

Time to try on boxing gloves

11 countries, about a hundred participants and 11 awards earned by Belarusian athletes — at International A Boxing tournament, held in Minsk

By Dmitry Komashko

The national teams of Russia and Kazakhstan, Congo and Sweden, Ukraine and Australia sent their top boxers to Minsk for the tournament, which was dedicated to the memory of Soviet Union Hero Victor Liventsev. The important round sends boxers through to the World Championship (to be hosted by Baku in Azerbaijan) where the winners will go through to the 2012 Olympics in London. Obviously, the struggle unleashed in the Minsk ring was dynamic.

Out of ten final fights, two were purely 'Belarusian'. In the lightest weight category (under 49kg) gold went to Vadim Kirilenko, who defeated Belarusian Tsiren Badmaev (left with silver). In the under 75kg category, Nikolay Veslov of Belarus faced country mate Vitaly Kuzmirkov to win. Ivan Figurenko, Vazgen Safaryants, Mikhail Dolgolevets and Sergey Kornev also claimed gold

medals, while bronze went to Dmitry Zhukov and Yaroslav Shish.

"I would prefer not to describe the success of the event from the point of view of how many medals were won," stresses the head coach of the Belarusian national boxing team, Valery Kornilov. "Over the past six months, we've been working hard to get in the necessary physical shape. This was a kind of test for us, allowing us to pit ourselves against our formidable world rivals. Our guys proved that they can pose a threat to leading boxers from Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Australia, which makes me extremely happy. This is clearly the direction we need to move in."

According to the Chairman of the Belarusian Boxing Federation, representatives of the International Boxing Federation (AIBA) have highly praised the organisation of the event in Minsk. Next year, the tournament should reach an even higher level.



Yaroslav Shish (R) of Belarus fights against Ukraine's Roman Semenishin

Points for obstacles

Two horse racing tournaments of highest ranking hosted this summer by Republican Olympic Equestrian and Breeding Centre in Ratomka

Early July saw a round of the FEI World Cup Eventing hosted by Ratomka, including such Belarusian athletes as Yelena Telepushkina, Vyacheslav Poito and Alexander

Fominov. All three performed well, continuing their struggle for places at the 2012 Games.

Belarusians also performed at a show jumping stage of the World Cup. The event gathered the world's horse riding elite. Organisers claim that Minsk has not hosted such a high level tournament since about 10 years ago: truly a victory for Belarusian sports. Histori-

cally, Ratomka is known for its strong competitions. The Soviet team traditionally included a couple of Belarusian athletes. In 1980, Victor Uglyumov took Olympic gold. According to the state equestrian coach, Natalia Yuranova, the new generation of Belarusian riders will do their best to repeat the success shown so long ago by our famed country mate.



BATE fails to use an advantage on playing Ekranas

Nekhaichik and BATE attempted to use the advantage of numbers to enter their opponent's half of the field. Ekranas strengthened its defence even more in response. Victor Goncharenko's trainees created a series of dangerous moments that, alas, did not lead to goals. Renan Bressan failed to turn an aggressive attack into a result, while BATE captain Dmitry Likhtarovich's powerful kick missed the net. Spartak's former forward Artem Kontsevoy, playing for BATE, had the last chance for a long-awaited goal; sadly, his beautiful kick in the 86th minute hit the bar.

If the two matches be-

tween the seven-time Belarusian champion and five-time Lithuanian champion can result in a Belarusian victory, our fans will be able to enjoy another autumn of European football matches. BATE can yet secure a minimum performance in the group stage of the second most important European tournament — the Europa League. To repeat its 2008/2009 success, when BATE reached the group stage of the Champions League and was able to invite European footballing legends Real Madrid and Juventus Torino to Minsk, they must defeat Lithuanian Ekranas at home and pass through the next qualification round.

Score required for victory

By Yuri Karpenko

First official match between Lithuanian and Belarusian champions ends in no score draw

Favourite BATE Borisov was closer to claiming victory in the first match of the third Champions League qualification round, held in Lithuanian Panevezys, but failed to make the most of some 'juicy' opportunities near goal. Lithuanian Ekranas showed stronger defence than attack, keeping their rival away from their own goal during both halves.

During the 58th minute, Serbian halfback Marko Andelković was sent off after tripping BATE's Pavel

Women's hockey strengthening

Belarus' exclusive women's professional hockey team — Pantera — to play two national tournaments next season: open championships of Latvia and Austria

Latvia's Open Championship is scheduled from October to March, featuring the Belarusian team, Latvian Laima and Saga (from Riga), Zemgale (Jelgava) and Estonian Sputnik (Kohtla-Järve). In Austria, Pantera will face Austria's Sabres and Vienna

Flyers (from Vienna), the Salzburg Eagles (Salzburg), Slovakia's Slovan (Bratislava) and a Dutch team, with matches held from mid-September to late February. Pantera's General Director, Yevgeny Kukushkin, is convinced that the Belarusian team is strong enough to perform well in these two leagues. "We'll play 16 matches as part of the Latvian championship and 20 in Germany — not many. However, this new project has a single disadvantage: only two

or three teams from Austria's elite league will be able to come to Belarus; we'll need to play others away," he says. Having won Latvia's Open Championship, Pantera has qualified for the IIHF European Women's Champions Cup (featuring 16 teams in total). Its head coach, Vasily Pankov, is to continue coaching the team next season, with the line-up remaining almost unchanged. Russian forward Marina Sergina is likely to depart, with 2-3 new legionnaires arriving.

New heights on the horizon

By Dmitry Komarov

Last year's performance of Minsk-2006 in VTB United League full of intrigue

For the past six months, the Belarusian basketball champion has played world grands, filling Minsk-Arena with ardent fans. Many anticipated a draw before the new season, promising a new series of matches against formidable rivals. The results were not disappointing.

The number of clubs participating in the League has now gone up to 18, resulting in the squad from Minsk playing at least eight matches at home next season. Another good piece of news is that our rivals in Group B are Russian CSKA, Lokomotiv Kuban and

Spartak, Lithuanian Lietuvos Rytas, Polish Prokom, Czech Nymburk, and Ukrainian Azovmash. Another opponent will be settled on October 2nd, when the group containing Finnish Honka, Russian Krasnye Krylya and Yenisey, Polish Anwil, Lithuanian Šiauliai and Ukrainian Dnepr will select a team to go through.

The powerful line-up of rivals necessitates a serious approach to training, as the Director General of Minsk-2006 club, Konstantin Shereverya, stresses.

"Our opponents are very strong. To appear worthy, we need a strong squad. We have meetings with our partners and sponsors scheduled. Hopefully, they'll be ready to provide the required assistance and participate in forming the club's budget. We also



Minsk-2006 in action

count on our fans' support. Matches promise to be exciting and memorable — certainly worthwhile," he explains.

The regular VTB United League season starts on October 10th, 2011 — ending on March 16th, 2012. Minsk-2006 also plans to take part in the third most important European championship — EuroChallenge. In the qualification match for its group stage, Belarus will face Georgian club Sokhumi.