

Gold and bronze from Pokljuka biathlon

Following her triple Olympic gold in Sochi, biathlete Darya Domracheva has her sights set on the Big Crystal Globe. Despite her huge success, she had been yet to claim a medal at the World Cup stage in Pokljuka.

By Yegor Glebov

In the face of high winds in Slovenia, the gales at Laura Sports Complex seemed like a light breeze, which perhaps explained Darya's poor marksmanship in the sprint and 28th place. Sochi bronze medallist Nadezhda Skardino came third, without a single miss across two shooting ranges, while Lyudmila Kalinchik, who also covered the sprint without a miss, occupied 8th place.

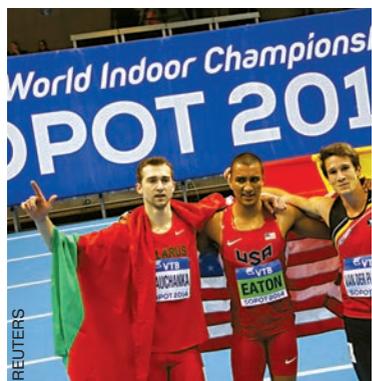
Despite Darya Domracheva's breathtaking 'climb' in the pursuit, moving from her initial 28th position to 4th at the finishing gate, her strategic struggle for the Big Crystal Globe seemed lost, since both Kaisa Mäkäräinen and Tora Berger were ahead, as in the sprint. Berger's advantage amounted to four-dozen points before the mass

start but, of course, the race is Darya's forte, and led to her 18th biathlete gold. As in Sochi, she took the lead early on, shooting confidently and skiing fast across the 12.5km distance. Moreover, it was the first time Domracheva had managed to leave behind her Big Crystal Globe rivals, enabling her to reduce the gap in the overall standings: currently led by Kaisa Mäkäräinen, followed by Tora Berger.

Nadezhda Skardino helped her teammate by endeavouring to keep a furious Berger behind her in the final lap, winning back two precious World Cup points for Darya from the Norwegian athlete. Besides Domracheva and Skardino, Lyudmila Kalinchik was also ranked among the top ten, making the mass start a true gift for March 8th Women's Day.



Darya Domracheva covers the distance



More medals from Sopot

By Igor Grishin

Polish Sopot brings two World Indoor Track and Field Championship medals for our athletes

Andrey Kravchenko has won silver in the heptathlon, with a new national record of 6,303 points, just 329 points behind American Ashton Eaton; bronze went to Belgium's Thomas van der Plaetsen (6,259). Meanwhile, on the last day of the competition, Belarusian runner Marina Arzamasova took the 800m bronze, setting a personal record of 2 minutes 0.79 seconds. The USA's Chanelle Price took gold, with Polish Angelika Cichocka (2 minutes 0.45 seconds) claiming silver.

With two awards (one silver and one bronze) the national team of Belarus shared 20th place at the World Championship, with teams from the Bahamas, Canada and China.

Lost as they could

Anticipation better than reality regarding friendly Bulgaria-Belarus match

By Yuri Bakerenko

The first meeting in this year looked more promising than most of those we saw last season. Sadly, despite being equally matched, the score finished on a disappointing 1:2 defeat for Belarus, watched by just 4,000 rain-soaked fans in the 43,000 capacity Vasil Levski Stadium. It was so quiet that you could hear individual conversations between spectators and between the coaches and their players!

Our performance was rather like the weather: wet! Initially, the Belarusian squad appeared to have swallowed sleeping pills. They woke up a little in the second half and managed a goal on a crazy ricochet but, in truth, the first match of the season was a failure.

Coach Georgy Kondratiev would, no doubt, admit that most of the squad are not on peak form at present, since it's outside of the main season. However, it is disturbing, since our national team will be taking part in the qualifying round for the 2016 European Championship this autumn. Exhausted by a long season, they surely won't be at their best. If they repeat their Sofia performance, their dreams of reaching the actual tournament will remain just that.



National team match against Bulgaria proves a failure

Georgy Kondratiev,

the head coach of the national team of Belarus:

It was the worst match for the team under my management. For some reason, the players appeared unready; for the first 25 minutes, they played terribly. I have to admit that the team from Bulgaria deserved to win. We played horribly at the very beginning. When our wingbacks received the ball, they needed to deliver it forward to Hleb and Rodionov; however, they kept passing back! Our rival repeatedly blocked us and was on better physical form, while also playing 'at home'. We weren't ready for their aggressive play and it's given us much to consider. We have no right to continue playing so badly.



Best marksmen compete in Moscow

By Igor Leshin

Belarusian men's national team in air rifle shooting wins 2014 European Championship (team 10m standing), setting new European record

Vitaly Bubnovich was the best Belarusian marksman at the European Championship, in the 10m air rifle event, occupying second place. Ilya Chergeiko came 8th while Yuri Shcherbatsevich was 27th. Belarus came first in the team rankings, with a new European record of 1,873.2 points, outstripping squads from Ukraine and Russia.

Belarus' Victoria Chaika claimed bronze in the women's 10m air pistol event, earning 176.6 points, while Germany took gold and silver: Stefanie Thurmann and Monika Karsch respectively.

After the competition, Victoria Chaika admitted that noise at the shooting ranges had unnerved her rather and affected her ability to concentrate: however, such a situation is not regulated by competition rules.

All fans can enjoy matches

By Polina Lokhmanenko

Ice Hockey World Championship matches to be broadcast on big screens located in fan zones



During the forthcoming Ice Hockey World Championship, in May, two fan-zones are to be set up in the capital: near Minsk-Arena and Chizhovka-Arena. Fans can gather to celebrate, relax and chat between matches, while enjoying championship games shown on big screens. Each zone is to feature a concert platform, cafes and restaurants, as well as stalls selling souvenirs. There will even be mini-tournaments and fan competitions.

Three zones of hospitality are also being organised. The main venue will be near the Sports Palace on Pobediteley Avenue, featuring several entertainments and places for relaxing. Fans will be able to hire boats on the river or try go-carting, on an indoor rink (used for skating in winter). The Student Village, on Dzerzhinsky Avenue, is to accommodate a great many fans, offering well-developed infrastructure, free and fast transportation to the centre of the city and ice arenas. Hostel cafeterias will be selling snacks outside during the event and visitors will be able to visit the Ice Palace in Brilevichi. The third zone is to be near the Ice Palace on Pritytsky Street, with skating, discos and food carts set up, as well as a small outside entertainment platform.