

Nine medals for two

Belarusian rhythmic gymnasts begin season well

At the first World Cup round, held in Canadian Montreal, Lyubov Cherkashina won the all-round: comprising hoop, ball, clubs, and ribbon. Belarusian Alexandra Narkevich came second, followed by Russia's Margarita Mamun. The tournament gathered 13 athletes in all, including several world leaders in rhythmic gymnastics, such as Belarusian Melita Stanyuta.

Our Belarusian graces claimed seven individual prizes, with Narkevich taking gold for her ribbon and clubs exercise and silver for the hoop. Cherkashina took silver for her ball, clubs and ribbon exercise and bronze for the hoop.

Junior's precise shooting

Munich hosts prestigious IWK — International Air Gun Competition

Our Belarusian sharpshooters were a success at Germany, bringing home three silver and one bronze medal. Vitaly Bubnovich claimed silver in the men's pneumatic rifle shooting from 10m while Victoria Chaika was placed second in the same event for women.

Two medals went to 1st Summer Youth Olympics silver medallist Ilya Chergeiko: in pneumatic rifle shooting from 10m (which earned him success in Singapore). He won bronze on the first start and silver on the second. Artem Lukanovets came fourth for his 10m pneumatic pistol shooting, in the junior competition.

New step in football career

Belarusian national team forward Sergey Kornilenko transfers from Russian Zenit to Blackpool

The English Premier League club has rented Sergey until the end of the season. Last year, Kornilenko, 27, was also transferred temporarily: to Russian Tom and Rubin. Blackpool is currently ranked 12th among the top 20 clubs in England, within the Premier League.

Belarusian halfback Alexander Hleb is currently playing for Birmingham, also in England.

Test of strength

Belarusian national teams play series of table tennis matches in European Nations League

By Yuri Karpenko

At the group stage, our Belarusian girls have already defeated their rivals in four matches: England and Poland (away) and France and England (at home). Regardless of the results of other matches, they have secured their play-off place, being among their group's top two teams. The final matches are scheduled for autumn.

In the recent home match against Poland, the Belarusian squad was represented by its strongest line-up: acting European champion Victoria Pavlovich, her sister Veronika, Alexandra Privilova and Yelena Dubkova. Poland failed to bring its core players to Minsk but still

looked quite formidable. The equally strong Polish players posed a serious threat to the Belarusian girls, who felt the stress of playing at home, where fans' expectations were high. This may have affected their nerves, as they failed to bring their best game, losing 2:3. The two Belarusian wins were captured by Victoria Pavlovich.

The Belarusian men's team, playing in the Premier Division of the tournament, faced Russian players in Yekaterinburg, losing 2:3. Table tennis leaders Vladimir Samsonov and Yevgeny Shchetin were absent from the squad due to a tough club schedule.

Meanwhile, October's Europe-Asia tournament is



Belarusians lack luck in fight against Poland

to become one of the brightest in table tennis. Minsk will gather the top ten players

from our two continents this autumn. Each country will be represented by just one player. Vladimir Samsonov of Belarus is an old-timer of this tournament.

Among favourites

By Kirill Karin

From February 19-20th, for the first time, Minsk will be hosting the Greco-Roman Team World Wrestling Cup

The event is to gather the strongest world squads: from Russia, Turkey, Iran, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Bulgaria, Korea and Cuba. As expected, Russia, Iran and Azerbaijan are the tournament's favourites, having won gold, silver and bronze respectively at last year's World

Cup (among teams).

Belarusian head coach Gennady Sapunov doubts that his team will be among the medallists but hopes to make a good impression. Last November, at the 17th International Tournament Dedicated to the Memory of Olympic Champion Oleg Karavaev, held in Minsk, our wrestlers sensationally defeated Russia in the semi-finals; our rivals then failed to bring their best line-up. However, the outcome of the event is not a foregone conclusion, since

success depends on the performance of the whole team rather than one or two leading athletes, with wrestlers competing in seven weight categories.

The Belarusian team might include our most titled Greco-Roman wrestlers: 2008 Beijing Games bronze-medallist Mikhail Semenov (under 66kg), alongside the laureates of world and European championships — Alexander Kikinev (74kg) and Timofey Deinichenko (96kg).

Champions League being dynamically relaunched

Yunost Minsk to play in Champions League for 2011/2012 season



Yunost ready to battle for new trophies

By Kirill Pirogov

Zurich, Switzerland has hosted the heads of the International Hockey Federation, and representatives from the National Hockey

League, the Continental Hockey League and various leagues and federations from Austria, Germany, Russia, Slovakia, Finland, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Sweden and Belarus. The meet-

ing tackled the revival of Champions League, looking at its development over the next three years, with the plan approved by most participants.

Annually, 16 teams are to play 59 matches as part of the Champions League. Meanwhile, the Belarusian Hockey Federation received confirmation from the IIHF that, in the 2011/2012 season, a winner of the Continental Cup — Yunost Minsk — will join the Champions League.

The final decision regarding the new Champions League format will be taken in late February, when the clubs should confirm their readiness to participate.

Victoria Azarenko keeps her ranking

Tennis star remains in ninth place in global ranking



Victoria Azarenko

By Yuri Kovalev

Following the Australian Open Grand Slam event (the first tournament of the season), Azarenko has kept her ninth place singles ranking. On the Melbourne courts, Belarus' number one seed defeated German Kathrin Woerle, Czech Andrea Hlaváčková and Chanelle Scheepers from the South African Republic. In the quarter-finals, Victoria lost to China's Na Li, who went on to

lose to Belgian Kim Clijsters (now ranked second, up from third) in the finals. Top position in WTA ranking continues to be held by Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki.

In the doubles, Victoria partnered Russia's Maria Kirilenko, reaching the finals, where they lost to Argentina's Gisela Dulko and Italian Flavia Pennetta. Victoria is now ranked 25th worldwide for her doubles skills, up from 44th.

Meanwhile, our Belarusian tennis players proved successful in the first round of the Fed Cup (Europe/Africa Zone Group I), winning every set. On the first day, they defeated the Austrians, while beating the Croatians on the second. On the third, they crushed Greece.

In the match to reach the World Group II play-offs, the Belarusians defeated Poland easily, with Olga Govortsova beating Magda Linette and Belarusian team leader Victoria Azarenko defeating Poland's top seed, Agnieszka Radwańska, after a tough struggle.

The Belarusian team now goes through to face whoever loses World Group II of the Fed Cup, playing from April 16th-17th.