



Photos: Jukka Rautio (main photo), Metallurg press office (portrait)

PRE-OLYMPIC SHUFFLE: *Old foes Canada and USA met twice during the pre-Olympic event in Turin in November as the teams tested both Olympic arenas, the Palasport Olimpico and the Torino Esposizioni. Here, USA's Courtney Kennedy (left) and Molly Engstrom manage to stop Canada's young star Sarah Vaillancourt. Few people know more about Olympic hockey than IIHF Hall of Famer Dave King (portrait insert) who is featured on the back cover. King was interviewed from his home which nowadays is Magnitogorsk, Russia.*

The game must seize this historic opportunity

The revolutionary turn-around regarding rule enforcement in the National Hockey League following the lockout, has given the world of hockey new momentum to fully implement the crackdown on restraining fouls. And this should not be mixed up with "zero-tolerance".

RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL

■ For the first time in hockey history there is the opportunity for the IIHF and the NHL to be on the same page when enforcing the rules and calling restraining fouls like hooking, holding and interference. In the time leading up to Torino 2006 and during the event, it is our responsibility to the game and its fans to seize this opportunity and showcase hockey as a sport of unique speed and skill to the projected Olympic TV-audience of 2.3 billion viewers.

It is our goal to call the games in Torino according to 2005-2006 IIHF Rule Emphasis Bulletin. The document calls for attention on strict rule enforcement, focusing on hooking, holding and interference infractions. The basic objective of the rule enforcement can be best summarized with these lines:

Players who use their skill and/or anticipation and have gained a positional advantage on an opponent shall not lose that advantage through illegal use of hands, arms or stick by the defending player.

■ These lines above should also be an answer to one of the most frequently asked questions to the IIHF in recent weeks: Will the level of "zero-tolerance" be applied to situations which restrain the puck carrier?

I'd like to answer the same way as the NHL's new Director of Officiating Stephen Walkom did in a conference call which was later published on NHL.com. We don't talk about "zero-tolerance" because it's impossible to attain. There will always be incidental contact and there will always be judgment. But what we want is the offensive player skating without being hooked and held.

■ The IIHF on-ice officials going to the IIHF World U20 Championship in Vancouver, Canada will be instructed to strictly follow the guidelines of the IIHF Rule Emphasis Bulletin. The "World Juniors" will be the first indication whether the IIHF emphasis on restraining fouls is enforced the same way as the NHL's crackdown on similar fouls.

Furthermore, we will have three sessions with the Olympic referees leading up to Torino to make sure that the six IIHF-referees and the four NHL-referees who will officiate in the Olympics, will do so according to the same standard.

There will be a meeting with just the NHL-officials in Toronto on December 19-21, while the IIHF-referees convene in Zurich, Switzerland on January 13-15, 2006. Finally, all Olympic on-ice officials will go through instructional sessions in Turin on February 13-14, two days before the start of the men's tournament.

■ The world governing body of ice hockey and the most influential hockey league in the world are united in their efforts to make hockey the most exiting game in all sports. Now that we have reached this consensus, there is no going back. The rules must be enforced to keep the good players in the game and make the bad ones obsolete.

René Fasel
IIHF President

AIK repeat as European champions

■ Sweden's AIK Stockholm is the best women's club team in Europe for the second consecutive year.

Led by exceptional national team goalie Kim Martin, AIK netted three narrow victories against Swiss EV Zug (2-0), Finland's Espoo Blues (2-1) and Russia's Skif Moscow (3-2) to grab the 2006 IIHF European Women's Cup played in Solna, just north of Stockholm (December 2-4).



Photo: OVE LINDSTRÖM

BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL: AIK from Stockholm is again the best women's club team in Europe. Standout goaltender Kim Martin is front row, right. She had 1.00 GAA and 97.52 in save percentage.

game. Emma Laaksonen got Espoo's goal in the first period.

■ There is no doubt that the 19-year old Kim Martin, also Sweden's national team goaltender and the bronze hero from Salt Lake City 2002, was the MVP of the tournament, facing 121 shots in the three games while allowing three goals for a 1.00 goals against average and an amazing save percentage of 97.52.

■ The key game was against the Finnish champion Espoo Blues on the second day of competition. Despite being outshot, 52-24, Martin led AIK to a 2-1 win as the

■ AIK could afford to lose the last game against Skif Moscow, but they pulled out a 3-2 victory after again being outshot, this time 36-17. Martin was of course handed the Best Goaltender honours, while Emma Laaksonen was named Best Defenseman. EV Zug's Daniela Diaz got the recognition as Best Forward. Blues' forward Karolina Rantamaki led all tournament scorers with four goals and one assist in three games.

See EWCC results on page 11 and complete stats on IIHF.com

Ground broken for Moscow arena for 2007 Worlds



Photo: Kimmo Leinonen, IIHF

SEE THE RINK?: Ice Hockey in Moscow moves into a new era as the arena for the 2007 IIHF World Championship is taking shape. The outdoor Lenin Stadium was the site for the 1957 championship, while the 1973, 1979 and 1986 events were held at the Luzhniki Arena. St. Petersburg -- sole organizer in 2000 -- will be co-hosting the 2007 IIHF World Championship.

■ The national associations of Belarus (Minsk), Finland (Helsinki, Turku), Hungary (Budapest, Szekesfehervar), Slovakia (Bratislava, Kosice) and Sweden (Stockholm and Malmö) have all submitted offers to host the 2011 IIHF World Championship. The deadline to submit offers was September 1.

The next step in the application process is for the associations to submit a bid document before January 15, 2006. The final decision will be taken by the IIHF Annual Congress in Riga, 18-20 May, 2006.

■ Of the five applicants, Belarus, Hungary and Slovakia have never hosted the IIHF World Championship. Slovakia, Sweden and Belarus all postponed their bids for 2011 after losing the 2010 bid to Germany last spring.

The upcoming IIHF World Championships:
2006 Riga, Latvia
2007 Moscow, St. Petersburg, Russia
2008 Quebec City, Halifax, Canada
2009 Zurich, Berne, Switzerland
2010 Cologne, Mannheim, Germany



Stockholm club clinched the tournament victory already on day two, because of the head-to-head score against Blues.

■ Pernilla Winberg gave AIK the lead in the first period and Emilia Andersson scored what proved to be the game and tournament winner midway through the

Costello in Hall; Rebuilt Canada national game

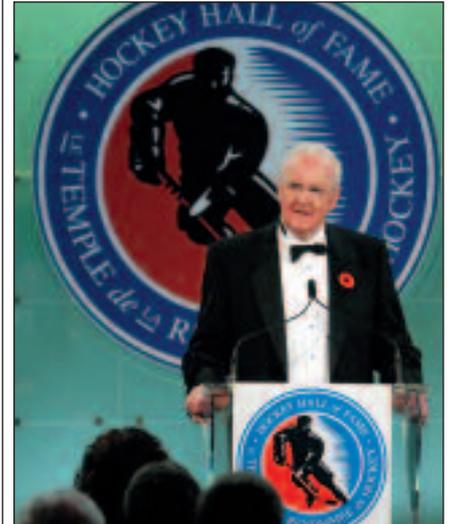


Photo: HOCKEY HALL OF FAME

OFFICIALLY IN: Murray Costello during his acceptance speech at the Hockey Hall of Fame on November 7.

■ Murray Costello, current member of the IIHF Council, was inducted to the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto on November 7 along with Valeri Kharlamov (posthumously) and Cam Neely.

Costello headed up the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association (today Hockey Canada) for 19 years and accepted the honour "in recognition of the amateur side of the game, particularly all those volunteers who work so hard to keep development going."

He was instrumental in the launch of the Program of Excellence in the 1980s, which continues to put Canada at or near the top of every IIHF World Championship and nurtures a successful Olympic program.

"The program got Canadian hockey out the gate and brought the program back to respectability," he said. "We had to teach our kids to play the tenacious Canadian game, but always with control and discipline. The kids responded and we got back on track. Now they know who we are internationally, because (in) every competition we're a threat. That's the way it should be."

■ After helping Canadian hockey getting back on track, Costello now devotes much of his time on the IIHF council helping small hockey nations building up their programs.

Costello is chairing the IIHF medical committee that is responsible for doping enforcement, and he's also the chairman of the arena committee that helps grow the sport in developing hockey countries

"What's happening in the Koreans, Japan and China is promising," he says. "Australia is doing quite well, things are developing in New Zealand, Israel is moving up, and I've had an interest in Mongolia. Also Mexico, Ireland, Spain and Iceland have promising hockey programs.

"They're lacking funds. That's the main inhibitor of growth in a lot of countries. Some countries have so few arenas and hockey is expensive compared to many other sports."

-- with files from Toronto Sun and Canadian Press

iceTimes is published bi-monthly.

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Turin is ready to rumble as arenas pass test

Two things were obvious at the pre-Olympic test event in Turin in November: the arenas will be ready for the major event -- and so will Canada's women's team.



■ A pre-Olympic event usually focuses around the facilities more than the event itself, but one couldn't help noticing the excellent shape of Canada's women's team. Some eight months after losing gold to the United States at the 2005 IIHF World Women Championship in Sweden, Canada defeated the reigning world champions 5-0 and 7-0 in Turin, leaving little doubt about which team will carry the burden of being the gold medal favorite in the Olympics.

"They have definitely reached the next level," said U.S. coach Ben Smith. "No women's hockey team has ever played on the level that Canada plays on right now. They have simply raised the bar."

Canadian coach Melody Davidson had to answer unusual questions like "doesn't this look too good?"

"No," she said. "We are not concerned so much about the score, we are only concerned about the game and our focus is just on the game. We did some good things today, but we can still improve."

"We are happy today, but tomorrow is a new day. We have enough experience to realize that this means little come Olympic time."

Finland also left the pre-Olympic tournament with a good impression defeating their archrival Sweden 6-2, grabbing third place in the event.



PALASPORT OLYMPICO: The main Olympic hockey venue (right) will have comfort for both fans and athletes. Left: player's training room with bikes and weights.

■ The competition manager of the Olympic hockey tournament, Jukka-Pekka Vuorinen, was a relieved man following the test event. "We had a very good response from the teams," he said. "They were happy with the venues and the facilities."

The test event revealed that the secondary hockey venue, the 6,000-seat Torino Esposizioni, had problems with the ice quality and it was decided after the tournament that the rink needs new pipes and a stronger compressor.

The work with the Esposizioni ice started immediately after the test event. "This is exactly why you have test events," said Vuorinen. "To check out things and improve what has to be improved for the Olympic tournament."

■ The main arena, the 12,300-seat Palasport Olimpico, passed the test without any remarks. It's a beautiful state-of-the-art building with comfortable seating and perfect sightlines.

As seen above, the arena has spacious facilities for fans, players and media. The Palasport will host 31 Olympic games (21 men's and 10 women's) while 27 games (17 men's - 10 women's) will be held at the Esposizioni. All semifinal games, as well the bronze and gold medal games will be at the Palasport Olimpico.

Related link: www.torino2006.org (event & ticket info)



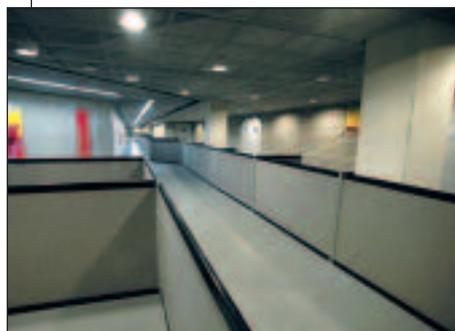
Turin photos: JUKKA RAUTIO

CANADA SENDS MESSAGE: Katie Weatherston and friends defeated the U.S. 12-0 over two games in Turin.



TORINO ESPOSIZIONI: An exhibition hall has been turned to a full scale hockey arena with 6,000 seats. Not as big as Palasport Olimpico, but the atmosphere at the "Espo" is great.

BELOW: The mixed zone at the Palasport. Lot's of space for reporters to make post-game interviews.



IIHF Association News

AUSTRIA: Jim Boni was named coach of Austria's national team on September 26. The 42-year-old Italian-Canadian, who led the Vienna Capitals to their first domestic league title in 43 years, signed a one-year contract. Boni has also coached in the Austrian league and served as Canadian assistant coach at the 2004 Loto Cup. He succeeds Herbert Pock, who was let go after Austria was relegated at the 2005 IIHF World Championship in Vienna.

SWEDEN: The Swedish Ice Hockey Association named Anders Eldebrink assistant coach of Team Sweden for the Olympic Winter Games in Turin, on November 17. Eldebrink, who is the head coach of the Kloten Flyers of the Swiss league, will be assisting head coach Bengt-Ake Gustafsson along with Jan Karlsson. Eldebrink was earlier assistant coach in Timra and Sodertalje of the Swedish Elitserien. As a player, Eldebrink compiled 165 games patrolling the blueline for the Swedish national team and he was a member of the 1987 World Championship winning team. He also won Olympic bronze in Calgary 1988 and finished second with Tre Kronor in the 1984 Canada Cup.

SWITZERLAND: The Swiss ice hockey association announced on September 29 that the contract with national team coach Ralph Krueger has been extended until 2009, the year Switzerland will be hosting the 73rd IIHF World Championship (Zurich & Berne). The contract will be extended to 2010 if Switzerland qualifies for the Olympics in Vancouver the same year. Krueger has been in charge of the Swiss national men's program since 1997, the longest tenure ever by a Swiss national team head coach.

2005 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS CUP PREVIEW

Dynamic Dynamo dares to defy Europe drought

Dynamo Moscow is, according to most experts, the favorite to win the 2006 IIHF European Champions Cup. Although a valid prediction, one must consider this:

- ❑ The club has had a record breaking turnover of players from the 2004-05 championship team.
- ❑ Dynamo has a poor record in European finals.

■ ■ There is no doubt that the nine-time national champion Dynamo Moscow is in a favorable position to repeat Avangard Omsk's victory from the inaugural ECC last year. Most observers, like IIHF Hall of Famer Dave King in this issue of the *Ice Times* (see last page) consider the Russian Superleague as the best in Europe. Adding to the fact that the tournament is played on Russian ice in St. Petersburg makes Dynamo a logic pick.

Having said that, it's impossible to disregard this fact: coach Vladimir Krikunov (the same man who will lead Team Russian at the Olympics in Turin) has more or less an entirely new team this season.

■ ■ We don't know for a fact but this could be a record as far as a top European club is concerned: Dynamo lost 23 players from the 2004-05 championship team and recruited 14 new ones.

Gone are of course all NHL-lock-out players like Andrei Markov, Maxim Afinigenov and Pavel Datsyuk, but also the super-talented Alexander Ovechkin, whom some observers have already named as the best player in the NHL, at the age of 20.

■ ■ But the new Dynamo is far from being an average team. Their biggest off-season acquisition was forward Maxim Sushinsky, 32, who will go for his second straight ECC title. Sushinsky, probably the best skater in the world, was named tournament MVP as he led Avangard Omsk to the title last year. Add new national team goaltender Sergei Zvyagin (from Neftekhimik), Belarus national team forward Mikhail Grabovsky, Ukrainian veteran forward Vadim Shakhraichuk, Czech attacker Pavel Rosa and intimidating defenseman Denis Kulyash (from CSKA)



REPEAT?: Maxim Sushinsky (left) was Avangard's star in last year's ECC. Will he also be Dynamo's in the 2006 edition?

have a core of a potential European champion.

■ ■ But winning has not been the strong point of Dynamo in previous European appearances. The Moscow club has lost all of its four European cup finals in the 90s.

1991 IIHF European Cup: lost final against Sweden's Djurgarden 3-2.

1993 IIHF European Cup: lost final against Sweden's Malmo on penalty shootout.

1994 IIHF European Cup: lost final against Finland's TPS Turku 4-3.

1997 IIHF European Hockey League: lost final to TPS again, 5-2.

Dynamo also lost the 1992 semi-final to Djurgarden, 4-3, but claimed the bronze after trouncing Swiss SC Bern 6-1. Will

Dynamo finally end its European championship jinx in St. Petersburg?

Alexander Ragulin Division

Dynamo Moscow

RUS

Founded: 1946
Championships:
(9) 1947, 1954, 1990,
1991, 1992, 1993,
1995, 2000, 2005

Notable players:

F Maxim Sushinsky, F Pavel Rosa, D Sergei Vyshedkevich, D Alexander Riazantsev, G Sergei Zvyagin

Coach: Vladimir Krikunov

League record by Dec 5: 14W-2T-13L, position: 8th

Notes: Dynamo lost 23 (!) players after the 04-05 season while signing 13 new ones.



■ ■ Teams will play a single round-robin within the three-team group. The winner of each group will advance to the Gold Medal game. If the Gold Medal game is tied after regulation, there will be 10 minute overtime with teams skating four-on-four. If the score is still tied after the overtime period, there will be Game Winning Shot competition (Penalty Shoot-out).

■ ■ Teams play for a total prize money sum of 700,000 CHF with the winner receiving 315,000 CHF and the losing finalist 175,000 CHF.

■ ■ The transfer deadline for the participating teams will be December 15. After that date, the teams cannot add any new players to their 30 man ECC long-list roster.

■ ■ On January 4, the teams can register 20 players and 2 goalkeepers from the long-list for the tournament, the same maximum amount which can be used in a game. The minimum amount players that a team must register on January 12, is 15 skaters and 2 goalkeepers.

SCHEDULE

January 5
Kärpät Oulu - HC Davos 14.30
Dynamo Moscow - Slovan B. 18.30

January 6
HC Davos - Frölunda Indians 15.00
Slovan B. - Moeller-Pardubice 18.30

January 7
Frölunda Indians - Kärpät Oulu 15.00
M-Pardubice - Dynamo Moscow 18.30

January 8
Group winners meet in Gold Medal game

Ivan Hlinka Division

Karpät Oulu

FIN

Founded: 1946
Championships:
(3) 1981, 2004,
2005

Notable players:

G Niklas Bäckström,
D Lasse Kukkonen, D Mikko Lehtonen, F Michal Bros, F Petr Tenkrat, F Kalle Sahlstedt

Coach: Kari Jalonen

League record by Dec 5: 19W-0T-10L, position: 2nd

Notes: Karpät is the only returning team from last year's ECC. The team lost in the final game against Avangard, 0-2 in overtime.



Frolunda Indians

SWE

Founded: 1946
Championships:
(3) 1965, 2003,
2005

Notable players:

G Tommy Salo,
D Ronnie Sundin, D Johnny Oduya, F Tomi Kallio, F Niklas Andersson, F Martin Plüss, F Magnus Kahnberg

Coach: Stephan Lundh

League record by Dec 5: 16W-4T-7L, position: 2nd

Notes: Frolunda won bronze in the 1997 European Hockey League after losing the semifinal to Dynamo in OT.



HC Davos

SUI

Founded: 1921
Championships:
(27) 1926, 27, 29-
35, 37-39, 41-48,
50, 58, 60, 84, 85,
2002, 05

Notable players: G Jonas Hiller, D Brett Hauer, F Reto von Arx, F Landon Wilson, F Josef Marha, F Riku Hahl, F Michel Riesen

Coach: Arno Del Curto

League record by Dec 5: 15W-1T-10L, position: 3rd

Notes: Davos' 27 national championships is more than the other ECC clubs have together.



HC Moeller-Pardubice

CZE

Founded: 1923
Championships:
(4) 1973, 1987,
1989, 2005

Notable players:

G Adam Svoboda,
F Jan Caloun, F Petr Sykora, F, Miroslav Hlinka, F Michal Mikeska, D Robert Kantor, D Andrei Novotny

Coach: Vladimir Martinec

League record by Dec 5: 11W-3T-14L, position: 12th

Notes: The club signed two key players at Nov. break: forward Petr Sykora returned from Washington, while goalie Adam Svoboda came from Lada Togliatti (RUS).



Slovan Bratislava

SVK

Founded: 1921
Championships:
(6) 1979, 1998,
2000, 2002, 2003,
2005

Notable players:

G Pavol Rybar, D Petr Pavlas, F Martin Hujša, F Branislav Janos, F Peter Junas.

Coach: Josef Augusta

League record by Dec 5: 16W-3T-15L, position: 6th

Notes: Martin Hujša is Slovan's superior scoring threat, having 14+16=30 points going into December. No other player was close to his numbers.



ON TOUR OF EUROPE: The Silver Stone



■ ■ The impressive Silver Stone trophy, which will be awarded to the winning team of the IIHF European Champions Cup, was on a promotional tour of Europe this past autumn visiting the cities and clubs that will take part in the 2006 ECC.

■ ■ The Silver Stone is made of chiseled silver and weighs seven kilos (equivalent to one British stone), hence the name Silver Stone). It was produced by the Italian designer Enzo Bosi and the trophy was originally created for the now defunct European Hockey League.

■ ■ The original will be kept at the IIHF offices in Zürich, while a one-to-one replica will awarded to the winning club.

DAVOS: Club chairman Tarcisius Caviezel and sports director René Müller (below) get acquainted with "the Stone".



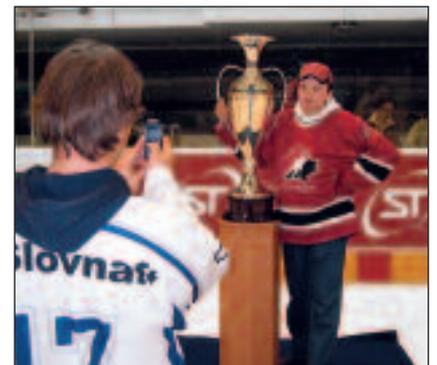
OULU: Kärpät-fans pose with the Silver Stone.



ST. PETERSBURG: The Stone (left) even made it to the annual tennis event.



BRATISLAVA: The Silver Stone at centre of attention at Slovan's player & fan event.



BRATISLAVA: Slovan fans work the handy camera while getting a feel for the ECC-trophy.



ST. PETERSBURG: Dynamo team and management present the Silver Stone before a big crowd at the GUM department store on Red Square.



PARDUBICE: Busy autograph session with players as the Silver Stone overlooks action.

OULU: Kärpät GM Junno (far left) and head coach Jalonen (far right) announce signings of prospects Paakkolanvaara, Leinonen and Metso with the Silver Stone as witness.



The ghosts of Christmas past,

By Jenny Wiedeke

It's Boxing Day in Canada and the Smith's, Jones', Anderson's and virtually every other Canadian family has gathered around the television to watch the hockey event of the season. No, it's not the Stanley Cup Finals, or even the Olympics.

The event that has captured the heart of the hockey crazed nation for the past few decades is the IIHF World U20 Championship -- better known in the land of the Maple Leaf as 'World Juniors'.

The Past

Canada's affair with the World Juniors wasn't necessarily love at first sight. The first championship was held in Czechoslovakia in 1977 and Canada took home the silver, finishing behind the Soviet Union. The Soviets went on to win the first four World U20 Championships, while Canada continued to send junior club teams to the event during those early years, making it tough for the Canadian public to adore.

The brightest Canadian moment in those first championships was the introduction of a young forward Wayne Gretzky to the international stage.

■ ■ Despite being a mere 16 year-old, Gretzky stole the show in Montreal in 1978 getting an unheard of 17 points in Canada's bronze medal effort. The effort still ranks him among the top 10 in all-time single tournament scoring.

Unfortunately for the Canadians, Gretzky only appeared in that one World Junior Championship as the tournament returned to obscurity in Canada when the event moved back overseas to Europe for the next four years.

After finishing out of the medal race in 1980 and 81, something which has only happened seven times in the 29-year history of the juniors, Canada turned the tables both on the competition and on the Canadian public.

The U20 team captured the attention of the world, and finally its own fans, when in 1982, in the United States, it won its first-ever gold medal. Trailing 2-1 at the end of the second period, the Canadians came back to tie Czechoslovakia, 3-3, enough to win the gold. Both the dramatic win and the close proximity of the championship to Canada, was enough to spark the U20's fairy tale relationship with the Canadian public.

Thanks in large part to its *Program of Excellence*, a junior development program that still exists today, Canada spent the rest of the decade in the medal race at virtually every championship. After it's 1982 gold, the Canadians earned two additional golds in the 1980s, along with one silver and one bronze. The 1985 gold medal in Finland was particularly impressive as the European rosters

were packed with talents such as Esa Tikkanen, Dominik Hasek, Mike Richter and Valeri Kamenski. It was again a tie against the Czechs (2-2) that gave the Canadians the gold.

■ ■ But if the 1980s were impressive for Canada's U20 teams, the 1990s were legendary. Canada opened the decade winning the first two World Juniors. At long last, the Canadians were able to overcome the Soviets for the gold medal, something which they had not been able to do since the start of the U20 Championship. The Soviets returned to the golden position in 1992, but the success was short lived.

In 1993, Canada won its first of five consecutive World Junior Championships--a record which has never been repeated, and won't likely ever be touched (only the Soviet Union's four straight wins from 1977-1980 comes close). During that string of success, names such as Chris Pronger, Paul Kariya, Jason Allison, Kris Draper, Anson Carter, Eric Lindros, Ed Jovanovski, Bryan McCabe, Jose Theodore, Jarome Iginla, and Joe Thornton suited up.

Consider that during that five-year span, all but one player on all five combined rosters was drafted into the NHL, while all but 18 players in that span went on to play in the NHL.

■ ■ Even before Canada won its five straight gold medals, World Junior fever had gripped Canada. When it was announced that the 1991 championship would be held in Canada, a fierce bidding war erupted for host city rights. In the end, Saskatoon beat out the other cities by guaranteeing a one million dollar profit.

Canada wasn't immune to terrible seasons, as 1998 proved. After it's five straight gold medals, Canada came crashing down in the form of an eighth-place finish in Finland. But the flat finish didn't effect the hearty spirit of the Canadian fans the next year when the championship returned to Canada.

■ ■ Winnipeg hosted the most successful World Junior Championship to date, as record crowds braved the bitter cold to come cheer on their national team. Winnipeg smashed all attendance records and put on one of the most successful championships in history. Only Russia could dampen the Canadian spirit, as they downed Canada, 3-2, in the gold medal game.

That silver medal would start another streak. The gold-less era for Canada began with that 1999 silver medal finish in Winnipeg and lasted for six years. Sure, during that time, the Canadians earned four silver medals and two bronze - and along the



A MISSING LINK: Sidney Crosby year's championship since he is in

way set yet another attendance record at the 2003 World Junior Championship in Halifax, but it was not enough for the now-spoiled fans, who had come to expect gold.

■ ■ Last year, with a fully loaded roster, filled with veteran leadership, the Canadians were at last able to produce another gold medal. The medal was the nation's 11th first-place finish and 21st overall medal at the championship. But with a rookie roster and the pressure of hosting the championship on its shoulders, many are wondering what 2006 holds for the proud hockey nation.

The Present:

There is not a ticket to be found for any game in Vancouver--they were all long ago sold out. Up in Kamloops and Kelowna, people might be able to catch the action, but only for the preliminary round games. Such is life when Canada hosts the World Junior Championship.

TSN, the host broadcaster is expecting that this year's championship will draw millions of viewers. Last year alone, the network had an average of 3.23 million viewers for the gold medal game.

present and future



could follow in Wayne Gretzky's footsteps and only play in one World Junior Championship. Crosby is expected to miss this the NHL. Even if he doesn't return, he will always have his U20 gold (2005) -- something that Gretzky never earned.

TSN also recently signed on to cover the U18 World Championship as well.

■ ■ But even the most rabid Canada fan has to be a tad bit nervous entering this year's championship. From last year's golden roster, only two are eligible to return. One of those players, is Sidney Crosby, which might give fans a reason to rejoice, until the reality sinks in that he will be playing in Pittsburgh instead of Vancouver during the holidays. Regardless of whom the Canadians name to their roster, and be sure it will be filled with NHL prospects, although none with previous U20 experience.

Home ice in many sports might be considered a blessing, but in the world of U20 hockey it has become a curse. In 29 years, only four hosting teams have won the gold medal. The last time it happened was when Finland won in Helsinki in 1998. The World Junior odds are indeed stacked against the host -- no matter how many fans show up to cheer them on.

The good news for Canada is that the field this year is considered to be wide open. Neighbour and rival, USA, is expected to vie for the gold

medal and is bringing along Phil Kessel, whom many consider to be America's answer to Sidney Crosby. The Russians also look to be strong contenders after winning the most recent U20 and U18 international break events. The Czechs have also had a strong showing in recent U20 and U18 championships and have a veteran team coming to Vancouver. But with no dominant team expected to arrive in Vancouver, the door is open for even a rookie team to take home the gold medal.

The Future:

The future is bright for not only for Hockey Canada, but the city of Vancouver, as well. At the conclusion of the 2006 Olympic Winter Games, all eyes will turn to Vancouver as the host nation of the 2010 Olympics. This World Junior Championship is merely the first of several high profile events that the city will host leading up to the Olympics.

And just like it's past, the future for Canadian hockey is sure to be colourful, storied and successful. Canada is the nation where hockey will always rule -- and its crown jewel will remain the IIHF World Junior Championship.

Is the U18 Championship a crystal ball for U20s?

■ ■ The World U18 Championship is in its infancy compared to the other IIHF World Championship events. But in its modest seven-year span, the championship has made its own mark in the international hockey world.

The U18 Championship was first known as a 'coming out' party for young stars. Current NHL rookies Alexander Ovechkin and Zach Parise got their international start at the championship. But now that the event's history is a little longer, the tournament is now not only a predictor of future individual talent, but star teams as well.

It only takes modest mathematics to figure out the relationship from the U18 to the U20 championship. Each year, the U18 championship is played in April, which means the following Christmas at U20s, a handful of players from the April tournament will be eligible to play at the World Juniors as an underaged player.

But it is in fact one year later, at the following World U20 Championship when the full impact of a strong U18 showing can have an impact at the U20 Championship.

In 2002, the United States won its first-ever U18 gold medal under head coach Mike Eaves. Two years later, Eaves brought virtually the same roster to the 2004 World U20 Championship and again won the gold medal.

This is, of course, the most obvious example. But following the two-year model consider that:

■ ■ In 2001, it was the Russians who won the gold medal at the U18 Championship. Two years later at the U20 championship, the Russians had a repeat gold performance.

■ ■ In 2000, the Russians were the silver medalists at the U18s and at the U20s in 2002 the team won the gold medal.

■ ■ In 1999 and 2000, Finland won the gold medal at the U18 Championship. At the U20 Championships that followed two year's later, the Finns earned silver and bronze.

■ ■ Finland's bronze performance at the U18 championship in 2001, held up at the 2003 World Juniors where they also took home the bronze.

In fact, in the five seasons, that the two-year gap can be applied, all five of the gold medal teams from the World U18 Championship have, at a minimum, earned a bronze at the World U20 Championship two years later. More than half of the medalling teams from the U18 championship have gone on to win gold at the U20s two years later.

So where does this leave all those fans who want to look into the crystal ball to see just where their favorite team will finish in Vancouver?

The gold medallists of the 2004 World U18 Championship was Russia, who beat the United States in the final game. Taking home the bronze was the Czech Republic. If history is any indication, expect to see one, if not all three, of these teams on the medal podium at the closing ceremony.

The Golden Ones: Players to

When it comes to the IIHF U20 World Championship, Goran Stubb has seen it all. The Finland-based scouting director and IIHF Hall of Famer is one of the most well-known men in the small world of scouting.

Stubb and his European Scouting Services company, a part of the NHL's Central Scouting Service, is responsible for compiling the comprehensive schedule of European hockey events that are must-sees for scouts of all levels. His company has scouts all over Europe, including Russia, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark and of course, Finland. Stubb himself estimates that he attends over 200 hockey games per season.

But one event stands out on Stubb's calendar each season. It's the same event that attracts virtually every General Manager and Head Scout and that serves as the final international proving ground for the top young hockey prospects -- the IIHF World Junior Championship.

■ ■ "The U20s is the best hockey tournament in the world," Stubb said from his home in Helsinki, Finland. "It's in the middle of the season when players are in peak shape, and you have young players that are enthusiastic, skilled and play with such a big heart."

It's no wonder that the veteran scout has been at every World Junior Championship since the first puck was dropped nearly 30 years ago. So who better to help *Ice Times* put together its U20 Championship preview than the man that has seen it all? We sat down with Stubb to talk about the European teams and players at this year's U20s.

Russia:

The Russians enter this year's championship with three medals in the last four years, including a silver last year and two golds in 2002 and 2003. Russia also has 10 players from last year's team that are eligible to return to the roster. However, gone is Alexander Ovechkin, who has aged out and is now making a name for himself in the NHL.

Stubb's Scouting Report:

There's a saying that 'a good goaltender is half of the team'. Russia has the best European players, but they don't have the strongest goalies. If they get a hot goaltender, they can absolutely win the gold. The Russians also won the most recent Four Nations Tournament, so they will be strong.

Who to watch:

Without a doubt Evgeni Malkin will be one of the strongest players at this year's tournament (if he attends, since he is likely to be on the Olympic roster, the Russians may not send him to the U20s). He's second in the Russian league in sco-

ring right now and is a good all-around player. He also has the right attitude. Sergei Shirokov will also be very good for the Russians, he had an outstanding tournament last year (four goals, four assists). But he's small (175 cm.) The fact he has not been drafted yet is surprising. This could be his tournament.

Czech Republic:

The Czech Republic won its first medal at the U20s since 2001 when they defeated host, USA, for the bronze medal last year in Grand Forks. The Czechs are bringing a relatively strong class to Vancouver, which includes veteran goaltender Marek Schwarz, along with six other potential returnees.

Stubb's Scouting Report:

The Czech Republic is a difficult team to predict. They were on a roll (three bronze medals in three years at the U18 and U20 combined) until this season started. So far, they have struggled -- especially at the November Four Nations tournament where they finished in last place. But despite this, they still have the ability to do well and surprise some teams.

Who to Watch:

The name that really comes to mind when I think of this Czech team is Michael Frolik. He is the complete player and only born in 1988. He can skate very well, shoot, pass and has a good hockey sense. He is already entering his second season with Kladno in the top Czech League, which says a lot about his skills.

Sweden:

The Swedes are headed in the right direction, last year at the U18 championship, the nation earned its first medal since 2000 (a bronze). Still, the Swedes have to overcome a near 10-year medal drought at the U20 level. Like the Czechs, Sweden has seven potential returning players from last year's team and is bringing up a strong group of under-aged players that were responsible for the U18 bronze medal in Plzen last year.

Stubb's Scouting Report:

Sweden is doing well right now. They have a lot of good goaltenders coming up through the ranks and have three good ones to choose from coming into this tournament.

Who to Watch:

Nicklas Backstrom will draw attention at his first U20 championship. He had a good U18s last season (five points). He has good hockey sense and is a very good player. Magnus Akerlund should also be very good in net for the Swedes. They also have another underaged player, a 1988-born goaltender, Jhonas Enroth, who if given the chance, could have a strong tournament.



FACES IN THE CROWD: Just a few of the players that could turn Leonardo Genoni (SUI), Marek Schwarz (CZE), Nicklas Backstrom

Finland:

While the Swedes have been up in the last year or two, the Finns have decidedly been down. At the U18 level, the team has been in the relegation round for the last two years, while at the U20s the team missed out on a medal last year for the first time in four seasons. The good news is that Finland's outlook in net looks good.

Stubb's Scouting Report:

Finland is not a strong team when you look at them on paper. But they won the most recent Four Nations Tournament, which had really good teams from the Czech Republic and Russia there. In the Finnish tradition, they have strong goaltenders, but scoring could be a problem.

Who to Watch:

Tuukka Rask has a lot of experience (he split time at last season's U20 championship, playing in five games with a 2.96 GAA). He should give Finland a solid base for the team. Also Jesse Joensuu should be very good for the Finns in his second U20s (Joensuu had one goal last year). He is a regular in the Finnish league and is a big, physical player (190 cm, 96 kg).

watch in Vancouver



heads in Vancouver. Clockwise from upper left corner: Phil Kessel (USA), Juraj Simek (SUI), Evgeni Malkin (RUS), Jack Johnson (#27 USA), (SWE), Tuukka Rask (FIN), Michael Frolik (CZE), Marek Zagraban (SVK), Guillaume Latendresse (CAN), Jesse Joensuu (FIN)

Switzerland:

The Swiss are able to win medals in the top divisions -- they just haven't done it in a while. Stuck in the middle of the pack, the Swiss are clearly meant to compete with the top 10 teams in the world, but can't seem to get over the hump that puts them in the semi-finals. The last U20 medal the Swiss won was in 1998, a bronze. But below the U20 level, things are a shaky for the Alpine nation, which was relegated from the top U18 division last season, a class which will make up a good part of this year's team.

Stubb's Scouting Report:

I'm waiting for the Swiss to start producing skaters that will make outside thier borders. They have goaltenders that have proven they can make it, but so far no players. The country has great potential and it can produce good players and good results, but something seems to be missing to make them able to make it as players at the top level.

Who to Watch:

Juraj Simek, a forward, should be drafted this year. He is a solid player that did well at the U18 Championship last year. The Swiss also have been producing good goaltenders. Leonardo Genoni

and Reto Berra are both capable goaltenders--either one could be the number one guy.

Slovakia:

Slovakia has just one junior medal to its credit -- a bronze at U18s in 2003. But the team is very good at playing spoiler for other teams, and generally is able to make it to the quarterfinal stage. However, like the Swiss, the nation can't get over the semi-final hump. This year the team has a handful of returners, including lanky Marek Zagraban, who had a good U20 tournament last season in Grand Forks.

Stubb's Scouting Report:

I must be honest, the Slovaks are a complete mystery to me. Since so many of their players are in North America, and I am based in Europe, I haven't had the chance to see them play too often. I do know one thing, though, whatever they feed their players works -- they have some of the biggest junior players that I've ever seen.

Editor's note: This only includes reports on the teams that are in Goran Stubb's domain. USA, Canada, Latvia and Norway were not included.

-By Jenny Wiedeke

The First Glimpse: Discovering Talent

■ "A common misconception is that the U20 championship is where players are discovered," says scout Goran Stubb. "This is rarely the case. In fact most of the NHL General Managers that are at the event are there to check up on the players that they've already drafted."

In fact, by the time the World U20 Championship is played, there are very few surprises thanks to a bevy of events throughout the year that keeps the scouts on their toes and globetrotting.

Each year, in addition to the U18 and U20 World Championships, the IIHF carves out between three and four international breaks. These breaks have become nearly as important as the World championships themselves for scouts to attend. In fact, any given international break tournament can have more than 100 scouts depending on the teams, and of course the players attending.

■ The first major international events take place in August, well before the first puck of the regular season drops in most European leagues.

"For scouts the big August event is the U18 Cup in the Czech Republic and Slovakia," Stubb says. "Normally between 100-150 scouts go to that event for the first look at the new players coming up."

Next on the schedule is the November international break. Normally, there are a handful of tournaments at during this break-including two U18 Four Nations Tournaments and two U20 Four Nations.

"During the November break, the scouts are normally divided depending on which group of players they need to see," Stubb says. "This year the U18 events were in Finland and Slovakia and it was a pretty even split."

■ The scouts watch some of the senior tournaments as well. Events like the Karjala Cup and Deutschland Cup also catch the eye of some of the talent seekers.

The December international break revolves around the U20 Championship. Very few other international events are staged during this break, however, some nations may bring their junior national teams together just for a few practices.

■ February is the next busy time for the scouts as that international break operates much like the one in November. Most of the focus is now on the U18 age group as the scouts are more familiar with the U20 group.

Finally, in April is the crowned jewel of the scouting world, the World U18 Championship. It is truly the first time that scouts get the chance to see the youngest and top hockey prospects in a championship environment. The only downside to the tournament is the timing, which falls during the playoffs for the European and North American leagues when scouts have other obligations. Despite the conflict, more than 150 scouts attend the U18 Championship each year.



Goran Stubb has worked with NHL's Central Scouting since 1983. He heads up the European Scouting Service, and is a member of the IIHF Hall of Fame.

2005 IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW



IIHF World U20 Championship records wait to be broken

Third time's a charm?

Canada has the most illustrious history of any nation at the World Junior Championship. But the last two times Canada played host to the U20s (1999 Winnipeg, 2002 Halifax) the team was forced to settle for silver. Will the hosts be able to overcome the home ice disadvantage in Vancouver?

ALL TIME IIHF WORLD U20 STANDINGS

Country	Years	Games	Wins	Ties	Losses	GF	GA	Points	Gold	Silver	Brz.
Canada	29	191	131	21	39	1000	487	283	11	6	4
Finland	29	193	108	16	69	881	601	232	2	4	5
Sweden	29	193	106	13	74	880	573	225	1	6	4
United States	29	192	88	9	95	797	763	185	1	1	2
Soviet Union	15	99	79	5	15	645	250	163	9	3	2
Russia	14	94	64	8	22	399	202	136	3	4	3
Czechoslovakia	16	106	61	12	32	565	342	134	0	5	6
Czech Republic	13	88	44	9	35	324	245	97	2	0	1
Slovakia	10	73	27	8	29	182	181	62	0	0	1
Switzerland	19	124	27	6	91	310	717	60	0	0	1
Germany	21	135	21	3	111	302	848	45	0	0	0
Kazakhstan	4	25	4	2	20	49	140	10	0	0	0
Belarus	5	30	3	2	25	58	170	8	0	0	0
Ukraine	4	26	3	1	17	37	132	7	0	0	0
Poland	6	41	2	2	37	69	361	6	0	0	0
Norway	5	33	3	0	30	66	297	6	0	0	0
France	1	6	1	0	5	6	42	2	0	0	0
Austria	2	11	0	1	10	14	99	1	0	0	0
Japan	1	7	0	0	7	9	83	0	0	0	0

The Graduate: One for the brightest stars in recent U20 history has moved onward and upward. Alexander Ovechkin is a well-known name at the U20 World Championship, and now he is becoming a household name thanks to his strong performance with the Washington Capitals in the NHL. Ovechkin is the only player in recent years to be added to the All-Time U20 Record Book. The Russian's 18 goals ranks him fourth on the all-time list. Ovechkin played at the World Juniors from 2003-2005.

IIHF World U20 Championship
All-Time Record Book

U20 All Time Leading Scorers:

	GP	G	A	PTS
1. Peter Forsberg (SWE)	14	10	32	42
2. Robert Reichel (TCH)	21	18	22	40
3. Pavel Bure (URS)	21	27	12	39
4. Alexander Mogilny(URS)	21	18	17	35
5. Esa Tikkanen (FIN)	21	17	18	35
6. Vladimir Ruzicka(TCH)	19	25	9	34
7. Markus Naslund (SWE)	14	21	13	34
8. Niklas Sundström (SWE)	21	18	15	33
9. Esa Keskinen (FIN)	14	10	22	32
10. Erik Lindros (CAN)	21	12	19	31

U20 All-Time Goal Scorers:

1. Pavel Bure (URS)	27 goals	1989-91
2. Vladimir Ruzicka (TCH)	25 goals	1981-83
3. Markus Naslund (SWE)	21 goals	1992-93
4. Robert Reichel (TCH)	18 goals	1988-90
Petr Rosol (TCH)	18 goals	1982-84
Alexander Ovechkin (RUS)	18 goals	2003-05

U20 All-Time Assist Leaders

1. Peter Forsberg (SWE)	32 assists	1992-93
2. Robert Reichel (TCH)	22 assists	1988-90
Esa Keskinen(FIN)	22 assists	1984-85
4. Eric Lindros (CAN)	19 assists	1990-92
5. Esa Tikkanen (FIN)	18 assists	1983-85
Raimo Helminen (FIN)	18 assists	1983-83

Single Season Points Leaders:

	PTS	G	A
1. Peter Forsberg (SWE)	31	7	24
2. Markus Naslund (SWE)	24	13	11
Raimo Helminen (FIN)	24	11	13
4. Robert Reichel (TCH)	21	11	10
5. Vladimir Ruzicka (TCH)	20	12	8

Single Season Goal Leaders:

1. Markus Naslund (SWE)	13 goals	1993
2. Pavel Bure (URS)	12 goals	1991
Vladimir Ruzicka (TCH)	12 goals	1983
4. Several tied with 11		

Single Season Assists Leaders:

1. Peter Forsberg (SWE)	24 assists	1993
2. Doug Weight (USA)	14 assists	1991
Esa Keskinen (FIN)	14 assists	1985
4. Jaromir Jagr (TCH)	13 assists	1990
Raimo Helminen (FIN)	13 assists	1984

IIHF World U20 Championships

Year	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Venue
1974*	Soviet Union	Finland	Canada	Leningrad, URS
1975*	Soviet Union	Canada	Sweden	Winnipeg/Brandon, CAN
1976*	Soviet Union	Canada	Czechoslovakia	Turku, FIN
1977	Soviet Union	Canada	Czechoslovakia	B. Bystrica/Zvolen
1978	Soviet Union	Sweden	Canada	Montreal
1979	Soviet Union	Czechoslovakia	Sweden	Karlstad
1980	Soviet Union	Finland	Sweden	Helsinki
1981	Sweden	Finland	Soviet Union	Fussen
1982	Canada	Czechoslovakia	Finland	Minnesota
1983	Soviet Union	Czechoslovakia	Canada	Leningrad
1984	Soviet Union	Finland	Czechoslovakia	Norrkoping/Nykoping
1985	Canada	Czechoslovakia	Soviet Union	Helsinki/Turku
1986	Soviet Union	Canada	USA	Hamilton
1987	Finland	Czechoslovakia	Sweden	Piestany
1988	Canada	Soviet Union	Finland	Moscow
1989	Soviet Union	Sweden	Czechoslovakia	Anchorage
1990	Canada	Soviet Union	Czechoslovakia	Helsinki/Turku
1991	Canada	Soviet Union	Czechoslovakia	Saskatoon
1992	Soviet Union	Sweden	USA	Fussen/Kaufbeuren
1993	Canada	Sweden	Czechoslovakia	Gavle
1994	Canada	Sweden	Russia	Ostrava/Frydek Mistek
1995	Canada	Russia	Sweden	Alberta
1996	Canada	Sweden	Russia	Boston
1997	Canada	USA	Russia	Geneva/Morges
1998	Finland	Russia	Switzerland	Helsinki/Hameenlinna
1999	Russia	Canada	Slovakia	Winnipeg
2000	Czech Republic	Russia	Canada	Skelleftea/Umea
2001	Czech Republic	Finland	Canada	Moscow/Podolsk
2002	Russia	Canada	Finland	Pardubice/Hradec Kral.
2003	Russia	Canada	Finland	Halifax/Sydney
2004	USA	Canada	Finland	Helsinki/Hameenlinna
2005	Canada	Russia	Czech Republic	Grand Forks/Thief River Falls

*denotes unofficial tournament

RESULTS SUMMARY

IIHF Continental Cup

First Round 23-25 September

Group A - Steaua Bucharest, Romania

Medvescak - Red Star	5 - 1
Steaua Bucharest - Medvescak	5 - 2
Steaua Bucharest - Red Star	8 - 3

Group A Final Standings

Steaua Bucharest (ROM)	2	2	0	0	13-5	4
KHL Medvescak (CRO)	2	1	0	1	7-6	2
Red Star Beograd (SCG)	2	0	0	2	4-13	0

Steaua Bucharest qualified for Continental Cup Second Round.

GROUP B - Ankara, Turkey

Helio Jaca - Slavia Sofia	5 - 2
Polis Akademisi - Ganey Aviv	12-3
Ganey Aviv - Helio Jaca	2-13
Slavia Sofia - Polis Akademisi	3 - 5
Ganey Aviv - Slavia Sofia	0 - 5 forefit
Polis Akademisi - Helio Jaca	4 - 7

Group B Final Standings

Helio Jaca (ESP)	3	3	0	0	25-8	6
Polis Akademisi (TUR)	3	2	0	1	21-13	4
Slavia Sofia (BUL)	3	1	0	2	10-10	2
Ganey Aviv (ISR)	3	0	0	3	5-30	0

Helio Jaca qualified for Continental Cup Second Round

Second Round 14-16 October

Group C - Elektrenai, Lithuania

GKS Tychy - Riga 2000	2 - 7
Energija - Steaua Bucharest	3 - 4
Riga 2000 - Steaua Bucharest	10-4
GKS Tychy - Energija	9 - 2
Steaua Bucharest - GKS Tychy	4 - 4
Energija - Riga 2000	0-10

Group C Final Standings

Riga 2000 (LAT)	3	3	0	0	27-6	6
GKS Tychy (POL)	3	1	1	1	15-13	3
Steaua Bucharest (ROM)	3	1	1	1	12-17	3
Energija (LTU)	3	0	0	3	5-23	0

Riga 2000 qualified for Continental Cup Third Round.

Second Round - Group D - Grenoble, France

Herning IK - Coventry Blaze	2 - 2
Grenoble - Amsterdam	2 - 2
Coventry Blaze - Amsterdam	5 - 4
Herning IK - Grenoble	1 - 3
Amsterdam - Herning IK	3 - 3
Grenoble - Coventry Blaze	2 - 0

Group D Final Standings

Grenoble (FRA)	3	2	0	1	7-3	5
Coventry Blaze (GBR)	3	1	1	1	7-8	3
Amsterdam (NED)	3	0	2	1	9-10	2
Herning IK (DEN)	3	0	2	1	8-2	2

Grenoble qualified for Continental Cup Third Round.

Second Round - Group E - Minsk, Belarus

Helio Jaca - Sokol Kiev	0 - 4
Junost Minsk - Kazzinc Torpedo	4 - 0
Sokol Kiev - Kazzinc Torpedo	1 - 3
Helio Jaca - Junost Minsk	0 - 8
Kazzinc Torpedo - Helio Jaca	10-0
Junost Minsk - Sokol Kiev	2 - 1

Group E Final Standings

Junost Minsk (BLR)	3	3	0	0	14-1	6
Kazzinc Torpedo (KAZ)	3	2	0	1	13-5	4
Sokol Kiev (UKR)	3	1	0	2	6-5	2
Helio Jaca (ESP)	3	0	0	3	0-22	0

Junost Minsk qualified for Continental Cup Third Round.

Third Round 18-20 October

Group F - Jesenice, Slovenia

HK Riga - Junost Minsk	2-1
Acroni Jesenice - Grenoble	6-2
Junost Minsk - Acroni Jesenice	2-1
Grenoble - HK Riga	3-4
Grenoble - Junost Minsk	2-8
HK Riga - Acroni Jesenice	2-1

Group F Final Standings

HK Riga (LAT)	3	3	0	0	6-5	6
Junost Minsk (BLR)	3	2	0	1	11-5	4
Acroni Jesenice (SLO)	3	1	0	2	8-6	2
Grenoble (FRA)	3	0	0	3	12-18	0

HK Riga qualified for Continental Cup Super Final

European Women's Champions Cup

GROUP A - Tallinn, Estonia

Espoo Blues - Dreamland Tallinn	42-0
Laima Riga - Aisulu Almaty	0 - 5
Dreamland Tallinn - Aisulu Almaty	0-26
Espoo Blues - Laima Riga	7 - 0
Aisulu Almaty - Espoo Blues	1 - 5
Dreamland Tallinn - Laima Riga	1-13

Group A Final Standings

Espoo Blues (FIN)	3	3	0	0	54-1	6
Aisulu Almaty (KAZ)	3	2	0	1	32-5	4
Laima Riga (LAT)	3	1	0	2	13-13	2
Dreamland Tallinn (EST)	3	0	0	3	1-81	0

Espoo Blues qualified for WECC Final Round.

GROUP B - Budapest, Hungary

Marilyn Budapest - Skif Moscow	0-20
HC Rodovre - MB Skarholmen	3 - 8
Marilyn Budapest - HC Rodovre	1 - 8
Skif Moscow - MB Skarholmen	3 - 1
Skif Moscow - HC Rodovre	3 - 1
MB Skarholmen - Budapest	14-0

Group B Final Standings

Skif Moscow (RUS)	3	3	0	0	26-2	6
MB Skarholmen (SWE)	3	2	0	1	23-6	4
HC Rodovre (DEN)	3	1	0	2	12-12	2
Marilyn Budapest (HUN)	3	0	0	3	1-42	0

Skif Moscow qualified for WECC Final Round.

GROUP C - Unna, Germany

EV Zug - Cergy Pontoise	12-0
Bergkamen - MHK Martin	3 - 2
EV Zug - MHK Martin	13-3
Bergkamen - Cergy Pontoise	3 - 5
Cergy Pontoise - MHK Martin	4 - 4
Bergkamen - EV Zug	1 - 3

Group C Final Standings

EV Zug (SUI)	3	3	0	0	28-4	6
Cergy Pontoise (FRA)	3	2	0	1	9-19	4
EC Bergkamen (GER)	3	1	0	2	7-10	2
MHK Martin (SVK)	3	0	0	3	9-20	0

EV Zug qualified for WECC Final Round.

FINAL ROUND - Solna, Sweden - December 2-4

Skif Moscow - Espoo Blues	0 - 1	(0-0, 0-1, 0-0)
AIK Solna - EV Zug	2 - 0	(0-0, 1-0, 1-0)
Skif Moscow - EV Zug	3 - 3	(1-0, 2-0, 0-3)
Espoo Blues - AIK Solna	1 - 2	(1-1, 0-1, 0-0)
EV Zug - Espoo Blues	3 - 6	(0-1, 1-2, 2-3)
AIK Solna - Skif Moscow	3 - 2	(1-0, 1-1, 1-1)

Women's ECC Final Standings

AIK Solna (SWE)	3	3	0	0	7-3	6
Espoo Blues (FIN)	3	2	0	1	8-5	4
Skif Moscow (RUS)	3	0	1	2	5-7	1
EV Zug (SUI)	3	0	1	2	6-11	1

Women's Olympic Test Event

Torino, ITALY 7-12 November

USA - Finland	1 - 0	(1-0, 0-0, 0-0)
Canada - Sweden	3 - 1	(1-1, 1-0, 1-0)
Finland - Canada	1 - 3	(0-1, 1-2, 0-0)
Italy - France	1 - 3	(1-1, 0-1, 0-1)
Sweden - USA	0 - 3	(0-1, 0-2, 0-0)
France - Italy	6 - 3	(2-1, 2-2, 2-0)
Canada - USA	5 - 0	(2-0, 2-0, 1-0)
Finland - Sweden	6 - 2	(1-1, 2-0, 3-1)
Sweden - Italy	14-0	(5-0, 5-0, 4-0)
Finland - France	11-0	(3-0, 6-0, 2-0)
Canada - USA	7 - 0	(5-0, 1-0, 1-0)

Final Standings

Canada	4	4	0	0	18-2	8
United States	4	2	0	2	4-12	4
Finland	4	2	0	2	18-6	4
Sweden	4	2	0	2	17-12	4
France	3	2	0	1	9-15	4
Italy	3	0	0	3	4-23	0

2004 TUI Cup

Various Locations, GERMANY 8-13 November

Switzerland - Canada	1 - 2	(1-1, 0-0, 0-0, 0-1)
Germany - USA	7 - 2	(2-1, 2-0, 3-1)
Switzerland - Slovakia	4 - 2	(0-2, 2-0, 1-0)
USA - Canada	1 - 4	(0-1, 0-1, 1-2)
Slovakia - Canada	4 - 0	(1-0, 2-0, 1-0)
Germany - Switzerland	1 - 2	(0-0, 0-2, 1-0)

Germany - Slovakia	0 - 6	(0-0, 0-2, 0-4)
Switzerland - USA	1 - 4	(1-1, 0-3, 0-0)
Canada - Germany	4 - 1	(1-1, 1-0, 2-0)
USA - Slovakia	3 - 2	(2-1, 0-0, 1-1)

TUI Cup Final Standings

Canada	4	3	0	1	10-7	8
Switzerland	4	2	0	2	8-9	7
United States	4	2	0	2	10-14	6
Slovakia	4	2	0	2	14-7	6
Germany	4	1	0	3	9-14	3

2004 Karjala Cup

Helsinki, FINLAND 10-13 November

Round Robin Results

Sweden - Czech Republic	6 - 3	(1-3, 3-0, 2-0)
Finland - Russia	3 - 2	(0-0, 0-1, 2-1, 0-0)
Czech Republic - Finland	6 - 2	(3-2, 2-0, 1-0)
Russia - Sweden	2 - 3	(0-0, 1-0, 1-2, 0-1)
Czech Republic - Russia	3 - 5	(1-3, 1-1, 1-1)
Finland - Sweden	2 - 1	(2-0, 0-1, 0-0)

Karjala Cup Final Standings

Finland	3	2	0	1	7-9	4
Sweden	3	2	0	1	10-7	4
Russia	3	1	0	2	9-9	2
Czech Republic	3	3	1	0	2-12-13	2

U20 Four Nations Tournament

Stupino, RUSSIA 11-13 November

Czech Republic - Finland	2 - 5	(1-1, 1-2, 0-2)
Sweden - Russia	1 - 4	(0-1, 0-1, 1-2)
Sweden - Czech Republic	2 - 1	(0-1, 2-0, 0-0)
Russia - Finland	3 - 1	(2-0, 1-1, 0-0)
Finland - Sweden	1 - 4	(1-0, 0-1, 0-3)
Russia - Czech Republic	3 - 0	(0-0, 1-0, 2-0)

Stupino U20 Final Standings

Russia	3	3	0	0	10-2	6
Sweden	3	2	0	1	7-6	4
Finland	3	1	0	2	7-9	2
Czech Republic	3	0	0	3	3-10	0

U20 Four Nations Tournament

Huttwil, SWITZERLAND 11-13 November

Slovakia - Norway	1 - 3	(0-1, 0-0, 1-2)
Germany - Switzerland	2 - 1	(1-1, 0-0, 0-1)
Germany - Slovakia	2 - 2	(1-0, 1-2, 0-0)
Switzerland - Norway	3 - 0	(1-0, 1-0, 1-0)
Norway - Germany	2 - 6	(1-3, 1-0, 0-3)
Switzerland - Slovakia	5 - 0	(2-0, 1-0, 2-0)

Huttwil U20 Final Standings

Germany	3	2	1	0	10-5	5
Switzerland	3	2	0	1	9-2	4
Norway	3	1	0	2	5-10	2
Slovakia	3	0	1	2	3-10	1

U18 Four Nations Tournament

Prievidza, SLOVAKIA 10-12 November

Germany - Russia	1 - 5	(0-0, 0-5, 1-0)
Slovakia - Czech Republic	3 - 1	(1-0, 1-0, 1-1)
Russia - Czech Republic	4 - 4	(0-1, 2-1, 2-2)
Slovakia - Germany	2 - 3	(2-1, 0-1, 0-1)
Czech Republic - Germany	4 - 2	(1-0, 1-1, 2-1)
Slovakia - Russia	1 - 2	(0-0, 1-1, 0-1)

Prievidza U18 Final Standings

Russia	3	2	1	0	11-6	5
Czech Republic	3	1	1	1	9-9	4
Germany	3	1	0	2	6-11	2
Slovakia	3	1	0	2	6-6	2

U18 Four Nations Tournament

Kuortane, FINLAND 10-12 November

Switzerland - Finland	3 - 2	(1-0, 0-2, 1-0, 1-0)
Sweden - USA	5 - 1	(1-0, 1-0, 3-1)
Finland - USA	3 - 4	(2-2, 0-0, 1-1, 0-1)
Switzerland - Sweden	0 - 2	(0-0, 0-1, 0-1)
Finland - Sweden	3 - 1	(0-0, 1-0, 2-1)
USA - Switzerland	6 - 0	(0-0, 3-0, 3-0)

Kuortane U18 Final Standings

Sweden	3	2	0	1	8-4	4
USA	3	2	0	1	11-8	4
Finland	3	1	0	2	8-8	2
Switzerland	3	1	0	2	3-10	2

**DAVE KING**

Born: December 22, 1947 in Saskatoon, Canada
 ■■ Coach of the Canadian junior team in the early 80's, led the team to a gold medal in the 1982 IIHF World U20 Championship.

■■ Coached Team Canada at the 1984, 1988 and 1992 Olympics, winning the silver medal in Albertville-92. Coached Team Japan in Nagano 1998.

■■ Led Team Canada in five IIHF World Championships, winning two silver medals, in 1989 and in 1991.

■■ Coached Calgary, Montreal (asst. coach) and Columbus in the NHL.

■■ Inducted to the IIHF Hall of Fame in 2001.

Photo: Courtesy of HC Metallurg Magnitogorsk

FLUENT IN RUSSIAN?: *Not quite yet, but the Metallurg players seem to get coach Dave King's message anyway. Going into December, "Magnitka" were leading the Russian league with most goals scored and least against. Far right is youngster Evgeni Malkin, whom King calls "the best player in the league."*

King of Canada is The Man in Magnitogorsk

By Szymon Szemberg, IIHF

■■ For almost his entire coaching career, Dave King tried to figure out Russian hockey -- from the outside. Now, at the age of 58 he finally got the opportunity to study it from the inside. The IIHF Hall of Famer and four-time Olympic coach of Team Canada (and one with Team Japan) is coaching Metallurg Magnitogorsk, becoming the first Canadian ever to coach in the Russian Super League.

The Metallurg player's skill and King's tactical prowess is proving to be a highly successful mix. At the beginning of December, Metallurg was the runaway leader in the league, with a winning percentage of almost 80 percent.

The *IIHF Ice Times* checked in with Dave King in the steel town in southwestern Siberia, on the banks of the Ural River.

For more than a decade you were on a mission to decipher the great Soviet/Russian teams of the 80's and 90's with your Canadian national teams with a limited talent level. Give us a picture of how it feels to suddenly be part of the other side?

All those years I coached the various Canadian national teams, the Soviets were the benchmark in international hockey, by far the best team. We were obsessed with trying to think of how to stop them. But in those days I could only observe from the outside and in. Now I have the opportunity to observe inside and out. It's very exciting and very enlightening.

What has impressed you the most?

Probably the way they conduct practices with the 8-10 year olds. The practices are extremely demanding with all the emphasis on skating, puckhandling, passing and receiving in very high speed. The players are very disciplined and there is no fooling around. All youth coaches can learn from how these practices are conducted. Having said that, I don't recommend copying the entire system. There is a downside.

Which is?

With elite programs like that for young players, it's very difficult to build a large base of hockey players. As a young Russian player, you cannot choose to play at the

level you like. There is only one level and there are cuts made at the age of 13. There are many examples of players who blossom at the age of 16, but this player might under this system already have been eliminated at the age of 12. If you don't make it at 13, there are not so many other options.

Going back to the major league team, what adjustments did you have to make coming from the NHL?

Obviously there is a language barrier, but it's not a major problem. I have several players who have played in North America and they understand English and I have people who can translate. But the biggest adjustment was to respect their hockey culture not trying to change too much.

Give an example.

They can have an extremely tough off-ice training for one hour and then jump to the ice and go at full speed there. In the beginning I was wondering if this is the right thing to do, but I decided not to interfere with what they believe in. The core of this is essentially the old Soviet hockey philosophy.

So were do you come in? Why did they need a Canadian coach?

I had the feeling that things got a little flat here and they needed to re-energize the team. They were looking for stimulation and someone who could introduce a different tactical game. But again, it's a delicate balance. You cannot impose too much of the North American game, but a hybrid is probably a good thing.

So you are working on something that Herb Brooks accomplished with the U.S. national team in the Lake Placid Olympics 25 years ago?

Yes, but it's a reverse situation from Brooks. He had an American team learning things from the Soviet system. I have a Russian team trying to adopt certain things from Canadian hockey.

You were in Hamburg last season. Please compare the DEL to the Russian league.

The DEL is a very professional league from the organi-

zational point of view. But as far as the hockey, they have too many old North American players who treat playing there as a paid vacation. Many of them are AHL veterans who come to Germany not wanting to practice too hard. So from the athletic point of view, the Russian league is much better. It's the best league in Europe. I have seen lots of games in the Swedish and Finnish league and the Russian is better.

Tell us something about the great prospect of Russian hockey, Evgeni Malkin, who plays for you.

What can I say, he is very good. For a player born in 1986, he is amazing. He is so skilled, he has speed, puck control, he can shoot. But his best asset is his love of the game. He is so enthusiastic that sometimes I worry about him. He stays on the ice after practices and he never wants to leave. He is like a throwback to the old days when players played for the love of the game. According to me, Malkin is the best player in the league. I think it would be a big mistake if they don't name him to the Olympic team. He brings so much energy.

Hypothetical question: your Metallurg team plays against Detroit in the club world final, who wins?

With the new rules in the NHL, where they have taken away all obstruction and interference, it would obviously benefit the Russian team. It would be an equal game with our speed and fitness against the NHL team's strength and depth.

You being a four-time Olympic coach, you must be excited for Torino 2006 coming up. Who do you pick for the gold medal game?

Yes, I am very excited. In all of sports, there is nothing like the Olympics. They stand out. Canada will be one part of the gold medal game. They have superior depth and one injury here or there doesn't affect them. I'd love Russia to be the other team and they will if all players respond to the call. From what I hear, many players are not as committed as players from the other nations. If the best Russian players commit, it will be Canada against Russia. If not, it will be Canada against the Czechs.

Related link: www.phl.ru/prensa/printed/324. Dave King in interview: "In many aspects the Russian league is equal with the NHL." (In Russian)