



Maxim Gustik's final jump does not leave the judges indifferent

# Jump worthy of gold

Belarusian freestyle aerial Maxim Gustik wins FIS Freestyle Ski World Cup fifth stage, hosted by Deer Valley

By Igor Grishin

After initially being placed 10th among 12 finalists, Maxim Gustik, aged 24, finished fifth among the top 12 freestyle aerial jumpers in the second stage of the selection round for the final eight. He came first in the third stage (from eight finalists) and then reached the top four. During the final stage, he came first, outstripping

Travis Gerrits of Canada, Michael Rossi from the USA and Chinese Jia Zongyang. Gustik's previous highest World Cup achievement was second place in Austrian Kreischberg in February of last year.

Three more Belarusian aerial ski jumpers also took part in the Deer Valley event. Vancouver-2010 Olympic champion Alexey Grishin returned from a long-term

spinal injury and reached the penultimate stage of the tournament. In the first qualification round, he came third. However, sixth place in the second and third rounds was insufficient to earn him a position in the super-final four.

Dmitry Dashchinsky — who took silver in the Turin Olympics of 2006 and bronze in Nagano in 1998 — finished 11th among the top 12, after coming 4th in

the qualification round. Another Belarusian ski jumper Denis Osipov occupied 13th position among 32 entrants in the first round, being knocked out.

After two stages of the Freestyle Ski World Cup, Belarus' Dmitry Dashchinsky is ranked 4th and Gustik has risen from 21st to 6th place. Denis Osipov is placed 9th and Alexey Grishin occupies 14th position.

# Minsk dragons grow in strength

By Dmitry Baranovsky

**Tsmoki Minsk continues among top 16 in EuroChallenge — Europe's third most important basketball tournament**

Entering the top 16 teams is the highest achievement in the history of Belarusian club basketball and our squad could even reach the next stage, having beaten German Telekom Baskets — 74:70. The match was vital for the Belarusian 'dragons', following an earlier defeat by Belgium's Okapi Aalstars. To continue in Group L, Tsmoki needed to beat the German Bonn team, as they did.

The match against Telekom Baskets began with a spectacular performance by Alexander Kudryavtsev, who gave his team a major burst into the lead. However, the guests quickly 'recovered' and, by the middle of the fourth quarter, had closed the gap, which had reached 14 points by that time. However, Tsmoki stood firm and, in the dramatic final, won on penalty shots.

This success has enabled the Belarusian squad to remain in the fight for a place in the next round, moving into second position. The most interesting time still lies ahead as the Minsk team moves forward from its Okapi Aalstars defeat.



Tsmoki Minsk beats German Bonn — 74:70

## Sporting mix

**Redfu rapper makes song out of Victoria Azarenko's grunts**

Music lovers will soon be able to hear a symphony of groans — as heaved by Victoria Azarenko on the tennis court

The number one seed tennis player, currently defending her championship title at the Australian Open, is known as one of the loudest players within the WTA. Almost every blow by Victoria is accompanied by a great expulsion, which can seem extremely loud in a quiet stadium.

Her friend (according to rumours, her boyfriend), American rapper Redfu, has seen musical potential in those groans, recording them for use in his new song, which he plans to release soon. Victoria gave permission for the recordings to be used for the track but asserts that the noises are just natural, as they appear on court. Redfu has manipulated their tone to suit his song.

# Play-offs round the corner

Minsk's Dinamo still to play three matches in KHL Championship



Dinamo defeated by Chelyabinsk Traktor in home match

By Yegor Glebov

Dinamo recently saw success in its away series against Moscow, Prague and Bratislava, bringing home 6 points of 9 possible. It is now ranked 7th, reinforcing its tournament position and increasing its chance of reaching the play-offs.

The squad's recent performance has inspired confidence from fans al-

though the home match against one of the leaders of the Eastern Conference, Chelyabinsk Traktor, brought disappointment. At the after match press conference, the head coach of the Minsk team, Alexander Andrievsky, noted, "We were crippled by the second goal. This was our fourth match, having played every other day, and we'd just returned from a difficult game. We remained determined for

the second half but our rival's second goal broke us psychologically and our exhaustion was suddenly apparent. It's difficult to fight physiology, so the result became 2:5."

The home defeat hasn't influenced Dinamo's tournament position in the Western Conference. "Everything is in our hands and we're still ranked seventh. We have three matches ahead and everything depends on us," Mr. Andrievsky has stressed.

Dinamo Minsk can expect to earn points in its away match in the Moscow Region's Chekhov, against local Vityaz. The home meetings will be more difficult. On February 15th, the Belarusian squad will face one of the leaders of the Eastern Conference, Ak Bars Kazan, followed by Ufa's Salavat Yulayev, ranked 5th in the Eastern Division, on February 17th. These squads may have already ensured themselves a place in the play-offs by then, so we may be fortunate enough to find them saving their energies but our Minsk squad will still need to work hard to gain a place in the final stage of the KHL Championship.

## Biathletes prepare skis

**Very soon, the Czech town of Nove Mesto will be hosting the Biathlon World Championship after the mid-season break. Crews have had a chance to draw breath after the World Cup, including the Belarusian squad, which is pinning hopes on its female biathletes and, especially, on Darya Domracheva.**

The senior coach of the national team, Adrian Tsybulsky, notes that Ms. Domracheva is among the leaders of the current season and of the upcoming World Championship. "I don't understand why some view Domracheva as unreliable, as she came second in the World Cup. It's not easy to compete with Norwegian Tora Berger, but Darya always fights. I can't say that she never makes a mistake but she always give her all, aiming for 'gold' in every race."

Anastasia Dubarezova is also doing well, having transitioned from ski racing. Nadezhda Skardino, who claimed her first ever World Cup medal this season, is also looking promising and Lyudmila Kalinchik is shaping up nicely. Any one of