



IceTimes

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Whoa, Canada!

Maple Leaf charges to
gold medal triumph >

Wrapping up the
2014/2015 season >

2015
IIHF WORLD CHAMPION
Canada

ŠKODA



Reebok

From the IIHF President

Great effort leads to greater success

By René Fasel

Thank you Prague, thank you Ostrava, thank you Czech Republic.

It is always satisfying to end the hockey season on a positive, and lucky for us we were able to close out the year with a bang at the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship.

Following the success of Belarus 2014, the Czech organizing committee threw itself into the planning and execution of the 2015 IIHF Worlds, and I am happy to say that they came through with great success.

Visitors to Prague and Ostrava were treated to a real “world hockey festival” in both cities and I heard nothing but great things said about the tournament from fans and officials alike.

A big thank you goes to the Czech Ice Hockey Association and the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship organizers. It is always a challenge to put together a tournament of

this kind, but not only did they do a great job taking care of both the fans and the teams, they also went beyond and invested heavily into marketing and promotion.

The result? An IIHF all-time World Championship attendance record that was already broken before the start of the semi-final round, and a final count of 741,690 spectators, smashing the already impressive mark set by Minsk 2014.

But even for those who didn't have tickets, there was always something to do around the tournament. The fan zones in both cities were always in business, and it was a pleasure to see so many different jerseys among the huge crowds in and around the O2 and CEZ arenas.

To add to the organizers' success, we reached new heights in our quest to bring in more fans to the game. Thanks to an excellent cooperative effort with our marketing partner Infront, we were able to live stream games and make highlights available to fans around the world. The number of eyes we were able to pull to our social media channels was significant. You can read more about this on page 8. With the great game action we witness each year at the Worlds we must continue to harness social media to bring the game to a younger audience.

As usual, we also closed out the tournament with our Annual Congress, where we reviewed the past year and came out with some positive feeling about the direction of the federation and our financial status.

We had to have some difficult discussions at the 2014 Congress in Minsk and the Semi-Annual Congress in Tenerife, but the important thing was that we came out with a plan and put it into action. I would like to thank all of our members for their input and participation as we formed our plan of action for the future.

I would also like to welcome Turkmenistan as an IIHF associate member. With our efforts to bring hockey to more Asian countries I am happy to include this Central Asian nation into the IIHF family as our 74th member.

For now, as we head into the summer I wish you all the best and hope you get some time to relax and spend with your loved ones.

We reached new heights in our quest to bring in more fans to the game.



News and Notes



Photo: GEPA

IIHF

39 male and 32 female athletes will compete in a Global Skills Challenge taking place from 5-10 July in Vierumaki, Finland. The names were finalized in May following a national qualification phase that began last October.

[Click here to view all contestants and skill tests](#)

The athletes will compete in six skills competitions to determine the 15 best male and the 15 best female athletes that will qualify for the 2016 Youth Olympic Winter Games.

The Under-16 Skills Challenge was conceived ahead of the first Youth Olympic Winter Games in Innsbruck 2012, as a way of getting other

countries involved in an ice hockey event, beyond the top nations that were competing in the men's and women's ice hockey tournaments.

The Skills Challenge will take place between February 12 and 21, 2016, during the 2016 Youth Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway.

BELARUS

The Belarusian Ice Hockey Association and national coach Dave Lewis (pictured) have agreed on a contract extension.

"We originally signed for one year. At the final meeting I asked the team whether it wants to work with him. [The players] welcomed the future co-operation. After a thorough discussion with the coach we agreed on continuing working together. We plan on a three-year con-



Photo: Richard Wolowicz / HHOF-IIHF Images

tract so that it will include the entire Olympic cycle," BIHA President Igor Rachkovski said.

At the press conference Rachkovski also announced the intention to work on a bid for the 2021 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship after hosting the event for the first time in Minsk in 2014.

For the U20 national team Pavel Perepekhin was confirmed as head coach. The 37-year-old led the team to the top division in his second season behind the bench and will continue his work at the 2016 IIHF World Junior Championship in Helsinki, Finland.

GERMANY

The German Ice Hockey Association announced that the contract with national coach Pat Cortina will not be extended after three years in this position.

Under Cortina, the German men's national team finished in 9th, 14th and 10th place in the last three World Championships but missed the qualification to the Olympic Winter Games for the first time in history since coming back after World War II for the 1952 Olympics.

Cortina also coached the U20 national team that was relegated at the 2015 IIHF World Junior Championship.

HUNGARY

Miklos Nemeth resigned as president of the Hungarian Ice Hockey Federation. A successor has not yet been chosen.

He leaves as Hungarian ice hockey is trending upwards. The men's senior team won promotion last month to the 2016 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship, the first time the team has reached the top level since 2009.

Nemeth was elected president in June 2010, taking over for Ferenc Studniczky, and was re-elected last year for another term.

SWEDEN

Torgny Bendelin was named head coach of the Swedish U18 national team, replacing Jim Brithen.

The 58-year-old was the head coach of the U20 national team from 2004 to 2007. He was also coaching AIK Stockholm, Leksands IF, Linkopings HC and HV71 Jonkoping in the top Swedish league.

Sweden also named former women's national team player and long-time AIK Stockholm coach Ylva Lindberg as the new head coach of the U18 women's national team. Lindberg previously worked as an assistant coach of the women's national team.

Welcome Turkmenistan!

By Martin Merk

Turkmenistan was admitted as an associate member of the International Ice Hockey Federation during the 2015 IIHF Annual Congress.

Turkmenistan is the third former Soviet republic from Central Asia after Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to join the IIHF, whose membership now includes 74 member national associations.

Although Turkmenistan was part of the Soviet Union, playing ice hockey is a rather modern phenomenon. With a large part of the country covered by the Karakum desert, the country rich in natural gas reserves doesn't have a long tradition in ice sports.

Turkmenistan has three indoor ice rinks with four ice sheets suitable for hockey all located in the capital of Ashgabat. The first one, the National Olympic Sports Palace with a capacity for 1,000 spectators, opened in 2006 and was the basis to launch ice sports programs. In 2011 two more ice arenas were built.



The 10,000-seat Winter Sports Palace, located in the Turkmen capital city of Ashgabat. Photo NCTWS

The biggest arena is the 10,000-seat Winter Sports Palace. The opening tournament there was played with Russian teams Ak Bars Kazan, Neftyanik Almetyevsk, Podhale Nowy Targ from Poland and Maribor from Slovenia.

Since 2013 the annual Cup of the President of Turkmenistan is held. The international tournament also involved clubs from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine as well as the national teams from Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

The senior league was played for the first time in the 2013/2014 season and involved eight teams that played 28 games each during three months with Galkan as the national champion ahead of Shir and Nesil.

There are currently 182 ice hockey players registered in the country including 120 players that are 20 years of age or younger. There are also plans to open a sports boarding school designed to support ice hockey players in their careers.



Fact File

- Population: 5, 171, 943
- Language: Turkmen
- Number of registered hockey players: 182
- Capital city: Ashgabat
- GDP: 82.15 billion USD



To Switzerland and Slovakia for Worlds

By Martin Merk

The 2015 IIHF Annual Congress allocated the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships in 2019 and 2020 over to Slovakia and Switzerland respectively.

Slovakia will organize the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in Bratislava and Kosice from 3-19 May 2019, the same venues that hosted the 2011 Worlds for the first time in history of Slovakia as an independent country. Bratislava was also a host in 1959 and 1992 during the Czechoslovak era.

A city of 618,000 inhabitants, the Slovak capital of Bratislava has 4.2 million people in a 100-kilometre radius including Vienna. The arena of Slovan Bratislava has a capacity of 9,763 seats for hockey and two practice rinks under the same roof. Kosice is the country's second-largest city with a population of 240,000. The secondary arena offers 8,347 seats and an additional ice sheet for practices.



Tournament mascots Gooly and Cooly (inset) may be in for a comeback at the 2019 and 2020 Worlds. Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

"The atmosphere was truly exciting in 2011 not only for players but for hockey fans from all around the world," said Slovak star forward Miroslav Satan in a presentation to Congress. "All the country got the fever for two weeks and we were able to showcase Slovakia all around the world."

Under the slogan "Love Ice Hockey", Switzerland will host the 2020 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in Zurich and Lausanne. Swit-

zerland last time hosted in 2009 in Berne and Zurich-Kloten. With 400,000 inhabitants in the city and 1.3 million in the region, Zurich is the largest city of the country that was one of the four founding members of the IIHF in 1908.

The World Championship took place in the Zurich region four times including the 1953 and 1998 events at the proposed venue.

The Hallenstadion heritage building was origina-

lly built in 1939 and reopened in 2005. It offers 11,200 seats for hockey, a nearby practice rink and is the home of the ZSC Lions Zurich.

A brand-new venue in Lausanne is planned as the second facility. The 10,000-seat arena is planned also for the 2020 Winter Youth Olympic Games bid and will include a practice rink located alongside it. Lausanne is the second-largest city in the French-speaking area of Switzerland with 350,000 inhabitants in the region and a sports hub with the headquarters of the International Olympic Committee.

The 7,000-seat arena in Zug that recently hosted the U18 World Championship was named as a backup venue.

"It's three cities with true ice hockey enthusiasm," Swiss Ice Hockey Federation President Marc Furrer said pointing out that the Switzerland has the league with the highest average attendance in Europe.

Future IIHF World Championships venues:

2016: Moscow & St. Petersburg, Russia
 2017: Cologne, Germany & Paris, France
 2018: Copenhagen & Herning, Denmark
 2019: Bratislava & Kosice, Slovakia
 2020: Zurich & Lausanne, Switzerland

IIHF Hall of Fame adds more legends

By Lucas Aykroyd

The IIHF Hall of Fame added several new members to its ranks as the 2015 IIHF Hall of Fame class was inducted on 17 May in Prague.

In his opening remarks, IIHF President René Fasel described this as a “very special induction class.” And it certainly was.

Former Italian star Lucio Topatigh became the inaugural winner of the Richard “Bibi” Torriani Trophy for outstanding careers by players from non-top hockey nations.

Monique Scheier-Schneider of Luxembourg was also honoured as the 2015 recipient of the Paul Loicq Award for outstanding contributions to international hockey. The event was MC’d by TSN broadcaster and 2013 Paul Loicq Award winner Gord Miller.

Inductees Dominik Hasek and Robert Reichel collectively represented the golden era



From left: Dominik Hasek, Robert Reichel, Tom Renney for Scott Niedermayer, Fran Rider, Monique Scheier-Schneider, Maria Rooth, and Lucio Topatigh. Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

of Czech hockey from 1996 to 2001. Hasek’s unique acrobatic style made him arguably the best goalie of his generation. The Pardubice product backstopped his nation to gold at the first “NHL Olympics” in Nagano, Japan in 1998.

In his speech, “The Dominator” made a passionate appeal for the NHL to continue Olympic participation:

“To win it all for your country is to win for everyone and everything that is at the heart of who you are. To bring back the gold medal

from Nagano was indescribable. I encourage the NHL to embrace it and give players like Jaromir Jagr one more shot at a party in the Old Town Square.”

As Miller related, all-time NHL coaching great Scotty Bowman once said: “If I could choose one goaltender to play for me in one winner-take-all game, I would choose Dominik Hasek.” Miller added that Hasek’s Buffalo Sabres teammates once counted that he stopped 111 out of 118 shots during a pre-game warm-up, reflecting his ultra-competitive nature.

Reichel famously scored the semi-final shootout winner against Canada in Nagano. An 830-game NHLer, the talented centre from Litvinov captained the Czech team to three IIHF World Championship titles (1996, 2000, 2001), and wore the “C” on many other occasions.

“The most memorable moment for me was winning that 1998 Olympic gold,” Reichel added. “It was special because it was the first time we played a tournament with the best players. It meant so much not only to me but for our country.”

The smooth-skating Niedermayer, an IIHF Triple Gold Club member, captured international titles at the Olympics (2002, 2010), World Championships (2004), World Juniors (1991), and World Cup of Hockey (2004). He also won four Stanley Cups with New Jersey (1995, 2000, 2003) and Anaheim (2007).

Hockey Canada president Tom Renney accepted on behalf of Niedermayer, currently an assistant coach with the Anaheim Ducks. Renney goes back decades with Niedermayer, including coaching him with Kamloops.

“It’s really nice that a coach gets to come up and accept on behalf of a player, because a great player makes a good coach,” said Renney.



Photos: Andre Ringuette / IIHF-IIHF Images

“To win it all for your country is to win for everyone and everything that is at the heart of who you are.”

Dominik Hasek

Rider, who founded the Ontario Women's Hockey Association in 1975 and a Canadian national women's championship seven years later, also spearheaded the first unofficial World Women's Championship in 1987. Her forward-thinking approach led to the IIHF's officially inaugurating the Women's Worlds in Ottawa in 1990. And in 1998, women's Olym-

pic hockey became a reality – thanks again in large part to this Brampton, Ontario native.

“In 1987 at the world tournament, the countries were putting a lot of effort into it. And there was a lot of money involved. We were just hoping that we would have the countries so that we would have the money. It was very volatile. But in the end six countries came, and a total of 11 sent delegates.”

Rooth, a four-time Olympian from 1998 to 2010, made history when she won silver with the Swedish women's team at the 2006 Winter Games in Turin, Italy. Her hat trick against the powerful Americans, including the shootout winner, led the Damkronorna to a stunning 3-2 upset and ultimately a silver medal. Rooth also earned Olympic bronze in 2002, and added silver and bronze medals during her nine World Championships.

“Growing up, I was the only girl among 600 players on my club team, Rogle,” recalled Rooth, who said she idolized Wayne Gretzky growing up because she had no female role models. She gave a special shout-out to her university coach Shannon Miller (“You really taught me what the word ‘excellence’ means in hockey”), as well as fellow UMD player Carolyn Ouellette and Damkronorna teammates like Gunilla Andersson and Erika Holst.

In Italian hockey, Topatigh's passion was unmatched. He represented his nation an amazing 18 times at IIHF tournaments between 1983 and 2006 – including 14 top-level participations (with four Olympics) and four B Pool appearances. His swan song was the 2006 Winter Games in his native land. Topatigh attributed higher values to hockey such as “redemption,” “principle,” “honour,” “sacrifice,” and “interaction with other human beings.”

Scheier-Schneider has done wonders for the development of the game in her native Luxembourg. Since 1992, she has served as the General Secretary of the Luxembourg Ice Hockey Federation. An IIHF Council member since 2008, the Schiffange native has also worked as an off-ice official and minor hockey program's secretary, demonstrating her commitment to the grassroots. She is also the president of the Tornado Luxembourg club, and has managed junior and senior national teams.

“You can't ask for more than receiving an award for something you're doing with love and passion,” said Scheier-Schneider in her Paul Loicq Award acceptance speech. “I hope I can still go on some more time because hockey is my life.”

The IIHF Hall of Fame, founded in 1997, includes 201 greats representing 23 countries.



“I come from a country where hockey is not a nationwide sport, but it is in the hearts of many fans.”

Lucio Topatigh

More fans, better access

World Championship coverage sets record numbers in digital media

By Martin Merk

The IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship continued its growth online, enriching the amount of digital media available to fans and posting impressive user numbers.

Thanks to a excellent collaboration with Infront Sports & Media, the IIHF was able to make a wide variety of video available on computers and mobile devices for hockey fans around the world, including live streaming, highlights, and interviews.

The digital media material helped to promote and spread awareness of the IIHF Worlds to more fans around the world, supplementing the cumulative TV audience of around a billion in over 160 countries and territories.

Videos on the official World Championship platforms were viewed over 11.4 million times during the event, especially on YouTube and Facebook – up 25 times compared to 2014.



Photo: Richard Wolowicz / IIHF-IIHF Images

The IIHF Digital Media crew (pictured: presenter Olga Khmylev) covered the Worlds in both venues. Fans could also get stats and highlights on their phone on the official IIHF app.

The video material was subsequently shared among millions of fans on Facebook.

Fans were able to watch and share highlights, interviews, on-ice sessions with players, and fun content like the popular animated penalty clips with the mascots Bob & Bobek.

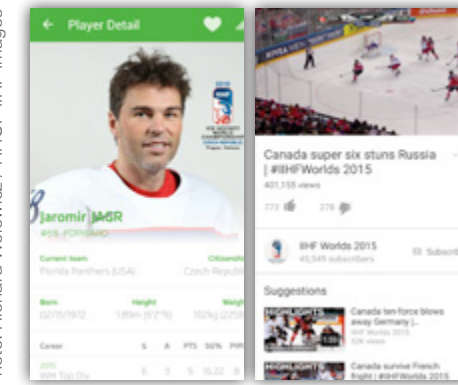
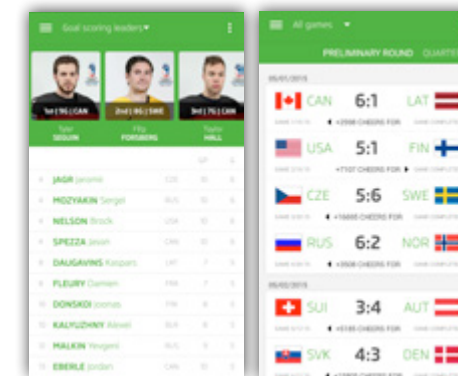
With the user growth rate in the World Championship month in social media more than doubled, the IIHF had over 188,000 Facebook users (+13.5%) by the beginning of the

month with a reach of the postings during the Worlds of over 66 million. The Twitter account “IIHFHockey” grew to over 82,000 followers (+10.1%) and had a reach of over 18 million during the Worlds. The photo and video-sharing platform Instagram, started in 2014, moved from just under 5,000 followers before the start of the Worlds to over 14,000 by the end of the gold medal game.

On average 402,014 fans per day from over 200 countries visited the official website IIHF.

com during the event, a growth of 14.7 per cent compared to Minsk 2014. The official IIHF and World Championship websites had 49.5 million cumulative page views.

The official IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship app, available in several languages, was downloaded by over 260,000 new users who were able to follow the games on their mobile phones and tablets. The app was used in over 14 million sessions in all continents during the event.



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Ten things we learned from Prague and Ostrava

By Lucas Aykroyd

At the 2015 IIHF World Championship in the Czech Republic, we learned the seedings of the first eight countries to qualify directly for the 2018 Olympics, along with host Korea.

But that wasn't all. Here are 10 other takeaways from a tournament to remember:





Photo: Richard Wolowicz / HHOF-IIHF Images



Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images



Photo: Richard Wolowicz / HHOF-IIHF Images



Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

1. Right now, Canada is unstoppable

For Canadian fans, the memory of losing five straight quarter-finals (2010-14) suddenly seems distant. This year's Team Canada was an absolute powerhouse, scoring more goals (66) than any other gold medalist since the 1977 Soviets (77). Earning a perfect record with 10 straight regulation-time wins, they received the inaugural Infront Team Jackpot of 1 million Swiss francs and took over top spot in the IIHF World Ranking.

With captain Sidney Crosby entering the Triple Gold Club and three Canadians on the media all-star team (Jason Spezza, Taylor Hall, Brent Burns), this was a magnificent tour de force in Prague for the team from the Great White North.

2. Russia has work to do

With Alexander Ovechkin, Yevgeni Malkin, and Ilya Kovalchuk, the Russians had more NHL MVPs and scoring leaders in their lineup than Canada. But in the final, when Canada got ahead, Russia reverted to the individualistic play and defensive gaffes that have often been its downfall recently. Other examples include the 2013 quarter-final loss to the Americans (8-3) and the 2014 Olympic quarter-final defeat against Finland (3-1).

And what about discipline? In last year's final, head coach Oleg Znarok was suspended due to a semi-final exchange with the Swedish bench. This year, most of his players left the ice before the Canadian anthem was played. Granted, Russia has done well at the Worlds, but could better discipline mean more gold medals?

3. America's youth tide is rising

The United States has not won this tournament since 1933. That's frankly shocking. But the 3-0 bronze medal win over the Czechs offered a ray of hope. The U.S. got big performances from budding stars, including both NHLers like Brock Nelson and Seth Jones and college and AHL prospects such as Jack Eichel and Connor Hellebuyck. The nation that supplies close to one quarter of the NHL's talent now owns two of the last three World Championship bronzes. Demographics are pushing the U.S. closer and closer to topping the podium.

4. Age is only a number

Jaromir Jagr delighted the home crowd with his virtuoso performance in his international swan song. The 43-year-old Kladno-born legend was named tournament MVP with six goals and three assists. And Jagr, a Triple

Gold Club member who ranks fourth in all-time NHL scoring, wasn't the only older player who shone. French goalie Cristobal Huet earned his first World Championship shutout ever at age 39, beating Austria 2-0. At age 37, Belarus captain Alexei Kalyuzhny had 10 points, tied for the fifth-highest total.

5. It's a glorious goaltending era

The U.S.'s Hellebuyck recorded a sparkling 94.7 save percentage and 1.37 GAA en route to his tournament all-star team berth. Finnish giant Pekka Rinne set a new post-World War II record for the longest shutout streak (237:05), winding up with three goose eggs and the Directorate's Best Goalkeeper award. Others excelled, too, like Canada's Mike Smith, who allowed just one goal in three elimination games en route to gold. Today, greatness between the pipes will make you or break you.



Photo: Richard Wolowicz / HHOF-IIHF Images



Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images



Photo: Richard Wolowicz / HHOF-IIHF Images



Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

6. Belarus has hit its stride

Belarus only had the World Championship attendance record for one year before the Czech Republic set a new mark of 741,690 this year. But the former Soviet republic had another praiseworthy outing on the ice. It finished seventh for the second consecutive year. It's the first time Belarus has ever had two quarter-final berths in a row. That may have stemmed partly from the vocal support of Belarusian fans, who packed the stands in higher-than-average numbers in Ostrava.

7. Sometimes, surviving is thriving

For non-elite nations, the benchmark for success is sometimes simply avoiding relegation. Latvia, France, and Denmark all flirted with danger this year, but managed to keep their heads above water.

For the Latvians, it would have been a tragedy to go down after staying in the elite division since 1997. Fortunately, the point they secured from their 3-2 shootout loss to France to end the tournament kept them up. The French, who doomed Austria with that win, had extra incentive to avoid relegation since they're co-hosting the 2017 tournament with Germany. Same for Denmark, which hosts in 2018. The Danes, who were promoted to the elite division in 2003, squeezed out a 14th-place finish.

8. NHL still leads the way

In past years, the KHL was sometimes touted as a budding rival to the NHL. But this tournament reinforced the fact that North America's top pro circuit remains peerless.

The media all-stars and Directorate Award winners were all NHLers (except for AHL goalie Hellebuyck). Fifteen out of the 20 top scorers were NHLers – just five were KHLers. The biggest KHL contribution came from SKA St. Petersburg, which had six skaters on the second-place Russian team.

9. Supplemental discipline works

At the 2015 Worlds, the Disciplinary Panel handed out seven one-game suspensions – a comparatively small number. (In 2014, there were two multiple-game suspensions.) Those rulings reinforced the message that only clean

checks that do not endanger the long-term health and safety of other players are acceptable in today's game. There will always be some incidents in hockey, but the overall trend toward fair play and respect is irreversible.

10. Czechs know how to party

The best-attended World Championship in history may also have been the best-organized, from ticketing to volunteers to security. Bob and Bobek, the lovable bunny mascots, encapsulated the spirit of fun and celebration. Even though the Czechs didn't medal on the ice, they deserved top marks for how they welcomed the world to Prague and Ostrava. In 2016, host cities Moscow and St. Petersburg will have a high standard to live up to.

2018 Olympic qualification set

The qualification for the 2018 Olympic men's ice hockey tournament in Pyeong-Chang 2018 is set. The final events will be hosted by Belarus, Latvia and Norway.

Nine teams are automatically qualified for the 12-team tournament: the top-8 teams of the 2015 IIHF Men's World Ranking and host Korea.

[Click here to view the complete World Ranking](#)

The three best teams that didn't reach a top-8 position earned the right to host one of the three Final Olympic Qualification tournaments that will be held 1-4 September 2016.

A record 37 countries applied to play in the 2018 Olympic men's ice hockey tournament. The three qualifiers will be determined in nine events over four stages.

The seeding for the 2018 Olympic women's ice hockey tournament will be determined in one year based on the 2016 IIHF Women's World Ranking and the qualification for the women's teams will be played in the 2016/2017 season.

KOREA 2018 MEN'S SEEDING

GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C
Canada	Russia	Sweden
Czech Republic	USA	Finland
Switzerland	Slovakia	Q1
Korea	Q3	Q2

Dates: 09 - 25.02.2018

FINAL OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION

GROUP D	GROUP E	GROUP F
Belarus (host)	Latvia (host)	Norway (host)
Slovenia	Germany	France
Denmark	Austria	Kazakhstan
Q6	Q5	Q4

Dates: 01 - 04.09.2016

OLYMPIC PRE-QUALIFICATION

GROUP G	GROUP H	GROUP J
Italy (host)	Hungary (host)	Japan (host)
Great Britain	Poland	Ukraine
Netherlands	Lithuania	Croatia
Q8	Q7	Romania

Dates: 11 - 14.02.2016

OLYMPIC PRELIMINARY QUALIFICATION

GROUP K	GROUP L
Estonia (host)	Serbia (host)
Mexico	Spain
Israel	Iceland
Q9*	China

Dates: 05 - 08.11.2015

*Bulgaria will play Georgia in qualification game for Q9 spot on 03.10.15.

Triple gold for Sid


With Canada's victory over Russia in the 2015 final, Sidney Crosby joined the IIHF's [Triple Gold Club](#).

The 27-year-old superstar is the first player to become a "Triple Gold Captain", having led Canada to Olympic and World Championship gold and Pittsburgh to the Stanley Cup.

"It is a great honour joining the Triple Gold Club. I've been fortunate to play for some great teams," Crosby said. "You need some luck too. Guys have played in different events and sometimes you don't get the luck. I feel pretty fortunate to be a part of this and we could do it as a group."

The centre becomes the 26th member of the Triple Gold Club and the ninth Canadian player.





SIDNEY CROSBY, F, CANADA
 Olympic Gold Medal (2010, 2014)
 Stanley Cup (2009)
 IIHF World Championship (2015)

CROSBY

Video highlights: 2015 IIHF World Championship



[Click here to view all the game highlights from the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship](#)

Directorate Awards

Best Goalkeeper: Pekka Rinne, Finland
(92.77 SV%, 1.69 GAA, 3SH)

Best Defenceman: Brent Burns, Canada
(10 GP, 2G, 9A, 11P, +12)

Best Forward: Jason Spezza, Canada
(10GP, 6G, 8A, 14P, +7)

Media All-Star team

Goalkeeper: Connor Hellebuyck, USA
Defence: Brent Burns, Canada
Defence: Oliver Ekman-Larsson, Sweden
Forward: Jaromir Jagr, Czech Republic
Forward: Jason Spezza, Canada
Forward: Taylor Hall, Canada
MVP: Jaromir Jagr, Czech Republic



2015
ICE HOCKEY
WORLD
CHAMPIONSHIP
CZECH REPUBLIC
Prague - Ostrava

Directorate Best Defenceman, All-Star



Brent Burns, D, Canada

In addition to taking one of the best IIHF World Championship player portraits in recent memory (see above), Burns was a force to be reckoned with on the ice. Aside from leading Canada's defence and recording a +12 rating in the process, Burns was involved in 11 goals for Canada, recording nine helpers and potting in two himself.



2015
ICE HOCKEY
WORLD
CHAMPIONSHIP
CZECH REPUBLIC
Prague - Ostrava

Directorate Best Goalkeeper



Pekka Rinne, G, Finland

As expected Rinne starred in net for the Finns during the 2015 IIHF Worlds. During the preliminary round he broke Jan Lasak's modern day shutout record by going 237:05 minutes without allowing a goal. Although he was outduelled by Ondrej Pavelec and Jaromir Jagr in a 5-3 quarter-final loss, Rinne still had a memorable run in 2015.

To Russia with love for Hungary, Kazakhstan

By Martin Merk



For the first time in seven years the trend of the same two countries taking the elevator ride up to the top division was stopped, as Hungary has joined Kazakhstan to the 2016 Worlds in Russia.

For Hungary it was an exciting and much celebrated moment when it claimed second place at the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division I Group A in Krakow by beating host Poland 2-1 in the deciding game of the tournament.

Kazakhstan meanwhile was already locked in as the tournament winner after the fourth of five round-robin games. They started with clear wins over Ukraine (5-2), Hungary (5-0) and Japan (7-2) before facing a tougher challenge in a 3-2 win against host Poland that crowned Kazakhstan as tournament winner in



*Kazakhstan ran the table with an undefeated record, while Hungary (bottom) is also bound for Russia.
Photo: Miroslaw Ring*

the former royal capital of Poland. On the last day Kazakhstan continued its streak with a 3-0 blanking of Italy. Roman Starchenko, who was the scoring leader with four goals and six points, won the MVP and Best Forward awards while his teammate Kevin Dallman was named Best Defenceman.

“It was a hard-fought win. After the first period the coach made some changes and

they turned out well,” said Starchenko, who scored the game-winner against Poland with five minutes left.

On the last day it was Hungary and host Poland that went head-to-head to battle it out for the second ticket to the 2016 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

In front of 12,632 fans in Krakow including a contingent of roughly 3,000 Hungarians who travelled to the city, Hungary just needed one more point from the final game. Thanks to a 2-1 victory, they were able to punch their ticket to Russia.

For Hungary it’s only the third time in the post-World War II era that the men’s national team will play at a top-level event, after the 1964 Olympics and in 2009, when Hungary made it to the top-level World Championship for the first time in 70 years. This time the Magyars had to wait only seven years while Poland had to settle for bronze.

“It was a great team effort to stick together until the end. It’s unbelievable. It was a good job from the goalie to the defence to the forwards. Everybody worked for the same reason and finally we did it,” Hungarian forward Daniel Koger said.

“The good thing about this team is everybody goes for the team and that’s why we are successful. Right now we just want to feel this moment every second and celebrate with the guys.”

Japan beat Ukraine 3-1 in a battle against relegation which means Ukraine will go down to the Division I Group B in favour of Korea.

USA piles on the gold at U18s

By Chapin Landvogt



It wasn't easy, but the United States once again came out golden at the U18 World Championship after edging Finland in the final.

The States reaffirmed their perch atop the U18 international hockey ladder, recovering from an opening day loss to Russia by going undefeated in the next six games, including a 7-2 roll over Team Canada in the semi-final to set up a wild 2-1 overtime victory against Finland in the gold medal game.

While the American offence ran through All-Star, MVP, and Directorate top Forward Auston Matthews, in the case of the gold medal game it was Colin White, who banged in a great pass from Jeremy Bracco into a screened Finnish goal with 7:16 to go in overtime, finally overcoming an incredible performance from Finland All-Star goalie Veini Vehvilainen.

"This is unbelievable. Scoring an overtime ga-



The U18 World Championship is firmly in the hands of the United States thanks to a top-notch development program. Photo: Francois Laplante / HHOF-IIHF Images

me-winner - well there's no feeling like it. A lot of credit goes to my linemates. The defencemen got the puck up ice. Jeremy Bracco put the puck right on my stick. I was lucky enough to put it in", said White.

It was the USA's 2nd gold in a row and sixth in the past seven years. In fact, the USA has medalled at this tournament 12 straight years, taking eight times gold, three silver medals and one bronze. For those unfamiliar with how and why the

U.S. has become the dominant world power at this level, one look no further than what is called the United States National Team Development Program.

The NTDP yearly recruits top-flight players from across the country to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where they then become part of a two-year program that, as the program explains, is committed "to prepare student-athletes under the age of 18 for participation on the U.S. National Teams and success in their fu-

ture hockey careers. Its efforts focus not only on high-caliber participation on the ice, but creating well-rounded individuals off the ice."

These players then live with billet families and attend one of two high schools while regularly training, practising and playing with each other over a two-year span.

Their goal is to win gold at this tournament – and this year's team repeated resoundingly. In seven total games, the USA fired 46 pucks into opponent goals, and this despite having only scored once against Russia, and then being held to just two hard-to-earn goals by silver medallist Finland.

The bronze went to Canada after a 5-2 victory over Switzerland in the medal game. For host Switzerland, a fourth-place finish has to be seen as a complete success. The team posted a huge 5-0 upset over Russia in the quarter-finals and barely missed out on the gold medal game in a 5-4 semi-final loss to Finland.

The Swiss boasted some great young up and coming players like All-Star defenceman Jonas Siegenthaler and the fun to watch first line of Denis Malgin, Auguste Impose and Damien Riat. Many of this year's participants are expected to be at next spring's event.

Video highlights: 2015 IIHF U18 World Championship



[Click here to view all the game highlights from the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 World Championship](#)

Directorate Awards

Best Goalkeeper: Ilya Samsonov, Russia (93.39 SV%, 2.67 GAA)

Best Defenceman: Vili Saarijarvi, Finland (7 GP, 3G, 6A, 9P, +2)

Best Forward: Auston Matthews, USA (7GP, 8G, 7A, 15P, +11)

Media All-Star team

Goalkeeper: Veini Vehvilainen, Finland
 Defence: Vili Saarijarvi, Finland
 Defence: Jonas Siegenthaler, Switzerland
 Forward: Auston Matthews, USA
 Forward: Patrik Laine, Finland
 Forward: Denis Malgin, Switzerland
 MVP: Auston Matthews, USA



2015
ICE HOCKEY
U18 WORLD
CHAMPIONSHIP
 SWITZERLAND
 Zug - Lucerne

Directorate Top
 Forward, All-Star, MVP



Auston Matthews
 F, USA

A surefire top pick in next year's NHL Draft, Matthews led the tournament in scoring and averaged over two points per game. While at the U18s, the physically imposing 17-year-old also broke NHLer Patrick Kane's USA NTDP record for points in a season, scoring 116 to surpass Kane's 102.



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All-Star Forward



Denis Malgin
 F, Switzerland

The lightning-fast and offensively-gifted native of Olten did not disappoint Swiss hockey fans during the U18 Worlds. In Zug Malgin got off to a fast start, scoring his country's first goal of the tournament on a lightning-fast dangle. In Team Switzerland's decisive win over Russia, Malgin scored a goal and assisted on another to put the game away.

USA champs at Sledge Hockey Worlds

By Stuart Lieberman



The U.S. shut out archrivals Canada 3-0 in the gold-medal game of the 2015 IPC Ice Sledge Hockey World Championships A-Pool, securing their record-tying third world title.

The host nation's teenage duo of 17-year-old Declan Farmer and 16-year-old Brody Roybal stole the show in Buffalo, USA, along with speedster Josh Pauls and goaltender Steve Cash.

"This felt like a dream," said Cash, who recorded a shutout in net, making eight saves on the day.

"Obviously, in Sochi, we worked really hard to win gold there, and I feel like this year we've been working even harder as a unit. To do this in front of our home fans and in front of a lot of people who have never even been exposed



USA's sledge hockey team celebrates its record-tying third World Championship title in Buffalo. Photo: Bill Wippert

to sledge hockey before, it gives me a feeling of pride and speaks volumes to where the sport has come and how much it has grown."

Although neither side capitalized in the game's first two very physical periods, just 2:58 into the third period, Roybal fed the puck to Farmer, who immediately slapped it into the net to put the host nation out in front and ignite the crowd with chants of "U-S-A."

Less than five minutes later, the USA's Dan McCoy scored an even-strength goal, assisted by Buffalo's own Adam Page. Canada tried to fight back as the period was winding down, but with 22 seconds left on the game clock, Pauls fired the puck into an open net to secure gold for the USA.

"My first year on the national team, we came up short in the World Championships against Canada in 2013, so it was great to get them

back and win the title," said Farmer.

Watson was named the tournament's Best Goaltender, Pauls was awarded Best Defenceman and Russia's Dmitri Lisov was bestowed with the Best Forward honours.

The Italian team easily captured the hearts of sledge hockey spectators when they belted the words to their national anthem after defeating Germany, 4-2, in the fifth-place game to capture their best-ever finish at a World Championships. The tournament was very emotional for the Italians, who were dedicating their efforts on the ice to Gianluca Cavaliere, one of the team's defencemen who was not able to make the trip to Buffalo due to a last-minute injury.

As the underdogs in the bronze-medal game against Russia, Norway put up a much tougher fight than expected. Despite losing 2-1, the Norwegians took the Russians to overtime. When the buzzer went off to sound the end of the third period, it was a moral victory for Norway, forcing the Russians to play an extra 10 minutes and showing they could hang with the sport's elite.

[Click here for the Buffalo 2015 website](#)

[Click here for video highlights of the final](#)

Korean advances



Great Britain found itself on the wrong end of a one-goal loss for the first time in the 2015 IIHF World Championship Division IB, costing them a key point and giving Korea the top rank and promotion to Group A.

Having defeated rivals Croatia and Korea earlier, Great Britain only needed a single point from the game against Lithuania to claim gold. But it was Lithuania that came up with a

gutsy performance and played the role of party spoilers in a 3-2 victory. The victory allowed Lithuania to leapfrog Croatia and capture the bronze medal, whereas Great Britain ended up with silver.

Aside from a 3-2 loss to the British that put their promotion in jeopardy, Korea played a strong tournament. Five Korean forwards cracked the top ten in scoring, and the team potted 30 goals in the tournament as they won a return to Division IA after being relegated last season. The team witnessed the British loss from the stands and fell into each other's arms when the final buzzer went.

Joeri Loonen

Romania back to Division I



Four straight wins sealed Romania's return to Division I.

Never falling behind on the score sheet in any of their games they saw off Serbia (8-4), Australia (5-1), Belgium (4-3) and

Spain (7-1) to bounce straight back to Division I Group B following last year's relegation.

Roberto Gliga, who alongside his linemates Levente Zsok and Ede Mihaly spearheaded Romania's most lethal offensive weapon, was behind Romania's game-winning goal that downed tournament runners-up Belgium.

"Belgium was our toughest opponent," said the 21-year-old, who was missing on last year's roster when Romania was relegated. "It was a hard and tight game and you never know what could have happened if there would have been a few more minutes."

"We have an aging team on paper and without mentioning any names there are players who have made their last appearances for the



Unbeaten Romania will be back up to Division I next year. Photo: Elvar Freyr Palsson

national team. Romania will have to start giving younger players the chance and now we will have to wait and see what Romanian Ice Hockey Federation will do for next season," said head coach Kjell Lindqvist.

Vital for Romania's chances to stay up next year will be Gliga in shape, who despite his tender age already played two World Championships at Division I Group B level for his country, finishing fourth both in 2012 and 2013.

"We showed that we can do it in the past, so if we can get our full roster together and are ready to fight hard then I am sure we are going to manage to stay there next season," Gliga said.

Henrik Manninen



Lithuania beat Great Britain in the last game, which allowed Korea to move back up to Division IA. Photo: Thijs de Witte

China unbeaten



China won the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division II Group B to earn promotion, playing to its best result in six years.

The event was held in Cape Town, the eighth tournament South Africa has hosted since 1992 in Johannesburg. The games were played in the elegant Casino Complex Grand West in the western suburbs of Goodwood.

Although the team was relegated, the South African games were well attended, with the last three almost sold out.

Coming into the tournament the Israelis were considered favourites, but managed only one win in the tournament. China's 4-3 overtime win against Israel was followed up by a comeback victory over New Zealand, and a 5-2 win over Mexico to seal the No. 1 rank.

The Chinese beat South Africa 7-3 in their tournament finale, capping off an undefeated run. The team was well balanced and the majority of the players were also playing the last two years, 17 players in 2014 and 14 in 2013.



*China averaged over six goals per game and boasted the tournament's top power play.
Photo: South African Ice Hockey Association*

All the players represented the top clubs Harbin and Qiqihar from northeast China. The best point scorer was Xijun Cui with four goals and six assists. Defenceman Lontan Liu and quick forward Tianxiang Xia also impressed during the tournament.

New Zealand won the silver medal of the tournament despite the loss against the hosts and the Ice Blacks played some good games under their new Hungarian head coach Janos Kaszala. Bronze medallist Mexico showed some good hockey during the week and the leading players were Hector Majul (awarded best forward in the tournament), Carlos Gomez and goalkeeper Alfonso de Alba. Daniel Spivak of Israel was named best Defenceman and Dimitar Dimitrov chosen Best Goaltender by the IIHF Directorate.

Birger Nordmark

DPR Korea too



Chun Rim Hong silenced a partisan Turkish home crowd of 2,135 fans as DPR Korea won the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division III in the most dramatic fashion.

The winning goal during the final game of the tournament arrived with eleven seconds left of overtime and with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea finishing the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division III on top to move up to the Division II Group B next year.

Their nerve wracking 4-3 final day victory against Turkey saw DPR Korea go undefeated throughout the World Championship.

Hong, who scored a pair of goals and an assist, capping off a fine tournament as his team's scoring leader registering 10+7 in six matches.

Luxembourg finished third, winning their fourth consecutive bronze. In the lower half of the table Georgia showed an upturn in results during their second year at the World Cham-

pionship going from zero points to five in just a year.

New boys Bosnia and Herzegovina made history, scoring its first goal as a nation competing in the World Championship program against Georgia and potting two more later against the United Arab Emirates.

Prior to the start of the tournament, the Turkish Ice Hockey Federation had sealed a historical first deal to broadcast their final three matches live on national television.

Henrik Manninen



DPR Korea won promotion after finishing 2nd three years straight. Photo: Cihan Kahraman

League roundup

Recapping league results from around the world



CZECH REPUBLIC – HC Litvinov are Czech champions for the first time in their long history.

After 56 years of playing in the Extraliga, the title is finally in town.

After a regular season where the club finished 2nd overall in the standings and gave up only 16 losses in 52 games, HC Litvinov made it to the finals for the fifth time after 1978, 1984, 1991 and 1996. The club from a small northern town of the Czech Republic needed seven games to make the trophy theirs, going up against Ocelari Trinec, who finished the regular season in first place, two points ahead of Litvinov.

Despite playing the first two games in Trinec, the visitors managed to steal two tight wins. After that, the series moved to Litvinov where Trinec won Game 3. In Game 4 Litvinov didn't allow another defeat and blanked Trinec with a 3-0 victory. It was the first shutout for Litvinov goalie Pavel Francouz in the final series.

Trinec was down 3-1 in the series and came very close to dropping the whole series, but



Photo: HC Verva Litvinov

edged Litvinov in a shootout in Game 5, and then won on the road 6-3 to set up a Game 7 decider that was ultimately claimed by Litvinov with two goals late in the third period in a 2-0 victory.

"This is a big moment for me," 44-year-old Martin Rucinsky said. "I wanted this title for Litvinov so much. We were so strong mentally during the whole season. We didn't lose more than two games in a row during the playoffs, that's why I think we deserve the title."

It was the first domestic title for Rucinsky, who won an Olympic gold medal in Nagano and is a two-time World Champion with the Czech Republic.

"This is my biggest achievement after Nagano, we did this for Ivan Hlinka, who was always with us," the forward said, referring to the legendary Czech coach who died in a car crash in 2004. "We had his picture in the locker room the whole season and this is going to him as well."



FINLAND – Karpas Oulu is once again on top of the Finnish hockey world after winning its second-straight Finnish League title.

The team has established itself as the most successful in the new millennium, having now won its sixth title in the last 13 years.

The defending champs and regular season winners took on Tappara, regular season runner up in the final. It didn't get much closer than this year's final. The series, in which five of the games ended in overtime, was decided in the second overtime period of Game 7. All seven games were won by a single goal.

"Tappara is such a great team, they played in the final for the third time in a row. These two teams were so close, if it was up to me, we'd split the gold medals," said Karpas CEO Juha Junno.

Just like a year ago, it came down to one player seizing his opportunity. Last season, Juhamatti Aaltonen carried the puck from the Karpas blueline into the offensive zone and snapped the series-clinching goal. This season, it was 17-year-old Sebastian Aho.

While the puck was in Karpas's zone, Ivan Huml got the puck in the corner, and he sent




Photo: Jussi Määttä

a long pass all the way to the Tappara blueline, sending Aho on a breakaway, and he slipped the puck through Juha Metsola's five-hole, exactly one minute into the second overtime.

"We changed on the fly, I got a great pass from Huml, and got on a breakaway. It was just an instinctive move, I've scored similar goals before," said Aho.

"I'm so happy that it was Aho, who scored the goal. Who even thinks of going on a breakaway straight from the bench? Well, maybe a 17-year-old kid," said coach Lauri Marjamäki.

The championship was Karpas's sixth since 2002. The team has also two silvers and a bronze in the same time span.


GERMANY – Adler Mannheim found itself pitted against defending champions Ingolstadt in one of the most exciting DEL finals in recent times.

The first game ended 2-1 for Mannheim in overtime on the strength of a Ronny Arendt goal at just 4:46 of OT play. Ingolstadt turned the tide taking Game 2 and 3 in a convincing fashion 5-2 and 6-1. But things changed when Mannheim rallied and took Game 4 by a score of 6-2.

With the series tied, Mannheim slipped out a tight 3-1 victory on the strength of 29 saves by goalie Dennis Endras before heading back to Ingolstadt for Game 6. In the deciding game, Kurtis Foster, Andrew Joudrey, and Jonathan Rheault scored for Adler, and Endras stopped 26 of 27 shots to give Mannheim the title in a 3-1 victory.

For those who have been in Mannheim for a while, namely Captain Markus Kink and former top scorer Christoph Ullmann, who both were with the team in 2007 when it last won a championship, it was a release of pressure such as few athletes can know, with the team failing to live up to expectations for years.

“Just a crazy, crazy feeling right now,” said Ull-




Photo: Sorli Binder / AS Sportfoto

man after the game. “Of course we’re going to enjoy this. When you spend eight years fighting and battling for this, then I think it’s more than fair that we’ll spend, say, a good eight days celebrating it.”

Jochen Hecht was named MVP of the finals. The former NHLer played just under 900 NHL contests but after a very modest season with just 11 goals and 20 points in 35 games, the 37-year-old added 12 assists and 15 points in 15 playoff games and posting a +10 rating.

“No matter what the score is or where the series is at, we’ll keep working hard and then we’ll be successful,” said Hecht. “It doesn’t matter if you play in the NHL or DEL, you work very hard an entire year for a title. And once you have that trophy in your hands, that is a feeling that simply cannot be described.”

For Mannheim, it was the sixth title in team history and first in eight years. Canadian head coach Geoff Ward, who won the title in his first year with the team, won Coach of the Year honours.


SWEDEN – The Vaxjo Lakers beat Skelleftea AIK 3-2 in double overtime in Game 6 of the Swedish Hockey League final, giving the team its first championship after being promoted to the SHL only four years ago.

“It’s such a fantastic feeling, after all the pressure we’ve felt throughout the season, and to win it at home. We’ve been both underdogs and favourites at the same time, and it took us some to cope with, said the Lakers captain Tomi Kallio, who won the title with Frolunda in 2003 and 2005.

During the game Skelleftea had grabbed a two-goal lead early in the second period, but Vaxjo rallied back and tied the game in the third. Team captain Tomi Kallio started the rally when he checked Niclas Burstrom behind Skelleftea’s net, giving Liam Reddox a wide open lane to go around the net and find Jani Lajunen in the slot.

Six minutes later, the Vaxjo Lakers power play, quarterbacked by Rosen, tied the game when Tuomas Kiiskinen misfired the puck to Jeff Tambellini, who had an easy shot at the goal.

Halfway through the second overtime period, Rosen got the puck by the side of the



Photo: Vaxjo Lakers / Champions Hockey League via Getty Images

net, went around it, and then slipped a perfect pass to Kiiskinen, who one-timed it in the Skelleftea net.

Just five years ago, Vaxjo played in Hockeyallsvenskan. The club was founded in 1997 on the bankrupted ruins of Vaxjo HC, then demoted to division 4, far from the bright lights of the SHL. In the six seasons that followed, the Lakers had played their way to Hockeyallsvenskan, the second-tier league in Sweden, then spent five years establishing themselves on that level.

Between 2009 and 2011, the Lakers played for a spot in the SHL each year, and finally succeeded in 2011, finally advancing all the way to the final in 2015. Skelleftea played in its fifth straight final, and was looking for its third straight title. A good record for a team that, while now a dynasty, returned to the SHL in 2006.

Gallery



Prague's O2 Arena was packed to the rafters for the 2015 World Championship, and along with Ostrava's CEZ Arena drew a record 741,690 spectators. Photo: Andrea Cardin / HHOF-IIHF Images



Bruno Marty, Executive Director of Infront Sports, presents Sidney Crosby with the Infront Jackpot cheque. Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images



Canada goalie Mike Smith gives his kid a ride after winning gold. Photo: Richard Wolowicz / HHOF-IIHF Images



USA's Nick Bonino scores a first period goal against the Czech Republic's Ondrej Pavelec while Jakub Klepis looks on during bronze medal game action at the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship.
 Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images



Finland's Juhamatti Aaltonen gets a shot off on Norway at the IIHF Worlds. Photo: Richard Wolowicz / HHOF-IIHF Images



Canada's Sidney Crosby battles for the puck while on one knee against the Czech Republic at the 2015 IIHF Worlds.
 Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images



France's Stephane da Costa scores the 3-2 shoot-out game-winning goal against Latvia's Edgars Maslaskis during the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship. The extra point ensured France's spot at the top division in 2016. Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images



2015 IIHF Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony MC and Paul Loiq award winner Gord Miller hands back 2015 Inductee Dominik Hasek his speech notes. Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images



Korea with a scoring chance against Croatia at the 2015 Division I Group B tournament. The Korean men's national team will compete in Poland next year at the Division IA Worlds. Photo: Thijs de Witte



Slovakia's Jan Laco and the rest of the team had home ice advantage during the preliminary round of the IIHF Worlds, as tons of fans travelled from the Slovak border to Ostrava. Photo: Richard Wolowicz / HHOF-IIHF Images



New Zealand and Mexico at the faceoff circle during the Division II Group B Worlds. Both teams played very well in the tournament and finished 2nd and 3rd overall. Photo: South African Ice Hockey Association



2015 IIHF World Championship mascots Bob and Bobek were a hit with fans during the tournament. It was the first time in World Championship history that two mascots were used. Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images



The Turkish Ice Hockey Federation had sealed a historical first deal to broadcast their final three matches from the Division III Worlds live on national television. Photo: Cihan Kahraman


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A perfect run

Team Canada head coach Todd McLellan reflects on his country's Worlds triumph

by Adam Steiss

When you had a look at the final roster, what were your thoughts about the group you had?

Obviously adding [Sidney] Crosby, [Patrick] Wiercioch, and [Dan] Hamhuis before the tournament started made a big difference. We thought that we'd have a fast team, an offensively skilled team, but we also knew that most of the guys were star players on their own team and we had to get them to buy into the 'team concept'. That was the biggest challenge, I thought the players did a good job of accepting that.

What was your reaction when Sidney Crosby approached Hockey Canada about wanting to join the team?

We were definitely excited, the management team, the coaches, anybody that was involved with the group. When Sidney Crosby was prepared to commit his time to come over and play for his country, and especially on short notice like that, we were all excited and anxious to get him over. His approach to it, his

willingness to come over I think gave our team a boost.

Three weeks later and Team Canada had broken its own record for goals scored at the World and won gold, did you expect this kind of offensive production?

You never know what to expect in this tournament because you don't know what the opposition is going to be like, but looking at the roster we had we didn't think we'd have trouble scoring, and as it turns out we didn't. But you never know who you're going to play, what the teams are going to look like, what the goaltending is going to be like in the tournament, so you couldn't predict the amount of offence we had but we did believe we could score.

During your postgame press conferences you often said the whole of the team must be better than its parts. Was there an instance when you started to believe that the players were buying into this message?

It was a daily buy-in. Prior to getting involved in the tournament I talked to them about rhythm – they as individuals are wired to play at least 20 minutes a night with their NHL teams – and that's the rhythm that they're used to play in. They would have to adjust their own personal rhythm for the betterment of the team, and play 15-16 minutes a



Under McLellan (centre), Team Canada scored 66 goals and went undefeated. Next season he will coach in Edmonton. Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

game instead of 20 but still be effective players, and they did a very good job of that.

Power play sacrifice, shift length sacrifice, players accepting the roles they were put in, the linemates they were with...I was very proud of our group because they did all that and were very willing to do it.

As a coach with lots of experience in the Stanley Cup playoffs, what is the biggest adjustment you make in your coaching methods or when you are preparing the team to go through the World Championship?

Actually we try to keep things as similar to the National Hockey League routine as possible,

at the Worlds the IIHF permits for example a 20 minute warmup, we only use 16 minutes because that's what the players are used to.

As far as the tournament itself what were your impressions of the IIHF Worlds, in particular when compared to the Stanley Cup playoffs?

The tournament in Prague was exceptional, it was such a good experience and I'm glad that I got to be part of it.

Almost all the teams in Prague stayed at the same hotel and it was almost like an Olympic Village atmosphere. It was like there was a hockey community that was established there, with all the different countries being involved.

The fans' approach to the game, I think it's more of a celebration in Europe than it is in North America, they are very astute fans over here but there's less celebrating, less chanting, less singing. They are more of a sit-and-watch crowd whereas in Europe there's much more celebration at the event and that was really good to experience. Just the overall presentation of the tournament by the IIHF and the organizing committee too was second to none.

Did you enjoy interacting with different coaches and teams while you were at the hotel?

Absolutely, it wasn't always talking about hockey either but just meeting people, that was one of the richest experiences of the tournament staying there, I called it the "Athlete's Village".

To stay in that village and dine with other teams and coaches and talking about the games with them and what was going on, it was a tremendous experience. If I was part of the organizing group for a tournament I would definitely try and set that up again.

For those teams that don't qualify or are eliminated from the playoffs early, do you see a significant value in NHL teams sending players to the Worlds?

Absolutely, without a doubt. It gives you the opportunity to finish the year off on a positive note, but it also is an experience that you don't normally get in North America and gives you a chance to grow your game.

Now that you're joining Edmonton, you got to work with Taylor Hall and Jordan Eberle in Prague, are you excited to coach them now with the Oilers?

Yes, they're two extremely talented players that are still fairly young. They were able and willing to accept the team concept over in Prague, it was fun for me and the rest of the coaching staff to be around them over there, but now as we head to Edmonton it's nice to have a relationship established with those two.

But again the model here is completely different, we're talking about spending years together now and developing a foundation and identity in Edmonton, where over in Europe it was a 30-day event for us. They adapted very well and I expect them to lead the way in Edmonton like they did in the championship, and be productive on both sides of the puck like they were in Prague.

Obviously this is a hypothetical scenario as the draft is still upcoming, but you mentioned in your introductory press

conference in Edmonton that you hadn't had the chance to see Connor McDavid play live. Judging by his play at the 2015 World Juniors and in the OHL what are your impressions of him?

As an organization we have to get through the draft, but we're excited about the prospect of him joining our club. He's been a tremendous player at any level that he's been at, and to handle the amount of pressure he's had put on him already makes him even more unique. But his skill level is extremely high, he's a competitive, competitive young man, you would think that he's going to be a good addition to the National Hockey League.

We also have to remember that he's 18-year-old and that's a lot to put on one young man's shoulders to ask him to carry a team. I spent some time with Sidney after the World Championships were over and we talked about it, it's not an easy task for any young superstar to go through.

I asked [Crosby] about his experience entering the league already a star player and a generational player, the pros and cons of how he was handled and he shared his thoughts with me and I was very appreciative of that.



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Coming up

IIHF INLINE HOCKEY WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

FINLAND, Tampere

05-11.07.2015

[Website](#)

IIHF Development Camp

FINLAND, Vierumäki

04-11.06.2015

[Website](#)

IIHF Semi-Annual Congress

CROATIA, Dubrovnik

24-26.09.2015



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