

Darya Domracheva begins her biathlon season with victory!

By Dmitry Baranovsky

"I was completely focused on the firing position today and was lucky with the wind," she admits. "It was gusting in a way that wasn't equal for all athletes. I felt relaxed, as my shooting coach, German Klaus Siebert, was nearby. This victory is important for him and the whole team."

Either Siebert's prayers or the weather gods helped her find all her targets; coupled with strong ski work, she took her place among the leaders by the fifth lap, creating a 'decent margin' ahead of Anna Maria Nilsson of Sweden (who came second for the first time in her career)



Darya on victorious ski track

and, more importantly, ahead of Magdalena Neuner of Germany.

Domracheva certainly proved her abilities, finishing over 40 seconds ahead of Neuner, even leaving aside the penalty minute of her German rival — one of the world's fastest. Kaisa Mäkäräinen of Finland, who usually wins purely on speed, seems to have temporarily lost her way at the shooting ranges, while Domracheva is shooting courageously and showing a good pace on the track. Neither illness nor surgery is holding her back.

"I wanted to end the race at the second lap," admitted Domracheva after the finish. "I began quickly, as if it was a sprint, and, unexpectedly, I began to feel the strain. All those missed targets followed..."

We hope her victory in Östersund will be her first of many this season, where the major test is traditionally seen at the World Championship. Unfortunately, Darya's teammates failed to match her success. The team's second hope, Nadezhda Skardino, let her nerves get the better of her, earning seven penalty minutes, and finishing in 59th position. Young Anastasia Dubozhova and Darya Yurkevich came 55th (with 8 misses) and 49th (two misses) respectively. The squad's Alla Tolkach suffered 12 penalty minutes, finishing last.

Tennis success repeated after five years have passed

Max Mirny wins final ATP doubles event in London

By Dmitry Komashko

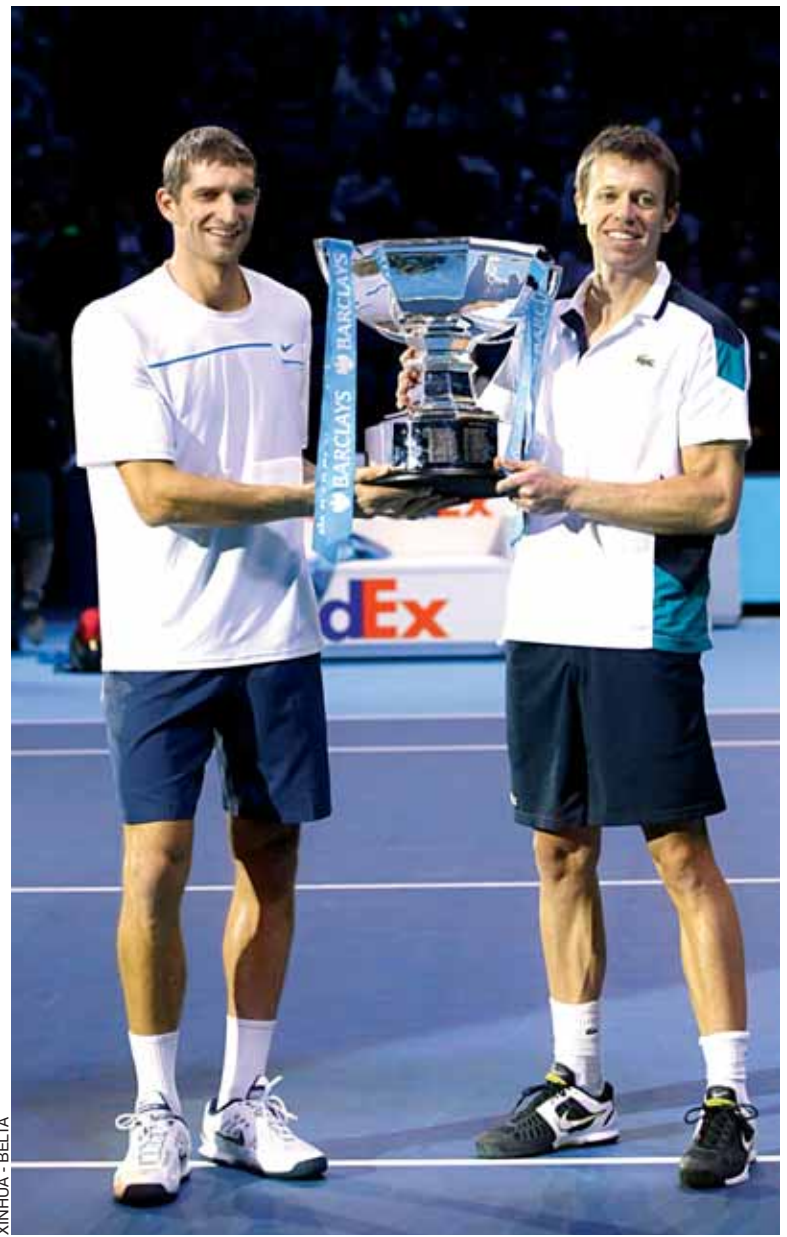
In the decisive match, with the Belarusian-Canadian duo ranked third, they defeated Poland's Mariusz Fyrstenberg and Marcin Matkowski (ranked eighth) — 7:5, 6:3. The match lasted for one hour and 19 minutes, with the Belarusian-Canadian pair repeating their preliminary stage victory. Max Mirny and Daniel Nestor are the only pair of eight final participants to win every match in the tournament.

At the preliminary stage, Mirny and Nestor topped their group, having beaten Rohan Bopanna (India) / Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi (Pakistan) — 7:6 (7:2), 4:6, 11:9 (ranked fifth worldwide); Poland's Mariusz Fyrstenberg and Marcin Matkowski — 6:4, 6:3; and Michael Llodra (France) / Nenad Zimonjic (Serbia) — 4:6, 6:3, 10:7 (ranked

second). In the semi-finals, the pair narrowly defeated American brothers Bob and Mike Bryans — 7:6 (8:6), 6:4 — who are ranked first.

Max Mirny won the yearly ATP doubles in 2006, pairing Swede Jonas Bjorkman and, last year, reached the finals with India's Mahesh Bhupathi, where they were beaten by his present partner, Canadian Daniel Nestor, partnering Nenad Zimonjic.

Max Mirny's success in London has become a beautiful conclusion to the season when the Belarusian tennis player returned to the global ranking's top. After bright partnering Jonas Bjorkman, Max's career was in decline. However, a year ago, he joined another tennis star — Daniel Nestor; their pairing has brought brilliant results. They have won four ATP titles: in Memphis and Shanghai, at the French Roland



Maxim Mirny and Daniel Nestor win doubles final in London

Garros Open, and at the London Masters finals. Moreover, Mirny and Nestor have entered the finals three times at prestigious events, inspiring fans to believe

that, next year, the experienced pair — who are already among the top three professional doubles — would continue their victorious tradition.

Nadezhda Ostapchuk and Andrey Mikhnevich — athletes of the year!

Executive Committee of Belarus' Athletics Federation and Head Coaching Council of the national squad name top athletes and coaches of 2011

Nadezhda Ostapchuk has been named the best woman athlete. The shot putt World Championship and Brilliant League silver medallist is joined by Andrey Mikhnevich, who is also known for the shot putt. He took bronze at the World Championship and at the European Team Champion-

ship, beating the 1994 national Belarusian record set by Sergey Kasnauskas by one centimetre. His winning throw reached 22.1m.

Alina Talay has been awarded the same title among young athletes for her 100m steeplechase, in which she won the Junior European Championship and World Military Games. She is also a silver medallist from the European Team Championship. In the same category among the men, Eduard Mikhan has been awarded for his de-

cathlon performance, in which he won silver at the European Junior Championship. The women's relay 4x400 squad — Anna Tashpulatova, Yuliana Yushchenko, Ilona Usovich and Svetlana Usovich — was named the best team, having been placed 6th at the World Championship.

The top Belarusian track and field coaches are Alexander Yefimov (Nadezhda Ostapchuk's coach) and Vladimir Sivtsov (Andrey Mikhnevich's coach).



Winner Andrey Kulebin

All victories in hosts' favour

Traditional Thai boxing tournament hosted by Minsk-Arena, with each BIG-8 participant defending its own continent

Belarus was represented by Andrey Kulebin — the multi-time European and world champion among amateurs and professionals. He showed his usual skill, defeating Loris Audou of South America and Africa's Ibrahim Konate on the way to the finals. In the tough final match, he also crushed European Ruslan Kushnirenko.

A spectacular WKN performance was organised, allowing Kick Fighter Club trainees to prove their worth. In the weight category under 54.9kg, Belarusian Andrey Zayats and Ukrainian Alexey Yanin boxed for five rounds, with Andrey winning. Dmitry Valent (76.2kg) faced Samir Durid for four rounds; then a towel was thrown indicating that the French capitulated.

Among the women, Yekaterina Vandarieva defeated Polish Joanna Jedrzejczyk (Dutch school) although the judging seemed dubious. Next year, the BIG-8 is likely to be hosted by a European capital.

Yielding only to Russians

Belarus' main team placed second at 18th International Greco-Roman Wrestling Tournament in honour of 1960 Olympic champion Oleg Karavaev

As is traditional, the event gathered over a hundred of leading athletes from nine countries. It has been held in Minsk since 1994, honouring Oleg Karavaev, but was awarded official status of an international competition only last year. This year, it has shifted from an individual to a team event and, as a result, the host country faced Russia in the finals — losing 1:6. Belarusian 2011 World Championship silver medallist Elbek Tozhiev (under 55kg) was the only one to claim a win during the final seven battles. Battling for bronze, Georgia defeated Kazakhstan 4:3.



Iosif Chugoshvili (Belarus) and Alexander Anuchin (Russia) fight

At the preliminary stage, Belarus-1 team topped Group A, defeating the USA — 5:2, Poland — 7:0, Kazakhstan — 5:2, and Lithuania — 6:1. The preliminary Group B winner was Russia, with Belarus-2 team placed third.

The total prize fund — as last year — totalled \$60,000. Russia, as the winner, received half the sum while Belarus-1 team claimed \$20,000 for its second place; the remainder went to Georgia.