

## Hockey gets bigger & better

### New attendance and TV records set at World Juniors in Ottawa



**WELCOME TO HOCKEY COUNTRY:** The motto of the 2009 World Junior Championship in Ottawa, Canada could not have been more appropriate. Sell out crowds of 20,000 and more awaited the top U20 teams. Before each Canada game, the giant Canadian flag made the rounds through the lower bowl of the NHL arena, Scotiabank Place. Photo: HHoF/IIHF Images

We are one year away from the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, what has the potential to be the greatest hockey tournament ever. The fans in Canada are ready for the next international highlight. How else can you explain that nearly nine million fans in that country watched the final part of the World U20 final between Canada and Sweden?



#### RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL

■ That number was truly amazing. Nine million TV-viewers in the third period on TSN and French RDS combined to almost a 30 percent share of the country's population. Those are numbers one gets for the Academy Awards, Presidential inaugurations or moon landings.

In one year, we will be able to accumulate even higher numbers when the best players in the world gather in Vancouver for the XXI Olympic Winter Games. It is the first time since 1988 (Calgary) that an Olympic hockey tournament will take place in Canada. But as opposed to the event 21 years ago, the teams will have all their best players available.

We just completed the men's final Olympic qualifications and I would like to congratulate Latvia, Germany and Norway who earned the last three spots for Vancouver.

■ Midway through the World Junior Championship in Ottawa, our sport was struck with a tragic event. Don Sanderson, a player on the Whitby Dunlops senior team in Ontario, Canada, became the first to die from injuries which were inflicted as a result of a fight. Sanderson died three weeks after his unprotected head hit the ice, after he was knocked down. But virtually, Sanderson died the same second his head crashed against the ice.

For many years now we have warned the leagues that do not punish fighting strongly enough, that they have to be proactive and do something before someone dies. Now we have the first hockey-fight related death and this reignited a fierce debate in Canada between those who rightfully want to get rid of this Neanderthal behavior and those who feel that fighting is 'a part of the game'.

In 2009, in an enlightened and civilized society, there is no room for players who only justify their presence with pugilistic ability.

■ On a positive note, I am enormously proud that the IIHF, together with our marketing partner Ovation Sports, were able to stage and successfully conclude the inaugural Champions Hockey League. We positioned the CHL as a key event on the European hockey calendar and did it during the most extensive financial crisis since the Wall Street crash in 1929. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this historic success.

René Fasel  
IIHF President

## NEWS &amp; NOTES

■ **CANADA:** The nation that is crazy for its junior hockey set another attendance record at this year's World U20 Championship. Organizers in Ottawa announced that the 2009 event drew a record attendance of 453,282, obliterating the previous mark of 325,138 set by Vancouver in 2006.

■ **ROMANIA:** The Romanian Ice Hockey Association named Canadian **Tom Skinner** as its new national team coach. Skinner held a coaching symposium in the nation in August 2008.

■ **SLOVENIA:** American **John Harrington** was tabbed to coach the Slovenian national team. Harrington coached the Olympic qualification and will likely return for the Division I World Championship in the spring.

■ **SLOVAKIA:** Junior player **Jakub Gasparovic** completed an incredible feat when he scored three short-handed goals in a 57-second span during a Slovakian junior league game.

■ **MOSCOW / MONTREAL:** The two biggest professional leagues held their All-Star games. In Moscow, a team of imports beat the Russian-native team in Red Square, 7-6. Meanwhile, in Montreal Team East beat Team West 12-11 in a shootout in the NHL's All-Star game.

■ **SWITZERLAND:** Dynamo Moscow won the 2008 Spengler Cup in Davos, Switzerland, on New Year's Eve, beating defending champion Canada, 5-3.

## OBITUARY

■ **Don Sanderson**, a player on the Whitby Dunlops in the Ontario Hockey Association in Canada died on January 2. The 21 year-old's death came three weeks after he hit his unprotected head on the ice during a fight. His death has re-ignited the debate about fighting in hockey in Canada, and around the world.

## IIHF Committees get down to business in Zurich



■ The IIHF is taking a new approach to its committee work for the upcoming 2008-2012 term. Many of the old committees were consolidated and new committees were added to address the changing times in the hockey world.

■ To kick off the new committee term, the IIHF hosted a Joint Committee weekend on January 29-31 in Kloten, Switzerland, where nearly all 13 committees met. Since so many committees have overlapping work the idea was to bring everyone together at the start of the term to facilitate better communication.

Some of the more notable changes to the existing committee structure include:

■ The IIHF History committee announced on February 16 the induction class of 2009. **Jan Suchy** (CZE), **Alexei Kasatonov** (RUS) and **Rudi Hiti** (SLO) will be inducted to the players' category. **Walter Bush Jr.** (USA) was honored as builder while Hungarian referee **Laszlo Schell** completed the class.

The five men will officially be inducted at a ceremony on May 5 in Berne, Switzerland. The IIHF Hall of Fame now has 155 greats from 22 countries.

Kasatonov won five IIHF World Championship golds, two Olympic golds, the 1981 Canada Cup and was named Best Defenseman of the 1983 IIHF World Championship. He won the Soviet national championship 11 times with CSKA Moscow.

Hiti is considered as the top Yugoslav/Slovenian play-

er of his time. Hiti caught the interest of the Chicago Blackhawks who invited him to training camp in 1970. But he broke his jaw in his first game and never got another chance. He represented his country in 17 World Championships and two Olympics.

Bush was an IIHF Council member from 1986-2008 and was key in bringing women's hockey to the Olympics. He was given the Olympic Order in 2002 and was inducted to the Hockey Hall of Fame in 2000.

Laszlo Schell officiated more than 1,500 games in Hungary from 1967-1990. Schell was an IIHF linesman from 1977-1982.

**Harald Griebel** (Infront Sports) was named the Paul Loicq Award winner for outstanding contributions to the IIHF and international hockey.

## 2008 Russian champions put on a stamp

■ The Russian Hockey Federation produced a stamp to honor its national team that won the 2008 World Championship in Canada.

The stamp, worth eight Rubles, can be bought at any post office in Russia. It shows the IIHF World Championship trophy and the silhouette and jersey of an unspecified player who represents the entire team that won gold.

"The victory of our team at the 2008 World Championship is important and gave pride to the national team's fans," said Russian Federation representative Olga Ivanova. "This success merited special attention and we think we found the best commemorative item with a stamp."



## IIHF News

■ The Eurosport group secured the rights for three major IIHF events for the 2008-2009 season. Eurosport will broadcast games live and delayed from the 2009 IIHF World Women's Championship; and the final round of the 2009 IIHF World U18 Championship. Eurosport also broadcast the U20s in Ottawa in January. Games on Eurosport 2 can be watched across Europe and they will also be on Eurosport Asia Pacific.

■ The 2009 IIHF Semi-Annual Congress will be held September 17-19 in La Marsa, Tunisia.

■ **Luzia Baldauf** has rejoined the IIHF as the manager of club competitions where she is working primarily with the Champions Hockey League. Baldauf, who spent the last two years in Munich, previously worked with the IIHF in the Marketing Department.



■ **Adrian Oggier** joins the IIHF as a Financial & Officiating coordinator. Adrian is a Swiss native and comes to the IIHF after working by the company *Evernet AG* in Zug. Last year, Oggier worked with the IIHF in organizing its archive. He will now assist with the day-to-day financial activities of the IIHF.



□ The formation of the Competition Committee, with the objective to review the existing championship structure and recommend changes or a new format.

□ The growth of the Development Committee, which will now handle work performed by the Sport, Coaching and previous Development Committees.

□ The formation of three new committees: Audit, Environment and Coordination.

□ The Referee and Rules Committees were combined, while the Marketing and Insurance Committees were eliminated.



Committee members for the 2008-2012 term

iceTimes is published bi-monthly.

**International Ice Hockey Federation**  
Brandschenkestrasse 50  
Postfach CH-8039 Zürich  
Switzerland

Phone +41,44,562,22,00  
Fax +41,44,562,22,29  
Email office@iihf.com

www.iihf.com







# A memorable start to 2009 in Ottawa



*Whenever the World U20 Championship is played on Canadian soil, it is guaranteed to be a memorable event for everyone involved. After years of bidding to host the World Junior Championship, Ottawa did not disappoint as the ten teams at this year's event treated a new record-number of fans to yet another great edition of the annual championship. And Ottawa did its part to make the championship memorable for the players on the ice. Below, Ice Times picks out some of the highlights from the holiday championship.*

*By Andrew Podnieks*

## Game 1

Vyacheslav Voinov gets the U20 underway with the first goal of the tournament late in the first period of a 4-1 Russian win over Latvia.

## Game 4

Canada begins its quest for five in a row slowly, scoring just once in the opening period against the Czechs. A four-goal second, however, catapults the team to an 8-1 win over a once-mighty nation.

## Game 6

Germany beats Kazakhstan 9-0 in a Preliminary Round battle between the two teams that will eventually be relegated to Division I for 2010. Timo Pielmeier earns the shutout for the Germans, stopping all 17 Kazakh shots.

## Game 10

Jordan Schroeter leads the Americans to a close 4-3 win over the Czechs by scoring twice and adding an assist.

## Game 18

After conceding 38 straight goals over four games without scoring one themselves, the Kazaks finally light the red lamp. Oleg Onichshenko makes the score 2-1 against the Czechs, though the Czechs go on to win, 10-2.

## Game 19

In the first shootout of the tournament, Slovakia beats Finland 3-2 to avoid the Relegation Round. Goalie Jaroslav Janus is the difference for the Slovaks, and his fine play the rest of the tournament earns him the goalie selection on the media all-star team.

## Game 20

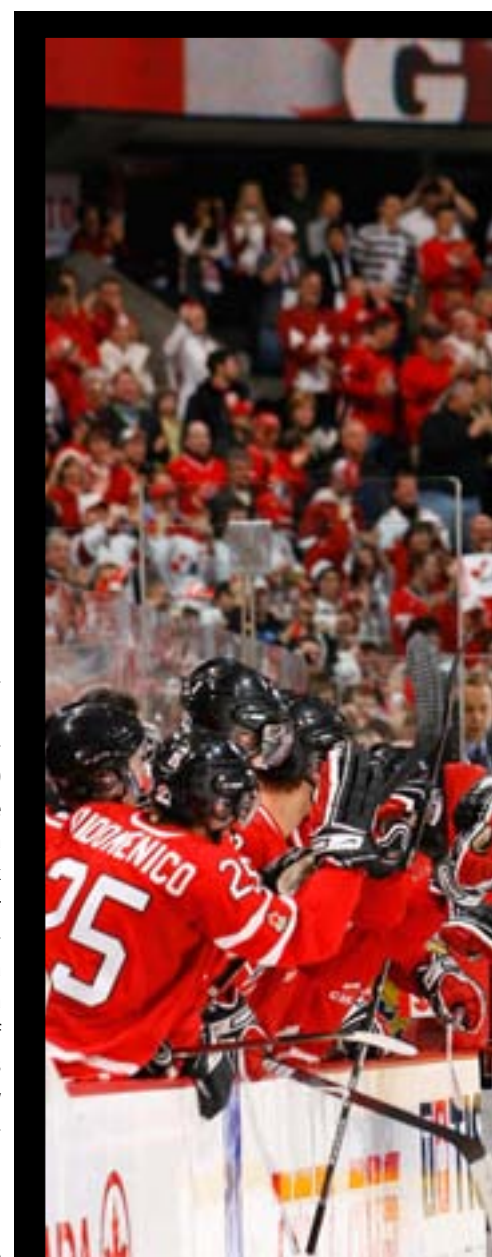
The Americans build an impressive 3-0 lead on Canada early in the first period only to relinquish it before the end of 20 minutes. John Tavares keys the comeback, first scoring a power-play goal from the back side and then 48 seconds later scoring the goal of the tournament to that point by deking a U.S. defenceman and roofing a quick shot over the glove of goalie Tom McCollum. Tavares later completes his hat trick by scoring one of two empty-netters for Canada.

## Game 21

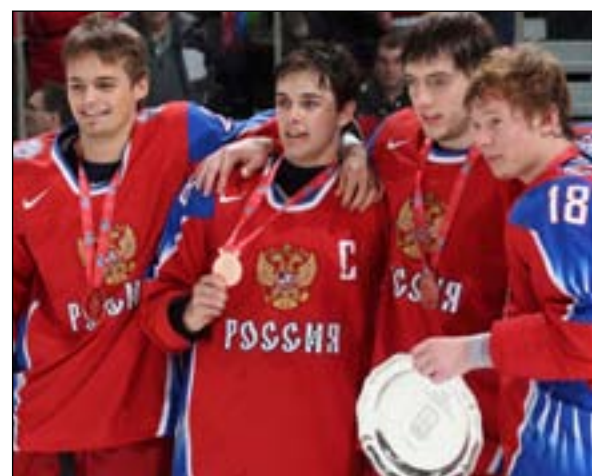
The Slovaks shock the Americans with a 5-3 victory, a win produced largely by the great goaltending of Janus, some lucky bounces, and some lax play by USA.

## Game 22

Call it the most bizarre penalty ever assessed. In the Germany-Latvia game, Roberts Bukarts scores three goals, getting his third goal midway through the second period. In friendly celebration, backup goalie Raimonds Ermics tosses his baseball cap onto the ice from the end of the bench, imita-



**THE SEA OF RED CELEBRATES:** *If you weren't wearing a red jersey, you wouldn't be at the Scotiabank Arena in Ottawa. Canada didn't disappoint the fans.*



**BEAUTIFUL BRONZE:** *While no team is ever satisfied with a bronze medal, the Russians were pleased enough to be taking home some hardware with them from the U20 World Championship after beating Slovakia, 5-2, in the third-place game.* Photo HHO/IHF Images





**WORLD U20  
AWARD WINNERS**



**Best goalkeeper:**  
Jacob Markstrom  
Sweden



**Best defenseman  
& media All-Star:**  
Erik Karlsson  
Sweden



**Best forward, MVP  
& media All-Star**  
John Tavares  
Canada



**Media All-Star (G):**  
Jaroslav Janus  
Slovakia



**Media All-Star (D):**  
P.K. Subban  
Canada



**Media All-Star (F):**  
Cody Hodgson  
Canada



**Media All-Star (F):**  
Nikita Filatov  
Russia

The tale of five titles



□ **2005:** Sidney Crosby leads Canada to its first U20 title in seven years in the United States. The win avenges the 2004 gold medal game loss against the Americans.



□ **2006:** In Vancouver, Canada wins its first U20 title on home ice since 1995. The U20 team was the bright spot in Canadian hockey, as the Olympic team struggled in Turin.



□ **2007:** Canada beats Russia for the third straight time in the U20 gold medal game, skating to a 4-2 victory in Sweden. Canada goes undefeated again at the tournament.



□ **2008:** Canada has its toughest gold medal game of the streak as Sweden forces overtime in the Czech Republic. Matthew Halischuk scores 3:36 into the extra period.



□ **2009:** The fifth title comes on home ice in Ottawa as, once again, Canada tops Sweden in the gold medal game.

ed at the U20 gold medal game between Canada and Sweden, then you were sure to stick out among the 22,000 fans at ir faithful followers as here they celebrate one of their five goals in the golden game.

ting the Canadian ritual of tossing a hat on the ice after a hat trick. A linesman, however, decides to assess Ermics a two-minute minor and 20-minute game misconduct for throwing an object onto the ice, a no-no in international hockey.

**Game 24**

Slovakia builds a 2-1 lead over Sweden only to see the Swedes rally for four goals in the third en route to a 5-3 win in the semi-finals and a place in the gold-medal game.

**Game 26**

Arguably the greatest goal in U20 history helps propel Canada to another gold-medal game. Canada holds the lead four times, but each time Russia responds with a goal. Then, with 2:20 remaining, the Russians score to go ahead, 5-4. With goalie Justin Tokarski on the bench for an extra attacker, Canada ties the game with just 5.4 seconds left thanks to a

phenomenal play by Jordan Eberle. A stunned Russian team survives the 10-minute overtime but loses in a shootout and later settled for the bronze medal.

**Game 31**

Canada's Angelo Esposito scores a brilliant goal to give his team a 2-0 lead in the gold-medal game. He takes a pass at Sweden's blue line facing his own goal, spins and keeps himself onside, and goes in alone on goalie Jacob Markstrom, finishing the play with a great shot.

**Game 31**

Canada celebrates its fifth gold medal after scoring, appropriately enough, five goals en route to the title. The celebration is the second straight championship on home ice for Canada. The nation also won in Vancouver in 2006.

# Cinderella story has fairy tale finish for Zurich

*The ZSC Lions' 5-0 victory over Metallurg Magnitogorsk capped an almost perfect inaugural Champions Hockey League season.*

*By Szymon Szemberg*

■ ■ Zurich held a press-conference on the eve of the final game at its training rink. The IIHF introduced the new CHL Silver Stone Trophy to the Swiss media for the first time and the room was packed. Sean Simpson, the Lions' head coach, addressed the crowd in his opening statement:

"Many of you who are here told me in August that the Swiss fans don't care about international club hockey and the only thing Swiss fans care about are the league rivalries."

"I think that your presence here shows that if fans are presented with a high-quality competition they will realize that there is a 'next step' and that it takes a little bit more to defeat the best teams from Sweden, Czech Republic and Finland than what it takes to defeat a Swiss rival."

About 30 hours after the press-conference, there was mayhem at the Diners-Club Arena in Rapperswil-Jona. The unbelievable final score was still displayed on the video screen as ZSC added Metallurg Magnitogorsk to its list of victims.

As the Zurich players were spraying champagne in the locker room, Switzerland's Sports minister Ueli Maurer entered the room and gave a short speech to players on behalf of the Swiss government:

■ ■ "What you have accomplished is not only Swiss ice hockey history," said Maurer. "This is Swiss sports history."

Maurer was not exaggerating. The ZSC Lions defeated the best teams from Europe's top four nations with style, playing creative and attractive hockey.

It started on October 22 when the Lions shocked the crowd in Linköping, Sweden by defeating the Swedish league leader, 7-2. The next step was the group decider in Prague on December 3 when Czech champion Slavia was soundly beaten, 5-1.

Finland's Espoo Blues - a team which went through the group stage with four wins and a goal differential of 14:4 - was defeated 6-3 and 4-1 in the semi-finals.

But despite this, ZSC was a big underdog going into the final games against the defending European champion Metallurg. After all, Russian clubs had won the four previous European Champions Cups and the KHL is considered the best league in Europe.

■ ■ ZSC's 2-0 goal stands out as the top moment in the first final game. The goal was the essence of what the 2008-2009 ZSC Lions were all about; offensive, creative, confident and unaffected by a hostile environment. Ryan Gardner charged over the blue-

line and dropped the puck to Adrian Wichser who quickly made a cross-pass to Peter Sejna. The Slovak held the puck for moment before he completed the give-and-go play. Wichser, who closed the CHL with 13 points in eight games, finished the play putting the puck into an empty net, past the hopelessly outplayed goalie Proskuryakov.

It was one of the most beautiful goals scored by a foreign team against top Russian opposition on Russian ice.

■ ■ In hindsight, and as strange as it may sound, it was likely a good thing for Zurich that the game in Russia ended in a 2-2 tie (Metallurg equalized with 43 seconds left).

"Had we won in Magnitogorsk, media would have named us favorites to win it all and people would have celebrated and congratulated us for the entire week leading up to the return game," said Sean Simpson of the draw. "I am not sure if we would have been able to handle that."

"As disappointing as it was to see them tie the game that late, coming home with a tie kept us more focused and the pressure was still on them."

■ ■ The finale in Zurich is now European club hockey history. But the most lasting consequence of ZSC's accomplishment is not the sensational win itself. It is that the CHL has changed the way fans and media in one country perceive club hockey.

Winning derby games is as great as it always has been. But now, there is an opportunity for a bigger challenge.



**WRITING HISTORY:** The ZSC Lions from Zurich, Switzerland made history in more way than one when they won the inaugural Champions Hockey League with a 5-0 win against Metallurg Magnitogorsk. It was the best showing for a Swiss team in European Club Competition. Zurich's Adrian Wichser (left) paced all players with 13 points, including 12 assists. Photo: Getty Images

## CHAMPIONS HOCKEY LEAGUE 2008-2009

### Qualification tournament September 13

Switzerland's SC Bern wins the qualification tournament on the second day of action. Bern beats Sinupret (GER) and Kosice (SVK) in the three-team round robin. The win is a double coup for the Swiss team, which about a month earlier played an exhibition game against the N.Y. Rangers in Bern.

### Week 1 October 8

The CHL kicks off and already in the first game comes a major upset as Finnish giant Karpas Oulu falls 3-2 against Berlin in the first group stage week.

#### Week 1 scores:

Berlin 3 - Karpas Oulu 2  
HV71 6 - SC Bern 2  
Salavat Ufa 7 - Mountfield 1  
Slavia 4 - Linköping 2

### Week 2 October 22

Zurich makes its debut in a grand fashion surprising many with a 7-2 win in Linköping. The win sets the tone for the Swiss club for the rest of the CHL.

#### Week 2 scores:

Karpas Oulu 0 - Metallurg 3  
SC Bern 1 - Espoo Blues 3  
Mountfield 5 - S. Bratislava 2  
Linköping 2 - Zurich 7

### Week 3 October 29

Espoo and Metallurg emerge as the teams to beat in their groups as they both win their second games. Slavia beats Zurich 5-4 in the first CHL shootout.

#### Week 3 scores:

Metallurg 5 - Berlin 2  
Espoo Blues 3 - HV71 2  
S. Bratislava 2 - Salavat Ufa 4  
Zurich 4 - Slavia 5 so

### Week 4 November 12

Salavat Ufa is the first team to seal a semi-final spot, earning its third group win, 3-0, vs. Mountfield. The Russian team is looking like the CHL team to beat.

#### Week 4 scores:

Karpas Oulu 2 - Berlin 3 so  
SC Bern 7 - HV71 5  
Salavat Ufa 3 - Mountfield 0  
Linköping 4 - Slavia 5





❑ Some people might ask, "Who got the goal pucks?" after Zurich's historic win against Metallurg. The answer is that they are stored at the IIHF office in Zurich and they will be distributed as part of a program to preserve the history of hockey.

Five different scorers representing three nationalities (Canada, Slovakia and Switzerland) provided one of the biggest upsets in international club hockey history.

❑ The IIHF saves goal pucks from all major gold-medal games and the Champions Hockey League final was no exception. The Finnish officiating crew was instructed to collect each puck after a goal and to give it the score-keeper's bench. There, the puck was marked with the name of the goal scorer and the goal he scored.

For over a decade, the IIHF has worked with with the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto whose mandate is to preserve the

history of the game. Collected artifacts like goal pucks, game used sticks and game worn jerseys are sent to the HHoF to be displayed in the Hall's international wing.

Together with the Hockey Hall of Fame it was decided how the five ZSC pucks will be distributed.

- ❑ 1:0 Blaine Down - HHoF will receive the game winning puck.
- ❑ 2:0 Peter Sejna - Will be presented to the ZSC Lions.
- ❑ 3:0 Mathias Seger - The captain's "game-killer" will be put on auction with the proceeds going to charity.
- ❑ 4:0 Jan Alston - Will stay at the IIHF headquarters in Zurich.
- ❑ 5:0 Jean-Guy Trudel - Will be presented to CHL marketing partner Ovation Sports.

*NOTE: The 3:0-puck, which will be auctioned, will be put on a wooden plaque along with the photo of Seger's goal and with a certificate of authenticity.*



## INAUGURAL SEASON TIMELINE

### Week 5 November 19

The semi-final picture crystallizes as Metallurg wins its group with a 3-1 win against Karpat. Espoo also earns a playoff place. Only Group D is up for grabs.

Week 5 scores:  
Metallurg 3 - Karpat Oulu 1  
Espoo Blues 2 - SC Bern 1  
S. Bratislava 5 - Mountfin 3  
Zurich 4 - Linköping 3

### Week 6 December 3

With all other groups decided, all eyes are on Prague for the Slavia - Zurich game. The Swiss become surprise semi-finalists with a 5-1 road win.

Week 6 scores:  
Berlin 2 - Metallurg 1  
HV71 0 - Espoo Blues 6  
Salavat Ufa 8 - S. Bratislava 2  
Slavia 1 - Zurich 5

### Semi-Final 1 December 10

Salavat Ufa wins the battle of the Russian teams with a 2-1 road win against Metallurg. At the time, Ufa is the stronger team in the Russian league. Meanwhile, Zurich dominates an injury-plagued Espoo with a 6-3 win.

Semi-final 1 scores:  
Metallurg 1 - Salavat Ufa 2  
Zurich 6 - Espoo Blues 3

### Semi-Final 2 January 7

Espoo has time to get healthy, but Zurich still wins the road game, 4-1, moving on to the finals, a first for a Swiss team. Metallurg bounces back and tops Salavat 3-1, and then wins the ensuing shootout to skate into the finals.

Semi-final 2 scores:  
Salavat Ufa 3 - Metallurg 1  
Espoo Blues 1 - Zurich 4

### Final Series January 21 & 28

Metallurg salvages a 2-2 tie on home ice in the first final, but then is dominated in the game in Switzerland as Zurich makes hockey history with a 5-0 drubbing in front of a sold out crowd in Rapperswil-Jona.

Final scores  
Metallurg 2 - Zurich 2  
Zurich 5 - Metallurg 0

## WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEWS

# The Tale of Two Teams

## Canada and USA still the teams to beat

■ ■ The tables have turned at the World Women's Championship, and yet the story remains the same.

There is no doubt, there have been major strides made in the development of women's hockey. One needs to look no further than last year's World Championship where Switzerland skated in its first-ever medal game, or where China stunned Germany in the final minutes to avoid relegation.

Yes, the playing field is starting to even out. But it takes only one look at the standings to see that the Women's World Championship gold medal chance is still a two-team race between North American powerhouses USA and Canada. The bronze medal race is similar between Finland and Sweden.

■ ■ That's the bad news. Now for the positive side.

What used to be predictable outcomes in both the gold and bronze medal games, are now up for grabs between the four dueling nations.

■ ■ Consider that Canada rattled off eight consecutive World Women Championship titles between 1990-2004 before the U.S. finally beat their northern foe in 2005. (Note: the event is not played annually). Virtually the same was true of Finland, which won seven bronze medals before Sweden shook up the standings.

Now, both the Americans and Swedes have shown that they are here to stay.

■ ■ The U.S. had a major hiccup at the 2006 Olympic Winter Games, the controversy about leaving veteran Cammie Granato off the roster dogged the Americans throughout Torino, and they seemed to take a U.S. - Canada final for granted. Along came the Swedes with other ideas, beating the U.S. in the semi-final for the first Olympic podium shake up in women's hockey.

The Americans licked their wounds and bounced back from the Torino lesson. Recent American rosters have featured a younger group. The change of focus has paid off, as the U.S. has won two of the last three World women's titles and also has earned the gold medal at both the U18 World Women's events.

Both U.S. gold-medal victories were by one-goal margin, including a shootout win in Sweden in 2005, but nevertheless, it has provided some much-needed parity at the top of the standings.

■ ■ The bronze medal picture is a mirror image of the golden one. Sweden and Finland have long been geographic rivals and can almost always be counted on to be at the same level of development in the women's game. But after years of Finnish domination, the Swedes have broken through.

Much like the Americans, the breakthrough came in 2005, when on home ice, the Swedes won their first-ever World Women's bronze medal. Sweden followed up in 2007 with a second bronze.

And while it may not sound exciting to say, at last the two individual medal races are truly a n o n e ' s game as the quality of hockey between the top four nations is on par with one another.

■ ■ So what about the other five countries at the World Women's?

There's a lot of promise. Switzerland proved that last year, and don't forget that Russia even won a bronze medal in 2001. More encouraging is the parity between the teams finishing between 5th and 9th place as most final decisions are by two goals or less. Also a promising sign is the ability of these nations to compete against the perennial powerhouses. Last year in China, only one game was decided by double-digits, a far cry from the early years of the Women's World Championship.



**ONE STEP AHEAD:** In the last two seasons, the U.S. has had the slight advantage over its Canadian rivals.

## Home ice advantage: Can USA reign at U18s

■ ■ You know you must be doing something right when your team wins a medal at five consecutive World Championships and people are asking when your squad will regain its dominant form.

Such is the problem that USA Hockey faces at the upcoming World U18 Championship on home ice.

■ ■ More than ten years ago, around the start of the official IIHF World U18 Championship, USA Hockey created the National Team Development Program, a fancy title for what amounts to a standing national U17 and U18 team that train year-round together in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

While the results weren't spectacular in the early years, the program started to pay dividends around 2002, when the country won its first gold medal at the World U18 Championship. Since 2002, the Americans have only missed the podium once.

■ ■ The problem is, much like Canada's dominance at the U20s has created unattainable expectations, so has the American success at U18s -- albeit on a more modest scale.

In fact, when the U.S. wins, those around the championship often put an asterisk when they speak of the gold medal saying, "Well, of course they should win it, after all, the team plays together the entire year."

■ ■ And now, with the championship on home ice and the U.S. missing the gold medal the last two seasons, expectations are high, and the pressure is on.

"I guess you could say it's a positive problem," says Jim Johannson, USA Hockey's Director of International Hockey. "When we started the program, there weren't many that gave it a chance to succeed and now people expect nothing but success from it. It says a lot about how far our junior hockey has come in a short time."

Other countries have tried to emulate the U.S. program, but only at the U20 level, where a handful of countries have their team play a partial schedule in local professional leagues. But thus far, USA Hockey holds the monopoly on U18 development.

Which is why the two non-gold finishes are even more frustrating. Last year the U.S. fell against Russia, 3-1, in front of 9,500 spectators in Kazan, Russia, while the previous year they lost the gold medal game, again against Russia by just one goal.

■ ■ The fact is, few nations have been able to string together a successful U18 team at the April championship besides USA and Russia. The Russians have a record seven medals at the event, while the Americans have six. Canada, the U20 powerhouse is very much hit or miss at the U18s, and Finland, while a threat in the tournament's early years, has fallen off the map recently.

Sweden is the most-likely team to break the cycle with its surge in its junior team program. But if history is any indication, the Americans have every reason to have high expectations, but should be leery of any medal round match-up against Russia.



## WORLD WOMEN'S U18 CHAMPIONSHIP

# Winning women's U18 gold as easy as U-S-A

■ The future of American women's hockey is looking bright. After winning the inaugural World Women U18 Championship last season in Calgary, the Americans followed up with an equally impressive golden performance at this year's edition in Füssen, Germany, solidifying their position as the junior women's nation to beat.

As at the women's level, the two top teams were the Americans and Canada. Both teams came with virtually the same strategy -- use veteran coaches and players to guide the future generation through the event.

For Canada, national women's coach Melody Davidson was on hand, although as a General Manager and not behind the bench, but undoubtedly, she wielded some heavy influence with the players. Serving as assistant coaches, Canada brought in two notable national team veterans Danielle Goyette and Caroline Oulette.

On the American side it was 1980 Olympic player, and nowadays more notably University of Wisconsin women's head coach Mark Johnson as the man leading the bench. Assisting him, much like behind the Canada bench, was USA veteran player Katie King.

■ The strategy paid off for both teams as they breezed past the competition in the preliminary round with a 37-2 goals advantage for the U.S. and a similar 35-1 advantage for Canada.

Both teams essentially cruised through their semi-final games, with the Americans squelching any hopes of another Czech miracle, like last year's bronze medal finish, with an ego-deflating 18-0 drubbing in the first

semi-final. Canada had their hands full with the Swedes early in the second semi-final game, but ultimately prevailed, 6-1, setting up the same showdown for gold as in every IIHF World Women's Championship event.

■ Much like their senior counterparts, the U.S. and Canada lived up to the rival expectations in the gold medal game. Many considered the Americans to be the stronger team entering the game, but they couldn't pull out to any more than a one-goal lead against the persistent Canadians.

Forward by the directorate, along with teammates Alex Rigsby (goaltender) and Alev Kelter (defenseman).

■ Away from the medal action, the consolation round proved to be just as action packed as the gold-medal game. Three of the four games in the round between the bottom four teams went into overtime and two were settled in the shootout.

Unfortunately for the Swiss, they came out on the losing end of both of the shootouts, first against Germany and then in the relegation game against Russia. For the Swiss it was a tough fate to accept after earning a surprise 4-3 win against eventual bronze medalist, Finland.

■ If the results at this year's World Women's U18 Championship are any indication, the future is bright for the women's game as the results begin to show more surprises.



**GOLDEN MOMENT:** The U.S. team, above, along with its coaching staff, (right) with Mark Johnson in the middle, celebrate the second straight gold.

With just over seven minutes left in the game, Canada tied things at two, sending it into overtime. Ultimately, the deciding moment came when Canada was whistled for a penalty 6:24 into the extra period. It was the opening that the Americans had been waiting for as Megan Bozek fed a long pass to Kendall Coyne, who put in the game winner. Coyne was named the Best



## Amanda Kessel living up to her name

■ If anyone at the Women's U18 Championship has big skates to fill, it is certainly American star forward Amanda Kessel.

Skating in her second World Women's U18 Championship, Kessel is the second family member to win an IIHF gold medal and the third to skate in an IIHF World Championship event.

While she has quickly made a name for herself in the women's hockey world with two gold medals, 10 goals and 20 assists in 10 games at the U18s, when Kessel takes to the ice, the question on the tip of everyone's tongues is, "is she related to THE Kessel?"



■ In this case the Kessel people are referring to is her brother, young NHL star Phil Kessel, who plays for Boston. Kessel had a stellar international career, most notably with USA Hockey's National Team Development Program, where he still holds the record for most career goals (108) and most

career points (180). Phil became the first of the clan to represent the U.S. in an IIHF event when he won silver at the U18 World Championship in 2004 and followed up with a gold medal in 2005.

■ According to Amanda, it was yet another family relation, cousin David Moss, who plays for Calgary, who turned the entire family on to the game.

"My brothers and I just followed in his footsteps," said Kessel in an earlier interview. "I was born into it. From the time I was three, I had skates on — because my brothers were all playing."

■ Younger Amanda was following in her big brother's footsteps at a young age, already a national champion at age 12, Amanda showed her brother's spark on the ice. In no time, she was noticed by the women's U18 coaching staff and became the team's leading scorer with 11 points as an underage player at the inaugural 2008 gold medal performance. She followed up with a second gold medal, besting her brother Phil's international medal haul with an astounding 19 points in five games.

And Amanda is just getting started. Now that she has exhausted her U18 eligibility, she will turn her attention to the women's national team and to her future college, which she has yet to choose.

■ And just in case there's not enough competition in the family, there's always middle brother Blake, who most recently skated for the Americans at the U20 World Championship in Ottawa and is a draft pick of the N.Y. Islanders.

Looks like Amanda will have to stay on her toes to stay ahead in the family medal count.

## CLUB COMPETITON ROUNDUP

## Continental Cup crown goes to MHC Martin



**A LOSS AND A WIN:** MHC Martin may have lost the battle in a 5-4 defeat against Rouen on the final day of action, but they won the war, coming out on top of the standings and winning the 2009 Continental Cup.

■ While most of this year's club hockey hype was around the inaugural season of the Champions Hockey League, the Continental Cup can still brag that it is the most enduring current club competition around.

And this year's Super Final, held in Rouen, France showed why the season-long event has endured. Fans were treated to one of the most competitive Super Finals in Continental Cup history as the four teams in the round robin were very evenly matched.

#### Winning through Losing

■ In the end, a loss in the last game proved to be enough for Slovakia's MHC Martin to actually win the championship crown thanks to an unlikely three-way tie scenario in the final standings.

Entering the final game between MHC Martin and host Rouen, three teams were tied in the standings with six points each. Martin, Rouen and Bolzano were the leaders, with fourth team Keramin Minsk from Belarus winless and out of the title hunt.

MHC Martin had the best goals-for, goals-against average, giving the Slovaks the clear advantage before the puck dropped in the final. In fact, Rouen would need to win by five goals to make up the

margin and claim the title. The five goals proved to be a bit more than Rouen could handle.

The host nation did put on a top-notch performance, edging MHC Martin, 5-4 in the head-to-head match-up. It is the first Slovakian win at the Continental Cup since the 2004-2005 season when Zvolen won.

#### The Not-so Long and Winding Road

■ The road to the Continental Cup Super Final started in September with the first round of action. But in fact, this year's final featured two teams that were automatically qualified to the Super Final (Rouen and MHC Martin) and two teams that entered the competition in the third round. Bolzano and Keramin Minsk were automatically qualified to the third round, and won their respective tournaments to earn their spot in the final.

For both Minsk and Bolzano, the odds were stacked against them as traditionally it is very difficult for a team to make its way through the ranks to win the Super Final.

The last time a team won the title that was not automatically in the Super Final was in 2007 when Junost Minsk came from the third round to win.

## EWCC gets a new club champion

■ It was five years in the making, but at last European women's club hockey has a new champion.

Russia's SKIF Nizhny Novgorod became only the second different team to win the EWCC in the five-year history of the event after going undefeated in the four-team round robin final held in Finland.

Novgorod barely edged out a competitive field, earning the gold medal after a 2-1 win against Finland's Espoo Blues in the last game of the championship.

For the Finns, the loss was the second blow of the weekend as they also lost against Sweden's Segeltorps IF and had to settle for third place.

■ Segeltorps had big shoes to fill as the Swedish entry, and while its second-place finish is far from a disappointment, it failed to live up the previous four years of Swedish domination at the EWCC.

Prior to SKIF's title win, only Sweden's AIK Solna had won the EWCC championship. But before the first puck dropped in this year's EWCC, it was clear there would be no Solna five-peat as they failed to qualify for the event after losing the Swedish title to Segeltorps.

With the field wide open, the Russians jumped on the opportunity to add a little variety to the EWCC standings.

It was SKIF's third time in the EWCC final, previously they finished in second place in 2006 and in third place in 2005.



**A NEW ADDITION:** The IIHF recently added onto its headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland. Famous Spanish artist, Rosa Serra created a fountain that is located on the back lawn of the Louis Magnus Villa. The fountain depicts a large hand holding a hockey puck with '100' inscribed on the puck. Serra also created a statue that is located at the front of the Villa that is an depiction of a hockey player in action.



#### SPORTS UPDATE

■ Applications are now being accepted for the Degree Program in Sports and Leisure Management offered through the Vierumaki Sports Institute and the Haaga-Helia Institute in Finland.

The program offers a college degree in ice hockey coaching and requires two years of course work followed by another year of a practicum.

If you are interested in applying for the program, please visit [iihf.com](http://iihf.com) for more information.

■ Also in Vierumaki news, the IIHF is once again hosting a Development Camp at the Finnish sport institute. Boys born 1994 will participate in this year's camp, which will be held July 4-12. For more information about the camp, please get in contact with your national association representative.



RESULTS SUMMARY

IHF World U20 Championship

Ottawa, CANADA, December 26 - January 5

Group A: Germany - United States 2-8 (1-2, 0-3, 1-3) Canada - Czech Republic 8-1 (1-0, 4-0, 3-1) Kazakhstan - Germany 0-9 (0-3, 0-4, 0-2) Kazakhstan - Canada 0-15 (0-4, 0-5, 0-6) United States - Czech Republic 4-3 (1-0, 2-1, 1-2) Germany - Canada 1-5 (0-1, 1-1, 0-3) Czech Republic - Germany 6-0 (2-0, 1-0, 3-0) United States - Kazakhstan 12-0 (3-0, 5-0, 4-0) Czech Republic - Kazakhstan 10-2 (6-1, 4-0, 0-1) Canada - United States 7-4

Canada 4 4 0 0 0 35-6 12 United States 4 3 0 0 1 28-12 9 Czech Republic 4 2 0 0 2 20-14 6 Germany 4 1 0 0 3 12-19 3 Kazakhstan 4 0 0 0 4 2-46 0

Group B: Latvia - Russia 1-4 (0-1, 0-1, 1-2) Finland - Sweden 1-3 (0-2, 1-0, 0-1) Slovakia - Latvia 7-2 (2-2, 3-0, 2-0) Russia - Finland 5-2 (3-1, 1-1, 1-0) Sweden - Slovakia 3-1 (2-0, 1-0, 0-1) Latvia - Sweden 1-10 (1-5, 0-1, 0-4) Russia - Slovakia 8-1 (2-1, 4-0, 2-0) Finland - Latvia 5-1 (2-0, 3-1, 0-0) Sweden - Russia 5-0 (4-0, 0-0, 1-0) Slovakia - Finland 3-2 SO (0-0, 1-2, 1-0)

Sweden 4 4 0 0 0 21-3 12 Russia 4 3 0 0 1 17-9 9 Slovakia 4 1 1 0 2 12-15 5 Finland 4 1 0 1 2 10-12 4 Latvia 4 0 0 0 4 5-26 0

Relegation Round:

Kazakhstan - Germany 0-9 (0-3, 0-4, 0-2) Finland - Latvia 5-1 (2-0, 3-1, 0-0) Germany - Latvia 1-7 (1-1, 0-5, 0-1) Finland - Kazakhstan 7-1 (3-0, 2-1, 2-0) Latvia - Germany 3-1 (2-0, 0-1, 1-0) Finland - Kazakhstan 7-1 (1-0, 1-0, 5-1)

Finland 3 3 0 0 0 15-3 9 Latvia 3 2 0 0 1 15-7 6 Germany 3 1 0 0 2 11-10 3 Kazakhstan 3 0 0 0 3 2-23 0

Germany & Kazakhstan are relegated to 2010 World U20 Championship, Div. I

Playoff Round:

United States - Slovakia 3-5 (1-3, 0-0, 2-2) QF Russia - Czech Republic 5-1 (1-0, 0-0, 4-1) QF Sweden - Slovakia 5-3 (0-1, 1-1, 4-1) SF Canada - Russia 6-5 SO (2-2, 1-0, 2-3) SF United States - Czech Republic 3-2 OT (1-0, 0-0, 1-2) 5th Russia - Slovakia 5-2 (1-0, 2-1, 2-1) bronze Canada - Sweden 5-1 (1-0, 1-0, 3-1) gold

Directorate Awards:

Best Goaltender: Jacob Markstrom (Sweden) Best Defenseman: Erik Karlsson (Sweden) Best Forward: John Tavares (Canada) MVP: John Tavares (Canada)

World U20 Championship Div. I, Grp. A

Herisau, SWITZERLAND December 14-20

France - Slovenia 2-1 (1-0, 1-0, 0-1) Estonia - Switzerland 1-12 (0-7, 1-2, 0-3) Poland - Belarus 0-4 (0-1, 0-1, 0-2) Slovenia - Estonia 22-2 (9-1, 9-1, 4-0) Switzerland - Poland 5-1 (3-1, 0-0, 2-0) Belarus - France 8-2 (1-1, 3-0, 4-1) Estonia - Poland 2-4 (0-0, 0-2, 2-2) Belarus - Slovenia 7-1 (0-0, 4-1, 3-1) Switzerland - France 6-2 (3-1, 1-1, 2-0) Slovenia - Switzerland 2-6 (1-2, 1-1, 0-3) Poland - France 2-8 (0-3, 0-4, 2-1) Belarus - Estonia 19-1 (5-0, 6-0, 8-0) Slovenia - Poland 4-0 (2-0, 0-0, 2-0) France - Estonia 19-0 (5-0, 8-0, 6-0) Switzerland - Belarus 2-1 (1-1, 0-0, 1-0)

Switzerland 5 5 0 0 0 31-7 15 Belarus 5 4 0 0 1 39-7 12 France 5 3 0 0 2 33-17 9 Slovenia 5 2 0 0 3 31-17 6 Poland 5 1 0 0 4 7-23 3 Estonia 5 0 0 0 5 6-76 0

Switzerland is promoted to 2010 World U20 Championship Estonia is relegated to 2010 World U20 Championship, Div. II

World U20 Championship Div. I, Grp. B

Aalborg, DENMARK December 15-21

Ukraine - Norway 2-4 (0-1, 1-2, 1-1) Hungary - Austria 2-6 (2-1, 0-5, 0-0) Italy - Denmark 1-2 (0-0, 0-1, 1-1) Austria - Ukraine 6-2 (1-0, 2-2, 3-0) Norway - Italy 4-1 (1-0, 2-0, 1-1) Denmark - Hungary 5-2 (2-0, 1-1, 2-1) Italy - Hungary 8-2 (2-1, 3-0, 3-1) Austria - Norway 7-0 (2-0, 2-0, 3-0) Denmark - Ukraine 2-0 (0-0, 1-0, 1-0) Austria - Ukraine 1-2 OT (0-0, 0-1, 1-0) Hungary - Ukraine 2-5 (0-1, 1-2, 0-3) Norway - Denmark 2-4 (1-3, 0-0, 1-1) Norway - Hungary 4-3 PS (1-1, 1-2, 1-0) Ukraine - Italy 1-2 (0-0, 1-1, 0-1) Denmark - Austria 3-8 (0-0, 2-3, 1-5)

Austria 5 4 0 1 0 28-9 13 Denmark 5 4 0 0 1 16-13 12 Norway 5 2 1 0 2 14-17 8 Italy 5 2 1 0 2 14-10 8 Ukraine 5 1 0 0 4 10-16 3 Hungary 5 0 0 1 4 11-28 1

Austria is promoted to 2010 World U20 Championship Hungary is relegated to 2010 World U20 Championship, Div. II

World U20 Championship Div. II, Grp. A

Miercurea Ciuc, ROMANIA December 15-21

Korea - Lithuania 1-4 (0-2, 1-0, 0-2) Serbia - Belgium 2-6 (1-2, 1-1, 0-3) Japan - Romania 12-0 (1-0, 3-0, 8-0) Lithuania - Belgium 9-1 (2-0, 2-1, 5-0) Japan - Korea 4-5 (1-1, 1-3, 2-1) Romania - Serbia 2-3 OT (0-1, 1-1, 1-0) Japan - Serbia 11-1 (4-0, 3-1, 4-0) Korea - Belgium 5-4 (0-1, 3-2, 2-1) Lithuania - Romania 8-1 (2-1, 4-0, 2-0) Belgium - Japan 1-13 (0-3, 0-5, 1-5) Serbia - Lithuania 1-10 (0-3, 1-3, 0-4) Romania - Korea 3-4 SO (2-1, 1-1, 0-1) Korea - Serbia 4-3 SO (1-2, 0-1, 2-0) Lithuania - Japan 4-5 (1-3, 1-0, 2-2) Belgium - Romania 5-3 (2-2, 2-0, 1-1)

Japan 5 4 0 0 1 45-11 12 Lithuania 5 4 0 0 1 35-9 12 Korea 5 2 2 0 1 19-18 10 Belgium 5 2 0 0 3 17-32 6 Serbia 5 0 1 1 3 10-33 3 Romania 5 0 0 2 3 9-32 2

Japan is promoted to 2010 World U20 Championship, Div. I Romania is relegated to 2010 World U20 Championship, Div. III

World U20 Championship Div. II, Grp. B

Logrono, SPAIN December 10-15

Croatia - Great Britain 3-2 (2-0, 0-0, 1-2) Netherlands - Mexico 7-1 (4-1, 2-0, 1-0) China - Spain 1-5 (1-2, 0-3, 0-0) Netherlands - Croatia 3-4 (1-2, 2-1, 0-1) Mexico - China 4-2 (2-1, 0-0, 2-1) Great Britain - Spain 6-0 (2-0, 2-0, 2-0) Netherlands - China 10-0 (6-0, 2-0, 2-0) Great Britain - Mexico 7-1 (3-0, 3-1, 1-0) Croatia - Spain 5-4 (1-1, 2-2, 2-1) China - Great Britain 2-9 (0-1, 1-5, 1-1) Mexico - Croatia 2-10 (0-1, 0-4, 2-5) Spain - Netherlands 2-4 (1-0, 1-4, 0-0) Croatia - China 12-4 (6-2, 2-2, 4-0) Great Britain - Netherlands 5-4 (2-0, 2-2, 1-2) Spain - Mexico 1-3 (0-0, 0-1, 1-2)

Croatia 5 5 0 0 0 34-15 15 Great Britain 5 4 0 0 1 29-10 12 Netherlands 5 3 0 0 2 28-12 9 Mexico 5 2 0 0 3 11-27 6 Spain 5 1 0 0 4 12-19 3 China 5 0 0 0 5 9-40 0

Croatia is promoted to 2010 World U20 Championship, Div. I China is relegated to 2010 World U20 Championship, Div. III

World Women U18 Championship

Füssen, GERMANY January 5-10

Group A: United States - Russia 17-0 (9-0, 4-0, 4-0) Sweden - Germany 8-1 (1-1, 1-0, 6-0) Sweden - Russia 6-1 (1-1, 3-0, 2-0) Germany - United States 0-11 (0-4, 0-5, 0-2) United States - Sweden 9-2 (3-0, 2-1, 4-1) Russia - Germany 5-2 (1-0, 1-0, 3-2)

United States 3 3 0 0 0 37-2 9 Sweden 3 2 0 0 1 16-11 6 Russia 3 1 0 0 2 6-25 3 Germany 3 0 0 0 3 3-24 0

Group B

Czech Republic - Finland 1-2 SO (1-1, 0-0, 0-0) Canada - Switzerland 16-1 (4-0, 6-1, 6-0) Czech Republic - Switzerland 7-3 (2-1, 1-0, 4-2) Finland - Canada 0-6 (0-1, 0-3, 0-2) Switzerland - Finland 4-3 (0-1, 4-2, 0-0) Canada - Czech Republic 13-0 (3-0, 4-0, 6-0)

Canada 3 3 0 0 0 35-1 9 Czech Republic 3 1 0 1 1 8-18 4 Switzerland 3 1 0 0 2 8-26 3 Finland 3 0 1 0 2 5-11 2

Consolation Games:

Switzerland - Germany 1-2 SO (0-0, 1-1, 0-0) Russia - Finland 1-2 OT (1-0, 0-1, 0-0) Switzerland - Russia 2-3 SO (1-2, 1-0, 0-0) Germany - Finland 1-2 (1-0, 0-1, 0-1)

Switzerland is relegated to 2010 World Women U18 Championship, Div. I

Playoff Round:

Canada - Sweden 6-1 (0-0, 3-1, 3-0) SF United States - Czech Republic 18-0 (8-0, 6-0, 4-0) SF Sweden - Czech Republic 9-1 (4-0, 3-0, 2-1) Bronze United States - Canada 3-2 OT (1-0, 1-1, 0-1) Gold

Directorate Awards:

Best Goaltender: Alex Rigsby (United States) Best Defenseman: Alev Kelter (United States) Best Forward: Amanda Kessel (United States)

World Women U18 Championship Div. I

Chambery, FRANCE December 28 - January 2

Austria - Norway 2-1 (1-0, 0-1, 1-0) France - Slovakia 2-1 SO (1-0, 0-1, 0-0) Japan - Austria 3-1 (0-0, 1-1, 2-0) Slovakia - Japan 1-6 (1-0, 0-2, 0-4) France - Norway 3-2 (3-1, 0-0, 0-1) Slovakia - Austria 5-3 (0-1, 3-1, 2-1) Japan - Norway 7-3 (4-1, 2-1, 1-1) France - Austria 4-2 (2-1, 2-1, 2-0) Norway - Slovakia 3-4 (0-1, 3-1, 0-2) Japan - France 2-0 (0-0, 1-0, 1-0)

Japan 4 4 0 0 0 18-5 12 France 4 2 1 0 1 9-7 8 Slovakia 4 2 0 1 1 11-14 7 Austria 4 1 0 0 3 8-13 3 Norway 4 0 0 0 4 9-16 0

Japan is promoted to 2010 World Women U18 Championship

Champions Hockey League Playoffs

Various sites December / January

Metallurg - Salavat Ufa 1-2 (0-0, 0-2, 1-0) SF1 Zurich Lions - Espoo Blues 6-3 (1-0, 3-2, 2-1) SF1 Salavat Ufa - Metallurg 1-3 (0-0, 1-0, 0-3) SF2 Blues Espoo - Zurich Lions 1-4 (0-2, 1-0, 0-2) SF2 Metallurg - Zurich Lions 2-2 (0-2, 0-0, 2-0) F1 Zurich Lions - Metallurg 5-0 (1-0, 1-0, 3-0) F2

Zurich Lions (SUI) win Champions Hockey League

Continental Cup Super Final

Rouen, FRANCE January 16-18

MHC Martin - Keramin Minsk 5-1 (0-1, 3-0, 2-0) Rouen - Bolzano 1-3 (0-2, 1-1, 0-0) Bolzano - MHC Martin 3-7 (1-2, 2-3, 0-2) Keramin Minsk - Rouen 4-6 (0-2, 4-0, 0-4) Keramin Minsk - Bolzano 1-7 (1-3, 0-4, 0-0) Rouen - MHC Martin 5-4 (2-1, 1-2, 2-1)

MHC Martin (SVK) 3 2 0 0 1 16-9 6 Rouen (FRA) 3 2 0 0 1 12-11 6 Bolzano (ITA) 3 2 0 0 1 13-9 6 Keramin Minsk (BLR) 3 0 0 0 3 6-18 0

Womens European Champions Cup

Lohja, FINLAND January 30 - February 1

SKIF Novgorod - Segeltorp 3-1 (1-1, 1-0, 1-0) Aisulu Almaty - Espoo Blues 2-4 (1-2, 1-0, 0-0) SKIF Novgorod - Aisulu Almaty 6-2 (1-0, 2-1, 3-1) Espoo Blues - Segeltorp 1-7 (0-2, 0-3, 1-2) Segeltorp - Aisulu Almaty 3-0 (2-0, 0-0, 1-0) Espoo Blues - SKIF Novgorod 1-2 (0-1, 0-1, 1-0)

SKIF Novgorod (RUS) 3 3 0 0 0 11-4 9 Segeltorp (SWE) 3 2 0 0 1 11-4 6 Espoo Blues (FIN) 3 1 0 0 2 6-11 3 Aisulu Almaty (KAZ) 3 0 0 0 3 4-13 0

# Bulanov gets the call to make the calls

By Jenny Wiedeke

■ Russian referee Vyacheslav Bulanov has one of the most impressive resumes in international officiating. Most recently, he added to his long list of achievements after calling the gold medal game at the World U20 Championship in Ottawa. Below, Bulanov talks about his officiating experiences and the pros and cons of being the man with the whistle on the ice.

**You recently officiated the gold medal game in front of 22,000 people. Where does that rank in your experiences as an official?**

I divide all of my games into three categories. The top category includes my important and famous games that brought me the most satisfaction. Of course, the gold medal game in Ottawa belongs in this category.

**With televised games and video replay, some officials says skating in big events is like 'being in a fish bowl' where every call can be analyzed. Do you prefer the modern TV era, or the old days with no replay?**

I prefer when the games are televised. The reviews can see all the good angles, which is better for analysis. Of course, it means that officials have to be very precise. Another interesting side effect of TV is the fact it has made referees more noticeable because our faces are on the screen. Television is also important because it helps make hockey more popular.

**Players tend to be affected by large crowds, as an official is it different when you call a game in front of so many fans?**

I think referees can't help but have the same feeling as a player. When there is a full house it creates an atmosphere that is much more exciting during a game.

**You have called several big games in your career, what were some of the more memorable experiences?**

Every referee remembers his first game. I still remember my first game as a linesman 18 years ago and as a referee nine years ago. Other memorable events include the Canada-Switzerland game at the Olympics in Torino. Also the last two years calling the final playoff round in the Russian league stick out in my mind.

**Are there any games that you still have on your wish list**

I think creating a wish list is like a dream. We say in Russia that you have to keep your dreams to yourself, you can't let people know what your dreams are. If keep your dreams quiet, they just might come true.



**ALL IN A DAY'S WORK:** Russian referee Vyacheslav Bulanov has worked some big games in his time, but it's tough to beat getting the chance to officiate the gold medal game at the World U20 Championship in Canada. Above he's in action at last year's World Championship, also in Canada.

problems in recruiting new officials. In Russia we need to invite more people to become officials, including former players who have retired from junior or senior teams. There also needs to be an active campaign that highlights the positive side of being an official.

**What is the difference between calling a game in the KHL and calling an international game?**

When you referee in a league, the players and referees know each other very well. There's already an idea of what to expect. At international events, there's not that pre-conceived expectation. Internationally, I think the players respect officials more because they haven't already formed opinions.

**Do you think the four-man system is a positive change?**

Absolutely it's positive step. I don't believe in returning back to one referee. Hockey has changed, rules have changed and officiating must go in the same direction.

**How has officiating changed since you started your career?**

Changes in officiating, basically, were affected by changes in the rules. Now the hockey world (IIHF and NHL) are moving in the same direction. The main idea is that players should to show their skills and abilities, while the lazy play must be eliminated.

**Fans can often be pretty hard on referees, if you had one thing to say to such fans, what would it be?**

I would say that officials are not your enemy and not the destroyers of hockey. We are here to try to improve quality of hockey.

**Are there any good one-liners that you can think of that you heard from a player or fan during a game?**

We have one team from the Far East in the KHL. To get this city, Khabarovsk, we fly eight hours one way. It is longest trip, but is the cheapest red fish caviar. I always buy kilos to bring home and for friends as a gift. Once when I was there, I disallowed a goal for the home team after video review. After that, the ice rink was quiet and one fan shouted: "Ref get the caviar out of your eyes and go look again." I thought it was pretty clever and funny.

**What do you think is the biggest problem facing officiating right now?**

The biggest problem is changing to the four-man system. When you are alone, you can direct the game as an individual. When there are two referees, you need to be a team. You have to think the same, move the same and build the game together. It's not always an easy adjustment.

**Many countries have a shortage of officials, what do you think is the best way to get the next generation interested in officiating?**

In each country there are different

## Vyacheslav Bulanov Fact File

Born: September 3, 1970

☐ Has officiated more than 400 games in the Russian top league.

☐ Is one of the most experienced international referees including:

- 1 Olympics
- 2 World Championships
- 2 World U20 Championships
- 1 World U18 Championship
- 1 Division I Worlds

☐ Played hockey in the CSKA Moscow junior program, until he was 20.