



IceTimes

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Super Suomi!

Kasper's OT magic ends
fantastic World Juniors >

USA wins WW18 >



From the IIHF President

Juniors set a great example in 2016

By René Fasel

As far as Finland is concerned, the year 2016 began with a bang.

Playoff wins over Canada and Sweden, and a storybook ending with Kasper Kapanen's OT winner against Russia, capped off a dream run for the Young Lions.

The event was a victory for Finland, and a huge step forward for the tournament in Europe.

Helsinki set a new IIHF World Junior Championship attendance record for Europe with 215,225 total spectators and an average of 7,174 hockey fans coming to the games.

On top of that, the television numbers in Finland, Sweden, Russia, and elsewhere on the continent were tremendous, and a testament to the rising popularity of this tournament in Europe.

In Finland, an average 1.964 million people watched the gold medal game. The numbers

peaked at almost 2.5 million people – that is 45 per cent of the country's population.

It marks a breakthrough for the World Juniors, and evidence that this tournament – with its tight games, fast skating, and super-talented players – has even more room to grow and develop.

Next year we go back to Canada, and we expect to once again have big crowds and lots of enthusiasm, but it is good to know that back in Europe the passion for the World Juniors is so high.

In Canada this year we just closed out the 2016 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship with another thrilling showdown between the gold medallists United States and Canada. The standard that these two nations have set with their women's programs, and the results that these programs have shown on the ice, offer a shining example of the possibilities of what women's hockey can be.

It wasn't just the North American teams either. The Czech Republic, Finland, bronze medallists Sweden, Russia, and the rest of the field played very well and tested each other in what was a tightly-fought tournament. On top of that, the 2016 women's U18 event also set records for attendance and produced breakout performances from many players and as many nations.

In other youth hockey news, next month will see the second edition of the Winter Youth Olympic Games. The men's and women's ice hockey tournament will run from the 12th to the 21st of February, and we will also have the Skills Challenge event, a competition that is unique to the Youth Olympic Games.

The 2012 Skills Challenge event in Innsbruck put into the spotlight some true hockey aces from all over the world. It was great to see young men and women from all corners of the globe - New Zealand to France, Croatia to Japan - coming together to show off their ice hockey skills and interact with each other in an Olympic environment. This event offers a high-profile platform to young hockey players from established and non-traditional hockey nations to demonstrate the true global reach of our sport.

As we go deeper into 2016, preparations continue for the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in Russia and the Women's World Championship in Canada.

Hopefully the action we've been treated to by the national junior teams at the U20 and U18 level will carry on to the seniors. Time will tell.



“The passion for the IIHF World Juniors continues to grow.”

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News and Notes

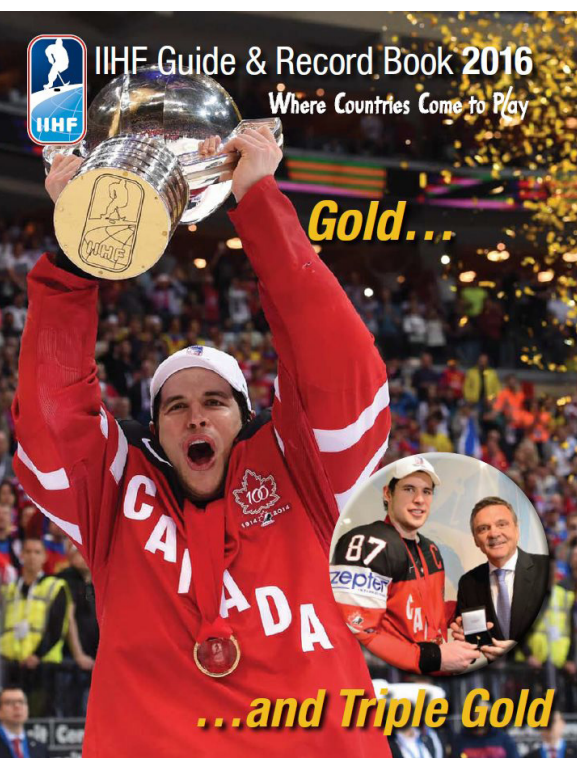
IIHF

The **2016 IIHF mobile app** is now available for Android, iPhone/iPad and Windows Phone.

Ice hockey fans can follow all IIHF tournaments with live scores, instant goal notifications and real-time game statistics. More features are also planned for the 2016 IIHF World Championship.

All of the app's features are also fully optimised for tablet and localised in English, Russian, Czech, Slovak, German and Swedish and can be downloaded for

Android, iPhone/iPad and Windows Phone.



The IIHF has also joined the social-media network VK.com. VK is the most visited website in Eastern Europe. It has over 75 million average daily users and with more than 300 million registered accounts it is the most used social-media platform in Russia and other CIS countries such as Belarus and Kazakhstan, both of which will be represented at the World Championship as well.

The IIHF page will include updates from the International Ice Hockey Federation, its marketing partner Infront Sports & Media and the Organizing Committee of the 2016 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship, providing news on the event in the run-up to the Worlds on vk.com/iihfhockey.

During the event fans at the arena and at home will be able to access the newest stories and information from the venues, great photos from

in and around the arenas, videos from the games and behind the scenes, live video chats with players and more during the biggest annual winter sports event.

The new 2016 IIHF Guide & Record Book is now available for hockey fans around the world as hardcopy or as a digital edition on a USB stick (8 GB) - inexpensive and easy to ship.

For fans around the world anticipating the upcoming World Championship events it has never been easier since the book is available in Europe and North America through IIHF.com and on various Amazon marketplaces.

Fans from everywhere in the world can buy a copy of the book or stick online through the **IIHF website**.

FINLAND

The Finnish Ice Hockey Association signed a one-year contract with **Jukka Rautakorpi** (pictured, top right) as head coach of the U20 national team in the 2016/2017 season.

He will succeed Jukka Jalonen, who coached the U20 team to gold on home ice in Helsinki.

Rautakorpi was already Finland's U20 national team coach for three seasons and led the team at the World Juniors in 1999 (5th), 2008 (6th)



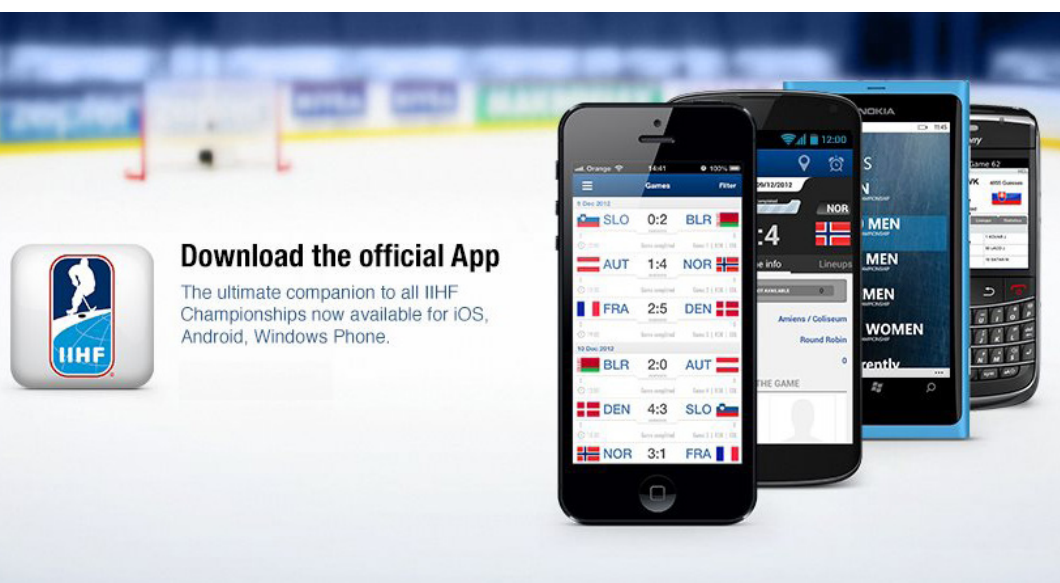
Philip MacCallum / HHOF-IIHF Images

and 2009 (7th). He was also coaching Finland at the U18 Worlds in 2011 and the U18 European Championship in 1998.

In club hockey he led Tappara Tampere to five league finals winning the championship in 2003. He also led HPK Hameenlinna to the final in 2010. Last season he was coaching the KHL's Amur Khabarovsk before being released early in the season.

FRANCE

The final of the French Cup returned to the newly refurbished Palais Omnisport de Paris-Bercy. The large venue, which has hosted the Cup final for several years, was refurbished to serve as co-host of the 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship together with Cologne, Germany.



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The Rouen Dragons took the prize in front of more than 10,000 fans, edging Grenoble's Bru-leurs de Loups 4-2 on a Jason Krog goal in the 57th minute to claim its sixth national cup and retain the trophy it won last year when the final was held in Marseille due to the work in Paris-Bercy.

Meanwhile, off the ice, the 2017 Organising Committee launched the recruitment drive for volunteers at next year's tournament under the slogan 'Ensemble pour 2017' (Together for 2017) and the new-look arena passed its first big test before dropping the puck on the world stage.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Josef Jandac (pictured, below) was named head coach of the Czech men's national team as of next season.



Sparta Prague / Champions Hockey League via Getty Images

His first challenge will be the 2016 World Cup of Hockey in Toronto in September. The contract also includes the 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in Germany and France, the edition one year later in Denmark and the 2018 Olympic Winter Games in Pyeong-Chang, Korea.

"The choice of the executive committee was unanimous," said Tomas Kral, the President of the Czech Ice Hockey Association. "With Josef Jandac we agreed on a two-year contract and he will exclusively work for the national team. His first task will be working on a roster for the World Cup of Hockey."

The 47-year-old has been working for Sparta Prague for the last four years and was named assistant to current men's national team coach Vladimir Vujtek for this season, a position he also held at the 2009 and 2010 World Championships and the 2010 Olympics.

Vladimir Vujtek is the current head coach of the men's national team. The future of Vujtek, who originally planned to retire, is uncertain and after discussions with the Czech Ice Hockey Association the door will be open for him to work in another capacity for the organization after the 2016 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in May.

SWEDEN

The Swedish Ice Hockey Association named **Tomas Monten** as the new head coach of the U20 national team.

Monten succeeds Rikard Gronborg, who will take over the men's national team after this season after having spent ten years in various positions with the U20 and U18 national teams, in the last three years as head coach of the U20 team.

"It is really a great honour to get the job as head coach of the U20 national team. It's a fantastically exciting job I have always hoped to get one day. That it becomes true feels fun and inspiring," Monten said.

The 38-year-old is no stranger to the World Juniors. He was an assistant coach for Sweden at the 2014 and 2015 World Juniors and also for the U18 national team in 2012 winning World Juniors silver on home ice in Malmo in 2014.

He's currently in his third year with Linkopings HC where he coached the junior team for two years and is now the assistant coach for the senior team.

USA

USA Hockey announced that **Mike Sullivan, John Hynes, Phil Housley, Jack Capuano** and **Scott Gordon** will serve as assistant coaches under Head Coach John Tortorella for Team USA in the upcoming World Cup of Hockey 2016.

Set for Sept. 17-Oct. 1 in Toronto, the World Cup of Hockey 2016 will feature eight teams including the U.S., Canada, Czech Republic, Europe, Finland, North America, Russia and Sweden.

"We're extremely pleased with the coaching staff we've assembled," said Dean Lombardi, general manager of Team USA and also the GM of the NHL's Los Angeles Kings. "It's a group that not only brings great experience on multiple levels, but is in lock step with where we're going and how we're going to get there."

"I'm looking forward to working with our coaching staff in guiding the group of players that are ultimately selected to represent our country in the World Cup," said Tortorella, who is also the head coach of the NHL's Columbus Blue Jackets. "We have a group of coaches assembled that all bring something different to the table and that is a real positive as we move toward our ultimate goal of winning the tournament."

Obituaries

GIAN BAZZI

Gian Bazzi passed away in January due to illness. He was 84.

The former Swiss forward represented Switzerland in 63 international games including the 1952 Olympic Winter Games where he scored two goals and in four World Championship events including three in the top division.

He was on the team that won the bronze medals at the 1951 World Championship in France and at the 1953 Worlds on home ice in Zurich and Basel.

In Switzerland the Davos native won three Cup titles with the Young Sprinters Neuchatel and was the top goal scorer of the league in 1961. He also played for SC Bern and was a coach of SC Langnau in the late '60s.

BRONISLAV DANDA

The former Czech national team forward died at the age of 85 on New Year's Eve

after long illness. He played 80 international games for Czechoslovakia scoring 45 goals including three Olympic Winter Games and two World Championships winning World Championship bronze in 1955.

The native of Hradec Kralove started to play hockey in Pardubice and won 11 national championships with Ruda Hvezda Brno. He was one of the fastest players of the country and in Brno he played on the top line and was one of six players who won that many championships with the team.

The winger ended his career for HC Auronzo in Italy before working as a coach in Brno, in Italy and Yugoslavia.

In summer Danda also played football and played 20 games in the top Czechoslovak league for Zbrojovka Brno scoring three goals.

JEAN-CLAUDE HURVOY

Former French national team defenceman Jean-Claude Hurvoy passed away at the age of 76.

Hurvoy represented France as a player of HC Chamonix at the 1961 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship C-Pool that took place together with all other pools not far from

home in Geneva and Lausanne, Switzerland.

He was the president of the association of national team players, of HC Saint-Gervais and HC Mont Blanc and was also a member of the Olympic committee of the Haute-Savoie department.

ROMAN NEUMEYER

Former IIHF Technical Director Roman Neumeyer passed away on 23 December in Olching, Germany. He was 84.

Neumeyer was born in Bukovina, Romania, but played hockey in Czechoslovakia and Austria. In Austria he also worked as a hockey and tennis coach.

Neumeyer was a Sport Director for the German Ice Hockey Association from 1970 to 1986. During this period West Germany won an Olympic bronze medal in Innsbruck 1976.

He then joined the IIHF, where he worked as a Technical Director between 1986 and 1996. He remained involved in the hockey family after his retirement as a technical advisor, including working at the 1998 Olympic Winter Games in Nagano, and as a directorate chairman at tournaments. Neumayer also worked on the establish-

ment of the German Ice Hockey Museum. He won the Paul Loicq Award presented annually to a person who has served the IIHF in an extraordinary manner promoting the sport of ice hockey worldwide in 1999 and was inducted into the German Ice Hockey Hall of Fame in 2001.

HORST SCHULDES

Former German national team forward Horst Schuldes passed away last on 5 December after long illness. He was 76 years old.

Born in Chomutov, Czechoslovakia, Schuldes moved to Germany where he played for SC Riessersee in Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

He represented Germany in 43 international games including the Olympic Winter Games in 1960 and 1964 and in the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships in 1959 and 1961.

In domestic play he became the top goal scorer with 25 goals in 14 games in the 1958/1959 season and won a championship in 1960

All set for YOG

Second edition of Winter Youth Olympic Games goes to Lillehammer

By Adam Steiss

February is around the corner, and the biggest youth ice hockey event of the 2016 calendar is only a couple of weeks away as preparations continue for the Winter Youth Olympic Games.

The second edition of the YOG, held in Lillehammer, Norway, should be an interesting one, with what will be undoubtedly two highly competitive men's and women's tournaments along with the unique Skills Challenge event.

There will be five teams each in the men's and women's tournaments. Four teams for each tournament from eight different nations were selected according to a special combined men's and women's under-18 world ranking established after the Men's and Women's U18 World Championships in 2015.

Norway as the host nation was awarded one male team and one female team to participate in each of the tournaments, and will also have two contestants competing in the Skills Challenge.



The 2016 Youth Olympic Winter Games Skills Challenge will feature participants from 22 countries around the globe.

The first edition of the Winter Youth Olympics, held in 2012 in Innsbruck, had no shortage of great moments. Finnish hockey fans might recall 2016 World Junior hero Kasperi Kapanen's debut with the men's national team. The then-15-old helped lead the way for the Finns, who defeated Russia in a shootout in a thrilling gold medal game.

Sweden rounded out the Nordic sweep in 2012, winning gold in the women's tournament with a 3-0 shutout of hosts Austria. Fresh off a bronze medal victory at the 2016 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship, the Swedes will be back in Lillehammer to defend their Youth Olympic gold against the likes of Czech Republic, Switzerland, Slovakia, and Norway.

Besides the team tournaments, an individual Skills Challenge will be held pitting the best 15 female and 15 male athletes, selected from a global qualification program based on a series of individual skill tests designed by the IIHF.

The following Skills Challenge competitions make up the program:

1. **Fastest Lap**
2. **Shooting Accuracy**
3. **Skating Agility**
4. **Fastest Shot**
5. **Passing Precision**
6. **Puck Control**

| MEN'S TOURNAMENT |
|------------------|
| USA |
| CANADA |
| RUSSIA |
| FINLAND |
| NORWAY |



| WOMEN'S TOURNAMENT |
|--------------------|
| CZECH REPUBLIC |
| SWEDEN |
| SWITZERLAND |
| SLOVAKIA |
| NORWAY |

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Frenchmen from the rocks

Briand, Arrossamena found hockey 4,200 km away of Paris

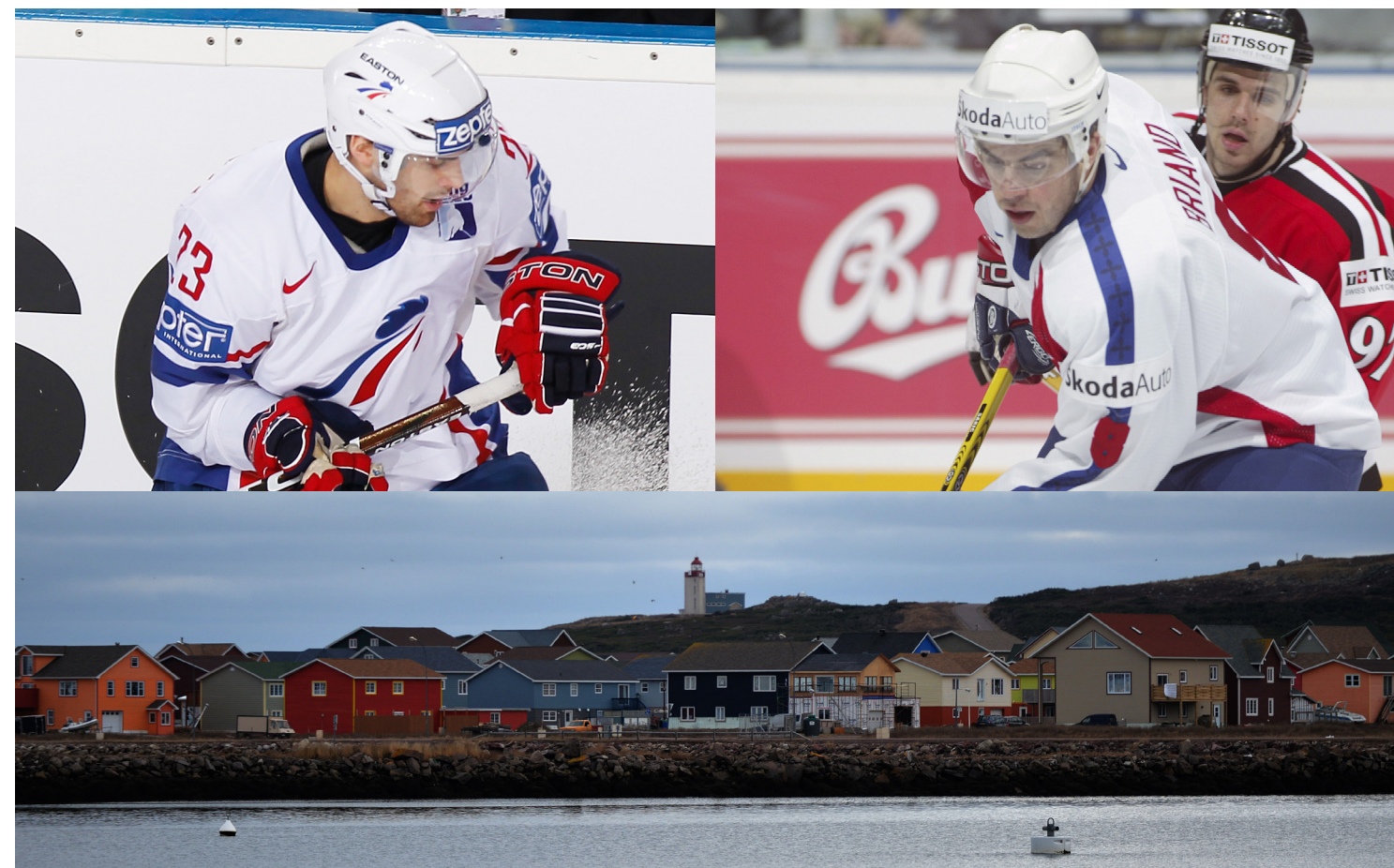
By Martin Merk

Which is France's hockey hotbed? Rouen? Chamonix? It might be the tiny archipelago of Saint Pierre and Miquelon off the shore of the Canadian province of Newfoundland.

The archipelago is a self-governing overseas collective of France and the only territory in North America that has remained in French possession after the 19th century.

Despite its remote location, and a return ticket to Paris setting one back over €1,000, the tiny island has produced more than its fair share of French national team players. Almost every World Championship team of the last two decades included a player from the archipelago.

The islands were frequented by indigenous and European peoples but not permanently settled until the French did so in the late 17th century. After several wars and treaties the French ceded all territories in North America to Great Britain – all but its last bastion to this day, Saint Pierre and Miquelon.



St. Pierre, on the French archipelago of St. Pierre et Miquelon, home to Nicolas Arrossamena (left) and Arnaud Briand (right).

From the eight rocky islands only two giving the archipelago its name are inhabited. Most people live on the smaller of the two islands, Saint Pierre, about 600 on the largest island of Miquelon. The climate with short summers and dark winters resembles Newfoundland and Northern Europe.

Although the people speak the continental version of French rather than with a Quebec accent

and claim to have the best croissants and baguettes in North America, the Canadian influence is obvious due to the geographical location and a lot of imported goods.

And of course, there's the hockey. Before Internet most TV channels came from Canada. The Montreal Canadiens were more likely to be on the screen than, say, Paris Saint-Germain.

The most famous hockey player to hail from St-Pierre was former French national team captain Arnaud Briand, who represented France in ten World Championship events and four Olympic Winter Games. Other French national players from the "rock" include Patrick Foliot, France's goaltender at the 1988 Olympics in Calgary.

"Saint Pierre and Miquelon are small islands but we have two hockey teams in St-Pierre that are like families. Either you play for the Cougars, or you play for the Missiles. So if you're born into a family you already have an idea for which team you'll play. It's like a family feud," says Briand, from the Cougars family.

There's just one North American size ice rink for the islands on St-Pierre while in Miquelon recreational hockey is played on a frozen lake in the winter.

"The climate is like in Northern Europe, like in Iceland. There's a lot of wind, there are small fir trees, white-tailed deer and rabbits," Briand describes the place he comes from with pride. "We eat a lot of cod fish, smoked salmon and lobster."

"We have a lot of competition with teams from Newfoundland. We also play in the Newfoundland Cup."

Briand, 45, finished his career after 16 pro seasons, mostly in France but also one season with

Stephane de Sakutin / AFP, Pekka Mononen / Europhoto, Jukka Rautio / IIHF Images

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Lulea, as the first Frenchman in the top Swedish league, and one in Augsburg, Germany.

“When I grew up I was watching a lot of hockey on Canadian TV, I saw Gretzky play and got an idea what I wanted to do. I played in St-Pierre and in the summers also went to camps in Quebec. I left for Quebec as a 14-year-old and when I was 19 I left for France to play professional hockey. When I left to play in Bordeaux the hockey culture was something I missed most from St-Pierre and Canada where there was so much hockey everywhere but nowadays it would be easier with the internet,” Briand says.

“Nowadays there are also other sports in St-Pierre like curling, judo, football, there’s now an indoor tennis hall as well. But when I grew up kids were mostly playing hockey. The winters are very long and people also like to watch hockey. The Montreal Canadiens are very popular and also the Boston Bruins.”

“I’ve been living and working in Rouen since I finished my career but I try to return every summer,” says Briand, who has been a board member of the French Ice Hockey Federation since its creation as an independent organization in 2006.

Saint-Pierre in hockey is almost as exotic to mainland French as when football teams from Guadeloupe or Martinique play in the French Cup. Ferries connect the islands and in 1999 a new airport opened that can theoretically accommodate planes from Europe, although in reality the flights only leave to nearby Canadian cities. Luc Tardif, the Quebec-born President of the French Ice Hockey Federation, remembers an anecdote from his early years as a President.

“In 2007 we played in the World Championship Division I in Qiqihar, China, and battled for promotion to the 2008 World Championship in Canada. 30 minutes after winning the tournament I got a call from the mayor of St-Pierre who offered us to have the pre-tournament camp in St-Pierre,” Tardif, who’s also an IIHF Council member, recalls. He had to explain that it won’t be possible due to

the normal pre-tournament schedule with exhibition games against other teams, however, the French team indeed came to St-Pierre at least after the 2008 Worlds.

“Because there are not that many places to stay the players were assigned to host families. They didn’t know in advance but they really enjoyed the great hospitality. We played two exhibition games so everybody involved in hockey could at least attend one game,” he says.

Among the other players who developed in St-Pierre are four national team players who were recently active in the French Ligue Magnus and have also played at least exhibition games for the national team like Mathieu Briand – not related to Arnaud – Valentin Claireaux, Gary Leveque and Nicolas Arrossamena, who all moved to mainland France during their junior years. Hockey is more popular among boys but with Anaëlle Champdoizeau there was also a female player on the U18 women’s national team.

26-year-old Arrossamena is currently the second-most successful player from St-Pierre having won two French championships – one each with Grenoble and Gap – and most recently the Continental Cup with the Rouen Dragons.

“St-Pierre is a great hockey place. There’s a good number of players born there who play in the Ligue Magnus. It’s a small island that has not that

much competition but develops good players that are skilled and good skaters. I never played senior hockey there but I can consider myself a Cougar since my father was their captain,” the 26-year-old says about his island.

He describes St-Pierre as a French place with a Canadian touch with more Canadian than French products in the stores, hockey and a landscape that resembles nearby Newfoundland.

“I return in the summer, my parents and my sister still live there so I’m going to see them and do my summer training,” he says.

Arrossamena started when he was three-and-a-half years old and moved to Grenoble in the French Alps when he was 15.

“It’s a dream for many boys to go over to France and become a professional player. It’s not that easy since there’s not that much competition on the island but if they work hard and follow what other players did they can achieve their goals. The young players learn from the players who have succeeded before.”

With players like Arrossamena succeeding on the French mainland and the profile of hockey on the rise in the country, it’s just a question of time until the next player from the rock 4,200 kilometres west of Paris will be the next to don the French national team jersey.



Briand (left) and Arrossamena at the 2016 IIHF Continental Cup.



Ten things we learned from Helsinki 2016

By Lucas Aykroyd

The 2016 IIHF World Junior Championship was a massive success for Finland, both on and off the ice. Thanks to a team driven to success and a rabid fan base, the tournament in Helsinki was one to remember. IIHF writer Lucas Aykroyd looks at the top-ten lessons learned from the WJC.



Taking a look back on the 2016 IIHF World Junior Championship held in Helsinki, Finland, here are 10 key lessons from yet another classic U20 tournament.

Finns are golden overachievers

Before the tournament, sport journalist Ken Campbell wrote in The Hockey News: “You could easily make the argument that, pound-for-pound, there is no better hockey nation than Finland.”

Combining their trademark gritty effort with an unusually powerful offence, the Finns triumphantly confirmed that assessment with their second gold medal in three years.

Drawing on a pool of just 39,731 junior players (compared to Canada’s 518,008 or Russia’s 86,100), the 2016 host nation made the most of what it had. Just like the 1998 tournament in Helsinki, an overtime win over Russia in the final was the perfect capper.

Youth will be served

The World Juniors are often called a “19-year-old tournament.” But this year,



Finland went past Canada, Sweden, and finally Russia in overtime to earn its fourth IIHF World Junior Championship.

every forward on the Media All-Star Team was a top prospect eligible for the next NHL draft: Finland’s Jesse Puljujarvi and Patrik Laine (both 17) and the U.S.’s Auston Matthews (18).

Puljujarvi was the top points-getter (17), while Laine and Matthews tied for the goals lead (seven). Only twice before has each all-star forward been 18 or under, in 1978 (Wayne Gretzky, Mats Naslund, Anton Stastny) and 1984 (Petr Rosol, Raimo Hel-

minen, Nikolai Borschevsky). Considering 17-year-old Finnish defenceman Olli Juolevi (17) was also named an all-star, it appears hockey’s trend toward youth isn’t limited to the NHL scoring race.

Never count Russia out

Russian defenceman Ivan Provorov said: “We are the nation that battles until the last second.” That holds particularly true when inspirational coach Valeri Bragin’s behind the bench.

The Russians flirted with disaster in the quarter-finals against underdog Denmark. But captain Vladislav Kamenev got the equalizer with 44 seconds left before adding the 4-3 overtime winner. Even more dramatically, in the gold medal game versus Finland, Andrei Svetlakov tied it up with just six seconds left, although his team ultimately lost on Kasper Kapanen’s OT goal. Today’s Russian teams aren’t as consistent as their old Soviet counterparts, but to discount them because they don’t play a “full 60 minutes” is folly.

Offence can win championships

The 1980s Edmonton Oilers would love how Finland captured its title this year. The Finns usually rely on strong goaltending and team

Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images



Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

defence, but at these World Juniors, both their overall goalie save percentage (87.7) and penalty-killing (65.2) ranked an unimpressive seventh out of 10 teams. How did they triumph?

The Finns scored 12 of their tournament-best 35 goals on the power play – including the game-winners in both the quarter-finals and semi-finals – for a conversion rate of 37.5. In six of their seven outings, they had four or more goals. Let's see if this signals a new run-and-gun era.

Denmark is for real

Many thought the Danes would falter this year without aces like Nikolaj Ehlers and Oliver Bjorkstrand. Instead, they rose to the occasion, getting third-period goals from Soren Nielsen and Mathias From in their



Matt Zamboni / HHOF-IIHF Images

crucial tournament-opening 2-1 win over Switzerland. Almost stunning Russia in the quarter-final (instead of getting blown out 8-0 by Canada, as in 2015) is another confidence-builder.

Denmark's team spirit compensates for a lack of elite skills. It augurs well for the 2018 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in Copenhagen and Herning, where some of these kids will strut their stuff on home ice.

Canada's team-building needs work

Let's not overstate Canada's woes in Helsinki. They were one goal away from advancing to the semi-finals. Nonetheless, when the 2015 champs lost two round-robin games for the first time since 1998, it was a sign of bad things to come.

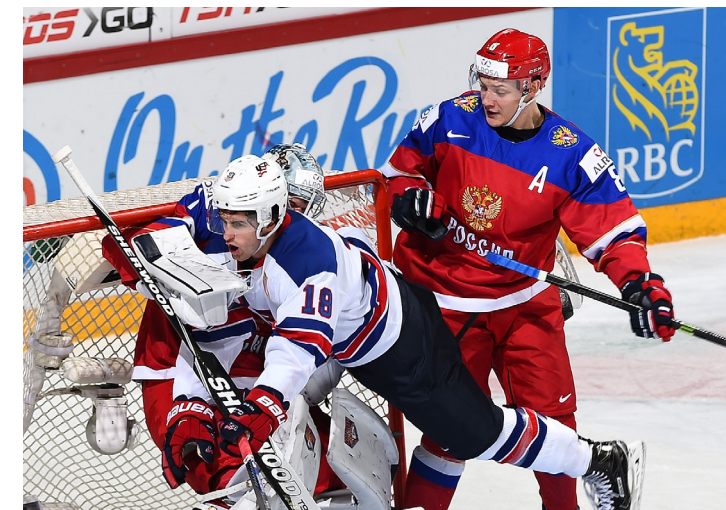


Matt Zamboni / HHOF-IIHF Images

The last time a Canadian team finished sixth was in 1992 in Fussen, Germany. Both this squad and the '92 edition never got their chemistry together, and both added a high-profile power forward and goalie late in the process. While it's unfair to directly compare Jake Virtanen and Eric Lindros, or Mackenzie Blackwood and Trevor Kidd, the reality is that Virtanen and Blackwood were focal points and struggled under the spotlight. Canada will learn from this and likely return to the podium in 2017.

Soul-searching time for Sweden

Sweden has now lost two straight bronze medal games, and each defeat was disturbing in its own way. Falling 4-2 to underdog Slovakia in 2015 should never have happened. This year's 8-3 loss to the Americans was the Juniorkronorna's largest margin of



Matt Zamboni / HHOF-IIHF Images

defeat ever in a medal game. Even without injured star William Nylander, coach Rikard Gronborg's veteran-loaded squad was perfect in the preliminary round. Yet they couldn't find a way in the last two games.

The Swedes, who recently cracked five gold medal games in seven years (2008-09, 2012-14), must take a look in the mirror. Fourth place isn't acceptable.

U.S. must solve its nemesis

In Ufa 2013, the U.S. proved it can win a title in Russia. But facing the Russians in the medal round is seemingly futile.

For the third straight year, Russia eliminated the Americans from gold medal contention, with a 2-1 semi-final win. The presence of future NHL stars like Auston Matthews,



Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

Sonny Milano, and Zach Werenski wasn't enough. Considering the U.S. has never beaten Russia in a World Junior play-off game, there's a missing "X factor" that must be addressed.

Czechs, Slovaks still work in progress

The Czech medal drought persists, dating back to 2005's bronze. Even the addition of NHL-experienced forward David Pastrnak wasn't enough to avert a 7-0 quarter-final loss to the Americans. And without now-graduated stars like goalie Denis Godla and winger Martin Reway, Slovakia's hopes of repeating 2015's surprise bronze crumpled in a 6-0 quarter-final defeat against Sweden. Both nations need more development before they can revive their old glories.



Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

WJC fever is sweeping Europe

With 215,225 fans at the games in Helsinki, Finland eclipsed the previous European World Junior attendance record of 144,268 set in Malmo, Sweden in 2014.

A peak of 2.5 million Finns - 45 percent of the country's population - watched their team top Russia for gold on the national TV broadcaster, YLE.

When the tournament returns to Europe in 2020, the Czech Republic, which set a new IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship attendance record in 2015 (741,690), will surely strive to take their World Junior numbers into the stratosphere.



FLYING HIGH IN HELSINKI: 2016 WJC IN NUMBERS

Total attendance: 215,225
(new record for European World Juniors)

2.5 million: Peak number of viewers in Finland for gold medal game

15.6 million total unique viewers watched WJC on TSN and RDS


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Video highlights: 2016 IIHF World Junior Championship



[Click here to view all the game highlights from the 2016 IIHF World Junior Championship](#)

Directorate Awards

Best Goalkeeper: Linus Soderstrom, G, Sweden
(5GP, 1.42 GAA, 94.70 SVS%)

Best Defenceman: Zach Werenski, D, USA
(7GP, 2G, 7A, 9 PTS, +10)

Best Forward: Jesse Puljujarvi, F, Finland
(7GP, 5 G, 12 A, 17PTS, +8)

Media All-Star team

Goalkeeper: Linus Soderstrom, USA
 Defence: Olli Juolevi, Finland
 Defence: Zach Werenski, USA
 Forward: Patrik Laine, Finland
 Forward: Auston Matthews, USA
 Forward: Jesse Puljujarvi, Finland
 MVP: Jesse Puljujarvi, Finland



2016
 WORLD JUNIOR
 CHAMPIONSHIP
 FINLAND
 Helsinki

Directorate Best
Forward, All-Star, MVP



Jesse Puljujarvi,
F, Finland

Combining with linemates Patrick Laine and Sebastian Aho to produce 17 of Team Finland's tournament-leading 35 goals, the 17-year-old was effectively unstoppable at the World Juniors. Puljujarvi finished atop the scoring table with 17 points, including five points in three playoff games.



2016
 WORLD JUNIOR
 CHAMPIONSHIP
 FINLAND
 Helsinki

Directorate Best
Goalkeeper, All-Star



Linus Soderstrom,
G, Sweden

Although his team finished out of the medal table, Soderstrom was a revelation for Sweden and a big reason for the team finishing atop Group A. In his preliminary round games against the United States and Canada, Soderstrom gave up just two goals, posting a shutout of the States in the process.

USA stays on top at Women's U18

Golden goal wins second straight title

By Andrew Podnieks



Natalie Snodgrass' backhand from the top of the crease at 1:47 of overtime gave Team USA another gold medal at the women's U18s.

"I was in the right spot at the right time," Snodgrass beamed. "It was a nice shot from the point, deflected. I missed it the first time but buried the rebound. I threw my gloves in the air!"

"The bounces didn't go our way, but they played well," Canadian forward Emma Maltais said. "We put our best out there. We're upset with the loss but proud of how we represented our country."

Snodgrass' goal means the Americans get to take home a second straight gold. The States have now won five of the nine WW18 events played.



Having now claimed a second straight gold medal, the United States have now won five of the nine WW18 events played.

"This team has worked so hard. It's incredible to be able to repeat. We're incredibly excited," Snodgrass said. In addition to the game winner, she also scored the tying goal in the third period. "it was the most exciting game I've ever been in."

Canada had built up a 2-0 lead through good puck pressure, but the Americans patiently worked their legs into the game and moved into a gear Canada couldn't quite match.

"To win it here, on their home turf, is amazing," said goaltender Alex Gulstene, who was sensational when she needed to be. "It's beyond words."

The seats were full. The suites were full. The standing-room section was full. The biggest crowd ever to watch an IIHF WW18 game, a total of 5,516, watched another thrilling chapter in the Canada-United States rivalry.

The women's U18 event set records for attendance and produced breakout performances from many players and as many nations. Twice the single-game attendance record was broken in the Preliminary Round, and the 5,516 fans who stuffed the Meridian Centre for the gold-medal game smashed that mark a third time.

This year's event saw the emergence of several players destined to become stars. The North Americans, of course, have nothing to worry about in this regard, but the very fact that the Europeans are starting to develop star forwards with offensive ability is both needed and refreshing.

Alina Muller of Switzerland, Fanuza Kadirova of Russia, and Sara Hjalmarsson of Sweden are just a few players who look capable of having long and successful careers in women's hockey.

Francois Laplante / IIHF-IIHF Images

IceTimes January 2016 / Vol. 20, No. 1

2016 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship



Valeria Tarakanova, G, Russia



Fanuza Kadirova, F, Russia



Cayla Barnes, D, USA



Ashton Bell, F, Canada

Directorate Awards

Best Goalkeeper: Emma Soderberg, G, Sweden
(6 GP, 1.75 GAA, 93.27 SVS%)

Best Defenceman: Cayla Barnes, D, USA
(5 GP, 0 G, 6 A, 6 PTS, +10)

Best Forward: Alina Muller, F, Switzerland
(5 GP, 7 G, 2 A, 9 PTS, +5)

Media All-Star team

Goalkeeper: Emma Soderberg, Sweden
Defence: Cayla Barnes, USA
Defence: Jessica Adolfsson, Sweden
Forward: Ashton Bell, Canada
Forward: Fanuza Kadirova, Russia
Forward: Alina Muller, Switzerland
MVP: Valeria Tarakanova, Russia



Directorate Best Forward, All-Star



Alina Muller, F, Switzerland

The Swiss star took her game up a notch at the 2016 IIHF U18 Women's World Championship, outshining the competition and becoming the first Swiss woman to lead an IIHF tournament in scoring. Her scoring touch almost singlehandedly saved the Swiss from relegation, accounting for seven of her team's 16 goals.



Directorate Best Goalkeeper, All-Star



Emma Soderberg, G, Sweden

Soderberg was a key cog in what was a comeback year for the Swedish U18 women's team. Her calming presence in net, and a sparkling 1.75 GAA, guided Sweden to a bronze medal game win over Russia, overcoming a rough two-year stretch for the country which saw Sweden finish in 6th place in 2014 and 2015.


January 2016 / Vol. 20, No. 1

CHL final set to take place in Oulu

Karpat, Frolunda last two teams left

By Martin Merk



And then there were two. Finnish champion Karpat Oulu and Frolunda Gothenburg from Sweden have reached the final of the Champions Hockey League.

The CHL Final will be played on 9 February in Oulu. The team from northern Finland had the best record of the originally 48 teams in the competition and earned home-ice advantage for the one-game final for the top European club competition.

Last year another team north of the Baltic Sea, Lulea HF, won the final against Frolunda, which will get a chance at redemption after dispatching HC Davos in the semis.

Both Karpat and Frolunda started the home-and-away semi-finals with a road win and advanced to the final with a tie on home ice.



Finnish club Karpat Oulu (left) will host Frolunda Gothenburg of Sweden (right) in the 2016 Champions Hockey League Final.

Frolunda's Ryan Lasch, a former World Championship participant for the United States, leads both the Champions Hockey League and the Swedish Hockey League in scoring.

"We play aggressive and want to create a lot of offence and tight defence, which leads us to get those offensive chances and go the



Karpat Oulu / Tommy Hall / Champions Hockey League via Getty Images

other way," explains Frolunda forward Ryan Lasch. "I think that we have a great game idea of what we want to do with the puck and how we want to play in the offensive zone."

"That is kind of the reason why we get the chances that we do and score how we do. We have four lines that can score at any moment and

any one of those four lines can step up. When you play that kind of system with four lines, it is scary, it is dangerous for the other team."

Standing in Frolunda's way this year is Karpat Oulu, which narrowly defeated Sparta Prague, Espoo Blues, and Lukko Rauma to make the final. Despite holding home ice advantage in the CHL final thanks to a better overall win-loss record in CHL competition this year, Karpat will be facing a team that has made the final in both years of the tournament's existence.

The Finnish club will be relying on defence and goaltending to claim the CHL trophy. Without a player in the tournament's top ten in scoring, Karpat will lean on goalie Sami Aittokallio, who has been a great pickup this season, allowing only ten goals in ten games and recording 5 shutouts. Oulu native and team captain Lasse Kukkonen and defensive partner Adam Masuhr will have their hands full with the Frolunda offence, which features three out of the CHL's top five top scorers.

The Karpat offence is led by forward Julius Junttila, and has a strong contingent of national team players including two of the heroes from Finland's 2016 World Junior triumph, Sebastian Aho and tournament MVP Jesse Puljujarvi. Time will tell if these youngsters have some more magic left in the tank when Karpat takes on Frolunda next month.

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2016 Continental Cup goes to Rouen

Home team wins plate, CHL berth

By Martin Merk



The Rouen Dragons made their weekend perfect and also beat Denmark's Herning Blue Fox, 4-0, to claim the Continental Cup for the second time.

As the Continental Cup winner the Dragons will also receive a wild card for next season's Champions Hockey League pending formal approval by the CHL board.

"It's something unbelievable. It was a great weekend, we had enormous support from our fans, we played great hockey games," French national team forward Nicolas Arrossamena said.

"Tonight we played very solid defensively and capitalized on our chances at good moments. We stayed focused until the end of the game and tonight we showed that we're capable of playing at the European level. It's great for French hockey."



The Rouen Dragons claim the Continental Cup for the second time since 2012 and will compete in the CHL next year.

Rouen has been a venue of firsts at the Continental Cup. In 2012 the Rouen Dragons became the first French team to win the competition – one of the biggest success stories for French hockey.

In 2014 it was the first time for another nation when Norway's Stavanger Oilers lifted the winners' plate, followed by Neman Grodno from Be-

larus. Now the plate returns to Rouen and the enthusiastic crowd at the Ile Lacroix ice rink couldn't have been happier.

"It was our goal and we had a lot of pressure but eventually we won and everybody is happy," said Marc-Andre Thinel, who won the Best Forward award.

His teammate Patrick Coulombe was named Best Defenceman by the tournament directorate and Herning's Simon Nielsen Best Goal-tender.

Just one week ago the Dragons won the French Cup beating Grenoble in the final in Paris in front of over 10,000 fans.

Now the team from Normandy claimed the Continental Cup on home ice. It will later play in the League Cup final against the Gap Rapaces and in spring the team will be looking to make some noise in the Ligue Magnus playoffs. At press time, the Dragons were in sixth place.

"It's awesome. The fans were so incredible this weekend. I think our team really came together and played three solid games against three tough teams who played all with different styles of hockey. It's great to do it for us and for the fans too. It's different guys stepping up each night that's why we are difficult to beat," Rouen's former Stanley Cup finalist Jason Krog said.

"The club is happy to join the Champions Hockey League. We will begin next season earlier than usual to be ready. It will be great for our fans to have the CHL here. It will again be another level with great clubs as opponents," head coach Fabrice Lhenry said.

Christophe Delaville

Japan marches back up

Earns promotion after one year in Div. I

By Agnes Szigeti & Szabolcs Zavodszky



The Japanese U18 women's national team only spent one year in Division I as they win promotion after being relegated the year before.

They will replace France in the top division for the 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship.

Before their last game against Norway it was already settled that Japan would be heading back to the top division for 2017. They were the favourites but it wasn't easy for them as both Germany and Slovakia arrived to Miskolc with their eye at being promoted.

"We want to play good hockey in every game, hopefully win as many games as we can with going up to the top division as our main goal," said German head coach Tommy Kettner at the start of the tournament that was hosted by Miskolc, Hungary.



Goaltender Ayu Tonosaki gave up just two goal in five games to help lift Japan back into the women's U18 top division.

Japan started the tournament with a 3-0 shutout win over Denmark on goals by Shiga, Ota and Hinata. In their second game Japan took on Germany and came through in a 3-1 win.

Japan kept up its hot streak on the third day of the tournament with a 7-0 victory over host nation Hungary. On the fourth day of the tour-

namment the Japan-Slovakia game was de facto the game for gold as they were the last two undefeated teams in the tournament.

Japan was back to their usual ways with strong skating and outshooting their opponent by a wide margin. They jumped out to a 2-0 lead after the first 20 minutes on goals by Yamashita

and Shiga, with the second one being a power-play marker.

A goal by Maskalova got Slovakia back in the game but Japan stuck to their system and it paid off with a second power-play goal by Shiga, and Konisha scored the fourth goal in the closing minutes of the period.

"We tried to take this tournament game by game. Each opponent was a challenge, we stuck to our style of play and I was happy with the way the team played. It will be tough next season but we will be ready," said Japanese head coach Yoshifumi Fujisawa with a smile on his face after his team won.

When all the dust had settled Japan had the gold medal and a ticket back to the top division with Denmark being relegated. Japan, Germany and Slovakia each took home an individual award, Ayu Tonosaki of Japan was the best goalie, Tatiana Istocyova of Slovakia was the best defenceman and Emily Nix of Germany was the best forward and also tied for the leading scorer with Millie Sirum of Norway.

The Japanese look to have a bright future as they will be returning both goalies and twelve skaters to this age group. Only six players were born in 1998, all others were younger and can return. They will not be an easy team to beat at next year's top division.

Romania rules in Novi Sad

Defeat Spain 6-5 on final day

By Adam Steiss



Romania defeated Spain 6-5 in a wild game on the final day to claim the 2016 IIHF Ice Hockey U20 World Championship Division II Group B.

Zoltan Sandor scored the tournament winner late in the third, the last of six goals in the period as Spain came back from a 3-2 deficit to go up 5-4, only to give up a goal and then a two-man advantage that set up Sandor's goal.

Romania, which was relegated from Group A last season, went into its final round robin game against Spain having put up four wins and 31 goals in four games, but sitting just one point behind the undefeated Spaniards in the standings after needing overtime to put away the host team Serbia in earlier in the tournament.

Spain meanwhile had cruised through the field and was anxious to finally earn promotion after



Romania (left) is moving up after a wild win over Spain in Division II Group B, while Mexico (right) also earned promotion.

two straight second-place finishes in Division IIB. But disaster struck as a high sticking penalty was followed up by a delay of game penalty for clearing the puck out of bounds, putting the team down two men in the dying minutes of the game. On the two-man advantage Norbert Rokaly got the puck behind the Spanish net and found Sandor beside the right post for the go-ahead goal with 3:31 left on the clock.



Mirko Lazovic, German Garcia



Mexico promoted

Win 3rd U20 Division III title

Team Mexico won promotion on home ice at the 2016 IIHF Ice Hockey U20

World Championship Division III, held in the capital Mexico City.

This is the country's third gold medal in this category, the last two coming in 2005 and 2011. All three tournaments have been won with Mexico hosting the event in the capital Mexico City. The team will advance to compete in the Division II Group B championship next year.

A 3-0 shutout of tournament runners-up Bulgaria on the fourth day of the round robin proved the deciding game for Mexico. The Bulgarians were upset 4-3 by Israel the following day while Mexico put up a 2-1 win over New Zealand to give itself the key tiebreaker against both teams with still one day left to play.

Mexico managed to win the tournament without having one player among the top ten in scoring. The team's success came in net with goaltender Jaime Perez, who backstopped Mexico in all five of its wins, posting a 2.12 GAA and 92.04 save percentage in the process to earn the Directorate Best Goaltender nod.

Bulgaria finished in second place, while New Zealand took third. Israel produced the tournament's top three scorers and potted 39 goals in six games, but had a rough start with tight losses to Mexico and Iceland and was blown out 6-2 by New Zealand which left the team out of the medals.

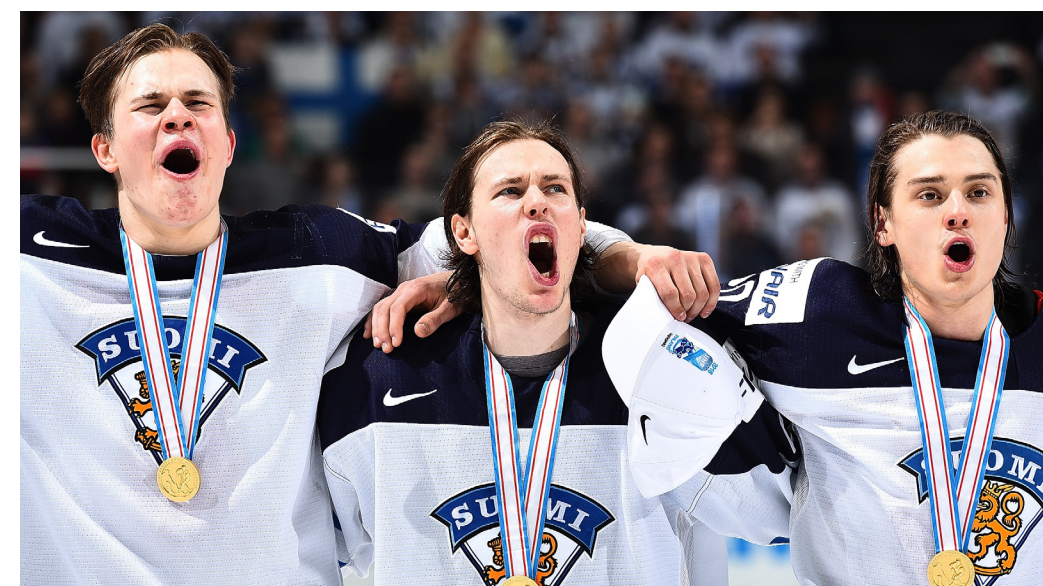
Gallery



Finland's Kasper Kapanen scores the overtime golden goal against Russia's Alexander Georgiev at the 2016 IIHF World Junior Championship.



Jana Chytilova / IIHF-Images



Matt Zamboni / IIHF-Images

Top: USA's Natalie Snodgrass scores the 3-2 overtime game-winning goal against Canada at the 2016 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship.
Bottom: Jesse Pulkkinen (left), Sebastian Aho (right), along with linemate Patrik Laine finished first, second, and third overall in scoring at the 2016 IIHF World Juniors.



Matt Zambonin / HHOF-IIHF Images

Denmark put in another great performance at the World Juniors, narrowly losing in overtime to Russia in the quarter-final.



Jana Chytilova / HHOF-IIHF Images

Sweden won women's U18 bronze for the fifth time in the nine years of the event, defeating Russia 2-1 in a thrilling finale.



Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

The United States handed Sweden its biggest-ever loss in a World Junior medal game, rolling 8-3 en route to bronze.



Hermann Sobe

Austria won the 2016 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship Division I Qualification on home ice, defeating Italy in the championship game 3-2. They will return to the Division I Worlds after a one-year relegation.



Mirko Lazovic

Romania's national U20 team lifts head coach George Justinian in celebration after advancing to Division II Group A.



German Garcia

Mexico's U20 national team won its third IIHF U20 Division III championship on home ice at the Mexico City Ice Dome.


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Backchecking: Jalonen hits home run at WJC

Coach joins exclusive Double-Gold Club

By Risto Pakarinen

In 2011, Jukka Jalonen hoisted the IIHF World Championship trophy in Bratislava as head coach of Team Finland.

In January, he coached Finland to a World Juniors gold. Only Mike Babcock has won those two gold medals before Jalonen.

Next up for the Finn: networking in North America. We spoke with Finland's coach after the golden dust had settled.

It's only been a few weeks since you won the gold, but does it already feel like a distant memory?

No, not yet. [Laughs]. I've had all kinds of events here and it takes a while before it's not on my mind all the time.

People still come up to me and take photos and selfies, and congratulate me, which is

really nice. Then I also have to report back to the federation before the tournament is completely in the past.

How do you coach teenagers compared to pro players?

You just have to be more patient with the young players because they are young, and in their own way a little immature and a work in progress.

A coach needs to show them that he trusts them, and take things easy. All in all, you have to be a little gentler because they're still growing up and vulnerable.

It's best to try to encourage them and push them forward and try to understand their language because, let's face it, this generation of players is different from the one that I'm used to, and that's something I have to take into consideration.

Team USA coach Ron Wilson said during the tournament that he wanted to be really careful with what he said, because "you could destroy a guy's life" if you crush his confidence.

There is that danger and that's why you have to be on your toes as a coach. An older player has built his confidence over the years and when they come to the national



Jalonen's gold at the 2016 World Junior Championship puts him among the most successful Finnish coaches of all time.

team, they know who they are, but a young player's confidence may be more fragile, and can be crushed. We tried to focus on the things the players did well, praise them and give them positive feedback, and not only talk about mistakes and weaknesses.

That sounds like it's a little more fun for the coach as well?

Well, yes, and it did challenge me to reconsider some of my old ideas and attitudes, which is great. Now, I do believe my ideas work with older players as well [laughs].

You have to have accountability, what matters is how you present it to the players.

We had the same approach with everything related to the way we played, we always tried to show the players examples of plays they had done well to show them that we knew they could play the right way. Of course you sometimes have to show mistakes as well, but the main focus was on things that were done well.

Are young players also more eager to do exactly what the coach asks them to do?

Yes. We had our own “stairs of success” and commitment is always an important part of that. We knew that our guys would commit to the team’s demands, that was a given, so we wanted to talk about courage and trust, and the ability to tolerate setbacks, more than about commitment.

For example, sometimes pro players can’t commit to playing in a role they’re not used to playing, and that can be a challenge for the coach. That wasn’t a problem for us.

You had to put forward Miska Siikonen into defence when a stomach flu took out a couple of defencemen. Did that help with the team to come together, and pull together?



“I think I’m a good enough coach to be in the NHL, even though I’d probably have to start as an assistant there.”

It’s natural that going through tough times together pulls the team together. That somebody is ready to take on a role he’s absolutely not used to, and does so without complaining showed that everybody was ready to do whatever it took to help the

team, and examples like that just strengthened our faith in ourselves.

You can always say all kinds of things, but it’s actions that really make people to take notice and buy in.

How close to the final roster was your first draft of it?

The core group stayed the same after Lake Placid, but a couple of players played their way onto the team during the fall.

We tried to keep our eyes open the whole time, but there wasn’t that much time for anyone to take long strides in their development. I’d say we had a 35-player strong group to draw from.

Some reporters thought the other group (with Sweden, Canada, and USA) was tougher but you told them to wait until the end to see which teams would come out on top. You obviously knew something the reporters didn’t.

Both teams in the final played in the same group in the preliminary round. The difference between winning and losing can be so small, and it’s hard to always know what it is in advance.

We played good games and we had to play tough games in our group and that probably got us ready for the playoffs stage. I don’t think the Swedes were challenged the same way, and maybe not the Americans, either.

You were down a goal or two in several games but always rallied back. At which point did you start to think that you're going to go all the way?

I actually thought already after the Lake Placid tournament that this team had true potential. And then, during the tournament when I saw that the team could rally back to win games, and I saw that the players started to believe in themselves. It doesn't help that the coach believes in them. [Laughs]. So, I had faith already in August, but it got stronger during the tournament.

What made you put Patrik Laine, Jesse Puljujarvi, and Sebastian Aho on the same line?

It was the last game of the exhibition tournament we hosted in November. I wanted to test Sebastian Aho as a centre. We needed to find another good centre because you need four good centres if you want to win.

I put Aho together with Laine and they played really well, so it was an easy decision to start the tournament with Aho centering those two. They got off to such a great start, their confidence got a boost and the snowball just couldn't be stopped. Sometimes it goes the other way, and a bad start destroys the players' confidence – and that's just as difficult to change during the tournament.



Jalonen coached Finland to a gold medal victory at the 2011 IIHF World Championship before taking over the junior team.

What's it going to be like to follow these talented kids' careers in the future?

That's one of the highlights of coaching; to coach a player at the beginning of his career and then see what kind of a player he becomes. Of course I have my own ideas and predictions, but you can never tell how a career will shape up.

Will your paths cross each other in the NHL, maybe?

Everything's possible. [Laughs]. These are young men and I hope to have a few good coaching years ahead of me, but I think it's I who has to do something special.

Many of these players will play in the NHL so whether we'll meet there depends on whether I have what it takes to make it there.

What would you have to do?

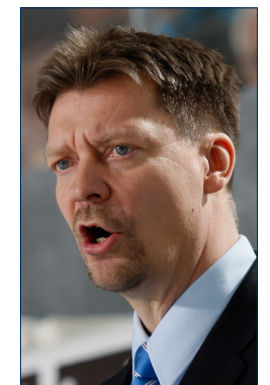
I think I'm a good enough coach to be in the NHL, even though I'd probably have to start as an assistant there.

But I'd need to network, and put the word out there. I have to give it some serious thought, how to do it. I've got my work carved up for me there.



Fact File:

Jukka Jalonen, Head coach, Finland



- Born: 2 November 1962 Riihimäki, Finland (age 53)
- Won IIHF World Championship gold medal in 2001
- 2006 SM Liiga Coach of the Year
- Inducted into Finnish Hockey Hall of Fame in 2012

Coming up

2016 Winter Youth Olympic Games

NORWAY; Lillehammer
12.02.2016 - 21.02.2016

Olympic Qualification Preliminary Round 2

Group G: ITALY, Cortina
Group H: HUNGARY, Budapest
Group J: JAPAN, Sapporo
11 - 14.02.2016

IIHF Ice Hockey U18 World Championship Division III Group B

SOUTH AFRICA, Cape Town
14 - 19.02.2016



From left: Attila Kovacs of Hungary (silver), Augusts Valdis Vasilonoks of Latvia (gold), and Japan's Seiya Furukawa (bronze), were the first-ever medallists at the Youth Olympic Skills Challenge event in 2012.

Oliver Lerch / GEPA pictures

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