

# Some dreams come true

Belarusian team reaches World Handball Championship 1/8 finals for second time since 1995, when it was headed by famous coach Spartak Mironovich

By Dmitry Baranovsky

Yury Shevtsov's trainees could have earned a place in the play-offs ahead of schedule. Moreover, having beaten Slovenia, they might have enjoyed third or, even, second place in the group, bringing a better draw in the knock-out round. The Slovenians appeared as favourites but the Belarusians were also quite sensational.

This match was principal for our squad because of several reasons. Interestingly, Sergey Rutenko has previously played for the Slovenian team, so was facing his friends while battling for his home country. He did well, proving himself the top shooter. It was largely due to Sergey that Belarus led by five points when the half-time whistle blew. Alas, he is not God, and the Slovenians managed to find an 'antidote' to the skills of the Spanish Barcelona player in the second half, when they scored the winning goal at the last second — after a penalty imposed for the removal of Rutenko.



Sergey Rutenko — the main striking force of Belarusian national handball team — attacks

This unfortunate defeat has not deprived Belarus of its place in the play-offs, as its final match in the group round saw an easy defeat of Saudi Arabia, leaving it in fourth place. However, in the 1/8 finals, the squad will have to face Spain — one of handball's trend setters and the host of the tournament. Incidentally, Rutenko has also been a leading player with Barcelona's handball team and even holds a Spanish passport, which still allows him to play for their national team. He has won various tournaments, including the Champions League,

playing for his Spanish squad, which may help.

Belarusian fans are interested in the World Championship not only because of the national team. They are also keen to see matches featuring legionaries who play for Belarusian clubs: Vasko Sevaljevic, the main shooter and leader of the national team of Montenegro (with 14 goals); and Rade Mijatović, their main goalkeeper.

Pavel Atman and Vadim Bogdanov, from Minsk Dinamo, are playing for the Russian team. Atman is ranked in the middle of

the team's 'forward list' and is one of the best passers in the tournament. Bogdanov, in goal, has saved almost half of all shots at the net, in the principal match against Danes. However, Russia has lost and is currently in second place in the group but is aiming for the champion title and aims to prove its leader status in the play-offs. Former Belarusian player Sergey Gorbok is also with the Russian squad, having transferred his loyalties to the team he thought had more chance of winning the title. He could yet be proven wrong.

## Borisov BATE club ranked 79th in January IFFHS rating

By Igor Grishin

**Belarus' nine-time football champion, BATE Borisov, jumps two places in International Federation of Football History and Statistics (IFFHS) rankings**

In January, the Borisov squad moved from 81st to 79th position, boasting 138 points. The top five football clubs worldwide are Spanish Barcelona (307), British Chelsea (279), Argentinean Boca Juniors (278), Spanish Atletico (278) and Brazil's Corinthians (272).

BATE will face a Turkish team in the UEFA Europa League 1/16 final: Fenerbahçe, which occupies 25th place, with 196 points. The match is being hosted by Grodno on February 14th, with the return match scheduled for 21st February in Istanbul. The winner will then go through to the 1/8 finals — playing either Italian Napoli or Czech Viktoria (Plzen).

## Hleb still playing for BATE



Alexander Hleb does well in BATE

**Famous Belarusian halfback continues to play for BATE Borisov this season**

The 31 year old footballer has signed a new contract with the Borisov club, until December 31st, 2013. In 1999, Hleb began his professional career with BATE, before conquering Europe. He playing first for German Stuttgart (2000-2005), and then London's Arsenal (2005-2008) before joining Spanish Barcelona (2008-2011). He failed to secure a place in the major line-up while playing under the Spanish flag, so was transferred to Stuttgart temporarily (2009-2010), followed by English Birmingham (2010-2011) and German Wolfsburg (2011-2012). He recently found a place with Samara's Krylia Sovetov, where he played until late July 2012. He then rejoined BATE, helping the team reach the Champions League Group Stage.

At the end of last week, BATE returned from their holidays and set off for Turkish Belek to train for the forthcoming season. In less than a month, on February 14th, Grodno will host the first match of the Europa League 1/16 final, with BATE facing Turkish Fenerbahçe. The return match will take place in Istanbul on February 21st, with the winner going on to the 1/8 finals, playing either Italian Napoli or Czech Viktoria (Plzeň).



Dmitry Dashchinsky claims silver at World Cup stage

## More medal worthy jumps

By Yegor Glebov

**Dmitry Dashchinsky takes silver at fourth stage of World Cup Freestyle Aerial, hosted by America's Lake Placid**

Twice Olympic medallist Dmitry Dashchinsky (silver in Turin-2006 and bronze in Nagano-1998) also claimed gold on January 12th, at the World Cup in Canadian Val Saint-Côme.

Two more representatives of Belarus appeared among the 12 finalists at the fourth stage of the World Cup Freestyle Aerial in Lake Placid: Denis Osipov took 6th place in the qualification round (115.23) and came 10th

(80.97) in the finals. Vancouver-2010 Olympic Champion Alexey Grishin, who is back after a long term spinal injury, came 9th (109.35) in the qualification round and 5th in the finals, (116.37). He needed just over 2 points to reach the super final.

In the overall World Cup standings, following these two stages, Belarusian Dmitry Dashchinsky boasts 4th place (183 points), Denis Osipov holds 7th place (130), Alexey Grishin is in 19th place (68), Maxim Gustik holds 21st place (56), Dmitry Glushakov is in 30th place (14) and Stanislav Gladchenko is close behind, in 31st place (13) — among 40 athletes.

## Darya Domracheva changing her goals

Belarusian biathlete comes third in sprint at IBU World Cup stage in Italian Antholz

By Dmitry Komashko

However, the stage was rather unpredictable for the Belarusian athlete. A year ago, Darya was seen on each of three places of the medals podium in Antholz while this time she failed to come closer to her previous achievement.

Domracheva has done well in sprint, boasting the third speed of the day and just one miss at the shooting range. As a result, she finished among prize winners. Russian Anastasia Kuzmina was slightly more precise while Kaisa Mäkäräinen was slightly faster; however, no one could dispute Darya's third position, as well as her prospects for the forthcoming pursuit race.

Nevertheless, everything went wrong in the pursuit which has always been Domracheva's favourite event. She was ranked only 10th having six misses. One can't hope for success with such shooting results. Moreover, although almost all specialists predicted Darya the winning of the Big Crystal Globe before the start of the season she is now unlikely to be among real contenders for this trophy.

Now, the major aim and task of the Belarusian biathlete is the World Championship, which is to kick within a week.



Darya Domracheva on the track

There Domracheva can still give fight and prove to her rivals that she is able to reach serious heights. She has all backgrounds for this, taking into account that Darya's major opponent is nowadays not Norwegian Tora Berger but self.