

Minsk footballers facing true sporting challenge

Minsk FC faces Belgian rivals with minority of players during home match

By Igor Leshin

The match was less than dynamic, to the benefit of the Minsk squad, which lacked as many top players as the Belgians. Standard controlled more of the pitch yet failed to attempt many goals. Unfortunately, the Minsk team suffered several penalties — as they did in their match against St. Johnstone — which placed strain on goalkeeper Bushma and his defenders. They did well in saving several penalty kicks, having had quite a lot of practice of late.

In the 36th minute, with only ten players, Sverchinsky failed to tackle M'Poku appropriately and earned two yellow cards. The squad's defence was in tatters. Lacklustre Razin was replaced by Kozak, while Maevsky took Sverchinsky's place; almost immediately, Maevsky also committed a foul against M'Poku but, fortunately, was left without a yellow card. In the remaining minutes before half-time, nothing special happened near Minsk's net.

In the second half, tempers flared, with Kibuk earning a yellow card for tackling Opare. The Standard defender, thinking the referee had been too light-handed, quickly rushed to take revenge against Vitaly, despite having been apparently twisted in pain on the grass a few moments before.



Minsk goalkeeper Vladimir Bushma played well but failed to save two goals

Standard's head coach, Guy Luzon, pushed far beyond the borders of the technical zone in order to 'cool off' his player and, perhaps unfairly, the Hungarian referee left Opare without so much as a warning.

Within a minute, Standard cut

down Minsk's defence with two long passes (Bulot used an especially stylish back kick) and Batshuayi opened the score, foiling goalkeeper Bushma.

Minsk FC almost managed to score, thanks to an unexpected kick

from Gorbushin, from the edge of the penalty area. Sadly, Kawashima made a beautiful jump to save the ball. Nevertheless, some hope for the return match would have remained were it not for Standard's Bulot scoring a second goal with his head.

Missed qualification

Belarusian national team basketballers almost reach final of qualifying round for 2015 European Championship, but lose to Estonia after two semi-final matches

After victory in the first match in Mogilev (76:70), the return game in Tallinn saw Belarus lose to Estonia 61:79 (17:19, 14:18, 14:18, 16:24). In first half, the two squads seemed equally matched, with Estonia supported by over 6000 fans. Sadly, the second half saw Estonia rally,

taking the lead by 18 points.

Among the Belarusian players was national team veteran Alexander Kudryavtsev, who scored a magnificent 22 points.

Estonia will now play two games against Bulgaria, which beat Switzerland in the semi-final — 92:71 (at home) and 87:67 (out). In the preliminary stage of this year's European qualification round, Ruslan Boidakov's players came first in Group D, outstripping Slovakia and Hungary.

Inspiring holiday

UN General Assembly proclaims April 6th as International Day of Sports

The Chairman of the 67th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, Vuk Jeremić, has emphasised that the new resolution promotes the importance of sport as a means of inspiring people towards transformation. He emphasised, "Sport can be a powerful tool in promoting peace and reconciliation, drawing us closer when we rejoice in our achievements together." He added that, thanks to sport, ethnic, religious and economic obstacles can be overcome.

In the unanimously accepted resolution, the member states of the General Assembly recalled the Olympic Charter and the International Olympic Committee's aim to make sports serve mankind, and encourage peace, as well as a healthy lifestyle, by connecting sports with culture and education.

The UN General Assembly has invited all nations and all international, regional and national sports organisations and other interested parties to liaise for the International Day of Sports, celebrating all aspects of sporting life and promoting awareness of this day.

Hanlon is relying on veteran experience



Glen Hanlon at tournament in memory of Saley

By Yegor Glebov

Head coach of Belarus' national hockey team, Glen Hanlon, chooses Belarusian Eduard Zankovets and Oleg Mikulchik as his assistants

Canadian Glen Hanlon arrived in Minsk from abroad on August 10th and immediately began work. He has approved a plan of training for the national squad, with the Belarusian Ice Hockey Fed-

eration, in readiness for the 2014 IIHF Championship in Minsk, and has chosen his coaching staff.

Eduard Zankovets boasts huge experience of working with the national squad, having been head coach from 2010-2011, as well as assistant to the head coach from 2005-2009. Mr. Zankovets helped Mr. Hanlon at the World Championships in 2005, 2006 and 2009.

From 2005-2007, Mr. Zankovets headed the Bela-

rusian junior team (U-20) and led it to the elite division in December 2005. He has also played in four world championships, for the national squad, in 1994, 1995, 1996 and 2002, alongside two Olympiads in 1998 and 2002. In 1993, Mr. Zankovets was named the country's best hockey player.

Oleg Mikulchik will be working with Mr. Hanlon for the first time but has liaised with Mr. Zankovets in the past, being an assistant to the head coach of the Belarusian junior national squad for the 2006/2007 season. In the 2010/2011 season, Mr. Mikulchik was head coach of the junior national team, but failed to lead his trainees to the elite group, losing to Latvia in a home match during the World Championship in Bobruisk (in 2011). Before joining the national squad, Mr. Mikulchik conducted two seasons in Ukraine and played for the Belarusian national team in four World Championships — in 1998, 1999, 2001 and 2005 — as well as in the 2002 Olympiad.

Playing best in 'blitz'

By Igor Leshin

Igor Mikhalchenko claims gold at Draughts-64 World Championship

At the Russian Checkers World Championships (draughts-64), recently, in St. Petersburg, Belarusian athletes took part in all three programmes: 'blitz', 'rapid' and 'classic'. Igor Mikhalchenko clinched gold in the 'blitz' round: the only award for the team during the ten-day tournament.

The 'blitz' rules give each player three minutes to make their move. Across nine games, Igor Mikhalchenko earned 14 points (5 victories, 4 draws) while his colleagues Andrey Valyuk and Yevgeny Kondratenko came 10th and 16th respectively. Dariya Fedorovich did best among the women, being placed 6th, with 12 points.

The 'rapid' round gave each player ten minutes, and earned our squad two 5th places: in the men's and women's competitions. Andrey Valyuk and Vera Khvashchinskaya took the honour, both ranked 12th, while Russian Oleg Dashkov claimed the championship title.

The tournament brought together almost all the strongest grand chess masters on the planet, with the winners primarily determined using additional criteria.

Tennis players on postage stamps

Republican Olympic Training Centre for Tennis hosts celebratory issue of special edition stamps, depicting leaders of Belarusian tennis Max Mirnyi and Victoria Azarenko

The event was attended by young Belarusian tennis players who had recently won silver awards at the most prestigious team tournament for their age: the European Summer Cup.

Initially, Belpochta planned to release general postage stamps dedicated to tennis, featuring a variety of action poses, but the Belarusian Tennis Federation offered the initiative of depicting Max and Victoria, finding support from Belpochta. The leading Belarusian players eagerly presented their photos for placement on postal stamps.

Nikolay Mirnyi, Max's father, loves the look of the new postage stamps while Max, currently playing in Cincinnati, in the USA, has told local press about the stamps, stressing the great honour for him.