

## Dinamo enters play-offs

By Dmitry Komashko

**Dinamo Minsk hockey club has beaten Severstal (4:2) in Cherepovets, securing its place in the play-offs of the Continental Hockey League for the second year in a row. Last year, the Belarusian squad was unsure of its place until the last moment but, this season, has gained a place seven matches before the end of the regular championship.**

The club has played confidently throughout the season and gave a stunning performance against Severstal. All four of its goals were scored within less than five minutes of the second half: by Obshut, Laine, Mikhalev and Meleshko. Goalie Vadim Tarasov must have been truly surprised. Severstal scored once more but failed to change the outcome of the match.

Dinamo is scheduled to play several more games but Marek Sikora's trainees are likely to be thinking more about the next stage, viewing the matches as a dress rehearsal for the 'knockout-round'!

Currently, Dinamo is placed first among five squads in the Tarasov Division and is sixth among 23 clubs. Places in the CHL's play-off Western Conference have already been secured by SKA St. Petersburg, Dinamo Moscow, and Torpedo Nizhny Novgorod. In the Eastern Conference, only the leader, Traktor Chelyabinsk, is through.

## Minsk-Arena to host World Track Cycling Championship

**Appearance of a modern sports complex brings major sporting events to Belarus**

Minsk-Arena has already hosted a European Championship, so a World Championship could hardly be far behind. The granting of the world forum to the venue in February 2013 was recently made by the International Cycling Union and is sure to bring the country into the spotlight. Primarily, the event should be surprising, since most leading sportsmen take a year off after the Olympics or, at least, indulge a more relaxed attitude. The results of post-Olympic championships usually bring unexpected results. Secondly, the track's speed and convenience are likely to be much remarked upon; the world record was broken there last year by Olga Panarina, prompting speculation as to whether more records are possible.

Belarus boasts many world class cyclists. Eight-time world champion Natalia Tsylynskaya has recently given birth to her third child, so will only watch the grand event. Olga Panarina, Tatiana Sharakova, and Alexander Lisovsky will be competing and, with Fate smiling, Belarusian fans may hear the national anthem several times. No doubt, the audience at Minsk-Arena will be amazed.

# Darya Domracheva: three races, three medals!

Belarusian biathlete Darya Domracheva continues to please her fans. On the eve of the World Championship, prior to which only one World Cup round in Finnish Kontiolahti remains, Domracheva is on perfect form, with every chance of claiming a medal in each event.



Second placed Domracheva (C) of Belarus competes during the women's 12.5 km mass start race

By Dmitry Komashko

Darya has taken three medals in Holmenkollen, which hosted a recent World Cup round. Her first was silver for the sprint, being pipped to gold by German Magdalena Neuner, who also celebrated victory in the pursuit. Domracheva came third but remains in the running for the Big Crystal Globe (awarded to the winner of the World Cup overall), as does Neuner.

In fact, Magdalena opted to stand down from the mass start distance event, as she was feeling the cold, allowing Darya to take the lead. Sadly, four missed shots almost robbed her of a medal, as her rivals — Marie-Laure Brunet, Teja Gregorin and Helena Ekholm — performed well. Nevertheless, Domracheva's speed enabled her to claim silver, behind German Andrea Henkel.

Domracheva is now just 21 points behind Magdalena Neuner in the World Cup, which could be completely overcome within a single race; much drama is sure to come.

## Freestyle jumper succeeds in being placed on victory podium

By Kirill Donskoy

**The team's strongest aerial jumper, Olympic champion Alexey Grishin, missed the second round of the Freestyle World Cup (hosted by Lake Placid in the USA) due to injury but Anton Kushnir captured bronze**

A new system of competition in freestyle jumping has been launched this season, with medals divided into three rounds. Based on qualification results, Anton Kushnir came eighth, ten points behind Canadian Olivier Rochon. Among the 12 finalists was also Belarusian Maxim Gustik, placed twelfth. At the second stage, Kushnir was second and



Anton Kushnir

Gustik was placed sixth.

In the super-finals, the best four struggled for medals. China's Jia Zongyang took gold (128.51),

followed by another Chinese athlete, Liu Zhongqing (127.83). Anton Kushnir (126.47) claimed bronze and Olivier Rochon closed the top four (109.38).

Other two Belarusians finished their performance after the qualification stage. Denis Osipov came 14th (106.67), while two-time Olympic medallist (1998 — bronze, 2006 — silver) Dmitry Dashchinsky (69.92) finished a disappointing 30th among 32 participants.

Among the women, the only Belarusian was Anna Guskova, 19, who finished 16th (52.34), among 18 athletes. The top three comprised China's Xu Mengtao (93.06), Cheng Shuang (85.65), and Fanyu Kong (81.20).

## Golden dance

By Yevgeny Dragovsky

**Belarusian ice dancers Yevgenia Tkachenko and Yuri Gulitsky, as part of international team, earn figure skating team gold at 1st Winter Youth Olympics, recently hosted by Austrian Innsbruck**

The team also included American Jordan Bauth (women's individual skating) and Japanese Shoma Uno (men's individual skating). The Belarusian-Japanese-American squad captured 16 points to win gold. The team of Eveliina Viljanen (Finland), Yaroslav Paniot (Ukraine) and ice dancers Maria Simonova and Dmitry Dragun (Russia) claimed silver; they also had 16 points but lost on additional estimates. Bronze went to So Youn Park (South Korea).



rea), Alexander Lyan (Kazakhstan) and French couple Estelle Elizabeth and Romain Le Gac, with 14 points in total. Our Belarusians won two medals at the 1st Winter Youth Olympics. Silver in the 500m went to skater Roman Dubovik. Belarus was represented in Innsbruck by 16 athletes in total, who competed in eight sports: biathlon, skating, skiing, figure skating, trampoline jumping, skiing Alpine combination, mountain skiing, and ice hockey.

## Return of Olympic hopes

By Alexander Kazimirov

**Beijing Olympics hammer throwing medallists Ivan Tikhon and Vadim Devyatovsky back on the circuit**

The athletes were removed from official events for three years, following a court ruling regarding suspicion of doping abuse. The charges have now been overturned, leaving the Belarusian athletes ready to win back their shattered reputations.

The head coach of the Belaru-

sian athletics team, Anatoly Baluev, notes that Tikhon and Devyatovsky will return at the end of April, when Brest will be hosting a traditional event dedicated to the USSR Honoured Coach, Yevgeny Shukevich. Vadim and Ivan are then scheduled to compete in May and June, hoping to qualify for the Olympics later this summer.

In fact, five more Belarusian hammer throwers are hoping to qualify for the Olympics in London: Pavel Krivitsky, Yuri Shayunov, Valery Svyatokho, Sergey

Kolomoets and Oleg Dubitsky. "The contract with the Belarusian Ministry of Sports outlines that, one month before the Olympics in London, I have to qualify for the Games," notes Vadim Devyatovsky. "Our country aims to send three hammer throwers to London, so the qualification level is 78m. For countries sending just one athlete, they only need to throw 74m. However, the national team may set its target at about 80-81m; this is quite attainable for me at the moment, judging by my physical shape."