



Coaching Department Study Visit

UEFA Under 21 Championships

Sweden 2009

Sweden v Belarus

16th June 2009

Malmo 18:15 KO

Report on Belarus

Squad	Name	D.O.B	Club
1	Pavel Chesnovski	4.3.86	FC Vitebsk
4	Igor Shitov	24.10.86	FC Bate Borisov
18	Dmitri Verkhovtsov	10.10.86	FC Naftan Novopolotsk
3	Aleksandr Martynovich	26.8.87	FC Dinamo Minsk
2	Nikolai Osipovich	29.5.86	FC Mtz-Ripo Minsk
11	Mikhail Afanasiev	4.11.86	FC Amkar Perm
8	Aleksandr Volodko	18.6.86	FC Bate Borisov
15	Sergei Kislyak	6.8.87	FC Dinamo Minsk
9	Leonid Kovel	29.7.86	Moskovskaya Oblast
7	Sergei Kryvets	8.6.86	FC Bate Borisov
10	Dmitri Komarovski	10.10.86	FC Naftan Novopolotsk
Subs			
14 on for 10	Anton Putsila	10.6.87	FC Dinamo Minsk
23 on for 11	Andrei Chukhlei	2.10.87	FC Dinamo Minsk
20 on for 7	Vladimir Yurchenko	26.1.89	Moskovskaya Oblast



Attacking Strategy

Belarus were a possession based outfit who passed the ball without any real purpose. The two attacking strategies we observed were;

- a. Playing into No.7 Sergei Kryvets, the shadow striker who attempted to play 'between the lines', but he struggled to receive good possession and face forward. As a result he went deeper and deeper, to little effect.
- b. To play wide to No. 9 Leonid Kovel and No. 11 Mikhail Afanasiev and link up with the lone striker No. 10 Dmitri Komarovski. However this was ineffective as the wide players were very predictable and No. 9 was right footed and regularly drove inside with no end product. No. 11, who played wide right, had pace but the team strategy did not maximise this.

Belarus had more possession than Sweden over the 90 minutes but did not move the ball quickly enough or forward with any urgency. When they kept possession across the back, the players in front did not create any space individually or collectively. Therefore they gave the ball away regularly and in vulnerable areas which Sweden capitalised upon.

Defensive Strategy

In general they defended deep and did not press the ball high up the pitch. The defensive line was set up in an attempt to win the first header. However the centre backs failed to contain the Swedish front players, either in the air or on the ground. The back players were regularly exposed by poor clearances and naïve passing in combination with no protection from the midfield players. This led to countless opportunities for Sweden to counter attack.

There was no clear indication whether full-backs were showing 'inside' or 'outside.' There was little evidence of any defending strategy.

Transition

There were a huge amount of turnovers which Sweden exploited leading to a number of attempts on goal. The Belarusians' could not contain the speed and numbers of the Swedish counter attacks. Sweden were set up to counter attack, and Belarus played completely into their hands.

Set Plays

Belarus were predictable in all set plays, both attacking and defensive, but they did attempt an adventurous corner in the 89th minute when all the intended threats (central defenders, holding midfield players) ran early into the 6-yard box. This left an opportunity for a driven ball to the edge of the box, a run over the ball, and a first-time strike at goal.

Belarus were also exposed by a very long Sweden throw, despite claiming in the pre-match notes that they knew everything about Sweden!

Game Management

Belarus maintained the same shape and style throughout the match, never straying from the opening script. There did not appear to be a 'Plan B'. The substitutions they made were like-for-like, but those joining the game looked technically better and brought some much-needed spirit and mobility to a struggling side.

Interestingly, after Belarus took an unexpected lead, there was no period of 'consolidation', they still kept to script and did not compact play to frustrate Sweden – unfortunately the lead lasted 2 minutes, and their chance was gone.

The Belarus coaching and management staff adopted a conservative non-intervention style on the side: at no point did they enter the technical coaching areas to share information with the players, unlike the Swedes who were very visual and vocal.

Belarus Players Post Match Comments

Midfielder Sergei Krivets took Belarus's 5-1 defeat against Sweden on the chin but hoped that his side would regain their focus quickly, telling uefa.com: "It is humiliating, but that's the nature of football. Life goes on."

"We deserved to lose," Krivets said. "I cannot remember a more disappointing defeat in my career."

"However, it was not as if Sweden were better than we expected," added the FC BATE Borisov midfielder, who turned 23 on 8 June. "We played well below our usual standard."

As for the Sweden game, the No8 Volodko agreed that many of Belarus's wounds were self-inflicted. "The fact that we conceded so soon after taking the lead is probably the major reason for our defeat," Volodko said. "Then we conceded two more. These goals broke our spirit. We mainly conceded after making mistakes. We tried to respond after the break, played more creatively, pushed forward and then conceded two more goals."

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Belarus Coach Yuri Kurnenin

Background (Information sourced from UEFA.com)

Date of birth: 14 June 1954

Playing career: FC Dinamo Moskva (1971-75), FC Dinamo Minsk (1976-87)

Coaching career: KIM Vitebsk (1989-90), FC Dinamo Brest (1991-92), Samotlor XXI Nizhnevartovsk (1993-94), Syria (1995-96), Al-Ahli Oman (1997), FC Dinamo Minsk (1999-2000), FC Chernomorets Novorossiysk (2000-2001), FC Shakhtar Soligorsk (2002), FC Dinamo Minsk (2003), Belarus (assistant coach 2003), Belarus Under-21s (February 2006 to present)

Despite taking Belarus to the 2009 UEFA European Under-21 Championship, Yuri Kurnenin is still best known in his homeland for his success as a player. He began at FC Dinamo Moskva but made his name with FC Dinamo Minsk between 1976 and his retirement in 1987. A member of the Dinamo side that became the only Belarussian club to win the Soviet title in 1982, Kurnenin initially played in midfield, but switched to wing-back, where his attacking instincts brought a famous hat-trick in a victory against FC Kairat Almaty during the title-winning season. Kurnenin entered the record books by scoring Belarus's first goal in UEFA competition when his free-kick against Grasshopper Club earned Dinamo a 1-0 first-round victory in the European Champion Clubs' Cup in September 1983.

His coaching career began with KIM Vitebsk in the minor Soviet leagues in 1989 before a move to FC Dinamo Brest, whom he led to third place in the inaugural Belarus championship in 1992, still the club's best finish. Kurnenin went on to coach in Russia, Syria and Oman, notably leading the Syrian national side to the 1996 AFC Asian Cup finals.

He returned to Belarus, and Dinamo, in 1999 but was unable to emulate his playing success and was sacked midway through the 2000 season. Spells at FC Chernomorets Novorossiysk and FC Shakhtar Soligorsk followed before another brief stint at Dinamo in 2003. He then teamed up with former Dinamo Moskva and Dinamo Minsk teammate Anatoliy Baidachniy as assistant coach of the Belarus national side before taking over the U21s in February 2006.