

# Need to play for future triumphs

National volleyball team of Belarus completes performance in Euroleague after last game in Mogilev, at Olimpiets Complex, showing what we can expect when they debut at European Championship

By Dmitry Baranovsky

The Belarusian squad narrowly missed qualification for the World Championship. If head coach Victor Sidelnikov had gathered the strongest players from the very beginning, and had included top player Oleg Akhrem (who usually captains Polish 'Resovia') the results may have been more impressive.

Belarus defeated Turkey national team with by a score of 3:0 in the last round, occupying the second place in Group C. Taking into account the youth of the team members and constant changes in strategy, this wasn't a bad result and the squad certainly gave their all. Sadly, they missed crucial opportunities. Head coach Victor Sidelnikov is convinced that practice and a stronger domestic championship

are the way forward. He notes that the standard internationally is quite different to that 'at home' and that 'Stroitel' (Minsk) is unaccustomed to playing at such a level, being used to winning easily with existing strategies.

Victor Sidelnikov is a famous expert with a wealth of experience from coaching top Russian volleyballers. He feels quietly optimistic about the team's prospects, predicting that they should, at least, reach the first round of the European Championship and may even eventually qualify for the World Championship if they adopt a more professional attitude.

One of the Belarusian national team's top players, Dmitry Lihorad, agrees. Having played in the first Euroleague, in 2008, when the national team did really well, he admits that it won't be



Belarus defeats Turkey's national team

easy to repeat this success. Early on in the season, the team realised that they could hold their heads high in Europe; however, it's important to train tomorrow's players.

Almost half of the players

who took part in this year's Euroleague are to play at the World Universiade in Kazan. The age requirements allow the coaches and federation management the chance to manoeuvre and consolidate, for best effect.

## Clubs to compete in European tournaments

By Yegor Glebov

**First round draw for European basketball tournament 2013/2014 held in Munich, Germany**

Four Belarusian clubs are to take part: three women's teams plus the men's Tsmoki-Minsk squad, which were playing in EuroChallenge 1/16 finals last season. The latter will compete within Group H, against BC Mureş (Romania), Szolnoki Olaj (Hungary) and Rilski Sportist (Bulgaria). The tournament starts on 5th November and finishes on 17th December. This season, the Minsk 'dragons' will be coached by Lithuanian specialist Donaldas Kairys, who follows in the footsteps of Andrey Krivonos as head coach.

The two best teams within each of the eight qualifying groups will go through to the next group round. In the Women's EuroCup, Belarus will be represented by national champion Grodno Olympia (in Group D, playing against two Russian teams — Moscow Dynamo and Noginsk Spartak — as well as Turkey's Istanbul Universitesi SK). National silver medallist Minsk Horizont will also be taking part (in Group C, against Turkish Tarsus Belediyesi, Russian Dynamo-GUVD from Novosibirsk and Romanian ACS Sfântu Gheorghe). Meanwhile, Group A will feature Tsmoki-Minsk, Turkish Homend Antakya and Botasspor Adana, and Russian Dynamo from Kursk. The first round of the EuroCup will be held on 7th November, with the final round held on 12th December. The two best teams from each of the seven qualifying quartets, alongside the two best third-place teams, will reach the play-offs.

## Top fighters in training



Andrey Kulebin — one of the national team leaders

By Igor Grishin

**Belarusian Muay Thai national team — among strongest on the planet — preparing for next European Championship. The team includes sportsmen who have previously claimed gold medals at world championships.**

Honoured coaches Dmitry Pyasetsky, Yury Bulat and Mikhail Stepanov

are helping prepare the squad, including four-time World Muay Thai Federation (WMF) champion Vitaly Gurkov (up to 71kg); he has also won three gold medals and one silver at the IFMA World Amateur Championship, (as recognised by the International Olympic Committee). Vitaly has had 97 professional fights since 18th January 2001, winning 85 of them (and having 12 defeats).

Andrey Kulebin (67kg) has won three gold medals and one silver at the WMF Muay Thai Championship, as well as two IFMA recognised gold medals, two silver and two bronze. He was recognised as the best fighter of 2012 and has won 50 of his 61 professional fights (having 11 defeats).

Since 2005, the Belarusian national team has won the kickboxing and Muay Thai World Championship five times, as well as the European Championship four times. The team won the overall World Championship title in 2009, when the tournament was held in the homeland of these martial arts, in Thailand. The team has also repeatedly appeared among the top three at the most prestigious world and European tournaments.

The European Muay Thai Championship for 2013 will take place in Lisbon, Portugal from 23rd-28th July.

## Place in the final determined

By Igor Leshin

**The final match of the Ruslan Salei Cup (as the Belarus Cup is now called) will take place in the capital's Ice Palace in Pritytski Street, as decided by the Executive Committee of the Ice Hockey Federation of Belarus.**

The final was originally to take place at Chizhovka-Arena but the site is yet to be completed, so Minsk Ice Palace, in Pritytski Street, is to step in. Minsk was Ruslan Salei's home city, making the choice appropriate. Bobruisk is being held in reserve. Minsk's junior team, which usually plays in the

Minor Hockey League, and the Under-20 National Ice Hockey Team have both asked to take part, since Riga's traditional Zholtok Cup has been abolished. They are to play as guests in the Salei Cup. The preliminary stage will see two groups of six teams, whose winners will face each other in a final duel.

## Good start in Euro League

By Igor Leshin

**Minsk Dinamo footballers enjoy successful start in Euro League 2013\2014, defeating Lithuanian Kruoja in Šiauliai, 3:0, in first round**

In the first part of the game, Dinamo took the initiative, forcing the host into defence. However, no one managed to score. Only very late in the second half did the Minsk squad delight fans, in the 63rd minute, when Hernán Figueredo made good on Dmitry Sychev's pass. Ten minutes later, Sergey Politevich used a pass from Igor



Minsk Dinamo leaves no chances to Kruoja

Stasevich from the corner flag; the final goal flew into the net in the 87th minute, by Gleb Rassadkin.

The return game is being

held at Minsk Traktor Stadium, with the overall winner going through to the second round, facing Croatian Lokomotiv from Zagreb.