

# New national uniform gets athletes' approval

Belarusian team kit for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi presented at the National Olympic Committee in Minsk

By Igor Leshin

The 22-piece collection, inspired by Belarusian traditional colours, includes ski outfits (a jacket, trousers, boots and strap), a reversible wind-proof jacket, training shoes, a parade suit, a training suit, a sweater, a set of four sport shirts and two peaked caps, a cap and a scarf, gloves, thermal underwear, flip-flops, a knapsack and a bag with wheels.

According to the First Vice President of the National Olympic Committee of Belarus (NOC), Igor Rachkovsky, the National Committee of Lithuania has played a definite role in the choice of the uniform. "They are our closest neighbours, and, while talking to them we got interested in who makes their uniforms. They recommended Audimas. The Lithuanian Olympic Committee has been liaising with the company for about 8 years. We paid a visit to Lithuania to study the company's business line, and offered co-operation. At this final stage, we're absolutely pleased with their produce and quality. We would like to continue our co-operation with the company in the future, so that sport shirts and sport suits with 'Belarus' inscription appear in our



Athletes like the uniform which the national team will wear during the Winter Olympics in Sochi

country, enabling fans to buy them when they go to support our athletes," noted Mr. Rachkovsky.

The new kit has already caught

the fancy of Belarusian athletes. The leader of the Belarusian biathlon national team, Darya Domracheva, has sent a letter to the

NOC, stating her delight with the outcome and stressing the perfect combination of quality, attractive colours and comfort.

## Stroitel continues European season

By Igor Grishin

**Stroitel Minsk volleyball team remains the only representatives of Belarus in European club tournaments after they advance to men's CEV Challenge Cup quarterfinal**

Alexander Singayevsky's players faced another Belarusian club Shakhtyor (Soligorsk), achieving two victories with the same score — 3:1. Now, the Minsk team will encounter Turkey's, Fenerbahçe in the quarter-final. In the 1/8 finals, the Turkish club was stronger after their matches: Turkey beat Finland's, VaLePa Sastamala 3:0 at home but lost 2:3 in the return match. The first game between Stroitel and Fenerbahçe will be played in Minsk (the preliminary date is February 5th), while the second leg will take place in Istanbul in mid-February.

In the women's competition, Minsk's Minchanka team, coached by the Serbian, Branislav Moro, failed to reach the quarter-finals. In the first match, played in Minsk, the hosts overpowered Rocheville Le Cannet of France — 3:1. However, the French side composed themselves, and won, with the same score, in the return match. In line with the rules of the competition, an extra 'golden set' was played, which Rocheville Le Cannet won 15:10.

## Expectations higher than official forecast

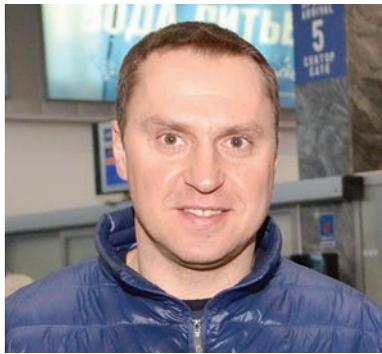
Up to 10 Belarusian sportsmen may get into the top 6-8 of the strongest athletes in their sports at the Winter Olympic Games 2014, in Sochi. The Assistant of the President of Belarus on Physical Culture, Sports and Development of Tourism, Maxim Ryzhenkov announced to journalists.



Sergey Dolidovich



Darya Domracheva



Alexey Grishin

By Yegor Glebov

"Nobody has set a task for our team to win a particular number of medals. We expect, and we hope, that our sportsmen will get on the podium in Sochi. There are forecasts of rating agencies, but we are not going to do the same. We expect that nearly 10 Belarusian sportsmen will get into the top 6-8 of the strongest in their sports," noted Mr. Ryzhenkov.

"The overall result is influenced by many factors, such as psychological mood, general condition, and preparation of sports equipment. Therefore, we cannot say that if an athlete fails to get on the podium, he or she has

not necessarily done the full amount of work," said Maxim Ryzhenkov. He also added that the state, for its part, did everything needed to ensure the preparation of the Belarusian team. "No federation has declared that something was not made available, or that there was something that they lacked. For this reason, we may have fairly high hopes for our athletes and for their most successful performance," noted Mr. Ryzhenkov.

The First Vice President of the National Olympic Committee of Belarus, Igor Rachkovsky, added that the leading Belarusian participants had undergone medical examinations abroad. "These are four people,

including biathletes Darya Domracheva and Nadezhda Skardino, and also freestylers. They have undergone functional examinations in a well-known clinic in Israel. It was necessary to determine what changes were necessary to include in the preparations of the leading Belarusian competitors," Igor Rachkovsky explained. "All of us are waiting for results. They may have very good results. It is possible to say the same about Sergey Dolidovich, the leader of our team in the cross-country ski race."

According to the forecasts of international rating agencies, Belarus can count on 5 medals in Sochi: 4 medals in the biathlon and 1 in freestyle.

## Belarusians fail to conquer Australia

By Yegor Glebov

**Following the exit of Victoria Azarenko and Olga Govortsova, the last representative of Belarus, Max Mirnyi, leaves Australian Open**

On their way to the quarter-final of the men's doubles, Max Mirnyi and Russian Mikhail Youzhny lost in a three set match to the Polish-Swedish duo Lukasz Kubot and Robert Lindstedt — 4:6, 7:5, 2:6. Before this, the duo had defeated American, Nicholas Monroe and Argentinean, Horacio Zeballos and then beat Spaniards Marcel Granollers and Marc López in the second round. Following this, they won against France's Julien Benneteau and Edouard Roger-Vasselin.

On the same day, the two-time Australian Open champion, Victoria Azarenko of Belarus completed her performance on Melbourne Park courts, losing to Poland's, Agnieszka Radwanska in the quarter-final. Victoria managed to impose herself in the second set after losing the first set to the Pole. However, in the decisive set, the Polish tennis player looked fresher and confidently whitewashed Azarenko. Before this, Radwanska had knocked out another Belarusian player, Olga Govortsova.

The top three seeds of the world have left the Melbourne Park courts. During 1/8 finals, American Serena Williams (world's #1) and Russian Maria Sharapova (world's #3) left the tournament while Azarenko only managed to reach the quarter-finals.

## Good fight

**Belarusian masters of sambo and freestyle wrestling, won awards at two large, international tournaments held in Kazakhstan and Russia**

During last day of the World Cup stage, for prizes of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev in Almaty, there were medal events in 10 weight categories. Svetlana Timoshenko appeared on the podium in the under 80kg weight category. Yekaterina Prokopenko won a silver medal in the under 60kg event and Anastasia Arkhipova won a bronze medal. Earlier, Belarusian, Andrey Kazusenok, became the men's sport sambo champion in the under 90kg category, whilst his colleague, Tatiana Tokt, received the bronze in the women's event (64kg). At the finish of the 25th International Wrestling Tournament and the Ivan Yarygin Golden Grand Prix Wrestling Championships held in Russia's Krasnoyarsk, the representative of Belarus, Ivan Yankovsky, was defeated by Russia's Abdusalam Gadisov in the final of the category up to 97kg and received a silver medal. However, another Belarusian wrestler, Alexander Gushtyn, (86kg) was not able to achieve as much and dropped out of the fight at the preliminary stages. Ivan Yankovsky's medal was the fourth for the team of wrestlers from Belarus. Zalina Sidakova (55 kg) and Vasilisa Marzalyuk (75 kg) won one silver medal each, and Anastasia Guchok won bronze in the under 60kg weight category.