

## Obviously breaking national records

By Igor Grishin

### Belarusian sportsmen have set 35 national records in Olympic sports since beginning of 2013

The largest number of records — 12 — has been set in swimming events, followed by shooting (9), short track (4), cycling (3), archery (3), weightlifting (3) and track-and-field (1).

In 2013, swimmer Yevgeny Tsurkin broke the most national records (6): four within a single month. At the World Summer Universiade, in Russia's Kazan, Yevgeny set a new national record in the 100m butterfly and then broke his own national record in Barcelona, clocking 51.65 seconds. He then broke the national record for the 50m butterfly (22.9 seconds) and 100m freestyle (49.41 seconds).

This year, other Belarusians have beaten swimming records: Pavel Sankovich (2 records), Igor Boki (1), Victor Vabishchevich (1), Alexandra Gerasimenya (1) and Yuri Suvorov (1).

This year, Belarusian track-and-field athletes broke the least national records: only Alexandra Duliba, at a prestigious marathon in Los Angeles, in March.

## Significantly climbing the ratings ladder

### Belarus' national team climbs five places in FIFA ratings, being now ranked 73rd

The International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) has released the latest ratings for national squads, with the Belarusian national football team scoring 482 points and moving up five places, 73rd place, since July. Since the last ranking was published, Georgy Kondratiev's trainees have not played any matches, so the move reflects the relative play of other squads.

Belarus' rivals in Group 1 of the 2014 World Cup qualification round are Spain, which is ranked 1st (1,484 points), France in 23rd place (838), Finland in 65th place (537) and Georgia, which is ranked 97th (369).

Belarus will play its next friendly game against Kyrgyzstan, ranked 135th in the FIFA world ranking, on September 6th, in Zhodino. In autumn, the 2014 World Cup first qualification round will be completed, with Belarus playing their remaining fixtures against two favourites: hosting France at home on September 10th and then meeting Spain (the current World and European Champion) away, on October 11th. On October 15th, Belarus will play a friendly match against Japan's national squad (695 points, 37th place) at home.

# Minsk used its only chance

Belarus' European Cup assets reduced by three-quarter. Dinamo Minsk knocked out of Europa League after away draw against Trabzonspor, while Minsk FC continues its European Cup season.



Minsk's victorious match against St. Johnstone in Scottish Perth saw tough struggle from both teams

By Igor Leshin

The head coach of Dinamo Minsk, Robert Maaskant, has commented on the away match of his team, saying, "Trabzonspor had a great many chances to score yet failed to do so, continuing the intrigue of the match. The difference between the teams was obvious, especially when players were replaced. When we sent Bykov onto the field, Trabzonspor sent on Malouda, who has great experience in the European arena. We had the

chance to distinguish ourselves yet did not."

Few believed that Minsk FC would be able to beat Scotland, yet Vadim Skripchenko's team have claimed victory, bringing them just one step from the Europa League Group Stage. After their defeat in Grodno (0:1) Vadim Skripchenko's trainees won in Perth with the same score (1:0) and then claimed victory in a series of penalty shoot-outs — 3:2. The whole match represented a tough struggle, with both teams on the attack and several penalties awarded. For a long

time, the guests weren't able to make the decisive stroke; however, 15 minutes before the final whistle, their persistence was rewarded, with Minsk's Serbian legionary Miloš Rnić scoring. No more goals were forthcoming, and Minsk goalkeeper Vladimir Bushma saved potential goals during a penalty shoot-out, defending his net from two kicks from a distance of just 11m.

After the match, Mr. Skripchenko noted that he believed his team deserved their victory, despite their home defeat. He especially praised

Vladimir Bushma's saving of the match during the penalty shoot-out, which leaves Minsk FC as the last remaining team competing in European level tournaments.

The play-off round continental club tournament draw, at the UEFA Headquarters in Swiss Nyon, has determined the contenders for the Europa League Group Stage. Minsk will play a two round duel against Belgian Standard, from Liege: initially in Grodno on August 22nd and a return match on August 29th, on the field of the Belgian club.

## Athletes showing optimistic results

Deaflympics in Sofia sees Belarusians win record number of medals



National squad

By Yegor Glebov

Having won 27 medals at the 22nd Summer Deaflympics (for people with hearing impairment), hosted by the Bulgarian capital, our Belarusian sportsmen have certainly set a personal record for

achievement at such a high level event. The team of Belarus took fourth place in the over all medal standings: 12 gold, 11 silver and 4 bronze.

Representatives of track and field athletics and of swimming became champions in Sofia, while our judo wrestlers took silver, alongside some track and field eventers. Swimmers took another two silver medals, while bronze medals were won in freestyle wrestling, track and field and volleyball.

In competitive sports events, our women's basketball and volleyball teams finished 7th and 5th respectively.

This year's Deaflympics, in Sofia, gathered 48 Belarusian athletes: a record number on the team and a record number of medals. In 2009, the squad brought home an impressive 23 medals (10, 6, 7) — our best result until 2013.



Support from fans vital for Victoria

## Azarenko's return

By Dmitry Komashko

**Victoria Azarenko has returned to the court after a long break following her Wimbledon injury. However, everything turned out not in the way Victoria and her fans hoped it would be at a tournament in Californian Carlsbad.**

The positive news is that Azarenko has reached the finals after beating Italian Francesca Schiavone, Urszula Radwańska and Ana Ivanovic. Such a serious list of defeated opponents brought the thoughts about the title and Azarenko herself wasn't going to

hide her ambitions. However, in the finals, the Belarusian lost unexpectedly to Australian Samantha Stosur in two short sets — 2:6, 3:6.

She blames her play on the injury still nagging her and has dropped out of a tournament in Toronto, leaving fans to hope that she'll be ready to return for the New York hosting of the season's last Grand Slam tournament: the US Open. The Belarusian tennis player is considered to be one of the favourites on the Flushing Meadows courts, currently being ranked second seed, pushing out Russian Maria Sharapova, following her Carlsbad performance.