

Finishing season in high spirits

Maxim Mirny and Daniel Nestor win tournament in Shanghai

In China, Max and Daniel demonstrated brilliant play, yielding no more than five games during a match. The only lost set was the final one; fortunately, this wasn't fatal for the duo. Their well-considered strategy during the super tie-break helped them defeat French Michael Llodra and Serbian Nenad Zimonjic — 3:6, 6:1 (12:10) to successfully finish the tournament.

Their steady play over the season, and in Shanghai, has enabled the 'victorious' duo to qualify for the ATP finals in London a full one and a half months beforehand.

False step at start of qualification round

Belarusian women's national handball team plays first match of 2012 European Handball Championship

In the first match of the 1st qualification round, our national squad lost in Frankfurt-am-Oder to Germany — 19:27 (10:15). Our team is now being coached by famous Belarusian Leonid Brazinsky, while Valentina Yankovskaya scored an impressive six times.

The qualifying matches of the continental tournament (the main event for our squad) are being held in 2012. The two best teams from each group of seven go through to the final stage, joining the current European champions — the Norwegians, and the hosts of the final stage — the Dutch. The ultimate matches are scheduled for December 2012. To date, Belarus has reached the finals of the European Championship four times.

Minsk awaits table tennis stars

Minsk is to host grand table tennis 2011 INTERSPORT Europe-Asia All Stars Series

In late October, a unique match is scheduled for the Republican Tennis Olympic Training Centre, involving world level stars usually seen only at world championships or the Olympic Games. The teams will comprise the strongest masters from various states: Vladimir Samsonov (Belarus), Michael Maze (Denmark), Adrien Mattenet (France), Xu Xin (China), Gao Ning (Singapore) and others. According to organisers, it's a serious step in the development of table tennis in our country. Moreover, in future, a range of serious international tournaments are to be held in Belarus, featuring top level players.

Fencers demonstrate high class

Belarusian men's fencing team wins first World Fencing Championship silver in Catania

By Dmitry Komarov

In the finals, Dmitry Lapkes, Valery Priemko, Alexander Buikevich and reserve Alexey Likhachevsky lost to the Russian squad — comprising Nikolay Kovalev, Veniamin Reshetnikov, Alexey Yakimenko and reserve Pavel Bykov. The final score was 29:45. Beforehand, our team defeated Canada 45:27, Romania — 45:44 and Italy 45:43. Silver is the squad's highest achievement to date, with fourth place at the 2010 World Championships in Paris their previous best result.

"We still have two tournaments to attend — in Moscow and Beijing — before the Olympic

selection round ends (April 1st)," notes head coach Maxim Logotko. "Being ranked fourth allows us a fighting chance, and we think that we'll face a weaker team to reach the top eight. The only team likely to deprive us of a place at the London Olympics is the French. They currently lag behind us by 95 points."

Dmitry Lapkes was most successful in the individual events at the World Championship, occupying seventh position and losing in the ¼ final to Luigi Tarantino, 40, of Italy — who eventually claimed bronze. Valery Priemko was placed 23rd while Alexander Buikevich finished 37th and Alexey Romanovich was ranked 42nd.



Belarusian fencers don't hide their joy of success

Victoria's exhibition match

One of world's top tennis players once again organises master class for novices

A year ago, Azarenko surprised Belarus with her exhibition match at the Sports Palace, playing tennis legend Danish Caroline Wozniacki. Afterwards, she promised to repeat the event. The two world tennis stars are still planning their second 'friendly' match in the Belarusian capital but Azarenko has already organised a 'master class' for children at the Republican Tennis Centre in Minsk.

In order to share her tennis secrets with almost a hundred children, the number three seed had to abstain from the remainder of her seasonal calendar — including final tournament (which the Belarusian might reach both in doubles and singles events, and with which quite ambitious plans are connected).

The Fed Cup promises to be a serious examination of the Belarusian team in February, since we'll face players from the USA. Azarenko's old rival, Serena Williams, recently

announced her desire to join them. "It's difficult to say whether Serena Williams' decision to play as part of the American team will be better or worse for us," noted Victoria after the master class. "I know that it'll be much more difficult to beat the Americans but we have a strong, friendly team, able to defeat serious opponents. There's some time before the match, so it's now important for me to perform well at the final tournament and successfully finish the season."

BATE loses to Milan yet hopes for revenge

BATE Borisov footballers demonstrate encouraging play at Champions League Group Stage away match

At their previous meeting, at Minsk's Dynamo Stadium, Barcelona defeated Belarus 0:5; this time, BATE performed far more impressively, deserving to score at least once. The Borisov players received a perfect chance in the 33rd minute, when Dutch legionary Mark van Bommel lost the ball to BATE's Renan Bressan near the goal. The Brazilian had a tête-à-tête with Milan's goalkeeper, Christian Abbiati, but failed to score. Sadly, the Italian players then sent the ball to the back of the Belarusian net almost immediately. After the goal,



BATE tries to demonstrate its mastery in match against Milan

the Belarusians' play went downhill fast, with our team failing to keep possession of the ball. They made repeated mistakes in their passes, resulting in most of the action taking place near our goal. BATE missed a second goal in the twentieth minute before the match ended. Kevin Prince Boateng's kick, perfect in beauty and power, has reached the net from beyond the penalty area. The football club from Borisov has met the Italian club for the third time in its history,

but Milan's net was left out of reach once more.

"Today, we had a good chance of turning the game to our advantage," noted BATE's head coach, Victor Goncharenko, after the match. "However, we failed to use our opportunities. Milan's level of play is so great that they can score even from beyond the penalty area."

Goncharenko's squad will have the chance to correct the situation in a return match in Minsk.

Andrey Kostitsyn chasing records

Montreal Canadiens' forward Andrey Kostitsyn achieves the success shown by Vladimir Tsyplakov (named Belarus' top ice hockey player in 1992, 2000 and 2002) regarding the number of goal passes in NHL regular championship matches

At present, both boast 101 goal passes each, sharing second position among Belarusian NHL players, behind Ruslan Saley (who perished in September in a tragic plane crash). The latter assisted 159 times across 917 matches: an achievement likely to remain unbroken this season. The only other contenders are Mikhail Grabovsky (88 passes resulting in goals across 249 games) and Sergey Kostitsyn (75 passes across 237 matches).

Remarkably, Andrey Kostitsyn and Vladimir Tsyplakov have played 331 matches each in the planet's strongest league, to achieve 101 goal passes. The former has been with the Montreal Canadiens in the NHL championship for seven seasons, while Tsyplakov used to play for Los Angeles (1996-2000) and Buffalo (2000-2001).

Kostitsyn's 'sniper' achievements are much weightier, having delivered the largest number of pucks (88); Tsyplakov boasts just 69. Andrey Kostitsyn is now aiming for 100 delivered pucks, 200 resultative points and the Belarusian forward record (currently belonging to Ruslan Saley — 204 points: 45+159). Andrey has earned 189 points already: 88+101. He is just 15 points behind Ruslan.