

Hockey for true sports lovers

The World Championship has ice-spattered bright emotions, enabling the fans to meet the best players in the world. Truly, hockey is in the air these days. However, amidst this diversity and assortment of this wonderful hockey 'cuisine', aesthetes were able to find a unique 'dish': Minsk recently hosted a tournament of amateur teams to coincide with the world event.



Best players of the match between the team of the President of Belarus and the Hockey Legends of the USSR HC

By Dmitry Baranovsky

The competition gathered the ice hockey teams of President of Belarus, HC Hockey Legends of the USSR, HC Gazprom Export and HC Stolitsa. Fans enjoyed a unique opportunity to watch not only the modern 'stars' but also legendary players of the past. The latter represented world hockey two or even three decades ago, and their Minsk matches were a symbolic bridge to the past — enabling sport lovers to make a short trip in time.

The line-up of the HC Hockey Legends of the USSR was close to optimal: the impressive list of participating masters took the fans' breath away. Among them were Myshkin, Fetisov, Gusarov, Babinov, Lutchenko, Yakushev, Boldin, Shalimov, Butsaev, Zhamnov, Kozhevnikov, Kamensky, Prokhorov and Nikolishin. Of course, these 'legends' failed to demonstrate their previous speed. Some have lost their physical shape

by now, but all have a wonderful feeling of play, wisdom and talent. Really, there are no 'former' Olympic champions — as seen from the Minsk line-up.

Speaking of the forthcoming matches, Valery Kamensky — a famous forward, an Olympic champion, a Stanley Cup holder and a three-time world champion — attempted to explain the clear truth to journalists, "We can assert as much as possible that no medals or cups are at stake. However, we are all professionals. Accordingly, once we step on the ice, we simply cannot play at half-steam. We might realise that the match has no previous professional reason, but our emotions and practice will inspire us to produce our best."

Mr. Kamensky often comes to Belarus — visiting his relatives in Grodno almost every year. This time though, the hockey player had another reason: the World Championships. The previous generations of

star-players follow this global event with much interest, unintentionally comparing the participating squads with their own teams which brought them gold medals at world tournaments and Olympics. So far, this comparison is not in the present generation's favour. In the past, failures were common, but at present, everything should change for the better — believes five-time world and two-time Olympic champion, Alexey Kasatonov. In Sochi, he was the Russian team's general manager and, in theory, should have treated the team with jealousy. In turn, he cannot but hide his pride, "The Russian team is different here. There is no sense in drawing any parallel with the squad performing at the Olympics."

The Moscow 'stars' have also come to Minsk — all wishing to win. As Vladimir Myshkin — a former USSR team goalie (jointly with Vladislav Tretiak) and present Hockey Legend fullback — notes, the passes of these 'stars' are no less



Alexander Yakushev

efficient than before. "Of course, the guys are slower, but their abilities are not lost. Believe me, they boast the previous way of thinking, intuition and mastery. With this in mind, I have no time to relax."

Really, these 'legends' boast incredible mastery. Among those coming to Minsk was the famous Sergey Makarov. Of course, it was impossible to gather the outstanding 'five' but — even playing alone — Mr. Lovkach is wonderful (resembling Alexander Yakushev in this respect). Sergey finished his career as seven-time world and two-time Olympic champion, joining the Soviet team Tretiak and Kharlamov who were named by Canadian journalists as 'immortal' after their outstanding USSR-Canada super-series of 1972. Mr. Makarov came to Minsk as the Head of the Russian Amateur Hockey League, but spoke of professionalism, "I'd love to firstly note the high level of the World Championship's organisation. I followed the event attentively and can assert that its organisers managed to keep to the Soviet traditions; this refers both to the atmosphere and level of the matches. We are doing our best to show our mettle as well. It's actually a unique and rare opportunity for fans to see such famous players on the ice. We'd hope we do not disappoint them."

The first match was played by Gazprom Export and Stolitsa, with the Minsk team winning — 5:4. The second game, a bright and exciting match between the team of the President of Belarus, the HC Hockey Legends of the USSR ended 12:9, with the President's team winning. Alexander Lukashenko scored once and created three assists.

Minsk's already excellent Ice Hockey World Championship is augmented by another unique and spectacular event — a large team of legendary Soviet hockey players have come to the capital!

Belarus makes the biggest jump in rating of IIHF after World Championship

Belarus makes biggest jump in IIHF rating

After completion of the Ice Hockey World Championship 2014 in Minsk, the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) published a new world rating of national teams.

The Belarus national team has made the biggest jump in the IIHF ratings, from 15th to 11th place, which today, is equal to 3,170 points. For the first time in five years the Belarusians appeared in the quarterfinal of the tournament, and this fact provided them considerable progress, and allowed them to outstrip such countries as France, Germany, Slovenia and Denmark. The bronze winners of the World Championship-2014, Sweden (3,990), have preserved their first place in the IIHF world ratings, and outstrip Finland (3,955) by 35 points. The Russian national team, the winners of the championship (3,915), has moved up one position, having moved from 4th to 3rd place. After defeat in the semi-final, the current Olympic champions, Canada (3,850) fell to 4th place. It is followed by the Czech Republic (5), the USA (6), Switzerland (7) and Slovakia (8), whose positions remained unchanged.

The first top-twenty of world rating looks like this:

1. Sweden
2. Finland
3. Russia
4. Canada
5. The Czech Republic
6. The USA
7. Switzerland
8. Slovakia
9. Latvia
10. Norway
11. Belarus
12. France
13. Germany
14. Slovenia
15. Denmark
16. Austria
17. Kazakhstan
18. Italy
19. Hungary
20. Ukraine

The last position, 49th, is occupied by Mongolia (260). The teams which have left the top division, following the results of the 2014 World Championship, Kazakhstan and Italy, have not managed to keep their positions among the 16 best national teams of the planet, while two winners of the World Championship in division I, Slovenia and Austria, were included into their number. Among the countries of division I, Croatia has made the greatest progress, moving from 30th to 28th place.

The new rating of the IIHF is calculated taking into account the World Championships since 2011 and includes the Winter Olympic Games of 2014. Indicators of the rating are used to define the distribution of teams of the IIHF World Championship in the top-division, and also the winter Olympic Games and Olympic qualification. With the help of the rating, groups have been formed in anticipation of the World Championship-2015, which will be held in the Czech Republic.

Grabovski makes decision in favour of Mogilev ice centre

By Igor Leshin

Mogilev benefits from Grabovski goal

After the hard victory of the Belarusian national team over the Latvian squad, one more school will receive financial aid as part of the Presidential Sports Club's project

Mikhail Grabovski has again delivered the puck and for the third

time, received the opportunity of choosing the hockey school that will receive sponsor assistance from the President's Sports Club to the amount of Br75m. Grabovski chose the regional ice hockey centre of Olympic Reserve.

The current World Championship has become the most fruitful for children's hockey institutions, and has already brought them

Br300m. Based on the choices of the decisive goal-scorers of the previous matches — Nikolay Stasenko and Mikhail Grabovski — Br150m has been sent to the specialised children and youth school of Olympic Reserve of Yunost-Minsk HC, with another Br75m — to the children and youth sport school of the Vitebsk HC and the regional ice hockey centre of Olympic Reserve.



Mikhail Grabovski

As part of the World Championship, the President's Sports Club gave each athlete scoring the decisive goal, or the goalkeeper who successfully played to 'zero', the right to choose the children and youth school where financial aid will be transferred with the aim of strengthening its material and technical base.