

2011

Bert went to a *Euroleague* game in Charleroi, Belgium on December 8th, 2011: *Spirou Charleroi vs. Partizan Belgrade* 84-79.

Around 400 *Partizan* fanatics from The Netherlands, France, Germany and Belgium travelled to Charleroi on December 8th, 2011. The *Partizan* supporters were already making much noise, singing and cheering half an hour before the start of the *Euroleague* Group C game. They kept doing so until the end of the match-up between *Belgacom Spirou* and *Partizan Belgrade*.

Spirou quickly took the lead: 11-4 with US players **Demond Mallet** and **Andre Riddick** very active in offense. The Belgian side could not hold the advantage by the end of the first quarter. **Miroslav Raduljica** and **Milan Macvan** led their team in a nice come-back: 13-18 after 10 minutes. **Demond Mallet** and **Caleb Green** finished the quarter with a bad selection of shots.

Spirou had a poor start in the second quarter. Serbian duo **Dragan Milosavljevic** and **Dusan Kecman** were well present offensively and gave a very large lead to their team: 17-30. *Spirou's* Czech player **Jiri Welsch**, excellent through the whole game, gave a wake-up call to his mates by scoring at 19-30. *Partizan's* center **Rasko Katic** and *Spirou's* US forward **Caleb Green** got nervous and that made the sparks fly. *Spirou* was back in the race: 25-32 when Coach **Jovanovic** took a time-out. Thanks to a much better defense, *Spirou* even came closer. After *Partizan's* intimidator **Rasko Katic** hit and sent **Randy Oveneke** back on the bench with a knee injury, **Demond Mallet** got "on fire" and brought his team back at 37-38 at half-time.

As soon as the third quarter started, **Mallet** continued to score for *Spirou*. *Partizan's* center **Miroslav Raduljica** fouled for the fourth time. **Toko Shengolja**, **Demond Mallet** and **Jiri Welsch** boosted the *Spirou* side. The scoreboard suddenly showed 47-41. **Acie Law** also got "on fire" for the Serbian team and helped his team make 47-48 just afterwards. *Spirou* players **Demond Mallet**, **Caleb Green**, **Tornike Shengolja** and **Chris Hill** reacted well and showed power in fastbreak and precision from long range. Despite **Rasko Katic's** two easy baskets in the paint and **Dusan Kecman's** long-range shooting for *Partizan*, *Spirou* stayed ahead at the end of the third quarter: 69-61.

The fourth quarter began with a brawl between two big players at 72-67: **Andre Riddick** on the *Spirou* side and **Miroslav Raduljica** on the *Partizan* one. Mates quickly put an end to this situation and referees decided to give a technical foul to each player (fifth foul for both of them). **Katic**, the intimidator, made 72-73. Nevertheless, **Katic's** aggressive physical plays were not enough as **Shengolja** (from the free-throw line) and **Hill** (a three-pointer and a bonus) gave a nice lead to *Spirou*: 78-73 with less than 5 minutes to go in this game. Despite last *Partizan* efforts by **Law**, Coach **Bozzi's** men managed well the last minutes of play. They outscored their opponents 5-2 from the free-throw line to finally win the game 84-79.

Partizan fans stopped singing and everyone got home happy after an excellent basketball game. *Belgacom Spirou's* success will not be enough to qualify for the next round. *Partizan* will have to win again to qualify.

See full story (written by Bert) on <http://www.basketme.com/noticia.php?id=53183> and on <http://www.eurobasket.com/Belgium/basketball.asp?NewsID=251555>.

Bert went to a *Euroleague* game in Charleroi, Belgium on November 10th, 2011: *Spirou Charleroi vs. EA7 Emporio Armani Milano* 76-81.

It was almost a full house attending the much awaited *Euroleague* game *Spirou Charleroi vs. Emporio Armani Milano* at the *Spiroudome* in Charleroi, Belgium on November 11th, 2011. Supporters could enjoy a very high-quality basketball game.

Both teams played a strong defense in the first quarter. *Armani Milano's* Coach **Sergio Scariolo**, also Coach of Spain's national team which won the 2011 *FIBA European Championship* held in Lithuania last summer, decided to keep his stars **Danilo Gallinari** and **Malik Hairston** on the bench. Despite a beautiful alley-oop finished by *Armani's* Greek international player **Antonis Fotsis**, this game started with low scoring: 11-14 for the visitors after the first 10 minutes. *Spirou* players **Jiri Welsch** of Czech Republic and **Tornike Shengelia** of Georgia had applied themselves well to help their team to stay in the race.

Spirou of Coach **Giovanni Bozzi** did even better afterwards: they took the lead and played impressively from time to time. If *Spirou* had not missed so many free throws in the first twenty minutes of this neck-to-neck battle, the gap could have been even larger at the break. Score evolution in the second quarter: 29-25, 29-30 and 34-30 at the half. *Spirou* player **Caleb**

Green had led his team in scoring in the first half with 10 points while former *Denver Nuggets* star **Danilo Gallinari** with 9 points very efficiently helped his team to stay close.

The Italian team with much inspired duo of Greek international players **Antonis Fotsis** and **Ioannis Bourousis** began in a stronger way in the third quarter. *Armani Milano* was given the lead on a nice jumper by **Fotsis**: 36-37! After some very capricious judgment of referees, *Spirou Charleroi* reacted well and re-took the lead at the end of this ongoing seesaw battle: 58-53.

The final ten minutes looked like a real thriller with fantastic actors like **Danilo Gallinari**, **Antonis Fotsis**, **Jacopo Giachetti**, **Drew Nicholas** and **Omar Cook** on the visitors' side and **Demond Mallet** (21 points in this game), **Andre Riddick**, **Justin Hamilton** and **Chris Beghin** on the *Spirou* side. After 61-61 and 68-68 on the scoreboard, things got unexpected. Refereeing remained capricious (for both sides). The home team was nevertheless still ahead with just 1'34" remaining in this game: 74-71 on a basket by US center **Riddick**. Especially efficient from long range and from the line, *Armani* finished strongly: 74-74 and finally 76-81. The huge crowd attended a great game of basketball. Local players and fans can regret to have missed so many free throws in first and second quarters.

To be noted: the very satisfying performance of Division II player **Randy Oveneke** who finished this game with excellent stats of 8 pts (2/3 from 2 pt range, 1/1 from 3 pt range and 1/2 from the free-throw line) and 1 reb.

Bert went to the 25th World Juniors Tournament of Douai, Northern France on June 25th, 2011.

Now a traditional basketball event in Northern France, the 25th *World Juniors Tournament* of Douai held from 22nd to 26th June has been a well organized and one top level competition again.

This year, six U18 national teams from Europe with great young talents were involved in the tourney: hosting country and defending title winner France of Coach **Philippe Ory**, last July's *FIBA U18 European Championship* qualified teams Germany, Greece, Turkey and Croatia as well as Bulgaria.

Just like last year, the Douai event also welcomed a *FIBA* and *Euroleague* referees' camp (under *FIBA* lead). Once again, it was a great success and most teams had the chance to prepare well before the *FIBA U18 European Championship* which took place in Wroclaw, Poland from 21st to 31st July.

Douai school children were invited to attend the games played on Thursday and Friday. A nice crowd showed up at the *Salle Corot* on Saturday (from 500 to 1000, depending on the game) and had the chance to meet and greet guest star **Ian Mahinmi** (see picture, courtesy *rmc.fr*), the French pro player who recently won the 2011 *NBA* title with the *Dallas Mavericks*. A fantastic occasion for kids and fans to have an autograph and chat with one *NBA* champion.

The dunk contest on Saturday evening was of high quality and French versatile point guard **Ulysse Adjağba** finished first with an impressive double pump back hand dunk from the baseline. French tall forward **Jean-Charles Livio** finished second and German forward **Stephan Haukohl** third in this slam dunk contest much appreciated by fans.

Turkey deserved the 2011 title as they remained undefeated in the Douai competition. Based on an excellent organisation, the well-balanced Turkish NT showed that it was going to play for the title at the next European Championship in Poland. Finishing at second rank in Douai this year, France finished strongly as they gave no chance to the Croatians in the last match up of the tournament on Sunday afternoon: 88-38. Only defeated by Turkey 56-62 on the third day of competition, *Les Bleuets* finished the tourney with a 4-1 record. Germany and Greece both recorded 3 wins and 2 losses and respectively finished third and fourth while Croatia and Bulgaria were ranked fifth and sixth with only 1 win and 4 defeats in this mini championship tourney.

The 2011 *All Tournament Team* was known on the last day of the event:

Point guard: **Kenan Sipahi** (Turkey)

Shooting guard: **Mauricio Marin** (Germany)

Small forward: **Giannoulis Larentzakis** (Greece)

Power forward: **Josip Mikulic** (Croatia, see picture courtesy *Sun Sentinel*)

Center: **Mouhamadou Jaiteh** (France)

MVP of the 2011 Douai tournament: **Mouhamadou Jaiteh** (France)

Best scorer of the 2011 Douai tournament: **Josip Mikulic** (Croatia)

Besides the honoured or awarded young talents mentioned above, I would like to list several other players who, according to me, also deserve a special mention. Observers should keep an eye on the following young talents in the years to come:

Ramazan Tekin (Turkey, center); **Talat Altunbey** (Turkey, forward); **Hugo Invernizzi** (France, forward); **William Howard** (France, forward); **Bruno Cingala-Mata** (France, forward); **Paul Zipser** (Germany, power forward); **Anselm Hartmann** (Germany, guard); **Petros Melissaratos** (Greece, center); **Michalis Kamberidis** (Greece, forward); **Giannis Dimakopoulos** (Greece, center); **Matej Buovac** (Croatia, shooting forward); **Filip Cvjeticanin** (Croatia, forward); **Stipe Cubric** (Croatia, point guard); **Matej Kljajic** (Croatia, guard) and **Mario Metasovic** (Croatia, forward). Four Bulgarian players get a special mention too: **Denislav Vutev** (Bulgaria, center); **Velislav Galabov** (Bulgaria, center); **Dimitar Dimitrov** (Bulgaria, power forward); **Tencho Tenchev** (Bulgaria, forward).

Here are the scores at the 25th *World Juniors Tournament*:

Wednesday, 22nd June 2011
CROATIA 60-68 TURKEY
FRANCE 72-61 BULGARIA
GERMANY 67-56 GREECE

Thursday, 23rd June 2011
FRANCE 64-62 GREECE
GERMANY 65-63 CROATIA
TURKEY 85-59 BULGARIA

Friday, 24th June 2011
FRANCE 56-62 TURKEY
CROATIA 66-84 GREECE
GERMANY 74-75 BULGARIA

Saturday, June 25th 2011
TURKEY 58-54 GREECE
CROATIA 73-59 BULGARIA
FRANCE 66-58 GERMANY

Sunday, June 26th 2011
BULGARIA 62-69 GREECE
TURKEY 54-46 GERMANY
FRANCE 88-38 CROATIA

Bert covered the *FIBA Eurochallenge Final Four* with *KRKA Novo Mesto* (Slovenia), *Lokomotiv Kuban* (Russia), *Spartak Saint Petersburg* (Russia) and *BC Telenet Ostend* (Belgium) in Ostend, Belgium for eurobasket.com on April 29th and May 1st, 2011.

2011 *Eurochallenge*: *KRKA Novo Mesto* of Slovenia brings the trophy back home!

There was a lounge atmosphere at the *Sleuyter Arena* as only 2500 people showed up to attend the 2011 *Eurochallenge Final*. Both teams, *Lokomotiv Kuban* and *KRKA Novo Mesto*, played at a good rhythm and none of both was really dominating in the first minutes of the game. **Jeremiah Massey** hit a three-point shot to give his team of *Spartak* the lead 4-3 but the tough *KRKA* defense made the difference afterwards. After several fastbreaks, *KRKA Novo Mesto* was ahead 6-12 with 4:57 remaining in the first quarter when *Lokomotiv* coach **Kestutis Kemzura** took a first important time-out. A crucial one indeed as his team tied the game later on at 14-14 after two easy baskets by **Michael Wilkinson** (US-born player with Macedonian passport) and a great three by **Lionel Chalmers**. After **Aleksandar Dzikić's** time-out for *KRKA*, **Goran Jeretin** and **Sergey Toporov** of *Lokomotiv* kept giving assists to **Michael Wilkinson** who was well present to score underneath the basket. A three-pointer at the last second of the first quarter even gave *Lokomotiv* a lead by 2 points: 20-18.

Christopher Booker, the only non-European player of *KRKA Novo Mesto*, had done a good job in the first quarter and kept doing so in the beginning of the second one. He and young Slovenian talent **Zoran Dragic** put their team in front: 20-26. **Dragic** again grabbed an important rebound to make 22-30. The game turned out to be very spectacular: US pro player **Alando Tucker** on the *Lokomotiv* side (alley oop) and **Christopher Booker** on the *KRKA* side (two shots from downtown).

After 28-35, the Russian team was again able to speed up and come back at 34-35. Well led by **Dusan Djordjevic**, *KRKA* re-took one larger positive margin at 34-41 but *Lokomotiv* on a last rush in the first half avoided a large deficit. The scoreboard showed 41-43 at the half. A big difference compared with what happened in semi-final, much more points came from the bench this time for *Lokomotiv*: 21 on the whole. **Christopher Booker** of *KRKA* was the best scorer with 13 points in this game at half-time.

Goran Ikonic, the hero of the *KRKA* vs. *BC Oostende* semi-final, hit two three-pointers in a row to put his *KRKA* team ahead: 43-49. At the middle of the third quarter, the scoreboard showed 50-51. **Goran Ikonic** of *KRKA* had been forcing too many shots and the game got physically tougher and more aggressive. *Lokomotiv* key players **Michael Wilkinson** and **Goran Jeretin** even gave a 55-54 lead to their team. It was an almost perfect game as no team was willing to give up and kept scoring spectacular baskets. **Booker** came back on the floor for *KRKA* but despite his great efforts as well as the ones of **Zoran Dragic** and **Edo Muric**, *Lokomotiv* had a larger lead at the end of the third quarter: 65-61.

A time-out for *KRKA* at 67-63 in the beginning of the last quarter proves that it was a very strategic game played by both teams. **Zoran Dragic**, brother of *Houston Rockets'* **Goran Dragic**, kept his team alive at 69-65 with 6:30 left in this final game. **Michael Wilkinson**, very efficient, gave then *Lokomotiv* the right to be very hopeful: 72-65 to enter the moneytime. A big three by **Aleksei Surovtsev** of *Lokomotiv* was followed by one on the other side: 75-70 by **Booker** from long range indeed. A few seconds later, **Ikonic** even made 75-72 on an uneasy crucial lay-up with 3:29 left on the clock. *Lokomotiv* kept losing balls and turning the ball over under the Slovenian pressure and *KRKA* was again in front at 75-76 (**Christopher Booker** and **Smiljan Pavic** inside). **Dragic** first and **Djordjevic** on a three-pointer made 75-81 with 1:04 remaining on the clock. One last time-out and last efforts by *Lokomotiv* did not change anything, *KRKA Novo Mesto* is definitely the 2011 *FIBA Eurochallenge* title winner. The Slovenian side wins the well-deserved title mainly thanks to a last impressive 16-0 scoring run. 77-83, final score! Slovenians can cut the net as they will bring the trophy back home.

Goran Ikonic was voted MVP of the 2011 *Eurochallenge Final Four*.

FIBA Eurochallenge Final Four results:

2011-04-29 - Semi-finals

Lokomotiv Kuban vs. *Spartak Saint Petersburg* 74-64
KRKA Novo Mesto vs. *BC Telenet Ostend* 79-65

2011-05-01 - Game for 3rd and 4th place
BC Telenet Ostend vs. *Spartak Saint Petersburg* 94-92

2011-05-01 - Final
KRKA Novo Mesto vs. *Lokomotiv Kuban* 83-77

Bert went to a *FIBA Eurochallenge* 2010-11 second round game at the *mons.arena* in Mons, Belgium on February 15th, 2011: *Dexia Mons Hainaut* (Belgium) vs. *KRKA Novo Mesto* (Slovenia).

A nice crowd showed up at the *mons.arena* on Tuesday, February 15th for what was already considered by many observers as the game of the last chance for local team *Dexia Mons Hainaut* in the 2010-11 *FIBA Eurochallenge*. The first quarter proved that the local players had clearly understood the message. *Dexia's* Coach **Arik Shivek** of Israel could boost his players in the first ten minutes but their Slovenian opponents had also several opportunities in the paint to reduce the score in an efficient manner (mainly via their Texan center **Christopher Booker** and their Serbian guard **Dusan Djordjevic**). The attendance also quickly reacted to several obnoxious calls made by the referees. Led by a good **Marcus Hatten**, the Belgian team nevertheless took the lead 22-18 at the end of the first quarter.

In the second quarter, the situation changed totally and *Dexia Mons Hainaut* suddenly had a very poor shooting percentage. It became a very physical game very often interrupted by referees' calls. After 24-18, the *Dexia* men allowed too many successful second-chance attempts to their opponents of *KRKA Novo Mesto*, again led by **Christopher Booker** (see #12 on picture) but also by young Slovenian talents **Edo Muric** and **Zoran Dragic**. After a fantastic 0-15 run for the Slovenians of Head Coach **Aleksandar Dzokic** (24-33), the locals closed the gap to six points. Nevertheless, a few excellent plays and one last long-range shot by Bosnian player **Goran Ikonic** gave *KRKA Novo Mesto* a 42-34 lead.

Like in the first half, the *KRKA* guys (in foul trouble) kept grabbing important offensive rebounds, giving them several second chances to score. **Goran Ikonic** was still very hot from the perimeter and **Dusan Djordjevic** (three personal fouls in the first

half) came back with some great feelings which made the Slovenian side lead 39-56. Despite this large Slovenian advantage, the game remained open and pleasant but also physically tougher. After two intentional fouls by *KRKA* players (*Dexia*'s shooting forward **Ron Lewis** had to temporarily leave the floor with a bloody face after a physical contact in a rebounding situation), the *Dexia* team looked re-boosted and came back into the game thanks to three-pointers made by the Belgian guard **Alexandre Libert**. It was 58-62 and then 58-64 on a last Slovenian clutch play in the third quarter.

It was not enough for *Dexia* because the well-balanced *KRKA* team stayed very much concentrated. With **Zoran Dragic**, a great talent who could be a fantastic European player in the next few years, and a fantastic **Dusan Djordjevic**, *KRKA* had some great plays at the beginning of the fourth quarter. Their US center **Booker** also did an excellent job in the paint and *Dexia*, despite last efforts by American duo **Justin Cage** and **Quincy Taylor**, always remained behind in the fourth quarter which ended up with a 75-84 score. The battle at the rebound was definitely won by *KRKA* and that is probably where the difference was made: 25 for *Dexia* and 37 for the Slovenian team (with 13 boards for **Christopher Booker**).

Great game and great evening at the *mons.arena*!

Dexia Mons Hainaut: **Shaun Foster** 4, **Alexandre Libert** 11, **Quincy Taylor** 14, **Justin Cage** 10, **Ronald Lewis** 12, **Marcus Hatten** 9, **Sebastien Bellin** 2, **Peter Van Paassen** 6, **Ahmad Nivins** 7.

KRKA Novo Mesto: **Goran Ikonc** 14, **Matej Rojc** 2, **Simon Petrov** 5, **Edo Muric** 4, **Smiljan Pavic** 2, **Dusan Djordjevic** 19, **Zoran Dragic** 8, **Christopher Booker** 14, **Bojan Krivec** 7, **Dragisa Drobnjak** 4, **Jure Balazic** 5.

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