

## Opposition of principle

**Czech Republic, Great Britain and Israel to face Belarusian women's national basketball team (sub-Group B) at preliminary stage of 2011 European Championship, to be held in Poland**

The continental championship is scheduled from June 18th to July 3rd, hosted by three Polish cities: Łódź, Bydgoszcz and Katowice. It will be the third European forum for Anatoly Buyalsky's trainees.

In 2007, in Italy, Belarus sensationally (for the first time in our independent history) captured bronze in the tournament. Two years later, in Latvia, we were placed fourth. In the qualification round, our Belarusian squad saw the Czech Republic as their main rival, having lost to them in the semi-finals of the 2010 Championship, held last autumn.

Meanwhile, the website of the European Basketball Federation launched a poll to choose the best basketball players of 2010 from the continent. Two Belarusian names were among the top 16: Yelena Levchenko (Polish Gorzów) and Anastasia Veremeenko (Russian Nadezhda).

# Football season closes

**BATE Borisov loses away match to Dutch Alkmaar in last game of Europa League's group stage**



**BATE Borisov footballers (in yellow) meet all targets placed on them this season**

By Yuri Karpenko

Following the match, our Belarusian team had mixed feelings about their play, although BATE's head coach, Victor Goncharenko, asserted

that the squad had nothing to feel sorry for. After the match, he noted, "We find ourselves in a position where anything we say will look like an excuse. There's no need for explanations. We've had

a really tough season and, frankly, we're exhausted. The extra effort required from our side wasn't there but we have met our original targets: we've won another World Championship and reached

the Europa League play-offs. It's understandable that our team lost their concentration somewhat. We'll have to analyse our inter-season training soon. Probably, the reason for our failure is rooted there...

or in our tough schedule."

BATE halfback Renan Bressan was also upset, saying, "We are very disappointed, as we hoped to end the season differently. However, we've achieved a great deal this year."

Meanwhile, the national football team of Belarus (with 660 points) has jumped to its highest ever position in the FIFA rankings: up two places on November. A series of confident performances have led to FIFA raising its rating to 38th, up from 78th since August 11th. The national squad is now enjoying a winter break, having been placed second in the qualification group of the European Championship. The team played six matches without a single defeat, scoring nine more goals than it conceded.

The second half of 2010 has abounded in successful matches for our squads, with the junior team reaching the 1/8 finals of the continental championship. Meanwhile, BATE went through to the 1/16 finals of the Europa League.

## Spectacular festival for basketball sporting fans

By Yuri Kovalev

**Largest Belarusian sports complex — Minsk-Arena — beats attendance record set in October during WTB United League match**

It's no wonder that over 12,000 people attended the match at Minsk-Arena between legendary CSKA and Minsk-2006. The audience present were eager to see a game by the Moscow team with their own eyes.

Minsk-2006 fans who were aware of CSKA's recent difficulties anticipated an easy win for their team. However, the multi-time champion of Russia and the USSR, twice named best Europa League club, proved otherwise. CSKA showed that it was having problems, performing less brilliantly than usual. Even so, CSKA played smoothly; its reserves abounded in talent, resulting in confident play. Rivals can win the Europa League matches and the Russian championships; so Minsk-2006's dreams of victory were not totally unfounded. Minsk-2006's head coach, Andrey Krivonos, and his trainees were clearly in high spirits, based on their successes this season: the Belarusian squad has crushed all opponents in the Belarusian championship and felt quite comfortable at the WTB United League. Having matched the play of favourites and defeated less titled rivals, their confidence was perhaps understandable.

The first minutes of the Minsk



**Match between Minsk-2006 and CSKA**

match confirmed forecasts, showing that CSKA is not as strong as it used to be and that Minsk-2006 has largely improved. The hosts began on good form, leading immediately, even not afraid of famous Holden, Langdon and Vorontsevich on the squad. Winning the first quarter, Minsk-2006 continued in the same vein until half time, leading by a comfortable margin. The Minsk fans were enjoying the atmosphere.

However, CSKA's experience and strength began to work in their favour in the third quarter, when their speed, long throws and flawless penalty kicks came into play. Minsk-2006 was taken aback and CSKA shot ahead to win 75:62.

"In the first half of the match, we concentrated on both defence and attack," noted Andrey Krivonos after

the match. "The second half opened up CSKA's potential. Each player on our squad did his best. However, it's not possible to merely play basketball with such teams as CSKA: it's vital to calculate our moves — as in chess — and demonstrate united play."

CSKA Moscow praised Minsk-Arena, with coach Dmitry Shakulin noting his readiness to return to Minsk for the Final Four. CSKA is definitely through to this prestigious event, while Minsk needs to come second in Group A to earn a place in the tournament. Minsk-2006 lost its away match against UNICS Kazan, then defeated Honka of Finland at home and Dnepr Ukraine away before losing to local club Lietuvos Rytas, in Vilnius. Matches continue in early January.

## Best in their nominations

**Belarusian national squad's Yuri Zhevnov — also goalkeeper for St. Petersburg's Zenit — named best 2010 football player of Belarus**

According to the Belarusian Football Federation's poll of about 500 journalists and experts, Yuri Zhevnov has earned first place, with 407 points, followed by Rostov defenseman (Russia) Alexander Kulchy (330 points). The top three is closed by BATE Borisov forward Vitaly Rodionov (297).

BATE halfback Renan Bressan was named the best football player in the Belarusian championship, with second and third place occupied by team mates Vitaly Rodionov and Alexander Yurevich.

BATE head coach Victor Goncharenko was given the title of best Belarusian football coach, followed by Belarus' junior team coach Georgy Kondratiev and Shakhtyor Soligorsk's coach, Vladimir Zhuravel.

## Climbing tournament ladder with much success

By Kirill Pirogov

**Volleyball squads Stroitel Minsk and Metallurg Zhlobin continue play in European Challenge Cup**

Our Belarusian volleyball squads have played return matches in the European tournament. In the 1/16 men's finals of the Challenge Cup, Stroitel Minsk from Belarus defeated Anorthosis of Cyprus — 3:0, playing at home. Their first match, played on Aphrodite's Island, brought victory for the Belarusian team after a tie break — 3:2. However, Alexander Singaevsky's team had no room to relax during the home game, since their rival's strength was clear from the very beginning. The home match lasted just over an hour. In the next round of the tournament, Stroitel is to play Arkas from Turkey. Meanwhile, vice champion of Belarus Metallurg Zhlobin has defeated Antwerp of



**Singaevsky and his team**

Holland at home — 3:0.

The second round of the women's Challenge Cup brought victory to Kommunalnik Mogilev, playing against Ukrainian Khimik — 3:1, at home. However, on points, the squad failed to go through to the next round, having lost their first match — 0:3.