

Separated by net

Belarusian volleyball clubs enter European Cup

Belarus' champion — Stroitel Minsk — has beaten local Etta in Finnish Oulu, opening the second EuroChallenge Cup round. The match lasted 104 minutes, although the hosts only posed a true threat in the second and third sets. The final score was 3:1 in our favour. Stroitel now boasts a good chance of reaching the third round, as long as they perform well at home on December 21st. The winner of the two matches will face Austrian Posojilnica, from Bleiburg, in the next stage of the event.

Unfortunately, another Belarusian volleyball club, Kommunalnik from Grodno, has been knocked out, losing to Dinamo from Krasnodar, Russia — 1:3.

'Short water' with bronze

In recent years, the major achievements of Belarusian swimming have been connected with the name of Alexandra Gerasimenya but the recent European Short Course Swimming Championship demonstrated that the phenomenal swimmer isn't the only one who can earn medals at extra-class tournaments



Pavel Sankovich swims well

Our Belarusian athletes earned three bronze medals in Polish Szczecin. Pavel Sankovich covered the 50m backstroke in 23.64 seconds, yielding only to Spanish Ashwin Wildeboer Faber and Swiss Flori Lang. His other bronze came on the last day of the competition, when he finished behind Faber and Polish Radosław Kawęcki in the 100m backstroke.

The third medal was earned by Svetlana Khokhlova, who came third in the 50m butterfly. On the final day of the tournament, Khokhlova almost claimed another bronze, in the 50m freestyle; sadly, she finished 0.04 seconds behind Estonian Triin Aljand, who pipped her to another bronze.

Alexandra Gerasimenya came fifth in the 100m butterfly and fourth in the 100m freestyle but managed to set a new national record: 52.86 seconds. The national teams of Germany, Denmark and Spain were the top three at the European Championship for their number of medals; Belarus shared 16th position with the Belgium team. In total, swimmers from 20 countries worldwide stepped onto the podium.



Belarus' Darya Domracheva climbs podium to claim silver medal in women's 7.5km sprint

Gold medal earned at skiing distance

Belarusian biathlete Darya Domracheva has claimed two more medals during World Cup round, hosted by Austrian Hochfilzen

By Dmitry Komashko

Her first was earned in the sprint race, where she faced tough competition but demonstrated that she's in excellent physical shape. She was ahead on speed, but two misses on the shooting range pushed her into second place behind Olga Zaitseva of Russia. The narrow gap between the two presaged fierce rivalry in the pursuit race.

As ever, Darya reserved her strength for later in the race, although she skied confidently. Her shooting range miss earned

her a penalty lap, alongside Kaisa Mäkäräinen of Finland — also known for her speed. The Belarusian stood after Magdalena Neuner (who was third), separated by only five seconds.

Domracheva missed again at the second shooting range, keeping her behind Ekholm and Zaitseva. In her final shoot, Darya experienced the same disappointment; luckily, her opponents followed the trend, enabling her to outpace them and claim her medal. She now has a real chance of winning the major trophy: the Big Crystal Globe!

Other Belarusian athletes also did well in Hochfilzen. In the sprint, some of our girls won points — including former skier Anastasia Dubarezova. "I feel that I've achieved a lot but I do realise that I have potential to improve," admits Ms. Domracheva. "My main target this season — besides the World Championship, of course — is to win the Big Crystal Globe. I have the ability, so just need to do my best!" In the mixed relay, our quartet finished 10th, as the men lagged considerably behind their rivals.

Basketballers have eventually found recipe for victory

Minsk-2006 BC wins Belarus' Cup Final Four once again

The Minsk squad has defeated Grodno-93 — 103:91. The decisive match of the second most important national tournament was hosted by the Palace of Sports. American legionary Justin Knox distinguished himself by earning 25 points and 6 rebounds. His countryman Courtney Eldridge also played well, earning 21 points; he was named the best player of the Final Four. This is the third trophy for the country's leading club.

The Cup Final Four prepared Minsk-2006 well for its last match of the EuroChallenge group stage — Europe's third most important tournament. In Turkish Ankara, the Belarusian champion took its revenge on local Türk Telekom — 78:76. Alas, this success didn't help the team to change its tournament position, which has significantly worsened after two defeats



Minsk-2006 continues its European season

— by Germany's Telecom Baskets and by Turkish Pınar Karşıyaka. These two teams will continue to

the play-offs while Minsk-2006 will continue its season in the VTB United League.

Skiing to the podium

Yelena Sannikova wins 5km classic style ski race during round of Alps Cup in Slovenian Pokljuka

The Belarusian athlete covered 5km in 15 minutes and 50.8 seconds, beating her nearest rival, Russia's Olga Mikhailova, by 11 seconds. In the similar freestyle race, Sannikova came 14th — finishing 30 seconds behind Mikhailova. Among the men, Belarusian Alexey Ivanov has performed best, claiming 17th place in the 10km freestyle.

Andrey Kostitsyn bids for record

Belarusian forward for Montreal Canadiens sends his jubilee 'puck' into the net of the New York Islanders

Andrey has 200 points in the National Hockey League now. The 'jubilee' goal was scored in the middle of the first period, following a pass from Tomáš Plekanec. From the blue line, he sped across the whole rink, foiling Steve Staios and attempting to pass to his team mate Chris Campoli. The latter defended against opposing forward David Wallström, allowing Andrey to pick up the puck and flick it into the far corner of the opponent's goal for an equaliser of 1:1.



Andrey Kostitsyn

This is Kostitsyn's 7th season in the world's strongest league. He has played 347 matches for Montreal within the NHL and, with 200 (96+104) resultful points, is the second highest scorer among our Belarusian forwards in the NHL. Ruslan Saley still leads, although he sadly died in an aircraft crash near Yaroslavl, along with the whole Lokomotiv squad, on September 7th. He earned 204 (45+159) points across 917 matches. Andrey needs to score just five more points to beat this record.

Sailing to London

Belarus may not be surrounded by sea but this doesn't deter yachtswoman Tatiana Drozdovskaya, who has yet again delighted her fans

In 2007, Tatiana sensationally captured gold at the World Championship in Portugal and, this year, was placed a worthy 8th in a similar event in Australian Perta, in the Laser-Radial class. This has earned her one of 29 places at the 2012 Olympics, to be hosted by London; this is her fourth Games to date (having competed in 2000, 2004 and 2008). So far, 101 Belarusian athletes have qualified for the 2012 Olympics.