

# First win encourages second

After defeat by the USA national squad — 1:6 — the Belarusian national team conducted two successful matches. At first, it defeated the national team of Kazakhstan — 4:1 and next day it beat Switzerland — 4:3. Victories in these meetings were of principal importance for Glen Hanlon's trainees.

It would have been a great mistake to underestimate the Kazakh players. Before this game against Belarus, they had already managed to earn one point, bringing the match against the German team to a series of shoot-outs. At the same time, the Belarusian team was one of three squads at the championship who had not yet earned any points.

In their second match of the tournament our hockey players were stronger than Kazakhs, but didn't remove all the questions which were left after their initial defeat by the Americans. In the first period, the Belarusians delivered three pucks yet failed to establish efficient interaction, yielded in speed and even missed one goal.

The latter made many fans doubt the prospects of their team. Actually, the hosts of the tournament looked less than convincing against the background of the Latvians and Germans, who organised a true 'mincing machine' an hour before on the same ice, and they are our potential rivals in the struggle for leaving the group. Later, our players regrouped and attacked hard, even playing in minority, without stopping until the final signal, thus proving that the Belarusian national squad does boast serious potential. So we may assume that conclusions regarding the future and the present of Glen Hanlon's team could only be made after the match against the Swiss.

"This wasn't an easy game. We were the first to miss the goal but then managed to equalize the play. It was important to earn our first victory of the championship. However, this was only the first step towards our goal. Undoubt-



Kazakhstan goalkeeper wasn't left without work



Glen Hanlon manages to cheer up his team for the game



One of the moments at Swiss national team's net

edly, the national team of Belarus wants to qualify for the quarter-finals at a domestic world championship," notes Geoff Platt.

The captain of the national team, Alexey Kalyuzhny said that his team was following a clear plan for the game. An important moment was that, after the first missed puck, the squad didn't lose heart, but managed to take the revenge and turn events into its favour.

According to him, the victory should add confidence to the whole team. He said that the players understood what the fans expected from them and that they would make every effort not to disappoint them.

Compared to the match against the Kazakh team, Glen Hanlon made some changes in the roster. After disqualification Andrey Kostitsyn replaced Nikita Osipov while Andrey Ka-

rev replaced Ivan Usenko as the seventh defender. Judging by the results of the game, this yielded its fruit.

The meeting was nervous, with advantage moving from one team to another. However, as they say, even walls help at home, let alone the fans who almost packed the stands, and the result is apparent — the victory of Glen Hanlon's trainees and six points.

Forward of the Belarusian national team Andrey Stas, the author of one of the goals to the Swiss net, commented the match against the national squad of Switzerland:

*We strained every sinew in order to achieve victory. I thank to our fans, who have helped us greatly. They were supporting us fantastically.*

**You puck was very beautiful...**

*Probably, lookers-on see more than players. I've just come from the board to the slot and scored. I didn't even think of any beauty.*

**You've scored first and several seconds later missed the goal. Is it the lost of concentration?**

*I wouldn't say so. The Swiss are serious rivals who also are able to play hockey. They skate well and perfectly deliver passes. In total, they are a good team.*

**The team missed an offensive puck in the third period. How did you manage to quickly gather up courage and save the match?**

*We tried to follow the chosen scheme till the end rather than rushing forward, and this has yielded its results.*

**What did Glen Hanlon focus on before the game?**

*Actually, on game discipline. It seems we've fulfilled the task.*

## Belarusian champions for sixth time in a row

By Yegor Glebov

**Final series of Belarus Men's Basketball Championship ends in Tsmoki-Minsk victory**

The capital 'dragons' have earned their sixth champion title after beating Grdono-93 in an away match — 78:68. Before this, Andrey Krivonos' trainees have twice claimed victory

at home — 96:87 and 89:77 — and then lost in Grodno — 85:89. Therefore, the result of the 'golden' series is 3:1 in favour of Minsk.

Women's competition ended in

first (in history) triumph of female basketballers from Tsmoki-Minsk, who have beaten Horizont-Minsk in the decisive series — 3:1. Bronze went to Grodno Olympia basketball-

ers — ex-champions of the country. As expected, Alexander Shimkovy-ak's trainees have claimed three victories in a row over Gomel's Sozh-GGU in the series for the third place.