

Diversely different matches and results

Belarusian national football team wins, setting example to junior squad

By Dmitry Baranovsky

The Belarusian national team is through to the 2014 World Championship qualifying tournament, with Georgy Kondratiev's trainees facing Georgia in Tbilisi in early September. Accordingly, a friendly match against Armenia presented a chance for a warm-up, while allowing us to assess the squad's condition on the eve of the important tournament.

The national teams of Armenia and Georgia are very much alike, representing one school and one region and, of course, they play each other often. So, leaving for Yerevan, the coaches had their minds set on Tbilisi, viewing Renan Bressan's two goals as reason to hope for a favourable start to the

qualifying campaign.

In fact, Belarus won 2:0, although Dmitry Verkhovtsev scored a home-goal in the 77th minute. Our defence is clearly strong and the squad is showing a positive, confident spirit — long awaited. Despite this, Georgy Kondratiev asserts that they could have played far better, saying, "I have issues, as our opponent had several opportunities to score; they didn't deserve the defeat. Such is the way of sport... we won due to our character."

In fact, the line-up in Yerevan wasn't optimal, as several players were absent; their appearance in September will be very welcome. The coach muses, "Mozolevsky could have helped us in the second half of the game, as he



National teams of Armenia and Belarus end match with victory for guests

is so quick. Kalachev also could have assisted, but I don't see any sense in calling him now. Of course, I can't help remembering Kulchy but the first Russian league doesn't release its national squad members. I also believe that Alexander Hleb could have been useful, but he needs to return to form with his club."

If Mr. Kondratiev has problems, these are mostly

'technical' while Alexey Vergeenko, who is debuting as the head coach of the Belarusian national junior team, has more serious issues to contend with. In Minsk, his team was frustratingly defeated by Cyprus' national squad 0:3; they were uncoordinated and seemed unable to show any decent result. "I didn't see a true team on the field," noted Honoured Coach Yuri Pyshnik, after

the match. "This brought two stupid occasions of sending off, lots of yellow cards, constant disputes with the referee and three missed goals."

The Belarusian national junior team has long lost its chance of reaching the finals of the European Championship, so the coaching staff have their work cut out for them before the new selection round.

In honour of deceased team captain

By Igor Grishin

Fans take initiative to establish Salei Cup

Belarusian hockey fans are collecting signatures for an open letter to the Belarus Ice Hockey Federation, requesting that a Salei Cup be launched for the winners of the play-offs of the Belarusian Premier League. The letter states: "The name of one of our hockey players can not only raise the prestige of the competition but also inspire the younger generation. This is why we ask you to dedicate this cup to the memory of the tragically deceased captain of the Belarusian team, who played over 900 games in the strongest league in the world, Ruslan Salei. This would perpetuate the memory of Ruslan while enhancing the image of Belarusian youth hockey, drawing the attention of fans and the media."

Best achieved

World Junior U20 Chess Championship, hosted by Athens, sees three Belarusians taking part

Anastasia Zezyulkina took second place in Greece, with 9.5 points, beating Polish Klaudia Kulon in the final, 13th round. Throughout the entire tournament, Anastasia was defeated by only Chinese Guo Qi, who became the champion. Guo Qi drew in her final match against Azerbaijan's Abdulla Khayala. Her score equalled that of Anastasia but she won for best performance. Belarusian Maria Neveselaya claimed 42nd place while Vladislav Kovalev was 23rd (with eight points — seven wins and two draws). In the final round, he beat Marco Codenotti. Turkey's Alexander Ipatov won overall, with 10 points.

Nadezhda Ostapchuk:

'People are being mown'

Olympic Champion Nadezhda Ostapchuk is at the centre of a strange doping scandal and has been obliged to return her recent gold medal, badge and diploma

By Denis Kiselev

She has twice tested positive for the illegal drug methenolone, which is classified as an anabolic steroid, having been tested the day before the start of the competition (August 5th) and after winning the final of the Olympic tournament. The outcome is reported on the official website of the International Olympic Committee. The gold medal now passes to New Zealand's Valerie Adams while Russian Yevgenia Kolodko got claims silver and Chinese Gong Lijiao now takes bronze.

The news is a blow not only to Nadezhda but to her numerous fans. However, she has been happy to discuss the matter, rather than hiding behind the traditional 'no comment'.

It is difficult to say anything yet. I'd only learnt of the results a few hours before people began calling to ask questions. Before we draw any conclusions, I'd like to see the test results; I'll then decide what to do next.

If I understand correctly, this season, you passed the doping test more than once?



Of course; the last time was on July 30th, shortly before my departure to London. All the tests were negative so it seems strange to find the drug in my system within a week! I just don't understand how this can be!

Does it make sense to fight for the truth?

I don't think it's right to just leave the situation as it is, knowing that I was clean; this simply could not hap-

pen. It's stupid, and, of course, I'm not going to surrender. Moreover, there have been precedents. First, we should look at the results to understand where they've come from and how. This drug is anabolic — which is 'Stone Age'! Why would I go to the Olympics taking a drug that can be detected, thinking that I'd somehow slip through several doping tests? It looks illogical, clumsy and very ugly. I have the feeling that someone has interfered; we need to find out where and how.

Have you discussed the situation with anyone from management?

We've only recently returned from London, but now need to try to understand and solve the issue. It's clear that 'mowing' is occurring; there's no other explanation.

Of course, the Olympics are not the only competition of the strongest and fastest. They are called Games but are they always played honestly? Who benefitted from the absolutely illogical expulsion of Ivan Tikhon from the Olympics? The Hungarian athlete won gold, but only a knowl-

edgeable few know that he is a representative of a country which is a leading member of the International Federation.

Ms. Ostapchuk admits that she doesn't know all the circumstances of her case but it's obvious that the struggle to clear her good name is yet to come. We remember very well how, four years ago, Belarusian Ivan Tikhon and Vadim Devyatovsky faced a similar battle with the IOC and WADA; eventually, after a long trial, they cleared their names. From these all-powerful monsters of the world of sport, they received an apology and were given their medals again. This may be the second round imposed on Belarusian sport by Olympic officials.

The 30th Olympiad will be remembered not only for the performances of Bolt, Phelps and other heroes, but for several discriminatory judicial decisions, which have darkened the competition. We cannot forget the blows inflicted by the judges on Novikova, Safaryanets and Korneev, whose victories were fraudulently stolen.

Many aspects to work on



Match Belarus-Czechia

Belarusian basketballers begin qualification round of European Championship with failure

The Belarusian national basketball team has lost its first European Championship qualification match against the Czech Republic, despite a promising initial spurt by the Belarusians of 6:0. Sadly, the Czech squad quickly equalised and were leading by the end of the first quarter, continuing through the rest of the first half until they had 11 points. After a long break, our basketball players seemed as if they might change the course of the match — Alexander Kudryavtsev especially standing out with some good passes and accurate long-shots. Unfortunately, the Belarusian team were playing well below par, with shaky passes and lack of carry through on the attack, leading to a defeat of 65:73.