

Fate smiles to girls

Belarus' national basketball team qualifies for European Championship quarter-finals, beating UK squad after unsuccessful start in second round

By Dmitry Baranovsky

Rimantas Grigas' girls could have found themselves in the play-offs without achieving a single victory in the second stage. However, a good performance at the European Championship has created a 'safety margin' for the future. Defeat by Lithuania hardly counted against the national squad, which was primarily represented by its 'B team' players. Serbia's victory was unexpected however; the 48:54 defeat was a wake-up call, since a Belarusian win would have ensured the team's place in the play-offs. No doubt, this sharp realisation steered the girls in their match against the British and, although defeat wouldn't have automatically knocked us out, their confident victory with a gap of ten points has helped greatly. By the final

whistle, the score was 71:61, thanks to a show of initiative in the fourth quarter. The UK national squad, despite having been equal in strength throughout the match, failed to close the gap. Our team is, accordingly, through to the European Championship quarter-finals. The following match, against tournament hosts France (also the favourite) didn't greatly help Belarus, regardless of their efforts; a 50:58 defeat (7:12, 13:14, 14:19, 16:13).

Their previous defeat by Serbia did have its influence, since a higher place in the group would probably have helped them avoid meeting their serious rival so early in the play-offs. Alas, the Belarusian team is left in third place. Our girls are now presented with the world's strongest squads; their fate is in their own hands.



Croatian basketballers don't deter Belarusians from reaching quarter-finals

Glen Hanlon's return as coach

Canadian returns as head coach of Belarusian national hockey team



Trust placed in Glen Hanlon

By Yegor Glebov

The national squad of Belarus has acquired a new head coach this month, following a decision by the Belarusian Hockey Federation. Canadian Glen Hanlon is to return in his former role, having agreed to the terms of contract offered. From July 1st, he'll be under a two year con-

tract, with the option of extending for a third under the same terms.

Mr. Hanlon headed the national hockey team at the World Championships in 2005, 2006 and 2009, twice helping the squad reach the play-offs (2006 and 2009). The 2006 event, hosted by Riga, saw the best result to date, with the squad coming sixth. The Belarusian national team played 32 matches under Mr. Hanlon's leadership, gaining 14 victories and 3 draws, as well as 15 defeats. The position of head coach fell vacant on May 30th; the Belarusian Hockey Federation decided not to extend Andrey Skabelka's contract, having seen the national squad fail to play well at the World Championship this year, under his guidance.

Mr. Hanlon has already presented a training programme for the Belarusian national team, in readiness for the 2014 IIHF World Championship, being hosted by Minsk. In addition, he'll be overseeing national training for junior hockey country-wide.

Mr. Hanlon should arrive in Minsk in late July-early August, after the final approval of the national programme for the 2013/14 season.



IIHF World Championship official website

Online information

By Igor Grishin

Directorate for 2014 IIHF World Championship that is due in Minsk on 9th-25th May announced that an official website of the World Championship is currently available online

The website is made in the colours of the Championship and is available in two languages (Russian and English). It is designed to update hockey fans on the status of preparations and rules of the event in the Belarusian capital. The main page features links to the website of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) and web pages in social media that are related to the 2014 event. It also contains the contacts of the Directorate for the championship, an opinion poll and other contents.

The website is a useful source of information about the rules of visa-free entry to Belarus during the 2014

IIHF World Championship and the rules regarding luggage transportation. There is also information about hotels in Minsk and booking services.

The tickets to the World Championship will go on sale in September 2013. The new webpage contains the necessary information on the ticket sales.

The site also features some information on Belarus, Minsk and its hockey arenas. It contains the map of Minsk, addresses of Minsk's major cultural sites and shopping centres. The tourists will be able to find out the currency exchange rate in Belarus, weather and local time.

Those who would like to become volunteers at the 2014 IIHF World Championship will be able to fill in applications. The photo and video section contains photos and interviews with world's famous hockey players who comment on the forthcoming ice hockey championship in Minsk.

Leaders confirm their class again

By Igor Leshin

Athletes Yana Maximova and Andrey Kravchenko win silver at international track-and-field tournament in Austrian Salzburg

In the triathlon, the leader of the Belarusian team in track-and-field all-round events, Andrey Kravchenko claimed first place in the 110m hurdles, long jump and disc throwing (2,585 points) —just six points behind Kazakhstan's Dmitry Karpov (2,591). Ranked second worldwide among decathletes, Kravchenko has returned only recently after undergoing surgery for a serious sporting injury. In May, he won a tournament in Italian Florence, producing a world record for the season of 8,390 points. In June, he claimed victory at the IAAF World Combined Events Challenge, hosted by Czech Kladno (8,380 points).

The women's team won the 100m hurdles, the long jump and shot putt, while Yana Maximova came second overall, with 2,772 points, behind Danish Nadine Broersen (2,925 points).

Swimming from bronze to gold

Belarusian swimmers win 26 awards at 2013 Slovenia Open Championship

Belarusian team leader Alexandra Gerasimenya was enjoying her third major tournament after having taken a short break, winning gold in Radovljica in the 50m backstroke (28.54 seconds) and 100m butterfly (58.51 seconds), as well as in the 100m backstroke and 50m butterfly.

Gerasimenya recently took part in the Turkish Open Championship and the Belarusian Championship, whose results — combined with her Slovenian success — are enough to take her to the World Championship (50m backstroke, freestyle and butterfly and 100m freestyle and butterfly).

Yevgeny Tsurkin demonstrated similar success, claiming gold in the 50m, 100m and 200m freestyle and in the 200m butterfly. Meanwhile, Yegor Dodolev took gold in the 50m and 100m butterfly, and Yuri Suvorov in the 200m and 400m medley. Yuri Suvorov claimed silver in the 200m backstroke, as well as bronze in the 100m and 200m butterfly and 200m breast stroke. Victor Staselovich won the 50m backstroke and was second in the 100m backstroke while Vladimir Zhigarev took gold in the 400m freestyle and silver in the 400m medley, alongside the 100m freestyle bronze. Arseny Kukharev claimed the 100m freestyle silver and Victor Vabishchevich took silver in the 100m breast stroke and the 50m butterfly bronze. Yuri Klemparsky was third in the 50m breaststroke, while Oksana Demidova was second in the women's 50m freestyle.

The head coach of the Belarusian national team, Mark Zakutnev, notes that, besides Gerasimenya, several other Belarusian swimmers have qualified for the FINA World Championships in 2013.