

# Star parade at Minsk's ice arenas

International Amateur Ice Hockey Tournament, held in Belarusian capital, to become official world championship for veterans

By Yuri Karpenko

Minsk recently hosted its traditional Christmas International Amateur Ice Hockey Tournament for the prize of the President of Belarus. It's a well-established feature on the Belarusian hockey calendar, viewed as a veterans' championship: a competition for 'real men'. No other place on earth can boast such a major hockey tournament for amateurs. Moreover, it's high level of organisation, the hospitality of Belarusian fans and ardent audience support combine to create a unique atmosphere. Of course, the President's personal involvement in the competition is also noteworthy.

The Head of the Belarusian Hockey Federation, Yevgeny Vorsin, points out that the tournament's prestige rises each year. "Ever more teams are keen to take part in the event: more than are envisaged by our regulations," he notes. "It's inspiring that not only our neighbouring states apply to participate; more distant countries and traditional 'hockey states' like Sweden and

Canada are eager to join us. I think that, next year, they'll take part in the tournament." With this growing popularity in mind, the organisers plan to expand the geography of the Christmas Tournament next year, giving it the status of a world amateur championship. The issue is to be raised at the next International Hockey Federation congress meeting.

This year, amateurs from Austria, Germany, Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Finland, Switzerland and Belarus took to the Belarusian ice, with the tournament keeping its original format. After the first round, the team played knock-out matches to settle the final two squads. Fans anticipated seeing all-time rivals Belarus and Russia (which won the event once) in the ultimate match, and were not disappointed. As before, Russia brought its legendary players to Minsk: Alexander Yakushev, Sergey Makarov, Valery Kamensky, Vladimir Malakhov, Victor Lutchenko, Andrey Kovalenko and Maxim Mikhailovsky.

On the way to the finals, Belarus



Christmas tournament's prestige increasing each year

defeated Austria, Germany and Finland in its sub-group while Russia crushed Ukraine, Switzerland and Slovakia in Group B. The decisive fight at Minsk-Arena was dramatic and enthralling, with Russia proving luckier, snatching its win via a series of penalty kicks (after a 2:2 draw).

Despite defeat, Belarus cannot be viewed as a loser, having posed an equal threat to its opponents: once

world and Olympic champions. Russian Mikhailovsky was named 'best goalkeeper' of the tournament once again while representatives of the Belarusian President's squad — Vladimir Tsyplakov and Andrey Astashevich — were named 'best defenseman' and 'best forward' respectively. Next year, Belarus should gain the chance to redeem itself, if the favourites meet in the finals again.

## Setting record

**Anastasia Shvedova sets national pole vaulting record at St. Petersburg Cup**

The athlete from Grodno participated in the prestigious tournament out of competition but this did not hamper her from demonstrating the best result of all participants. She set her record on her third attempt, reaching 4.42m, beating her own previous record by a centimetre. The overall winner of the competition was Russian Alexandra Kiryashева, who only cleared 4.2m. Anastasia moved from Russia to Belarus in the autumn of 2009 and is continuing her preparations for the European Indoor Championship, to be held in March in Paris.

## Best among equals

**Victor Zuyev admitted Belarus' best boxer of 2010**

The Belarusian Amateur Boxing Federation has named the 27 year old from Vitebsk as the country's top boxer. In 2010, Victor captured silver at the European Championship, held in Moscow, which was his third medal at a continental event. In 2002, he took bronze and, in 2004, silver, while winning silver at the 2004 Olympics and two bronze medals at world championships (in 2003 and 2009).



Belarusian women's relay team wins another medal

## Team spirit brings deserved medal

**Fourth round of the IBU Biathlon World Cup, held in German Oberhof in tough weather, sees Belarusian national squad win one medal**

The women's relay team, comprising Nadezhda Skardino, Darya Domracheva, Nadezhda Pisareva and Lyudmila Kalinchnik, has, for the first time since 2006, claimed a bronze medal at a World Cup round. In the 4x6km race, the Belarusians lost only to those from Sweden and France, ahead of 15

other teams.

The leader of the Belarusian national biathlon team, Darya Domracheva, now has three medals (won at World Cup rounds) to her credit. In the 7.5km sprint, her excellent skiing left her in fourth position, among 91 participants; poor shooting let her down. Darya was 35 seconds behind Norway's Ann Kristin Flatland, while Lyudmila Kalinchnik finished 18th. Domracheva and Kalinchnik also took part in the mass start, with less success.

## Yevgeny Gutarovich takes the lead on cycling track

By Kirill Karin

**Belarusian cyclist starts new season as Française Des Jeux leader**

According to Velolive.com, Française Des Jeux failed to receive much attention in 2010, since the French squad mostly appeared only

in local races, rather than Grand Tour events. It was placed 22nd in the International Cycling Union ratings last year, although it won four races and gained 15 victories in separate rounds.

Pleasingly, Belarusian Yevgeny Gutarovich made a great contribution to the

team's success, since the team won the second Vuelta round, where Yevgeny came first, beating even famous British Mark Cavendish, who also performed well. Gutarovich won four other races, with two wins at the very beginning of the season, during the Mediterranean Tour. He also

won a race at the Circuit de Lorraine Professionnels, held in May, and won a race during the Polish Tour, in August.

Taking into account that the Belarusian cyclist's wins during the season were distributed evenly over time, we can admit his success. Unsurprisingly, the FDJ's heads have placed him in leading position this year, in the sprint, allowing the team to work for Yevgeny's benefit (rather than his French colleagues). This greatly increases his chance of success.

## Promising victory

**Minsk-2006 basketball players enjoy successful starting match in second round group stage of WTB United League**

The Belarusian team faced Dnpr Dnepropetrovsk, which boasts a strong position in the middle range of Ukrainian basketball. Previously, Minsk-2006 defeated the squad in an away match in the first round — 79:73, gaining a higher posi-

tion within Group A of the WTB United League than their opponent. At Minsk-Arena, the Belarusian team (coached by Andrey Krivonos) again confidently beat their rival — 85:74. American legionaries Melvin Sanders and Tywain La Shawn McKee scored the most points, each claiming 19, while their country mate, Sean King, managed a welcome 16 points.

In the first round, Minsk-2006 also defeated Finnish Honka and lost to basketball grands Lietuvos Rytas Vilnius, UNICS Kazan and CSKA Moscow. Now, with nine points, Minsk-2006 is placed fourth in the tournament table. It's too early to speak of beating the admitted leaders of the competition but our team is likely to be inspiring a few concerns. The next match within the



Minsk-2006 attacks

WTB United League sees Minsk-2006 play Honka on January 28th (an away match).