

Reshuffle seemed reasonable

From January 20th-29th, the Commonwealth of Independent States Cup is scheduled to take place in St. Petersburg

The tournament involves under-21 national teams. Those born between 1990 and 1991 are eligible. The Belarusian Football Federation has been invited to send our under 21s team, currently headed by Yuri Shukanov, but has declined, since the squad will be in training. Instead, a new squad is being formed comprising players born in 1992 and 1993, taken from Belarus' national junior squad of under 20s, coached by Alexey Vergeenko.

Legionaries out of action

Belarusian Toronto (NHL) club forward Mikhail Grabovsky misses two matches due to injury

In the middle of the third period of the home match against Phoenix, in the centre of the field, Grabovsky collided with Czech forward Martin Hanzal. Mikhail left the ice not suspecting the seriousness of his injury but was later prescribed two weeks rest. Another Belarusian legionary in the NHL, Andrey Kostitsyn, has been out of action for five matches with a leg injury; the date of his return is not yet known.

Minsk-2006 continues basketball autumn

Belarus' champions celebrate vital victory over Turkish Pınar Karşıyaka in third most significant Cup tournament of Europe — heading Group G and almost achieving their first win in VTB United League

By Vladimir Dmitriev

The team's leadership of Group G was at stake, although this did not guarantee a place in the next round of the tournament. A win would raise our chances significantly however, so the squad was determined to beat Turkish Pınar Karşıyaka in Izmir (in the EuroChallenge for several years and having begun the season by defeating Türk Telekom).

The match in Turkish Izmir rose in intensity towards the end, as the hosts came close to making an

impressive '21 point' comeback. Happily, the strong nerves of goal-keeper Alexander Kudryavtsev helped him avoid hesitation and the Minsk team created a major sensation within the EuroChallenge tour. They now boast two victories across two matches, and have an excellent chance of continuing to the next stage.

"The hissing noise of Turkish fans and the tremendous roar in the stands only inspired me," recalls Alexander Kudryavtsev. "We managed to demonstrate our cool at the



Minsk-2006 basketballers needed more luck to beat Russian Lokomotiv

end of the match, believing that we could win despite everything. Saying that, at the end of the match, we slightly relaxed."

They had to face four matches in a single week, over different tournaments. It's no surprise that the squad is tired by the end of a match. Andrey Krivonos' trainees experienced the same when bat-

tling Krasnodar's Lokomotiv-Kuban. Initially, they played well, helped by new recruit Courtney Eldridge, from the USA. After 32 minutes, he was boasting 1.5 times more passes with results than the whole hosting team: his 12 passes created a new record within the VTB United League. However, the team still managed to lose 83:89.

Minsk-2006 is next to face Czech Nymburk, hoping to earn first points in the VTB United League. So far, Mr. Krivonos' team has been focused on the EuroChallenge, where it seems they have quite promising prospects. Our basketballers are also to play in the Belarusian championship, where the club is confident of victory.

Belarusian cyclists earn four places at Olympic Games

Three Belarusian athletes to join team cycling race at 2012 London Olympics while Yevgeny Gutarovich earns place in separate start

The world and European 2011 rankings have determined qualification for the London Olympics, with those countries ranked 1-10th in the World Tour allowed to send the maximum number of five. Those ranked 11-15th are permitted to send four cyclists.

This year, only four Belarusians have performed in the planet's strongest teams: Konstantin Sivtsov (High Road, the USA), Vasily Kirienko (Movistar, Spain), Bronislav Samoilov (Movistar, Spain), and Alexander Kuchinsky (Katyusha, Russia). They began the season well; by summer, our country was ranked 16th worldwide. However, a lack of further achievements



FDJ rider Yevgeny Gutarovich raises his arms as he wins the cycling race

sent us to 21st place (with 86 points).

Pro Tour and continental events count towards qualification, and second division EuroTour races are also considered. La Française

des Jeux (FDJ) sprint cyclist Yevgeny Gutarovich is the only Belarusian athlete to have represented Belarus in the EuroTour this year. Despite suffering from appendicitis and needing to take

a long break, he claimed prizes in several races and improved both his personal EuroTour rating (2nd place behind Italian Giovanni Visconti — from Farnese) and his La Française des Jeux po-

sition (European club ranking of 1st place). The continental cycling ranking of Belarus has also been positively influenced by Yevgeny Gutarovich and our country is now placed 12th.

Five national teams have secured their participation in the 2012 Olympics following their excellent results in world cycling events, while Belarus is among the six European states having acquired three places in the group race at the Olympics.

Yevgeny Gutarovich's 2nd place in the individual EuroTour rankings has given him a position in the separate start race in London, alongside 39 other cyclists. Yevgeny, turning 28 on November 29th, has accomplished a great deal on his own, securing four Olympic tickets to the London Games for the national Belarusian team.

Rackets heading for London city

By Dmitry Baranovsky

Max Mirny and Canadian Daniel Nestor are to take part in the finals of the Association of Professional Tennis Players (ATP) tournament, in London

During the preliminary draw, the Belarusian-Canadian pair were allocated to Group B. they are to face Michael Llodra (France) — Nenad Zimonjić (Serbia), Rohan Bhopathi (India) — Aisam-Ul-Haq (Pakistan), and Mariusz Fyrstenberg — Marcin Matkowski (Poland). After one round, the top two pairs from each group will go through to the semi-finals.

Mirny and Nestor's chances are viewed as being good. In 2006, Mirny won the finals, playing with Swedish Jonas Björkman.