

Valuable lesson from star-studded Barcelona squad

BATE Borisov footballers sustain slashing defeat from Barcelona Spain in group stage of Champions League at Minsk Dynamo Stadium

By Yuri Karpenko

Recently, Spanish Barcelona set a unique record — becoming the only European club to win every possible title throughout the year: its national championship, the Spanish Cup and Super Cup, the Champions League, the UEFA Super Cup and the World Club Championship. It seemed a dream come true for Belarus to host such a footballing giant for a home game. Fans in their thousands were delighted to welcome the Spanish team to Minsk Dynamo stadium, anticipating the most exciting match in the history of local football.

This was BATE's first home match within the Champions League's group stage, against the current champion of the prestigious event. The rival team boasted an array of top players, including world legend Lionel Messi. Hosting a match against such a football super-power was an outstanding event in itself, although it was clear that BATE could only hope to hold its own against star-studded Barcelona.

Despite modest expectations, Minsk was determined to enjoy the event as a celebration of football and the final score of 0:5 did nothing to dampen the mood. Losing to such a footballing grand involved no shame, as BATE and its fans were happy to accept. Naturally, the tough battle has no doubt taught BATE some valuable lessons.

Barcelona was celebrating its 400th European match, which seemed to magnify Lionel Messi's



Worldwide footballing icon Lionel Messi steals the limelight during BATE-Barcelona match, in Minsk

high spirits and motivation. From very first seconds of the match in Minsk, Messi posed a threat to the Belarusians. They stood like a wall around the penalty line, to defend their goal, but Barcelona attempted to take BATE on its partially unguarded flank. After a pass from Dani Alves, Alexander Volodko sent the ball into his own goal and, within just three minutes, another upper kick brought a second goal. David Villa secured a precise throw

to Pedro Rodriguez, who sent a header into Alexander Gutor's net, and Messi was there to follow. Despite such setbacks, BATE enjoyed a beautiful moment during the first half; Volodko almost managed to score, simply lacking speed.

The second half began with higher spirits for BATE; regardless of nerves, they went on the attack, managing to push their opponents from their half of the field every now and then. However, BATE was

no match for Barca's speed, leaving their attacks rebuffed. Messi opened with another goal, sending the ball just under the upper bar. BATE several times approached Valdés' goal without seeing their efforts to fruition and, finally, David Villa evaded our defence to bring the score to 0:5.

The outcome was no surprise, as Barcelona is clearly faster, with more technical skills than BATE; moreover, they were clearly con-

fidant of their ability to win, while BATE's players felt themselves to be the underdog.

BATE's coaches and players have learned a valuable lesson, stressed head coach Victor Goncharenko at the after-match press conference. He noted that the result was not pleasant but that he did not feel entitled to criticise the squad. Any team would feel nervous in front of such a footballing giant, and could be similarly paralysed. Mr. Goncharenko mentioned that, after two dozen such matches, BATE would obviously grow professionally but that Barca's rapid play initially placed BATE in a truly unfavourable situation. Barcelona is strong in every component of the game — from ball control and co-ordination to fast reactions, and attack and defence skills. They are capable of outplaying any team in the world.

Barcelona coach Josep Guardiola emphasised that, despite a huge gap in the score, the match was not an easy one for his team. He admitted that some goals were achieved during moments of lost concentration and disorientation for BATE and noted that Messi (who scored twice) is one of world's top footballers.

In another H Group match, Milan Italy defeated Czech Viktoria Plzeň at home, 2:0; this gives them four points over two matches — like Barca. The Belarusian and Czech clubs have one point each. In the next round, on October 19th, BATE will face Milan in an away match while Barcelona will play against Viktoria Plzeň, at its Camp Nou.

Away hockey match ends with undoubtedly deserved win

By Yuri Kovalev

Dinamo Minsk plays brilliantly in four away matches as part of Continental Hockey League

In the closing round, held in St. Petersburg, after-match penalty shots resulted in a 4:3 win over SKA (their first defeat in the current championship). Dinamo now has three victories, having beaten Dinamo Riga — 3:2 (on penalties) and Atlant Moscow — 3:1. Their only defeat has been against CSKA Moscow — 0:2.

With 13 points after 8 matches, Dinamo is now ranked first among five teams in the Tarasov Division and is ranked second among 11 clubs within the Western Conference. According to the CHL rating, Dinamo Minsk is third among 23 squads. Based on the results of the preliminary round, the top eight teams from each conference will battle to reach the play-offs for the Gagarin Cup.

Commenting on the results of



Dinamo hockey players please fans with spectacular game

the away matches, Dinamo's head coach, Marek Sikora, notes that he's happy with his team's skills and determination. Moreover, he emphasises that his current line-up could break the run of unsuccessful matches. "I feel positively after our away matches, as the team is in

optimum physical shape, showing speed and determination and creating dangerous moments. It proves that we have a squad capable of shifting a match in its favour. There are improvements to be made but that's just part of normal training," explains Mr. Sikora.

Victory in Moscow and license to London

By Kirill Pirogov

Yelena Telepushkina earns place at Summer Olympics 2012 for horse racing

The Belarusian athlete captured gold at the recent international eventing competition in Moscow, making it her fourth victory in a row this year, giving her 226 points in total. Yelena is ranked first in eventing according to the FEI Olympic Riders Ranking List (in the Central and Eastern Europe, Cen-

tral Asia Olympic Group), sending her through to the next Games.

Yelena tells us that she has found a common language with her horse, Passat, who used to be quite nervous during competitions resulting in multiple mistakes. Now, Passat is ready for any high standing event. "We planned to attend an international tournament in Holland but, now we know our place at the London Games is secure, have decided to rest, allowing us to better prepare for 2012 events," explains Telepushkina.

Steady play brings results

Brest Zubrs win international 2011 Brest Cup baseball tournament

The event for those born in 1999 and later featured teams from Brest: Brest Zubrs, Orly (Eagles in Russian) and Legion. Two Russian teams also took part: Akuly (Sharks) from Balashikha and Northern Stars from Moscow.

A circle system saw each team play one another. Having won

every preliminary match, the Brest Zubrs entered the finals, facing the Northern Stars, whom they defeated 9:5. Akuly were placed third, after crushing Legion — 17:6.

Victory in this tournament is a nice finish to the current season — with our Brest Zubrs showing improvement with experience and fulfilling all the tasks set by their coach.