

Two leading Belarusian clubs confidently continue through European handball season

In the struggle for places in the 1/8 finals, Dinamo Minsk and HC Brest Meshkov have won their tournaments. This is the first time that Belarus is to be represented by two squads in European high ranking handball events.

By Dmitry Komarov

The team from Brest proved its worth finally in Macedonia, against local Pelister. The match at the Mladost Sports Hall was unforgettable, with beautiful combinations and determination, alongside two smoke bombs being delivered during the game! The first was set off during the Belarusian team's warm up, obscuring the stands but with no injury to players. According to the senior coach, Vladimir Savko, 'the incident made our players even more excited.'

Neither audience pressure nor scrambled training could stop the Belarusian team. Several seconds before the final whistle, it was clear that Pelister, having lost earlier in Brest, would not be able to close the gap, allowing it to enter the 1/8 finals of the Cup Winners' Cup for its sum of two matches.

The second smoke bomb was thrown into the centre of the court but did not influence the score of 26:25. It was reflected only in EHF delegate Josip Posavec's report. In January, Meshkov BHC will continue its fight for the Cup Winners' Cup in the quarter-finals.



Tough match between Dinamo Minsk and Nantes France keeps nerves on edge

Dinamo Minsk had a home advantage in the 1/16 finals of the EHF Cup, snatching four points from French Nantes at Minsk's Palace of Sports. However, they lead only until the 6th minute,

when the situation drastically changed and the French advantage reached 8 points! Dinamo battled on, giving a thrilling end of the match. Players from both sides were sent off, with recipro-

cal penalties awarded, leading to a score of 34:37 in the guests' favour. However, Maxim Babichev scored 35 seconds before the final whistle, securing not a win but a place in the quarter-finals.

BATE's slashing defeat in Barcelona

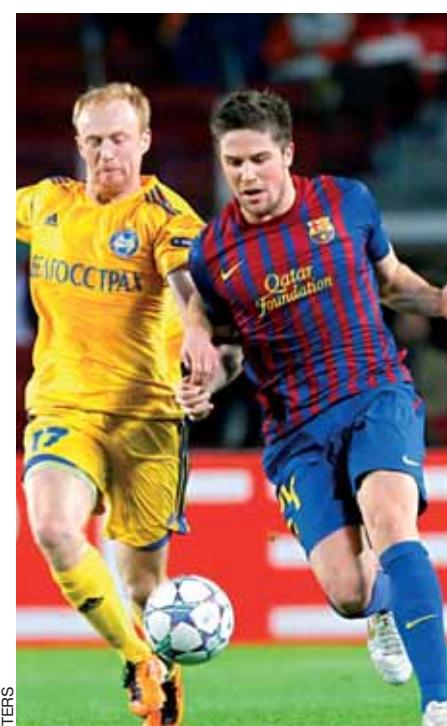
By Ivan Rafalsky

FC BATE Borisov loses closing match of Champions League's group stage

In Spain, BATE let in four goals from Barça (mostly represented by their B team). Goal-keeper Pinto and defenseman Maxwell were among the most experienced players on Barcelon'a squad. However, the other Barça players demonstrated football just as impressive as their 'superiors'.

During the first half, the hosts held the initiative, taking 13 shots at Alexander Gutor's goal. During the 35th minute, a precise pass from Pedro Rodríguez was skillfully employed by Sergi Roberto, opening the score. After half time, BATE came out more enthusiastically and energetically but lost their nerve, allowing Martín Montoya to score in the 60th minute. Two more goals were scored by Pedro Rodríguez. At home, in Minsk, Victor Goncharenko's team lost to Barcelona — 0:5.

So, Barcelona and Milan are to continue through to the 1/8 finals of the Champions League. Czech Viktoria BATE's European performance is now finished until next season.



BATE yields to Barcelona yet again

of the second most important European tournament: the Europa League. BATE's European performance is now finished until next season.

Belarusian, Polish and French boxers battle each other

Three countries take part in traditional friendly matches, held at Minsk's Palace of Sports

For two days, Belarusian, Polish and French boxers battled each other in friendly yet tough matches, each striving to prove themselves to be the strongest and most united squad. As a result, Belarusians captured four gold medals, with no other team winning gold. However, there were no losers in the wonderful event, which has been held since 2002.

"It's a great way to warm-up fighters, finding their weaknesses before the main season," emphasises the Chairman of the Belarusian Boxing Federation, Dmitry Tikhomolov. "Moreover, countries can trial their young boxers before allowing them to enter the main team. Accordingly, mixed squads (consisting of

number one and two boxers from each team) often come to such 'friendly' competitions. We've also done our best to involve the most diverse line-up, including almost all sportsmen from the national team."

Belarus had only two leading boxers in the event, Vadim Kirilenko and Ivan Baranchik, who showed their skill, as ever.

"This tournament is not just a trial," notes the head coach of the Belarusian boxing team, Valery Kornilov. "Generally speaking, there are no guaranteed places within our team. The only one through to the London 2012 Olympics is Sergey Korneev, while the others are still to fight in the qualification round in Istanbul."

Each has a chance but, from what we saw here at home, there's no doubt that it will be a challenge to gain a place at the Olympics."



Mr. Kondratiev

Carte blanche for two selection cycles

By Sergey Kravtsov

Belarusian Football Federation's Executive Committee unanimously decides to appoint Georgy Kondratiev as head coach of Belarus' national football team

Mr. Kondratiev was the only candidate for election, so the choice was pretty clear. The USSR champion is the perfect choice for Dinamo Minsk, having already achieved considerable success as a coach. Under his guidance, Belarus' youth team won bronze at the 2011 European Championship and has reached the Olympic Games in London. After his official appointment, Mr. Kondratiev promised 'to work responsibly and refrain from back-door games'. He is contracted to coach the national squad for at least two selection cycles

Securing place among star-filled squads

By Dmitry Baranovsky

Belarusian forward Alexey Kalyuzhny and two other players from Dinamo Minsk hockey club — defenseman Jere Karalahti and forward Geoff Platt — are chosen for the All-Star Game of the Continental Hockey League, to be held on January 21st in Riga

The Dinamo players are to perform in the core line-up of the Ozoliņš team — alongside top players from the CHL's Western Conference. Kalyuzhny — captain of Avangard Omsk — has been chosen for the top five of the Fiodorov team, gathering leading Eastern Conference players.

Four other players from Minsk were voted onto the list by fans: Canadian goal-keeper Kevin Landry, Czech defenseman Lukáš Krajíček, and forwards Zbyněk Iggl and Teemu Laine. National hockey defenseman Victor Kostyuchenko, from Avtomobilist Yekaterinburg, and Sergey Demagin, from Yugra Khanty-Mansiysk, also received a lot of votes.

This All-Star Game of the Continental Hockey League will be the fourth. Last year, the show was hosted by St. Petersburg, where Yashin's team lost. The squad included the Slovakian legionary from Dinamo Minsk, Peter Podhradský.