

New coach for Dinamo handball club

By Igor Leshin

Next season, the Minsk club will be employing a new head coach, Slovenian Boris Denič, who replaces Sergey Bebesheko

Boris Denič headed Slovenian Slovan to the semi-finals of the Challenge Cup in 2009 before moving to leading Slovenian club Celje, where he assisted famous Zvonimir Serdarcus. He also jointly coached the national team of Slovenia with Mr. Serdarcus and, on his colleague leaving both posts, took over, solely heading the national squad.

The Slovenian national team failed to qualify for the 2011 World Championship, being in less than perfect shape, but Denič's first selection round was successful and he later took the squad to Euro-2012, where they came sixth.

Denič's young team also performed at the World Championship this winter, in Spain, finishing fourth, within touching distance of a medal. The heads of Slovenian handball don't oppose positions overlapping, so Boris Denič will also be coaching Dinamo Minsk next season.

Minsk prepares for fight

Minsk to host European Boxing Championship for second time, with strongest from all over Europe opening new Olympic cycle and struggling for title

Following the London Olympics, world and European boxing has awaited revival. Now, Minsk is gathering almost three-dozen European and world champions, alongside Olympic medal holders. Almost all the teams are half veteran-half novice, with the most talented sure to guide their teams over the coming four years. Importantly, Belarus hopes to play a leading role in the European boxing ring, having won few medals of late. Of course, defeat inspires action and our fighters are ready. Among them is Sergey Korneev, who views the forthcoming European Championship as a matter of principle, having seen success at continental and world events. In London, however, he failed to reach the semi-finals — losing to Azerbaijan's Teimur Mammadov. In Minsk, the Belarusian plans his revenge.

Experienced Victor Zuyev also has a good chance of doing well, boasting the largest number of medals. He is in good physical shape and is ready to demonstrate that his 2004 Olympic silver was no whim of Fate.

Bulgaria's Strandja Cup was good practice for the Belarusian team, as head coach Vladimir Shin notes. He believes fans will soon be pleased, harking back to 1998, when three Belarusian sportsmen won medals at the European Championship, also hosted by Minsk.

SKA accepts challenge and wins!

SKA handball club wins EHF Challenge Cup, the third most important European handball tournament, hosted by Minsk-Arena — the country's biggest sports complex



Boris Pukhovskiy attacks in the decisive match for European Cup

By Dmitry Baranovsky

Belarusian SKA defeated Luxembourg Esch in the finals of the Challenge Cup, which many view as the 'poor man's event' in comparison to the Champions League and EHF Cup. However, SKA views its success as a landmark moment: not only because the Euro Challenge may cease to exist from next sea-

son but because the team line-up is about to change significantly.

During their final match, the squad managed to put aside all other thoughts, led by legendary coach Spartak Mironovich (who headed the club back in the 1980s, when SKA last won the event). The team were hungry for victory, eager to repeat their success of 23 years ago. Those veteran players went on

to join other clubs, enjoying good careers in handball. It had been too long since SKA had tasted the sweetness of supremacy.

Belarus' current champion, in the group stage of the Champions League, Minsk Dinamo, recently parted with three of its leading Belarusian handball players, replaced by foreign handballers. Boris Pukhovskiy, Sergey Shilovich and

Alexander Titov have temporarily rejoined SKA: the team where they began their handball journey. Each has already found a contract for next season but, meanwhile, SKA can only benefit from their expertise.

"We've waited an anticipation of repeating what happened 30 years ago. Finally, it's happened and I'm glad to have been part of this victory. It may not be the Champions Cup but I'm proud of my young team, which consists only of Belarusians," emphasised SKA head coach Spartak Mironovich at the post-match press conference. He could not hide his joy and pride in the squad, which truly deserved praise — especially as it comprised only Belarusians, and two-thirds junior staff. The victory was valuable to all the players, young and old, although even their coach admitted that the squad still has weaknesses to overcome, including over-reliance on its three veterans. Ivan Matskevich's goalkeeping was erratic at times, despite some spectacular saves; in most cases, his success was the result of Luxembourg making less than accurate shots.

"In order to maintain and develop our current success, the team will definitely need to grow. In the off-season, we'll think over the issue," notes the club's director, Pavel Galkin. He believes that it's too early to declare the team ready to rival the European handball elite but Mr. Mironovich is confident that there's plenty of time ahead. "The main thing is that we've put a new foot forward; any victories are 'cool!'" A few days after the historic final, SKA played again at Minsk-Arena, battling Dinamo in the national championship. Next weekend, the tournament will complete but, regardless of the outcome, SKA and coach Spartak Mironovich are winners.

Confidence ever growing

By Valentin Orlov

Belarus' national basketball team continues to find its form, ready for European Championship, with Rimantas Grigas' squad winning friendly matches

The Latvian team was the first to face Belarus in the new season, at a friendly tournament in Lithuanian Druskininkai. Our squad, which took part in the World Championship and the Olympic Games, while being a prize-winner of the European Championship, defeated Latvia 47:63.

The UK team was a much stronger opponent yet Grigas' squad achieved two confident victories — 48:43 and 64:50.

Another friendly tournament, in Polish Niemodlin, saw our girls battling squads from Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine, clearly



National basketball team continues to find its form

showing their talent and skills.

On May 29th, French Lyon is to host an international competition where our Belarusian team will meet rivals from France, Russia and Lithuania. Their 'tour' will finish in Mogilev, playing Italy, Serbia and Ukraine at a tournament dedicated to the memory of

Semen Khalipisky.

The European Basketball Championship starts in France on June 15th, with our girls attending for the fourth time since the squad formed. The first round sees them in Group D, facing the national squads of the Czech Republic, Croatia and Lithuania.

Successful starts

Six European Championship medals for Belarusian squad, from Zaslavl

The U-18 European Rowing Championship has just finished in Belarus, with 450 athletes from 27 countries taking part, in 13 classes: an absolute record for Belarus' hosting, in the number of entrants. The same feat was seen at the European Championship and at the Junior World Rowing Championship.

However, the number did not compromise quality. Five out of the 49 Belarusian rowing crews claimed awards, and Tatiana Klimovitch won the single boats. The organisers worked hard to create the most comfortable conditions for athletes and spectators and, regardless of the wet weather, the young rowers drew large crowds of fans, producing a wonderful sporting atmosphere.