

Close to the podium

By Kirill Pirogov

Belarusian women's indoor hockey team comes fourth at World Championship, held in Poznan, Poland

Our girls scored ten points during the preliminary round, in subgroup B, enabling them to climb to second place and go through to the semi-finals, alongside Germany. Samvel Kagramanyan's trainees then faced the tournament's favourite — Holland — famed in the world of indoor hockey. As expected, the Dutch snatched a confident win of 7:0.

In the match for bronze, Belarus opposed Ukraine. They led during the match but finally lost 2:4. However, fourth place in the world rankings is the highest achievement demonstrated by Belarusian indoor hockey (having claimed fifth place at the championships in 2003 and 2007). Gold went to Germany, followed by Holland.

Thinking ahead to qualification for the 2012 Olympics, we can be optimistic about our team's chances. Additionally, the junior football team and the national women's basketball team have also a chance of taking part in the Games.

Third at the Cup of Slovakia

Belarusian national ice hockey team participates in international four countries tournament in Bratislava

Before the meeting, Belarus lost to Germany in Frankfurt am Main, 1:3, although several of the squad's key players were absent, as in Slovakia: all the NHL and some Continental Hockey League players were unable to participate. In the first (semi-final) match of the Cup of Slovakia, Eduard Zankovets' trainees met Switzerland, losing 1:3. Simultaneously, Germany faced Slovakia, who proved stronger. In the match for bronze, Belarus took revenge for its recent defeat by the German team, crushing them 4:2. Incidentally, the Slovak squad is currently coached by Belarus' former trainer, Glen Hanlon.

Belarus' Slovakian matches are good training for the coming World Championship, to be hosted by the Slovakian cities of Bratislava and Košice, from 29th April to 15th May, 2011. In the first round of the grand event, Belarus will play against Canada, Switzerland and France, within subgroup B. In the second round, the top three teams from four groups will continue to battle for medals.

Team spirit brings medals

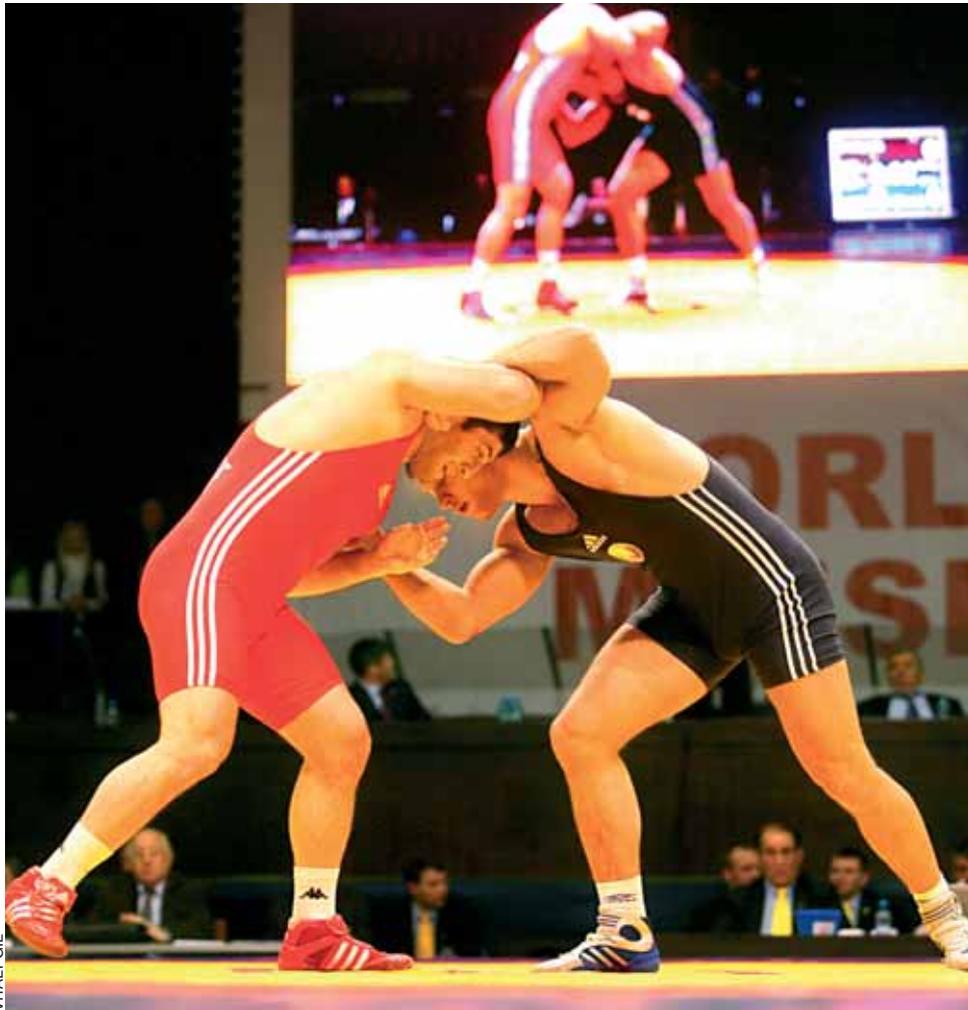
Belarusian Greco-Roman wrestling team captures bronze at World Cup round

By Yuri Karpenko

The World Cup is second only to the World Championship and was hosted by Minsk for the first time. Squads from ten countries competed in two groups, with wrestlers chosen from the results of the recent world championships. The host team was faced with the unenviable situation of battling Iran, Turkey, Cuba and South Korea — all strong contenders. The second group comprised Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Bulgaria, looking far less formidable.

Before the tournament, Belarus' national team head coach, Gennady Sapunov, complained that only 2-3 wrestlers on his team could pose a threat to their rivals and sent his top men onto the mat. These included Mikhail Semenov and Timofey Deinichenko, who were still recovering from injury. It was not expected that they would claim medals but the Belarusians demonstrated strength of character and finished with a respectable result.

In the first match, Belarus opposed Turkey and managed to win after a very tough fight. Surprisingly, Cuba failed to bring its best



Timofey Deinichenko (R) is the major Olympic hope for the Belarusian national team

line-up, leading to another victory for Belarus. The next opponent — Korea — had brought formidable Olympic champion Jung Ji-Hyun;

however, one wrestler does not make a team. From the very beginning, our Iranian rivals showed their strength and only Alexander Kikinev

was able to win a match. As a result of this defeat, Belarus fought for third place against another strong team — Azerbaijan. Dramatic confront-

tation led to Belarus losing 0:2 but we won 4:3 over all. The final fight between heavyweights Iosif Chugoshvili and Anton Botev settled the winner. The World Cup went to the Iranian team, which defeated Russia 4:3.

The tournament in Minsk was attended by several notable sportsmen, including three-time Olympic Greco-Roman wrestling champion, the 20th century's top wrestler, Russian Alexander Karelin. The famed athlete noted the high level of the event's organisation, the full stands at Minsk's Palace of Sports, and the top performances he witnessed on the floor.

President of the International Wrestling Federation Rafael Martinetti recalled 1968, when he performed at a European Championship held in Minsk. He noted that modern Minsk is almost unrecognisable from that time. Speaking of Belarus' intention of one day hosting the World Championship, Martinetti commented that, for 2014, all the tournaments' venues have already been chosen. Belarus, however, can apply to host the Junior World Championship in 2013; wrestlers from more than 100 countries are to take part.

Draw at Parc des Princes Stadium not in favour of BATE team

Paris draw in return 1/16 Europa League match against PSG deprives Borisov squad of chance of continuing in football battle

By Yuri Kovalev

BATE's chances in the return 1/16 Europa League match against Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) were not modest. Of course, Antoine Kombouare's trainees are at their peak of fitness, midway through their own national championship, while having a larger budget (including an incomparable budget for transfer players). In previous European Cup matches, Belarusian clubs Dnepr Mogilev and Dinamo Minsk have never managed to defeat the French (two draws and one loss). BATE, however, was in victorious spirits.

Alas, another draw (following two missed shots at home, where Minsk's Dynamo stadium witnessed a 2:2 draw) has ensured that our Belarusian club has been knocked out of the tournament. The yellow-and-blue team had every chance of scoring in the second half of the match, hosted by the Parc des Princes Sta-

dium. Sadly, BATE's Brazilian legionnaire Renan Bressan missed the net, despite shooting from a very favourable position.

As in the first match between BATE and Paris Saint-

matched. As expected, hosting PSG concentrated on defence, having enjoyed an away draw. The Paris players guarded their net intently yet continued to attack when the chance presented itself. Such tactics

with BATE working harder and spending more time at the opposite end of the field. Bressan lost a real chance to score a longed-for goal. After a high pass from the right wing, Zoumana Camara made an error near his goal, allowing BATE's halfback the chance to attack from a distance of just five metres from the French goal. Sadly, he failed to score.

Closer to the final whistle, the France's creative Hoarau, newly sent onto the field, began to attack. BATE's goalkeeper, Alexander Gutor, was on alert against constant danger and managed to avert any goals being scored. Unfortunately, the zero draw guaranteed a place in the 1/8 finals of the Europa League to the squad from Paris.

Having ended the two matches in a draw, BATE is now knocked out of the tournament, finishing its longest campaign in the history of the European Cup. Meanwhile, new draws for European cups are to follow this year.



Renan Bressan (with the ball) had chance to score in Paris

Germain, French coach Antoine Kombouare failed to put forward his main players. Meanwhile, Victor Goncharenko sent on his leading men. The first half of the match saw the squads equally

led to few dangerous moments, while BATE's attempts to score were weak, with no real threat to Apoula Edima Edel's goal.

The second half of the match was more dynamic,

Two wins in Memphis

American city proves lucky for Belarusian tennis doubles

In Memphis, Olga Govortsova and Russian Alla Kudryavtseva have won their first 'joint' title. This is Olga's fourth WTA title of her career. In the decisive match, Govortsova and Kudryavtseva saw tough opposition from Czech Andrea Hlavackova and Lucie Hradecka; only in their super tie-break did they manage to snatch victory, leaving the score at 6:3, 4:6, (10:8).

The men's doubles final also went to a tie-break, with Max Mirny, 33, and Canadian Daniel Nestor, 38, securing their first ATP win as a pair. Their match was hugely entertaining, facing American Eric Butorac and Jean-Julien Rojer of the Netherlands Antilles. The American-Antilles duo won the second set in a tie-break, leaving Max and Daniel to battle for victory in the third set. They finally enjoyed a 6:2, 6:7, (10:3) win. This was Nestor's 72nd ATP doubles title (with six partners) and 38th for Mirny (with 15 partners).