

Sports in need of good results

Alexander Lukashenko hears report from Belarus' Sports and Tourism Minister, Alexander Shamko, joined by the Assistant to the President for Physical Culture, Sports and Tourism, Maxim Ryzhenkov, and the First Deputy President of the National Olympic Committee, Igor Rachkovsky

The President warned his sports advisors, "Since your appointments, you've decided that a more integrated structure of management is needed for sport and fitness." He added that 'the time has come for action' but noted that, in following this path, 'definite results' would be expected; without them, he emphasised, 'you're aware who will be held responsible'.

Mr. Lukashenko wishes to see strict staffing policies applied to the sporting sphere. Various problems were discussed, alongside possible solutions and the issue of how best to reorganise the Sports and Tourism Ministry. Clear management of national teams and control of drug use were among the most pressing items on the agenda.

The President has approved proposals for reform but stresses his high expectations. Mr. Lukashenko has also requested a press conference in the near future, to allow all the decisions to be made public.

The best biathletes gathering

Darya Domracheva and Nadezhda Skardino may take part in Race of Champions-2013

The Olimpiyskiy Sports Complex is to host three races, featuring 20 world biathlon leaders: women's and men's mass start events, as well as a mixed relay. The Race of Champions is inspired by the famous Christmas start in Gelsenkirchen, hosted by the Aufschalke Stadium in Germany since 2002 and gathering over 60,000 spectators. Now celebrating its third year, the Race of Champions has become an independent project — popular among the world biathlon elite.

The top ten male and female biathletes are to take part in the Moscow event, with the final line-up announced on March 25th. The preliminary list includes two Belarusian biathletes: Darya Domracheva and Nadezhda Skardino.

Winners already named

Palace of Sports hosts '2012's Triumph of Sports Heroes' ceremony

By Igor Leshin

The state TV and Radio Company of Belarus joined forces with the President's Sports Club, the Sports and Tourism Ministry and the National Olympic Committee to choose winners in four categories: 'Determination to Claim Victory', 'Breakthrough of the Year', 'Result of the Year' and 'Most Striking Sports Moment of the Year'. A further four were chosen by public vote: 'Coach of the Year', 'Sportsman of the Year', 'Sportswoman of the Year' and 'Team of the Year'. Belarusian athletes who had performed at major international competitions in 2012 were eligible for nomination, with over 1.5 million fans taking part in voting.

'Breakthrough of the Year' went to swimming sensation Alexandra Gerasimenya, who claimed two Olympic silver medals in London. Other top nominees were the Belarusian men's handball team, which appeared in the finals of the World Cup, and the women's canoe four (Marina Poltoran, Irina Pomelova, Nadezhda Popok and Olga Khudenko) which took the Olympic 500m bronze.

The 'Determination to Claim Victory' bronze statuette is traditionally awarded to Paralympic athletes, claimed by Paralympic Games champion Lyudmila Volchek in 2006 and 2008. In 2010, the



Olympic champion Sergey Martynov, winner of 'Result of the Year'

prize went to skier Dmitry Loban, who disregarded medical advice to enter the Winter Paralympic Games in Vancouver and won bronze. This time, swimmer Igor Boky — a five-time champion and 2012 Paralympic Games silver medalist — was recognised for his sporting spirit.

'Result of the Year' went to 2012 Olympic gold medalist in small-bore rifle shooting Sergey Martynov — who also set a world record along the way. His top rivals for the title were 2012 world biathlon pursuit champion Darya Dom-

racheva and FC BATE, who claimed a sensational victory over German Bavaria (3:1) in the group stage of the Champions League.

'Most Striking Sports Moment of the Year' was awarded to the national gymnastics team (Lyubov Cherkashina, Marina Goncharova, Anastasia Ivankova, Natalia Leshchik, Alexandra Narkevich, Ksenia Sankovich and Alina Tumilovich) for their Olympic performance in London, which saw Cherkashina take bronze and the other girls claim group silver. The top nominations

were for the mixed doubles Olympic gold, won by Belarusian duo Victoria Azarenko and Maxim Mirny, and for the Belarusian team goal against Brazil in the group stage of the Olympic Football Tournament in London.

The public vote gave the title of 'Coach of the Year' to FC BATE Borisov's Victor Goncharenko while 'Sportswoman of the Year' went to tennis darling Victoria Azarenko — the 2012 Olympic champion in the mixed doubles with Maxim Mirnyi, singles bronze medalist at the London Games, 2012

Australian Open winner and first seed. 2012 'Sportsman of the Year' is London Olympic small-bore shooting champion (prone position from 50m) Sergey Martynov. The 'Best Team' is Victoria Azarenko and Maxim Mirny, for the 2012 Olympic mixed doubles tennis victory.

Major sponsors of sports in Belarus were invited to the awards ceremony, presenting special prizes. The next 'Triumph of Sporting Heroes' awards will be given after the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi.



Yana Maximova's medal jump

Track-and-field athletes prove class

European Athletics Indoor Championship finishes in Swedish Göteborg

Belarusian athletes weren't left without medals at the tournament, proving their talent and readiness for serious international tournaments. On the first day of the competition, Yana Maximova and Alina Talay both delighted fans. Ms. Maximova's pentathlon silver was the result of her earning 4,658 points — just 8 points behind titleholder French Ida Antoinette Nana Djimou. Ms. Talay's personal

record in the 60m hurdles (7.94 seconds) resulted in her well-earned silver.

On the last day of the tournament, bronze went to Yelena Kopets in the shot putt, for her throw of 18.85m. German Christina Schwanitz took gold for her throw of 19.25m, becoming European champion. Marina Arzamasova also took bronze, for her 800m run in 2 minutes 01.21 seconds. Gold went to Ukrainian Natalya Lupu (2 minutes 00.26 seconds) while silver was claimed by Russian Yelena Kotulskaya (2 minutes 00.98 seconds).

Three biathlon races bring two medals

By Igor Grishin

Belarus' top biathlete claims two awards at 7th Biathlon World Cup in Norwegian Holmenkollen

Belarus' Darya Domracheva finished second in the women's 7.5km sprint, having missed two targets (1+1) over two shooting ranges. She crossed the line with a time of 21 minutes 43.2 seconds, 12 seconds behind winner Tora Berger. The Norwegian hit every target, earning her a well-deserved 25th victory. Third place went to Anastasiya Kuzmina, from Slovakia (2 misses: +30.9 seconds).

Domracheva started the pursuit race in second place, 12 seconds behind Ms. Berger. Sadly, she missed nine shots (1+2+2+4) across the four shooting ranges, finishing the 10km distance in 34 minutes 26.7 seconds. She was 14.5 seconds behind Tora. At the final shooting range, Darya hit only one target of five, leaving her in a poor position, despite being quickest on the track. Beforehand, she had been in



Darya Domracheva at Biathlon World Cup in Norway

third place, despite five misses on previous shooting ranges.

On the final day of the competition, Ms. Domracheva came third in the mass start, behind Ms. Berger and Slovakian Anastasiya Kuzmina. The Norwegian covered the 12.5km distance, which had four shooting ranges, within 36 minutes 58.8 seconds (three misses). Ms. Kuzmina was 5.4 seconds behind, having completed two penalty loops, while Ms. Domracheva

was 23.3 seconds behind Tora, also having three misses. She led until the penultimate shooting range, where two misses brought her to eighth position. However, her speedy skiing and perfect shooting at the last range allowed her to overtake French Anaïs Bescond and come third.

Overall, Tora Berger boasts 1,069 points, Darya Domracheva has 748 and Germany's Andrea Henkel has 699.