

Press Release

Slovakia Cup 2011 (11 - 12.2.2011)

Slovak team wins tournament for first time in four years

The home team thrashed Switzerland 2:0 in the Slovakia Cup final. The tournament served as a test for 2011 IIHF World Championship organizers.

The Slovak home team wins the 2011 Slovakia Cup. In the dramatic final battle against Switzerland Slovakia came out victorious, winning 2:0. The winning goal was the result of excellent collaboration between three big names: Zedník, Surový and Podhradský. The second securing goal was netted by Marcel Hossa following Bartečko's run, with the assistance being later credited to Cibák. The Slovak team didn't lose a single point and thoroughly deserved first place at the tournament – which served as a test run for the organizers of the upcoming 2011 IIHF World Championship, Slovakia. The shooting action was significantly on the side of the Swiss in the game.

In the first period both teams played physically demanding hockey. The players subsequently played defensively, leaving little room for chances on goal. Thanks to the more active Swiss team, there was more gameplay in front of Lašák's goal. The hosts won with a first period shot in the 24th minute. The score remained unchanged throughout the second period, however the referees whistle sounded often and the penalty box soon became a popular visiting site. Mezei was the first to spend time out in the 28th minute. Hanlon's tactic paid off when he sent Stümpel in for the faceoff in a defensive formation. The Swiss attempted to resolve matters halfway through the game, as they had done against Belarus on Friday. Lašák and the Slovak defence found themselves in a number of dangerous situations, especially with Savary's formation with Christen and Ambühl on the wings. The home team immediately received a chance during power play immediately and when Bezina joined Furrer in the penalty box resulting in a 35 second advantage with the Swiss being two players down. In spite of the respite for trainer Glen Hanlon, the Slovaks made use of the time only for two shots on goal from the blue line. The Swiss had no luck either when Podhradský was sent off at the end of the second period.

It was only when Jeannin was excluded halfway through the third period that the Slovaks achieved success. A number of shots made it into the goal area and one of them got past Stephan into the

exposed goal just as the referees were signalling a further penalty for the Swiss – 1:0. Slovakia secured their victory just under 2 minutes before the end of the third period when Marcel Hossa converted Bartečk's pass excellently. The Swiss team tried to change the course of the game a minute before the end of the game by substituting the goal tender, but to no avail. Lašák kept a clean record throughout the game.

SLOVAKIA CUP 2011 – Final:

Slovakia – Switzerland 2:0 (0:0, 0:0, 2:0)Goals: 51. Zedník (Surový, Podhradský), 59. Marcel Hossa (Bartečko, Cibák).

Penalisation: 3:4 for 2 mins, Powerplay: 1:0, shorthanded: 0:0, Referees: Baluška, Ország - M. Novák, Valach, 2000 spectators Comments from players and trainers:

Glen Hanlon (Slovak coach): "In this game we were playing against a competitor that wanted to destroy us with their speed. *Goal tender Ján Lašák kept things together for the whole game – especially in the first period. The defence also showed itself in a good light. The special formations were also good. Once again we scored during powerplay and didn't give any away. We managed to use opportunities and we played with discipline.*

Sean Simpson (Swiss coach) "Congratulations to Glen and his team for a great game. *We managed to keep things even for forty minutes. We had a lot of opportunities, in the first period we outdid Slovakia on shots 24:10, but the Slovak goal tender was an unbelievable catcher. The whole tournament was on an excellent level, thanks for the invitation.*"

Richard Zedník (Slovak attacker, scorer of 1 goal): "It was a quality game, we are happy we won. *The Swiss showed their strengths, it was important to play attentively in defence, Ján Lašák supported us with a great performance. This game was important preparation for us, we needed it for synchronisation and to find out what we can expect in the future. The championship is still a long way off. Now we are going to return to our clubs, where the season peak awaits us. The atmosphere in the arena was great, we could hear the spectators. I didn't notice any imperfections in the arena during the heat of the game. We are looking forward to the atmosphere when the arena is full to capacity.*"

Ján Lašák (Slovak goaltender) "Zero is always a figure to look forward to - be it at a club or national level. *The goaltender gives the team the chance to win with one goal. We played well, with dedication and*

with the required dose of luck behind us. For me it was a pleasant game, lots of shots were made at me. It started well, I caught the first shot and then that was it.”

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