

Valeriy Borzov



Gold medallist over 100m and 200m at the 1972 Olympics, Valeriy Borzov was an acclaimed Ukrainian sprinter. Munich was the pinnacle of a glittering career that saw him crowned 100m champion in three successive European Athletics Championships between 1969 and 1974, doubling up with the 200m again in 1971.

A seven-time indoor European champion, he retired in 1979 and had spells as minister for youth and sport and president of the Ukrainian National Olympic Committee. A doctor of pedagogy, he now serves as president of the Ukrainian Athletic Federation and is a member of the International Olympic Committee.

Serhiy Bubka



Serhiy Bubka was the world's premier pole-vaulter for nearly two decades from the moment he captured the first of six IAAF World Championship gold medals in 1983. He broke the world record an incredible 35 times and, a decade after hanging up his spikes, his marks remain unbeaten, both outdoors and indoors.

He won only one Olympic gold, in 1988, but is admired at home and abroad – his statue stands outside the Olympic Stadium in Donetsk, Bubka's home since he was 15. He retired in 2001, becoming an IAAF council member and president of the National Olympic Committee. He served in parliament from 2002 to 2006.

Leonid Buryak



One of the best midfielders Ukraine has produced, Leonid Buryak was a pivotal member of the FC Dynamo Kyiv team that rose to prominence under Valeriy Lobanovskiy in the 1970s and 80s. The Odesa-born playmaker won five league titles, four Soviet Cups and the 1975 UEFA Cup Winners' Cup during 11 years in the capital.

Buryak enjoyed further success with FC Metalist Kharkiv but will always be associated with Dynamo and the USSR, for whom he scored eight goals in 49 international appearances. He moved seamlessly into coaching, immediate success laying the platform for spells in charge of Ukraine and then Dynamo.

Fred Finn



The world's most travelled man, Finn has flown more than 24m kilometres since boarding his first flight in his native England aged 18. He has visited 70% of the globe's countries and also holds the record for the most trips aboard Concorde, having notched up an impressive 718 flights – on which he always sat in the same seat.

A retired international licence manager Fred, he has settled in the Ukrainian town of Komsomolsk with wife Alla – at least, as much as someone who reportedly returns to his homeland to buy cheese can. He promotes his adopted country as a tourist destination and has also worked as a TV host, journalist and trade advisor.

Olga Freimut



A television presenter, journalist and model, Olga Freimut is best known as one of the hosts of breakfast show Pidym (Wake up!). In that capacity the Lviv-born, English-educated Freimut has been at the forefront of promoting the UEFA EURO 2012 final tournament in Ukraine.

Once named among Ukraine's 25 most beautiful women, the former BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) journalist is a respected voice in the world of fashion. In spring 2010 she became the face of Ukrainian Oksana Karavanska's New York collection.

Yevheniya Gapchynska



Yevheniya Gapchynska is a sought-after Ukrainian artist with dedicated galleries in Kyiv, Odesa, Dnipropetrovsk and Moscow. Her work is on public display across the Europe while the late Luciano Pavarotti and Russian film maker Nikita Mikhalkov are among respected private collectors with Gapchynska pieces.

She is perhaps best known as the illustrator of popular children books like Roald Dahl's Charley and the Chocolate Factory. She was part educated at the esteemed Academy of Fine Arts in Nuremberg, whose alumni includes Swiss painter Diego Bianconi and 19th century German sculptor Adolf von Hildebrand.

Olexandr Glyvynskiy



Glyvynskiy is an award-winning journalist and commentator, and current Ukrainian national team press officer. He is best known as the anchor and producer of highly-regarded television show Goal, but he has also covered two FIFA World Cups, the 2002 Winter Olympics and UEFA EURO 2000.

He actually began his career in radio in Lviv, and quickly became the voice of major sporting events across Ukraine. He switched to television, as a commentator and later anchorman for sports coverage on the UT-1 channel before moving to Era to host Good morning, Ukraine and Goodnight, Ukraine.

Victor Grachov



Viktor Grachov spearheaded FC Shakhtar Donetsk's return to prominence in the 1980s. The diminutive striker had spells with FC Torpedo Moskva and FC Spartak Moskva and won one cap for the Soviet Union – along with six games for the Olympic team – but spent his best years in his home province for Shakhtar.

Grachov scored 82 goals in 346 games for the Pitmen, helping them to four USSR Cup finals in seven seasons, winning in 1980 and 1983. He had a successful spell in Hungary before returning to newly-independent Ukraine for one last season with Shakhtar, scoring three goals en route to their 1995 Ukrainian Cup triumph.

Vitali Klitschko



A three-time world heavyweight champion, Klitschko is revered in his beloved Ukraine. He holds the distinction of never having been knocked down in a career spanning 15 years and 43 fights, bowing out at the top with he and younger brother Volodymyr holding all the major heavyweight belts.

Yet boxing is just one string in an impressive bow. Vitali is fluent in four languages, plays chess to a high standard and has a sports science PhD – his Dr Ironfist nickname is no misnomer. Devoted to numerous charitable causes, he is National Olympic Committee vice-president and, since 2010, leader of a political party.

Volodymyr Klitschko



The younger of the Klitschko brothers, Volodymyr shot to fame by winning gold at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta and developed into one of the best pound-for-pound boxers in the world. The reigning IBF, IBO and WBO world heavyweight champion, his professional record reads 55 wins in 58 fights; 49 by knockout.

Volodymyr is – like his brother Vitali – fluent in four languages, a doctor of sports science and an ardent chess player. He is also committed to numerous charitable causes and since 2002 he has been one of UNESCO's Champions for Sport. Still, he finds time for regular rounds of golf and he has accrued several acting credits.

Igor Kulchytskiy



Kulchytskiy achieved immortality in his home town Lviv when he captained FC Karpaty Lviv to their only major trophy, the Soviet Cup, in 1969. He spent much of his career with the Carpathians, as skipper for many years, and in 1971 won two caps for the Soviet Union in back-to-back 0-0 draws away to Mexico.

He represented several Lviv sides and also had a spell with FC Dynamo Kyiv before moving into coaching, heading the Karpaty academy. He still works at the club, and on becoming Ukraine's 20th Friend of EURO he promised to "do everything possible to help our city make the best possible preparations."

Ihor Kutepov



Ihor Kutepov gained immortality when he took the goalkeeper jersey for Ukraine's first game after independence, against Hungary in April 1992. He won three more caps before being replaced by Olexandr Shovkovskiy, but remained a dependable presence for FC Dynamo Kyiv and PFC CSKA Moskva.

Kutepov won the Soviet Cup with FC Metalist Kharkiv, two Ukrainian titles and the Ukraine Cup at Dynamo and was a Russian Liga runner-up with CSKA Moskva before he retired in 2000. He became a goalkeeping coach at CSKA Moskva, then went home to Kharkiv where he now heads Metalist's academy.

Kost Lavro



An award-winning artist and illustrator, Kost Lavro's work in children's books and magazines is well known in Ukraine. His recent efforts includes Christmas Eve, Favourite Poems and 100 tales, and his illustrations have been presented at book fairs across the globe, from Brazil to Iran, Switzerland to Japan.

Lavro is a long-term collaborator with the poet and publisher Ivan Malkovych. He is art director at Malkovych's highly-regarded A-BA-BA-HA-LA-MA-HA children's publishing house, his unique style greatly influencing their distinctive high quality editions of Ukrainian literature and poetry.

Ivan Malkovych



Ivan Malkovych is the author of five collections of poetry: White Stone, The Key, Poems, With an Angel on a Shoulder and his 2006 work, Poems for Winter. The poem Napuchuvannia sils'koho vchytelia (Wishing the village teacher well before his departure) was a silent manifesto for a generation in the 1980s.

Never one to rush – his poems often took years to complete – Malkovych now focuses his attentions on publishing. He owns the A-BA-BA-HA-LA-MA-HA children's publishing house, specialising in up-market, often illustrated, editions of Ukrainian literature and poetry. He has won a clutch of industry awards.

Oleksiy Mykhailychenko



As a midfielder, Oleksiy Mykhailychenko starred for FC Dynamo Kyiv throughout the 1980s, winning four USSR titles and three Soviet Cups before helping UC Sampdoria to a maiden Serie A title in his one and only season in Italy. From there he joined Rangers FC, where he won the Scottish title five years running.

He helped the USSR finish runners-up at the 1988 UEFA European Championship before winning gold at the Olympics in Seoul. After cutting his coaching teeth under Valeriy Lobanovskiy at Dynamo, leading them to two titles, he returned to the international setup with the U21s then from 2008 to 2010 as coach of the senior side.

Volodymyr Nechyporuk



Volodymyr Nechyporuk has been at the vanguard of Ukrainian style for the past 15 years. He has been director of Ukrainian Fashion Week since 1997 and on acquiring his Friend of UEFA EURO 2012 status ahead of the 28th edition he announced that "football will be the most popular trend in the next few years."

A journalist by trade, Nechyporuk worked in advertising and promotions for many years and was president of the Yanko agency. His name is closely associated with a number of popular fashion publications and he was publisher of the style magazines Eva and L'Officiel – Ukraine.

Oleksandr Pedan



Oleksandr Pedan is a popular television presenter, best known for his work on breakfast show Pidyom (Wake up!) and sketch show Zroby meni smishno (Make me laugh). It is as a comedian that he made his name, spending nine years as one of the ever popular Three fat men.

Since 2006 he has been a regular at Comedy Club UA, for the past two years in tandem with his early shift on Pidyom. He still finds enough time to perform for Ukrainian celebrity football team FC Maestro – 11 years dedicated to folk dancing under his choreographer father has given him nothing if not stamina.

Serhiy Prytula



Serhiy Prytula is a television presenter, comedian, actor, radio broadcaster and magazine columnist. His television work includes Fayna Yukraina (Wonderful Ukraine) and talent show Ukraina slyozam ne viryt (Ukraine Does Not Believe in Tears), but he is perhaps best known for breakfast show Pidyom (Wake up!).

Like Pidyom co-host Oleksandr Pedan he is also a resident at Comedy Club UA, continuing a passion he developed while at university. He also did student radio and was signed up by Kyiv station Music-radio in 2005. He continues to broadcast alongside his TV work and theatre production.

Olga Romanova



Romanova is a Ternopil-born designer who became a Friend of EURO after winning a contest to encapsulate the EURO 2012 style at the 2011 Lviv Fashion Week. "To be honest I didn't expect to win as I haven't been involved in sports wear before," she said. "My speciality is women's clothing."

Romanova's area of expertise at the Lviv National Academy of Arts is leather artwork, specifically accessories, bags and footwear. Yet it was her devotion to elegance and femininity that caught the eye of a jury comprised of celebrities, leaders of industry and UEFA EURO 2012 tournament director Markiyan Lubkivskiy.

Oleksandr Shovkovskiy



Oleksandr Shovkovskiy has been a mainstay of the Ukraine side for over a decade after making his debut aged 19. He is nearing 100 caps, none more special than his man-of-the-match performance against Switzerland at the 2006 FIFA World Cup when he saved two spot kicks as Ukraine booked a quarter-final place.

He famously denied two FC Shakhtar Donetsk players and scored the winner in a 2004 meeting for FC Dynamo Kyiv, Shovkovskiy's only employers. He has won an incredible 12 league titles with his hometown club, as well as eight Ukraine Cups. Only three players have made more appearances for the Bilo-Syni.

Pavlo Shylko



Under the stage name DJ Pasha, Shylko is perhaps Ukraine's most popular radio host, an unofficial title he assumed not long after taking to the airways in 1996. He specialises in global cultural and sporting events, covering several summer and winter Olympics, UEFA EURO 2000 and the 2006 FIFA World Cup.

He is a regular on television, as the voice of cartoon characters and presenter of the Eurovision Song Contest. Shylko has also had closer involvement with the annual music event, penning the lyrics for Ukraine's 2010 entry. His collection of written work includes English with DJ Pasha, a bestseller between 2001 and 2004.

Olexandr Sydorenko



Sydorenko presents Ukraine's favourite football television show, ICTV's Tretiy Taim (The Third Half), with fellow Friend of EURO Mykola Vasylykov. Aside from broadcasting, 'Fozzi' is also lead vocalist for Ukraine's most successful hip-hop group, TNMK (Dance at the Congo Square), also playing the guitar.

His musical career extended into football when he wrote the Ukrainian terrace favourite Viva Ukraine. An instant hit, the song is often used to whip up fans ahead of national team matches. A Kharkiv regional champion in his youth, Sydorenko plays for celebrity football side FC Maestro.

Olesya Telizhenko



Olesya Telizhenko is a fashion designer who takes inspiration from traditional Ukrainian culture and arts. She received a presidential grant in 2005 to create a collection of clothes, Drevo rodu (Tree of the Tribe), based on the embroidered rushnyky (towels) traditionally used in central Ukraine.

A graduate of the Lviv National Arts Academy who has also edited scientific works in the field of Ukrainian folk arts, Telizhenko has shown her collections in Ukraine and abroad. Her work will soon be even better known internationally: she is designing the tournament uniforms for UEFA EURO 2012.

Svyatoslav Vakarchuk



Svyatoslav Vakarchuk is the singer of Okean Elzy, Ukraine's most successful post-Soviet rock band. They have produced six albums since coming together in 1994 in Lviv, where Vakarchuk's father, Ivan, was a professor of physics at the university and a former Minister of Education and Science.

Svyatoslav has followed a similar if more diverse path, gaining a PhD in theoretical physics and serving in the Ukraine parliament before stepping down in 2008 when he was named the 55th most influential man in the country. Three years earlier he won 1m hryvnas for charity in Ukraine's Who Wants to be a Millionaire?

Mykola Vasylov



Vasylov is among Ukraine's most popular football presenter. He is best known for his work in the ever popular Trety Tame (The Third Half), aired on ICTV. The show was first broadcast during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, when he teamed up Olexandr Sydorenko; a member of Ukraine's most successful hip-hop group.

One of the last Friends of EURO to be unveiled, Ukrainian tournament director Markiyanyuk Lubkivskiy said the recognition for Vasylov – who also presents Inshyi Futbol (The Other Football) – was long overdue, because he is a friend of Ukrainian football and someone who bridges the gap between players and fans.

Stepan Yurchyshyn



Stepan Yurchyshyn is one of FC Karpaty Lviv's finest ever players, scoring 83 goals in 196 games for his hometown club. Over half came in a solitary season, in 1979, when he set a Soviet First League record of 42 goals for a single campaign – it was never beaten. He won all four of his international caps that year.

Spells at FC Dynamo Kyiv and PFC CSKA Moskva were curtailed by injury and his mother, respectively ("My mum said I would no longer be her son if I stayed in Russia," he recalls). He ended his career back at Karpaty in 1990 and after several coaching roles he is back there in the role of sporting director.

Dmytro Chygrynskiy



A defensive rock for club and country, Iziaslav-born Chygrynskiy made his debut for FC Shakhtar Donetsk aged 17 on the final day of the 2003/04 season. Having earned his first cap on 7 February 2007, Chygrynskiy became an international regular through the UEFA EURO 2008 and 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifying campaigns.

He played a crucial role as Shakhtar won the double in 2007/08 and was a mainstay in the following season's UEFA Cup success. FC Barcelona paid €25m for him in 2009 but he played just 12 games before returning to Shakhtar. They promptly won another double and reached the UEFA Champions League quarter-finals.

Marko Dević



Born in Belgrade, Dević had spells with a host of clubs in the Serbian top flight before moving to Ukraine with FC Volyn Lutsk in 2005. After two years at Volyn, the attacking midfielder cum striker signed for FC Metalist Kharkiv where he has flourished, scoring a shade under a goal every two games.

He has now made well over 100 appearances for the club, who finished third in each of his first five seasons. In June 2008 he became a naturalised Ukrainian citizen and made his international bow five months later. Dević scored his first international goal with a penalty in Ukraine's 1-1 draw with Sweden in February 2011.

Andriy Pyatov



Pyatov is an assured, ever reliable goalkeeper who began his career at FC Vorskla Poltava before moving to FC Shakhtar Donetsk in December 2006. He replaced another precocious starlet, Bohdan Shust, as the Pitmen's No1 the following season and has not looked back.

An ever-present during Shakhtar's 2008/09 UEFA Cup triumph, he also played from start to finish in the UEFA Champions League campaigns of 2007/08 and 2008/09 as well as the 2010/11 run to the quarter-finals. He has been Ukraine's first-choice keeper since ousting Olexandr Shovkovskiy in 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifying.

Artem Fedetskiy



Fedetskiy rose to prominence as a resilient defender while out on loan at Ukrainian Premier League sides FC Arsenal Kyiv and FC Kharkiv from FC Shakhtar Donetsk. He struggled to make a name for himself with the Pitmen but found his feet at FC Karpaty Lyiv, initially on loan and then permanently in 2009/10.

As a key member of the Karpaty squad, the right-back scored a crucial added-time equaliser in a UEFA Europa League play-off against Galatasaray AŞ to reach the 2010/11 group stage. Fedetskiy has also gained recognition at international level having made his debut in a 4-0 win against Lithuania in May 2010.

Valentyna Semerenko



Semerenko is one half of Ukraine's popular biathlon twins with sister Viktoriya. The pair were members of Ukraine's Biathlon World Championships silver medal-winning 4 x 6km relay quartets in 2008 and 2011, and while Viktoriya has enjoyed recent individual success it was Valentyna who first broke through.

A former world and European junior champion, she won three silvers and a bronze at the 2007 Winter World University Games in Turin, Italy. A year earlier, at the same venue, she came 46th in the individual race at the Winter Olympics. Valentyna, a teacher trainer, has since enjoyed World Cup podium finishes.

Viktoriya Semerenko



More popularly known as Vita, Semerenko is one half of Ukraine's popular biathlon twins with sister Valentyna. The pair were members of Ukraine's Biathlon World Championships silver medal-winning 4 x 6km relay quartets in 2008 and 2011, Viktoriya also claiming bronze in the 15km individual event at the latter meeting.

In April 2011 the native of Sumy Oblast, north-east Ukraine, triumphed in the fifth International Biathlon Competition for the Vitaly Fatyanov Prize in Kamchatka, Russia. She won both the sprint and pursuit races, to receive the top prize – a car. Like her sister, Vita is a teacher trainer by profession.

Jorge Zukoski



Florida native Zukoski, a former investment banker, has been president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine since 1999, charged with representing the foreign investment community operating in the country and facilitating the entrance of potential new investors into the market.

He arrived in Kyiv in the mid-1990s and is now a member of the president of Ukraine's Domestic and Foreign Investment Advisory Council and the Ukrainian government's Committee on Economic Reforms. Founder of the Ukrainian International Institute of Business, Zukoski is a Kyiv School of Economics board member.

Gaitana



Gaitana is one of Ukraine's biggest pop stars and picked up gongs for Best Female Singer and Best Album at the 2008 national music awards. She sings in Ukrainian, English and Russian, but also speaks French and Lingala, the language of the Democratic Republic of Congo where her father was born.

The singer also has an economics degree, plays the saxophone and had the chance to become a table-tennis professional before focusing on music. Her 2007 single Shalenyi spent seven weeks at No1 and, in 2011, she helped mark FC Shakhtar Donetsk's 75th anniversary with a special song, Shakhtar are Champions!

Serhiy Rebrov



Having started his career at FC Shakhtar Donetsk, Rebrov – the all-time leading scorer in the Ukrainian Premier League with 123 goals – rose to fame alongside Andriy Shevchenko at FC Dynamo Kyiv in the 1990s. He won titles in two spells with Dynamo, in Turkey (Fenerbahçe SK) and Russia (FC Rubin Kazan).

Now assistant head coach at Dynamo, the former forward also spent time in England with Tottenham Hotspur FC and West Ham United FC. His 75 international caps included four appearances at the 2006 FIFA World Cup, Ukraine's first major tournament as an independent nation.

Yana Klochkova



Known as the Golden Fish, Kharkiv-based swimmer Klochkova won four gold medals in Sydney and Athens, winning the 200m and 400m individual medley at both Olympic Games. She set 400m medley world records in both long and short course disciplines that stood for six years.

Other honours include being named World Female Swimmer of the Year by Swimming World Magazine and receiving the Hero of Ukraine medal, both in 2004. The award has been bestowed to under 300 nationals, including Vitali Klitschko, Valeriy Lobanovskiy and Andriy Shevchenko.

Olena Bondarenko



Alongside younger sister Kateryna, Olena Bondarenko claimed the 2008 Australian Open women's doubles title. As well as the Grand Slam victory she has picked up five International Tennis Federation (ITF) singles finals and reached a rankings high of 19th in the world in 2008.

Born in Kryvyi Rih to tennis playing parents, she first picked up a racket aged five and joined the pro tour at 14, winning her first tournament three years later. Olena initially partnered elder sister Valeria before linking up with Kateryna, who is two years her junior. She is now based in Kharkiv.

Kateryna Bondarenko



Ranked as high as nine in the world in the women's doubles (and 29th in the singles), Kateryna and older sister Olena gained global acclaim in 2008 when they swept to the Australian Open women's doubles, beating Victoria Azarenka and Shahar Pe'er 2-6, 6-1, 6-4 in the final.

The youngest of three tennis playing sisters, she won the 2004 Wimbledon girl's final and has beaten several of the world's best players, including Venus Williams and Ana Ivanović. Kateryna is coached by her parents and, aside from three WTA doubles titles, claimed a singles tournament win in Birmingham in 2008.

Viktor Anisimov



Donetsk native Anisimov is a celebrated fashion designer of men's and women's clothing and accessories. He is best known for his transformer items and complex constructions. A skirt that turns into trousers, a hood that becomes a scarf, or a pocket that become a bag.

Much is informed by military style, a vestige perhaps of his time at the National Military Institute of Physical Education in St Petersburg, a college for the Soviet Union armed forces. Anisimov went a different route, however, and has not looked back since fashion historian Alexander Vasiliev hailed his "colossal potential"

Leonid Kadenyuk



Born in the south-west of the country, Kadenyuk became independent Ukraine's first man in space when he joined the flight on NASA's Columbia in 1997, aged 46, alongside astronauts from the United States and Japan. On his return from the 16-day trip he continued with the Ukrainian space program.

A Soviet military pilot, he was just 25 when he was selected for the Cosmonaut Corps and after the break-up of the USSR he initially remained in the Russian Special Forces. In 1995 he returned home and after his historic flight he moved into politics, serving in parliament from 2002 to 2006.

Ihor Kondratyuk



Kondratyuk is a TV presenter and producer, most famous for his work as a judge on the Ukrainian X-Factor. In a career spanning over 25 years he has presented many different shows, including the award-winning Karaoke on Independence Square, which he has produced and fronted since 1999.

A well-known football fan – he has been known to halt shooting so he can watch a game – Kondratyuk became an X-Factor judge in 2010 and has already won six titles for his role at the National Television Awards. He lent his considerable skills to the UEFA EURO 2012 volunteer recruitment programme.

Jamala



Jamala is a jazz singer hailing from Kyrgyzstan, who hit the headlines worldwide after gaining a victory in the New Wave – 2009, a contest for young artists in the former Soviet bloc. Born Susana Jamaladinova to a family of musicians, by 16 she was already performing in contests in Ukraine, Russia and Italy.

She has gained awards and accolades ever since, developing her varied talents to become an opera singer and excelled to take the New Wave award. She sings in English, Ukrainian, Russian and in the Crimean Tatar languages, and is hoping to create a song enjoyed by fans of all nations at UEFA EURO 2012.

Bohdan Benyuk



Benyuk is an award-winning actor of stage and screen, who has recently diversified into teaching and politics. To a younger audience he is perhaps most broadly known for his roles in movies like Kandahar, as a television presenter, fronting Show of a Lonely Bachelor, and his staging of Bila Vorona (White Crow).

Benyuk followed older brother Petro into stage school and graduated in 1978. He was quickly taken on by Kyiv's Young Spectators' Theatre, where he remained for many years. Co-founder of theatre company Benyuk and Khostikoyev and professor at the National University of Arts and Culture.

Vasyl Virastyuk



Virastyuk claimed the The World's Strongest Man title in 2004 and was IFSA Strongman World Champion in 2007, to add to five national titles claimed between 2000 and 2005. He was also part of the Ukraine teams that earned the crown of World's Strongest Nation in 2003 and 2004.

He began his athletics career in the shot put, representing Ukraine between 1990 and 2000, before switch to Strongest Man events. Impressive in lifting competitions, he also excelled in the Arnold Strongman Classic, the world's most prestigious heaving event, finishing runner-up three times between 2005 and 2007.

Denys Sylantyev



Nicknamed Mr Butterfly, Sylantyev is a swimmer whose career peaked when he won the silver medal in the discipline at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. Involved in the sport since the age of seven, he is a four-time FINA World Cup winner and still holds the national record for the 200m butterfly, set in 2002.

After ending his career in 2009 he now contributes to the development of young talent through his Youth and Olympic Swimming Support Foundation. An active figure, the Zaporizhzhia-born Sylantyev is involved with helping visually impaired children through swimming.

Oleh Sobchuk



Frontman of S.K.A.Y, one of the Ukraine's biggest rock bands, Sobchuk has won numerous awards over his ten-year career. After learning how to play his brother's guitar, he and Olexander Gryshchuk formed S.K.A.Y in Ternopil, western Ukraine in 2001, releasing debut album All That Is Necessary in 2006.

Winner of Best Vocalist, Album of the Year, Golden Song, and Best Ukrainian Rock Band at the national awards in 2008, S.K.A.Y and Sobchuk are among the most influential artists in the country. Their music addresses critical issues in society, including the problem of AIDS and HIV.

Katya Osadcha



Osadcha is TV presenter and journalist best known for fronting popular shows Women's Tricks and High life. Starting her professional career as a model, she worked in Japan, France, England and Germany before returning to Ukraine to enter the world of television.

In 2007 she was included in Focus magazine's list of Ukraine's 100 most influential women. This level of influence was confirmed by the sky-high ratings achieved when she fronted Voice of Ukraine and Ukraine's Top Model, cementing her place among Correspondent magazine's 100 Most Influential Ukrainians.

Anatoliy Tymoshchuk



Ukraine's most capped player, Tymoshchuk has won league and cups in Ukraine, Russia and Germany. The defensive midfielder started out at hometown club FC Volyn Lutsk but made a name for himself at FC Shakhtar Donetsk, winning three league title and three cups, including the double in 2001/02.

A fee of around €15m took him to FC Zenit St Petersburg, where he captained the side to their maiden league title and the 2008 UEFA Cup, before joining FC Bayern München in 2009. In October 2010, a decade after making his international debut, he became the second player to win 100 caps for Ukraine.

Vadym Pysaryev

Pysaryev is an award-winning ballet dancer and choreographer, who took gold at the International Ballet Competition in 1985 and 1986. He has toured extensively and performed at the opening ceremonies for the Summer and Winter Olympics in 1988, but throughout he has maintained strong links with his homeland.

Principally Donetsk, where Pysaryev was born and began folk dancing at the age of six; he was only ten when he moved to Kyiv's State Choreography School to study under Irina Bulatova and Vladimir Denisenko. He graduated in 1983, and within 12 months he was pressing the boards at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre.

Olexander Volkov

Now head of the Ukrainian Basketball Federation, Volkov is regarded as one of Europe's finest ever players. A member of the Soviet Union's gold medal-winning team at the 1988 Olympics, he played professionally in Ukraine, Russia, Italy, Greece and the United States (for the Atlanta Hawks).

His career spanned 21 years, extended after the forward came out of retirement to play for Ukraine and newly-formed BC Kyiv, whom he also served as president. Named among FIBA's 50 Greatest players in 1991, Volkov was Ukrainian Sports Minister from 1999 to 2000 and now heads the national basketball federation.