeper, from Dinamo Minsk, is placed third. This is the second time that Mikhail Grabovsky has received the honour (previously, in 2009).

Last season, Mikhail earned 58 points over 81 matches, making him the best Belarusian forward in the NHL, while being third among the Toronto Maple Leaves. His is the best seasonal result for any Belarusian ice hockey player in the NHL. The previous record belongs to Montreal forward Andrey Kostitsyn, who ended the 2007/2008 season with 53 points over 78 matches. Mikhail has also set a new landmark for Belarus in the number of scored points in the regular NHL championship. Moreover, he was a huge asset to the Belarusian national squad at the World Championship held in Slovakia, earning 4 points over 6 matches.

## Leader crosses finish line

**Vasily Kirienko wins four-day highway cycling race: La Route du Sud**

Based on the results of four stages on French roads, the Belarusian (cycling for Spanish Movistar) has beaten Italian Davide Rebellin of Miche-Guerciotti by 40 seconds. Peter Kennaugh of Great Britain (Sky team) is third. Of 106 cyclists, 92 reached the finish line of the race, which began in Castres.

Kirienko was the most successful in the second round — between Saint Gaudens and Cauterets (177km). The Belarusian came second in this complicated section of the race, just five seconds behind Anthony Charteau (Europcar). Only after the third stage did the Belarusian push into the lead, from twelfth place, breaking away from Rebellin behind him by 43 seconds. In the closing, flat round, Kirienko finished in the group: enough to preserve his lead.

# Winning ticket to London

By defeating the Czech team 1:0 in the match for third place, our Belarusian footballers earn bronze at the European Under-21 Championship and receive their first opportunity to play at the Olympic Games

By Yuri Karpenko

The Belarusian under-21 football team have been incredibly lucky; despite two losses, they have been placed second in Group A and, amazingly, reached the European Championship's play-offs. Georgy Kondratiev's trainees are through to the semi-finals owing to having the best difference in scores. They even gained help from their rivals: Iceland beat Denmark 3:1.

However, the team has had to seriously fight for a ticket to the London Summer Olympics, as the English team's loss to the Czech Republic has not given Belarus a chance ahead of time. Tickets go to the top three teams in the tournament, so the Belarusian junior team needed to at least come third or reach the finals of the European Championship. It was not an easy task. In the semi-finals, the Belarusian squad played the almost unrivalled Spaniards, who confidently beat the Czechs and Ukrainians at the group stage, while drawing against the English.

In their match against Spain, the Belarusian team managed to demonstrate their

full potential, showing great determination more than skilful play. They lost again but their defeat significantly differed from the Swiss fiasco. Spain was a favourite on paper and in action, demonstrating confident play; they had every reason to foresee an easy victory in their semi-final match against Belarus (whose performance was not so impressive). Beginning in high spirits, they faced impressive discipline on the side of Belarus; in the 38th minute, Andrey Voronkov scored with an acrobatic pass — much to Spanish goalkeeper David de Gea's embarrassment. Nevertheless, in the final minute before regular time ended, Adrián López equalised and, during extra time, López joined Jeffren in earning Luis Milla's trainees a place in the finals.

The tournament match against the Czechs for third place (and the ticket to London) did not prove easy. In the first half of the game, the Czech players took the initiative while Belarus was obliged to fall into defence, rarely threatening their rivals' goal. After halftime, the picture drastically changed. Georgy Kondratiev's trainees



Belarusian national junior team forward Andrey Voronkov with the ball

went on the attack, allowing the squad to claim victory. Yegor Filipenko scored the winning

goal in the 89th minute, which takes the national junior team to the 2012 Olympics. Presi-

dent of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko congratulated them on their success.

## Lucky rowing starts in Belgrade and Hamburg

Belarusian athletes capture 13 medals at European Canoe and Kayak Championship, while Yekaterina Karsten wins World Cup round in academic rowing



'Golden' finish for female kayak four

By Yuri Kovalev

In Belgrade, Serbia, our canoe and kayak rowers stood out from the crowd, earning more medals than any other squad at the continental championship — setting a national record. The Belarusian rowers yielded only to Hungary in their number of gold medals: 5 against 6. In Olympic programmes, Vladimir Shantarovich's trainees claimed one gold and three silver medals.

Olympic champions Vadim Makhnev and Roman Petrusenko took two medals in the kayak pair: gold in the 500m and silver in the 200m. Oleg Yurenya repeated his su-

perb performance in the kayak single 5,000m race, with a photo finish against famed Norwegian rower Eirik Verås Larsen. In the closing metres, the Belarusian pulled ahead by 0.3 seconds, also winning bronze in the 200m.

The Belarusian kayak four women's 500m race saw Irina Pomelova, Nadezhda Popok, Olga Khudenko and Marina Poltoran take gold. In the spring Cup rounds, they were determined to show their worth with a double win. In Serbia, the Belarusian girls had little difficulty in knocking out their rivals, while Marina Poltoran also took gold in her favourite 5,000m.

The canoeists also added some weight to the Belarusian medals bag, making their debut in Belgrade. Yekaterina Gerasimenko and Svetlana Tulupova took part last year and have clearly improved since then, being the first to cross the finish line in the 500m canoe pair.

Meanwhile, Hamburg saw the second World Cup round in academic rowing. Belarusian Yekaterina Karsten, 39, is tireless this season. She won the 2,000m race hands down — ahead of her nearest rival, Emma Twigg of New Zealand, by almost two seconds. Karsten was in third position for the first half of the race but, reaching the 1,500m mark, pulled ahead to take the lead, strengthening her position by the finish line.

In Hamburg, Belarusian women's canoe pair Yulia Bichik and Tatiana Kukhta took bronze in the 2,000m, as did the Belarusian men's canoe four (Vadim Lyalin, Denis Migal, Stanislav Shcherbachenya and Alexander Kobuzubovskiy).

## Winning shot

**Sergey Martynov wins Shooting World Cup round**

German Munich has seen success for the Belarusian shooter in the small calibre rifle 50m prone position; this is his second Cup round victory of the season. He earned a total of 703.3 points, beating

Denmark's Kenneth Nielsen, who came second, by 1.9 points. Bronze went to Daniel Brodmeier of Germany.

Andrey Kazak was placed 9th in the small calibre pistol 50m distance shooting — enabling him to grab a place at the 2012 Games, to be hosted by London.

## Still among the elite

By Kirill Pirogov

**Belarusian track and field athletes keep place in super league of European Championship clubs**

In Stockholm, the Belarusian squad earned 220 points across 40 kinds of events, finishing ninth overall, staying in the elite division. They took four medals altogether. Alina Talay confidently claimed silver in the 100m steeple chase, behind Russian Tatiana Degtyareva by three seconds. Dmitry Plotnitsky led in the triple jump, losing to Italian Fabrizio Schembri (who outstripped the Belarusian by 14cm in his last, fourth,



Mikhnevich in action

attempt). Andrey Mikhnevich and Alexander Linnik took bronze, with shot putt season leader Mikhnevich throwing 20.4m. Linnik's 200m sprint was inspiring, being his best result this season.

The World Championship is the major start of the season. With this in mind, the team's line-up didn't comprise the main players; still, even these sportsmen's performance proved quite worthy.