

In the footsteps of past season

The football season is over, with all matches concluded and players resting all over the globe. However, the key heroes remain in Minsk and gathered recently at the National Library to receive awards: Timofey Kalachev was named Belarus' top footballer of 2013 while Leonid Kuchuk was named best coach.

By Yegor Glebov

This season, Kalachev, 32, a pupil of Mogilev school, performed as part of the Belarusian team, scoring a goal against France. Across 61 matches with the national team, he has scored eight goals. Moreover, Timofey is a leading player for Rostov, scoring three times across 18 matches in this year's Russian Championship. His prize (named after Alexander Prokopenko) is given for 'Football Talent and Devotion to Play for Belarus'.

Meanwhile, Borisov BATE forward Vitaly Rodionov was nominated for the most awards: four! He has been named 'Best Striker' of the 23rd National Championship (scoring 14 goals) and the most useful player in the championship. Two other BATE players — back Yegor Filipenko and half-

back Alexander Pavlov — were also acknowledged among the best.

Grodno Neman's Sergey Chernik was named 'Best Goalkeeper' while Minsk Dinamo's Nikita Korzun won the 'Football Hope' prize.

Belarus' champion — BATE — received the 'Audience Choice Award' (as the most visited team) while Shakhtyor (which won silver this year) was awarded the 'Fair Play' prize (as the most consistent team). Bronze holder Minsk Dinamo won the 'Thunderstorm of Authorities' prize for its play against the championship prize-winners.

Sergey Tsinkevich was named 'Best Referee' while Mogilev's Vitaly Malyutin and Minsk's Dmitry Zhuk topped the list of referee assistants. Among Belarusian coaches, Leonid Kuchuk — who trains Moscow Lokomotiv — was



At closing ceremony of football season, Timofey Kalachev is named best player of 2013

named best. In addition, Alexander Chernik (Viten, Vitebsk) was awarded as best Belarusian mini-footballer and Oleg Slautin (BATE) was acknowledged best beach footballer.

Among the female players, Yekaterina Avkhimovich (who plays for Russia's VDV, Ryazan)

was named best.

Speaking of the results of the 2013 football season, Sergey Rumas — the Chairman of the Belarusian Football Federation — notes that this year has not been the most successful in the history of Belarusian football. In his view, this was mostly an experimental season,

with the Premier League National Championship organised for the first time in line with a new — two-stage — system. Time will show whether this experiment is worth pursuing but Mr. Rumas believes that our accumulated experience may be used to the benefit of our national

Sergey Rutenko is voted best handballer

Sergey Rutenko — captain of Belarusian national handball team and among leading attack players for Spanish Barcelona — named world's best left-midfielder handballer for 2013

The online site handball-plan-et.com recently summed up the results of voting for the world's best handballer of 2013, and best players in their field positions. Winners were chosen by 11 European handball magazines and fans of the sport, who voted online via the site. Sergey Rutenko was named best left-midfielder, while Croatian Domagoj Duvnjak (playing for German Hamburg) was named best handballer worldwide. Hungarian midfielder László Nagy, from Veszprém, was ranked second, followed by Spanish line player Julen Aguina-



Sergey Rutenko on the attack

galde, playing for Viva.

Rutenko outstripped Czech Filip Jicha, from German Kiel, and Dutch Mikkel Hansen, from French PSG, to be named top left-midfielder. Remarkably, Rutenko

was placed third in terms of fans' votes, receiving 3,583 against Jicha's 6,314 and Hansen's 7,920. However, most journalists spoke in favour of the Belarusian handball player.

First medal of the season

Belarusian Anton Kushnir takes second place in aerial skiing at first stage of FIS World Cup 1, at Lake Beida, China: first Olympic event medal for Belarus of 2013/14 winter season

In the qualification round, at Lake Beida, Anton Kushnir came 13th, al-

lowing him to inch into the final. Fellow freestyler Alexey Grishin, the Olympic champion of Vancouver-2010, came 6th (115.93 points).

In the final, Anton Kushnir proved himself among the top four, behind leading Chinese Liu Zhongqing (127.15 points). Anton was placed second (124.43 points) while Chi-

na's Jia Zongyang was third (120.81). Alexey Grishin also came 6th in the final (118.59).

Among the female competitors, four-time Olympic medallist Belarusian Alla Tsuper came 7th in the qualification round (80.64 points) and 10th in the final (78.43). She was returning after a long break from jumping.

Four bronze medals over short distances

By Yegor Glebov

European Short Course Swimming Championship, hosted by Danish Herring, ends with bronze for Belarusian Alexandra Gerasimenya and Yevgeny Tsurkin, on final day tournament: four medals in all

Alexandra Gerasimenya completed the 50m freestyle in 23.83 seconds, and took bronze in the 100m freestyle. Meanwhile, Yevgeny Tsurkin's bronze in the 50m butterfly was his first at the European Championship in Herring.

In the final, he finished with a time of 22.45 seconds, creating a new record for Belarus. He actually beat his previous record, set during the semi-final (of 22.55 seconds) within two hours.

Belarusian swimmer Pavel Sankovich failed to claim a medal on the final day of the competition, coming 7th in the 100m backstroke and 9th in the 50m butterfly. Earlier, he took bronze in the 50m backstroke. The Belarusian national team thus boasts four bronze medals, occupying 19th place in the medal standings of the European Championship.

Tsmoki placed among top 16

Tsmoki-Minsk basketballers ensure entrance to next round of EuroChallenge

A confident victory in a home match against Bulgarian Rilski Sportist Samokov — 94:75 — has guaranteed a place for Tsmoki-Minsk in the next stage of the EuroChallenge. As soon as the match began, Donaldas Kairys' trainees seized the initiative and dominated. In the second quarter, they allowed their rivals to reduce the gap to a minimum, but then stepped up their performance,

to bring deserved victory.

Tsmoki-Minsk so far has 9 points, while Szolnoki Olaj KK has 8, BC Mures boasts 7 and Rilski Sportist has 6 points.

In the 6th round of the competition, the Minsk squad will have an away match against the Hungarians, while Rilski Sportist Samokov will face the Romanian club away. These matches will decide which squad continues to the EuroChallenge second group stage, alongside Belarus' team.