

Favourable wind in Australia

By Igor Leshin

Leading Belarusian yachtswoman Tatiana Drozdovskaya celebrates victory in Laser Radial competition at ISAF Sailing World Cup Melbourne 2013, in Port Phillip, Australia

After ten races, the Belarusian athlete has topped the list of competitors, far out-pacing her opponents. Tatiana Drozdovskaya finished first on six occasions,

scoring 19 points.

The competition in Melbourne brought together over 200 yachtsmen and women from all over the world, including many participants of the Olympics and Paralympics, as well as some from non-Olympic yacht classes.

The regatta's results are taken into account in releasing the International Sailing Federation (ISAF) world rankings, which were last updated on October 21st, 2013. Tatiana Drozdovskaya



Tatiana Drozdovskaya conquers all waves

was named third but had previously topped the list for several months. Her successful perform-

ance in Melbourne will again secure first place for Tatiana in the ISAF world rankings.

Good company to gather

By Yegor Glebov

10th Christmas International Amateur Ice Hockey Tournament for the Prizes of the President of Belarus, hosted by Minsk from January 3rd-7th, 2014, bringing together 12 teams

The Belarusian capital will welcome squads from Austria, Germany, Canada, Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine, France, Finland, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Switzerland. As is traditional, Belarus is to be represented by the President's team.

The formula for the 2014 tournament has changed, comprising a preliminary stage of three groups, of four teams each: Group A members are Belarus, Germany, Slovakia and France; Group B consists of Russia, Austria, the Czech Republic and Switzerland; and Group C is Canada, Finland, Sweden and Ukraine. The winners of each group and the team with the best performance among the runners-up will then advance; the Group A winner will face the best runner-up, while the winner of Group B will meet that from Group C. The final match will be a battle between the winners, while the match for third place will see the semi-final losing squads compete.

Group A games will be held at Minsk's Sports Palace, which is also to host the official opening ceremony of the tournament. Group B will play at Chizhovka Arena, while those from Group C will duel at Minsk's Ice Palace. The final games and the closing ceremony will take place at Minsk Arena.

The 10th Christmas International Amateur Ice Hockey Tournament for the Prizes of the President of Belarus opens a calendar of important sports events in 2014, crowned by Belarus' hosting of the IIHF World Championship in Minsk. Volunteers working during the May World Championship will each work with a Christmas tournament team.

Surprises in Hochfilzen

The winter sports season is now underway, having been long awaited by fans. Following Swedish Östersund hosting the first stage of the World Cup, Austria's Hochfilzen has taken on the mantel, bringing more excitement and anticipation. This time, in the central mountains of the Tyrol, we've witnessed the weather's whims and the success of our Belarusian biathletes: new names and old.

By Igor Grishin

The women's sprint opened the competitive programme, with most of our hopes pinned on Darja Domracheva, who occupied her usual second place on the eve of the event. Sadly, her short distance shooting failed to meet the mark, with four misses out of ten targets (two at each of two shooting lines). She finished a disappointing 36th as a result. Surprisingly, she also lacked her usual speed, being in third place for pace, and 15.4 seconds behind Norwegian Tora Berger, who led.

Belarusian Nadezhda Skardino finished only 28th while novice Anastasia Kalina was best in the team as regards shooting, being the only one without a miss at least at one shooting range (0+2) — during the sprint. Sadly, she finished 75th, being slowest among



Second stage of World Cup lacks Belarusians among leaders

all those on the Belarusian national team, and among 77 biathletes. Her final time was 2:19.5 seconds

behind Berger.

In the relay, our women's team was rather unbalanced, leaving us

in 7th place, to fans' dismay. Nadezhda Skardino was excluded from the women's chase, lacking enough points from the sprint to qualify, and leaving all eyes on Darja Domracheva. Our 'Belarusian rocket' moved up from her 36th start position to 11th, but three misses at the shooting range prevented her from claiming a medal. Norwegian Synnøve Solemdal came first while Ukrainian Juliya Dzhyma took silver and last year's silver medallist, Krystyna Pałka from Poland, took bronze, failing to quite match her performance at the last World Championship in Nové Město, where she earned silver.

Darya now has 116 test points and closes the top-ten in the all-round standings of the World Cup. Nadezhda Skardino has 64 points and is in 24th position, while other Belarusians still lack test points.

Application for true leadership

Mikhail Grabovski equals Andrey Kostitsyn in number of delivered pucks in NHL

By Kirill Karin

Belarusian forward Mikhail Grabovski, who plays for the Washington Capitals, recently helped his squad defeat the New York Rangers. In the regular championship game, he scored once: his 103rd puck in the world's strongest league. He has now equalled Andrey Kostitsyn's achievement among the top-scoring Belarusians in the NHL.

Washington beat New York in an away match — 4:1. Grabovski took a penalty shot in the second period and converted it into a goal. It was his first puck in the New York net of late, having failed to score in their past three meetings.

Remarkably, it was Grabovski's first penalty shoot-out in regular time in the NHL to have produced a result; he had made three such attempts previously.

This season, Grabovski has earned 25 (9+16) points across 30 matches, giving him a total NHL score of 242 (103+139) points across 397 matches. He recently topped the list of nine Belarusian hockey players playing in the world's strongest hockey league, in the 'goal+pass' system. Meanwhile, Andrey Kostitsyn, who also boasts 103 delivered pucks in the NHL, is playing for Chelyabinsk Traktor in the KHL for the second year in a row.

Two goalies and two line-ups

By Ivan Rafalov

Dinamo Minsk returns from first away match victory in past four, earning only three points after constant failures, a reshuffle of goalkeepers, mistakes by defenders and the adaptation of legionaries

In Novosibirsk and Novokuznetsk, Dinamo lost first to Sibir (3:1) and then to Metallurg (3:2) before flying to Khabarovsk to face local Amur. The series of away defeats across 16 matches would have continued were it not for goalie Lars Haugen, who saved his team from three penalty shoot-outs. Dinamo enjoyed two goals, thanks to Irgl and Lintner, and then focused on defence, yet allowed



In two of four games Belarusians avoid defeat during regular time

Amur to equalise in the third period — bringing the score to 2:2. During the last seconds of regular time, Amur took a shot which would have secured victory had the puck not hit the bar. Instead, the Belarusian team's Jeff Platt did brilliantly in the penalty shoot-out, securing victory.

"The game was hard," admits Lubomír Pokovič. "Our opponent attacked well, creating problems for us in the first period. I think that we should have brought the match to victory with a score of 2:0 but we were lucky that Jakub Petružálek failed to score in the

last minute. The penalty shoot-outs were something to behold!" Dinamo is to be congratulated over all, despite being ranked last in the Western Conference. Our Minskers have defeated their rival, now occupying last but one place in the Eastern Conference.

The series of away matches finished with a game against KHL debutant Admiral Vladivostok, with whom our Belarusian hockey players managed a draw after regular time and overtime. However, with no points following the penalty shoot-outs, our Minskers are pleased even with one point.