

# Closing of season at Minsk-Arena

Arena, team and fans lament end of road for KHL Championship regular part

By Igor Leshin

The Belarusian team's final match was against HC Dinamo Riga, whom the squad last faced at the season opening, in the Latvian capital. Coach Artis Ābols and his ice hockey players received the Belarusians as Nadezhda Cup champions on that occasion; more recently, they arrived as victors of five consecutive matches and with hopes for fourth place in their conference, which gives an advantage to host the quarterfinal of the Gagarin Cup on their ground.

Fans of HC Dynamo Minsk once again proved their great loyalty and support. Dynamo Minsk lost its chance to reach the play-offs long before the end of the season; however, fans managed to almost set a record for attendance during the match which actually decided nothing. They were rewarded with a fierce first period, in which the teams seemed equal-



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ly matched. The Riga players opened the score in the 7th minute, after an accurate shot by Jamie Johnson, past Minsk goalkeeper Lars Haugen. Several sharp attacks followed, with Dinamo's Andrey Stas also scoring.

In the second twenty minutes, the Minsk players continued to attack more persistently, bringing two more superb goals within three minutes. Alexander Materukhin was the

first to score, taking the puck independently to its final destination in the net, followed by Richard Lintner, outwitting Riga's goalkeeper, Mikael Tellqvist.

In the final third, the Riga players were fully on the attack, keeping Lars Haugen on his toes. In the middle of the period, Tomáš Surový scored, following a fine pass from Alexander Kitarov. Each squad made



Thanks to fans for support and trust

another attempt at a goal in the final 90 seconds: Riga's Gunārs Skvorcovs successfully scored the second puck, as did Zbyněk Irgl, bringing the final result to 5:2 — in favour of Lubomír Pokovič's squad.

Sadly, the game solved nothing for the Minsk team, despite their skillful play and fans' devotion. We cannot but hope that next season will be more successful for the team.

## Previous head coach returning to dragons

By Yegor Glebov

**BC Tsmoki-Minsk ends Lithuanian specialist Donaldas Kairys' contract as head coach**

The contract has been terminated by mutual consent, with Donaldas Kairys' assistant, Arvydas Straupis, also leaving the Belarusian basketball club. Andrey Krivonos is to return as head coach of the 'dragons', having headed the capital's team from 2008 to 2013. He led them to five championship titles and four victories in the national Cup.

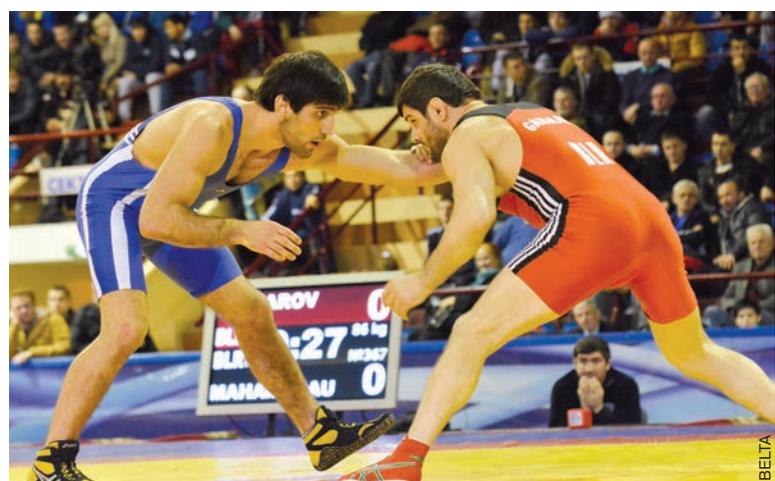
Under the direction of Donaldas Kairys, Tsmoki-Minsk won the Cup of Belarus and, for the first time in the history of Belarusian basketball, reached the quarterfinal of the continental EuroChallenge. One round before the end of the second group stage, the champions of Belarus faced Russian BC Ural from Yekaterinburg, having defeated Danish BC Aarhus and Finnish BC Kotka. In the final round of Group L, at Minsk-Arena, Tsmoki beat Denmark's Bakken Bears confidently — 89:51.

However, in the VTB United League, the team saw less success, suffering eight defeats in succession after an initial six victories at the beginning of the season. Now, in preliminary Group B of the VTB League, the Moscow Region's Kh-



BC Tsmoki-Minsk defeated BC Bakken Bears

imki leads, with 15 victories. The Minsk players will face the squad away, on March 8th. They'll then go on to play three more matches in the preliminary stage: on March 16th at home — against BC Triumph from Lyubertsy; and on March 21st and 24th away — against BC Krasny Oktyabr from Volgograd and then against BC Krasnye Krylia from Samara. The Minsk basketballers now hold 7th to 10th place, alongside Samara, BC Azovmash from Mariupol, and BC Neptūnas from Klaipėda (all with four victories).



Final fight between Murad Gaidarov and Amargadzhi Magomedov

## High level of achievement once again

By Igor Grishin

**Belarusian wrestlers win 14 medals (7 gold, 3 silver and 4 bronze) at 44th International Freestyle Wrestling Grand Prix Championship, in honour of triple Olympic champion Alexander Medved, hosted by Minsk's Sports Palace**

Belarusians Azamat Nurikov (up to 65kg), Ali Shabanov (74kg), Murad Gaidarov (86kg), Nadezhda Shushko (53kg), Zalina Sidakova (55kg), Anastasia Guchok (60kg) and Vasilisa Mar-

zalyuk (75kg) claimed gold medals. Meanwhile, silver went to Alexander Kontoev (65kg), Omar Magomedov (86kg) and Yusul Dzhililov (97kg) and bronze to Vladislav Andreev (57kg), Ivan Yankovsky (97kg), Vadim Shvedov (125kg) and Natalia Lanko (75kg).

The Russian national team claimed most medals: 2 gold, 3 silver and 13 bronze. Belarus took second place (7, 3, 4) and third position went to Kazakhstan (2, 4, 4). Wrestlers from 11 countries take home awards from the event.

## Honorary place in good company

By Yegor Glebov

**Belarusian biathlete Darya Domracheva and her Norwegian rival, Ole Einar Bjørndalen, named top athletes of Winter Olympics-2014 in Sochi, by International Sports Press Association (AIPS)**

Darya Domracheva has been recognised as the best sports-woman of the Games following a poll conducted by the AIPS among its professional journalist members. The triple gold medalist received 45 percent of votes, followed by Slovenian Tina Maze (21 percent), who gained two gold Olympic medals. Third place went to Norwegian skier Marit Bjørgen (with three gold medals), supported by 7 percent.

Among the men, Norwegian Ole Einar Bjørndalen, aged 40, took the top spot, with 29 percent of votes. Despite winning a modest two gold victories, he was ahead of Russian Victor An (27 percent), who gained three gold medals — plus bronze for the short track team event. French biathlete Martin Fourcade came third, with two gold and one silver medal (12 percent of votes).

The Netherlands' men's speed skating team was voted the best at the Sochi Olympic Games, winning gold in the team pursuit.

## Junior athletes make a name for themselves

**Yelizaveta Khlystunova wins women's epee individual event at European Fencing Cadet and Junior Championships in Jerusalem**

Yelizaveta Khlystunova, 16, who attends the specialised Olympic reserve school for children and young people, has outshone 80 fencers from 25 countries. She defeated six opponents in the preliminary round, which sent her through to the 1/16 finals. There, she smashed Francesca Cugini of Switzerland (15:7), leading to more success in the 1/8 and 1/4 finals: beating Israel's Vera Maia Kanevsky (15:4) and Romania's Zsuzsa Schlier (15:11). In the semi-final, the Mogilev pupil faced a tougher struggle against Italy's Federica Isola (14:13) before finding triumph against Italian Alessandra Bozza (15:14).

Sadly, Yelizaveta's teammates were less successful. Pavel Dubovsky was 24th (out of 86) in the men's epee individual while Natalia Kosmach came 28th (out of 44).

The European Fencing Cadet and Junior Championships gave individual and team awards, covering all types of weaponry.