

IIHF Centennial will be one for the ages

But 100 years of international ice
hockey is already in the book

RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL

The IIHF is entering its most exciting season to date. We will be 100 years old and the fans of international ice hockey will remember the 2008-2009 centennial for many years to come.

■ ■ It is not an easy task to promise events in sports. After all, it's far from being an exact science and the eternal truth is true that 'you win some and you lose some'. But I still take the liberty to give my word that this will be an unforgettable milestone season in the history of the IIHF. (Go to pages 6-7 for an overview of the IIHF's 100 Year Anniversary events.)

Everything will, of course, culminate with the 2008 IIHF World Championship in Halifax and Quebec City, Canada as this will be the first time that our banner event will be played the country where the best game in the world originated in the mid to late 1800s. One can naturally ask what took us so long, but that issue is another editorial in itself. The most important thing is: we will finally be there.

■ ■ The IIHF World Championship originated from the European Championship that was first played in the tiny Swiss village of Les Avants, near Montreux in 1910. After 13 European Championships (1910-1932) and 71 World Championships our journey from Les Avants to Quebec City will be completed on May 18, the day of the gold medal game at the 15,399-seat Le Colisée.

It has been an amazing century and this voyage between the two francophone sites on each side of the Atlantic ocean is chronicled in our centennial publication: *World of Hockey - Celebrating a Century of the IIHF*. We are proud to announce that the book will be released on November 13 in Toronto, coinciding with the Hockey Hall of Fame induction ceremony and the opening of the IIHF 100 Year Anniversary Exhibition at the Hockey Hall of Fame.

This event will also mark the start of the official countdown to May 2, the opening day of the 2008 World Championship. Although the release date is November 13, the delegates at the Semi-Annual Congress in Vancouver in September were treated to a limited sneak-preview edition of the first 100 copies.

■ ■ Apart from Sweden being awarded with the 2013 IIHF World Championship, the biggest news from the congress was the announcement from the IIHF Sports

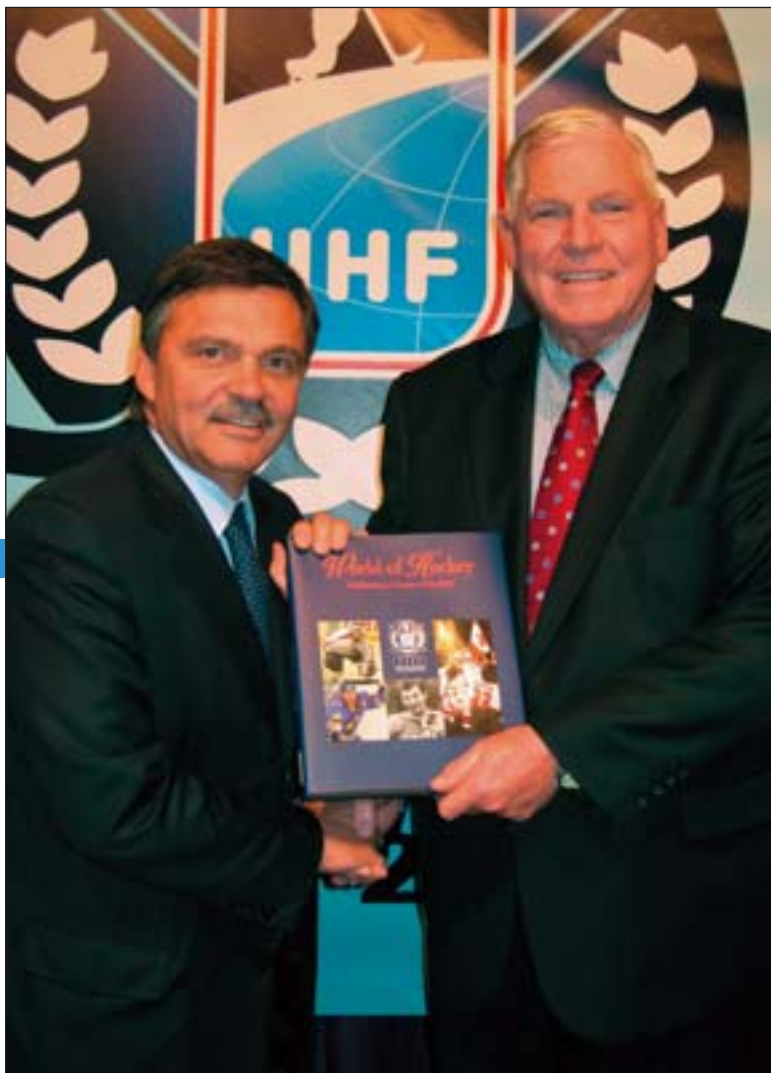


Photo: THOMAS FREYER

COVER TO COVER: IIHF President René Fasel and Chairman and CEO of the Hockey Hall of Fame, Bill Hay show off 100-years of ice hockey contained in 228 pages. The *World of Hockey Centennial* book is just one of several 100-year celebration projects that the IIHF has planned during the 2007-2008 season. The book is a joint venture between the IIHF and the Hockey Hall of Fame and will be released to the general public on November 13th at the Hockey Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. For complete details on the once-in-a-lifetime event, please refer to page 6.

Committee that it working on a proposal to change the format of the IIHF World Championship (see page 2 for details).

As the President of the IIHF I welcome all suggestions that have the goal to improve our game. But it must be pointed out, especially in direction to some media that jumped to premature conclusions, that for a any proposal to become a reality, it must be approved by the council, our executive body, and finally by the congress, our legislative body. This is not a process that is taken lightly.

During this process we will have time to weigh the positives and negatives of changing the number of teams and the format of our main event.

René Fasel
IIHF President

'13 is lucky number for Sweden; 14 may be future magic number

■ **VANCOUVER, CANADA:** The IIHF Semi-Annual Congress was in North America, an unique location for the yearly event, for a special season that lies ahead.

The highlight of the Congress was the selection of Sweden as the host the 2013 IIHF World Championship. The nation beat out Belarus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Latvia, receiving an overwhelming majority of 70 out of a possible 96 votes. Belarus had 15 votes, Hungary 8, and the Czech Republic 3. Latvia withdrew before the voting began.

The championship sites will be Stockholm (Globe Arena, 13,850) and the southern city of Malmö, where a 12,500-seat arena is currently being built.

"I want to thank everyone who supported us in our ambition to hold the championship in Stockholm and Malmö in 2013," said Swedish Ice Hockey Association President Christer Englund. "We will do our best to fulfill all expectations to hold a great hockey tournament."

It was Sweden's fourth consecutive bid for the tournament, which last hosted the IIHF World Championship in 2002. It will be the tenth time the Swedes have hosted.

Five Swedish members of the Vancouver Canucks -- Markus Naslund, Daniel Sedin, Henrik Sedin, Mattias Ohlund, and Thomas Gradin -- came to the Westin Bayshore Hotel, the Congress venue, to offer their sup-



PHOTO: Jeff Vinnik
THREE CROWNS IN '13: Henrik & Daniel Sedin, Mattias Ohlund and Marcus Naslund celebrate Sweden's victory in the run for the 2013 IIHF World Championship, which will be played in Stockholm and Malmö. The four Vancouver Canucks stars campaigned for their native Sweden prior to the voting.

port for the Swedish bid on September 20, and may have helped to sway the voters.

In other congress news:

□□ The biggest buzz was around discussion to reduce the number of teams at the IIHF World Championship from 16 to 14.

"We are looking at the possibility of going to 14 teams, divided into two groups of seven,"

Sports Committee Chairman and IIHF Vice President Kalervo Kummola confirmed. No timeline for the potential change was specified. But if the next congress approves the Sports Committee proposal, the new format could be in place as early as 2010 (Germany).

For this to happen, the Sports Committee must submit a concrete proposal to the IIHF Council for approval by the executive body. When this is finished, the Council must pass on the proposal to the Congress. If accepted by the Congress, the proposal can be implemented.

□□ As of the 2008 IIHF World Championship, playing time will count down on the clock instead of up (as in the NHL) to make it easier to keep track of time keeping issues, especially with penalties.

□□ Further details emerged about the inaugural World Women's U18 Championship. It will be held January 7-12, 2008 in Calgary. It was agreed that all nations that participate in this tournament will return for the 2009

edition. Then, a relegation system and Division I will be established for this category.

□□ It was suggested that all nations under the IIHF need to immediately accept World Anti-Doping Code compliancy, including applying code sanctions for all doping infractions. In the past there has been a discrepancy between the sanctions imposed by the national federations and the WADA Code.

□□ The IIHF will publish a new book on how to build a high-end hockey arena capable of hosting Olympic or World Championship competitions.

□□ After a review, Armenia and Greece retained their status within the IIHF, and will take part in a qualification tournament with Bosnia-Herzegovina prior to the 2008 Division III championship in Luxembourg.

□□ A limited advance edition of 100 copies of the 100th anniversary commemorative book, *World of Hockey: Celebrating a Century of the IIHF*, was printed for Congress delegates and guests in Vancouver. The book's official release date is November 13th in conjunction with the Hockey Hall of Fame's Induction ceremony.

□□ A special conference, in conjunction with the Canadian Association for Sports Medicine, will be held in Vancouver in June 2009. It will feature leading information from international experts, with a special focus on team sports and at least 1-1.5 days on hockey.

□□ IIHF referee camps have included full medical assessments for on-ice officials, and everyone has passed.

The next IIHF congress will be the General Congress, which is held once every four years. The General Congress will take place in Montreal following the 2008 IIHF World Championship and will feature several 100-year anniversary activities.

Last season at a glance

■ Did you get your copy of the IIHF Annual Report? Published every autumn, the full-color, 100-page report is a complete recap of the 2006-2007 season. With everything from championship results, to congress minutes, to unique photos, this is the one-stop book for international hockey fans.

■ If you are currently not on the IIHF mailing list, you can request a copy of the Report by e-mailing media@iihf.com



Obituaries

■ Former Soviet national team forward **Yevgeni Mishakov** passed away on May 30 at the age of 66. Mishakov was a member of the Soviet national team that won the IIHF World Championship four times from 1968 to 1971 and he also won two Olympic gold medals, in 1968 and 1972. Mishakov represented CSKA Moscow club from 1963-1974.

■ Belarus national team player **Alexei Savin**, 21, died in a traffic accident in the Russian city of Chelyabinsk on June 18. Savin, who was a native Russian but later acquired Belarus citizenship, represented Team Belarus in the 2005 and 2006 IIHF World Championship and in the 2005 IIHF World U20 Championship in Grand Forks, USA.

■ Former international referee **Quido Adamec** passed away on July 22, at the age of 82. Adamec officiated in seven IIHF World Championships, including on home ice in Prague 1959. He was chairman of the Czech Referee Committee since 1973 and a member of the IIHF Referee's Committee for 25 years. Adamec was inducted to the IIHF Hall of Fame in 2005.

■ **Sam Pollock**, who built a dynasty as general manager of the Montreal Canadiens in the 1960s and 70s passed away on August 15. He was 81. Pollock was the General Manager of Team Canada at the Canada Cup in 1976. The Montreal native won nine Stanley Cup titles as general manager from 1964-1978.

■ **Hans Bänninger**, the best Swiss goalie of the post-war era, passed away on August 22 in Zurich. He was 83. Bänninger led Switzerland to Olympic bronze 1948 in St. Moritz and to European Championship gold in 1950

■ One of the toughest hockey players passed away on July 14 at the age of 68. **John Ferguson** retired at the age of 33 after winning his fifth Stanley Cup in seven years Montreal. The Vancouver-native was the assistant coach of Canada at the 1972 Summit Series. Ferguson fought cancer for three years before passing away.

■ **Darryl Sly**, a legendary defenseman with the 1961 IIHF World Champion Trail Smoke Eaters, passed away in Collingwood, Ontario on August 31 after a lengthy battle with cancer. He was 68. Sly won the silver medal at the 1960 Olympics in Squaw Valley and played briefly with the Toronto Maple Leafs in the NHL in the late 1960s.

Association News

■ **AUSTRIA:** The Austrian Ice Hockey Association named Swede **Lars Bergström** the head coach of the Austrian national team. Bergström, signed for two years and has two Austrian national championships with Klagenfurt. He earlier served as assistant coach for Team Austria. Bergström's first job is to win the 2008 IIHF World Championship, Division I and gain promotion to the 2009 World Championship in Switzerland.

■ **SWEDEN:** The Swedish Ice Hockey Association named **Anders Eldebrink** as assistant coach to **Bengt-Ake Gustafsson** for the 2008 IIHF World Championship in Canada. Eldebrink, who is the head coach of Swiss league's Kloten Flyers, was part of the coaching staff that led Sweden to the Olympic gold in Turin 2006. Eldebrink return to Quebec City after 25 years. He played for the NHL Quebec Nordiques during the 1982-83-season.

■ **BELGIUM:** **Christian Pierre** was named General Secretary of the Royal Belgian Ice Hockey Federation.

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European NHL-hopefuls for 2007-2008

■ The following list records players who have signed contracts with NHL clubs prior to the 2007-08 season. Russia is not a part of the Player Transfer Agreement. If a player's signing date is other than for this season, it is noted by his NHL team. In total, 61 players from Europe were signed by NHL teams. In addition five North Americans that had been playing in Europe are included at the end of the list. The list is tentative.

SWEDEN (16)

Name	06-07 Club	NHL Club
Nicklas Bäckström	Brynäs	Washington
Tom Wandell	Pori (FIN)	Dallas
Anton Stralman	Timra	Toronto
Patrik Hersley	Malmö	Los Angeles
Patric Hörnqvist	Djurgarden	Nashville (08)
Alexander Hellström	Björklöven(2)	St. Louis
Niklas Hjalmarsson	HV71	Chicago
Mattias Karlsson	Almtuna(2)	Ottawa (08)
Tobias Enström	MODO	Atlanta
Erik Ersberg	HV71	Los Angeles
Mattias Ritola	Leksand(2)	Detroit
Patrik Berglund	Västerås(2)	St. Louis
Jonas Junland	Linköping	St. Louis
Magnus Johansson	Linköping	Chicago
Johan Ryno	Frölunda	Detroit
Andreas Thuresson	Malmö	Nashville

FINLAND (13)

Tuukka Rask	Ilves Tampere	Edmonton
Janne Niskala	Färjestad (SWE)	Nashville
Teemu Laakso	IFK Helsinki	Nashville
Juuso Riksman	Jokerit Helsinki	St. Louis
Petri Kontiola	Tappara Tampere	Chicago
Mikko Lehtonen	Espoo	Boston
Riku Helenius	Ilves Tampere	Tampa Bay
Janne Lahti	Hämeenlinna	Montreal
Sami Lepistö	Jokerit Helsinki	Washington
Mikko Maenpää	Hämeenlinna	Columbus
Antti Pihlström	Hämeenlinna	Nashville
Jari Viuhkola	Kärpät Oulu	New Jersey
Perttu Lindgren	Ilves Tampere	Dallas (signed 07)

CZECH REPUBLIC (9)

Jan Hlavac	Sparta Prague	Tampa Bay
Jaroslav Hlinka	Sparta Prague	Colorado
Vladimir Sobotka	Slavia Prague	Boston
Tomas Kana	Vitkovice	St. Louis
Ondrej Pavelec	Cape Breton (QMJHL)	Atlanta
Martin Hanzal	Red Deer (WHL)	Phoenix

Tomas Pospisil
Michal Neuvirth
Michal Repik

RUSSIA (8)

Igor Grigorenko
Nikolai Kulemin
Alexander Nikulin
Pavel Valentinov
Nikolai Lemtyugov
Semen Varlamov
Artem Anisimov
Anton Khudobin

SLOVAKIA (3)

Vladimir Dravecky
Mario Bliznak
Richard Stehlik

SWITZERLAND (3)

Jonas Hiller
Daniel Manzano
Juraj Simek

GERMANY (2)

Alexander Sulzer
Philipp Gogulla

DENMARK (2)

Morten Madsen
Kiril Starkov

AUSTRIA (2)

Oliver Setzinger
Andre Lakos

BELARUS (2)

Sergei Kostitsyn
Vladimir Denisov

LATVIA (1)

Kaspars Daugavins

NORTH AMERICANS (5)

Cory Murphy
Brady Murray
Martin Kariya
Simon Gamache
Jean-Guy Trudel

Atlanta
Washington
Florida

Detroit
Toronto (08)
Ottawa
Montreal
St. Louis
Washington
NY Rangers
Minnesota

Los Angeles
Vancouver
Nashville

Anaheim
Carolina
Vancouver

Nashville
Buffalo

Minnesota
Columbus

Nashville
Minnesota

Montreal
Colorado

Ottawa

Florida
Los Angeles
St. Louis
Toronto
St. Louis

UPDATE CANADA 2008

■ Canadian and Quebec hockey heroes **Jean Béliveau**, 76, and **Patrick Roy**, 42, will be the honorary co-presidents for the 2008 IIHF World Championship in Canada.



Jean Béliveau is one of the most distinguished players in the history of the game. All his goals, points and team records don't even come close to comparing with the contribution he made to the sport. With 10 Stanley Cups as a player and seven more as an executive, Béliveau, the longest-serving captain in the history of the Montreal Canadiens, continues to act as a leader in the only way he knows, that is by example.

Throughout a dazzling 18-year career in the NHL with the Montreal Canadiens and the Colorado Avalanche, Patrick Roy won four Stanley Cups was also named as the NHL's Best Goaltender three times and he won the Conn Smyth Trophy (given to the playoff MVP) three times. Roy also represented Canada in the 1998 Olympics in Nagano, finishing fourth.

"Being honorary co-president with Jean Béliveau represents for me a great honour and I am very pleased to be involved with this event," Roy said. "As part of the 400th anniversary of the City of Quebec, the hockey fans in the greater Quebec area will have a wonderful opportunity to attend this tournament which, for the first time will be held in Canada and at the same time, will have a chance to discover this championship."

■ The IIHF conducted its first major site visit in Halifax and Quebec City in late September, meeting with the host organizing committee and checking out the two venues, the Halifax Metro Centre (10,595) and the Pepsi Colisée (15,399).

"For the first time in quite some years we didn't have to inspect building sites as both arenas are in place," said IIHF's Deputy General Secretary Hannes Ederer. "Both the Halifax and Quebec City venues are typical Canadian arenas, very intimate with a great atmosphere. We won't have the space and in some cases the comfort that modern arenas provide, but that will be compensated with the ambiance."

■ Go to hockey2008.ca for ticket, accommodation and site information for the 72nd IIHF World Championships.

IIHF STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

New IIHF staff structure to take effect for 2007-08 season

■ The IIHF is working on re-structuring its staff to meet the needs of the ever-evolving world of international hockey.

Over the summer, three employees were added to the IIHF family, with more planned in the upcoming months. In addition, for the 100-year Anniversary, the IIHF hired consultant, **Thomas Gurtner** to oversee the project. He will be assisted for his one-year term by former Vierumaki student, **Kristina Koch**.

The new structure also includes familiar faces in new roles. **Hannes Ederer** will take over the Event Department, while **Rob van Rijswijk** will now oversee the Marketing Department. A new Communications Department was created, which will be overseen by **Szymon Szemberg**, who will assume the title of Director of Communications.

For the first time ever, the IIHF also has its own in-house travel agency, which will handle all event travel not only for the IIHF family, but hopefully for interested member federations as well.

■ **Yves Vonlanthen** is the new IIHF Legal Manager. In the newly-formed position, he will be responsible for all legal and human resources. Vonlanthen obtained a Masters degree in law at the University of Fribourg and earned a postgraduate degree in Sports Administration and Technology. He worked as an independent sports manager.



■ **Ruth Künzle** started her position as the new Financial Department Assistant on October 1. Prior to joining the IIHF she was working with various sports supply companies and at Schindler Elevators. Künzle also has an impressive hockey background, having played in 214 national team games with Switzerland.



■ **Aniko Fekete** is in the newly-established role of official IIHF in-house travel agent. In her role, Fekete will be responsible for the planning and reservations of all IIHF business travel. It is the goal of the IIHF to have the travel agency which Fekete represents, **HRG**, to handle future travel for member national associations.



2007 SEASON PREVIEW: OFFICIATING

Vinnerborg: The exchange program makes you grow

By Szymon Szemberg

■ ■ ■ *Marcus Vinnerborg, 35, refereed the gold medal game of the 2007 IIHF World Championship between Canada and Finland and he will start his third season as part of the IIHF's Referee Exchange Program. Ice Times talked to the Swedish referee about the exchange program.*

■ ■ ■ **Tell us about your experience with the Referee Exchange Program and if it has been good for your development.**

A: You get to learn about other cultures and this enables you to adapt to different situations. You grow as a person and it is good for your confidence. To arrive in Magnitogorsk from Stockholm on a cold Tuesday evening in January is a challenge and a character builder. It has so far been a very good learning experience and my career has benefited greatly from the exchange program. It has also led to a very constructive dialogue between the leagues.

Q: How does officiating in different countries and leagues improve your refereeing?

A: The leagues all over Europe have different styles. In some leagues the game is very physical, in others more based on skill. In some leagues the emphasis is on speed. This means that also your refereeing becomes different. You have to adapt your style and your skating pattern.

Q: Give us some examples.

A: The Russian league is very fast. You really need to skate hard in order to always have good positioning. The Swiss league is also fast, very much end-to-end action. The Slovak league is more finesse, but also with a lot of hooking going on. As a referee you need to adapt to all those league-specific profiles.

Q: Do you have any memorable episodes from your two years in the exchange program?

A: I was fortunate to be assigned to Bern vs. Geneva-Servette in the Swiss league. To be on the ice in the Bern arena in front of 16,000 fans was really something else, an unforgettable atmosphere. A slightly different experience was a game in the old barn in Augsburg, Germany. It was very cold as the stadium is not entirely covered and there was a video replay after a disputed goal. The person in charge of the replay device couldn't



GOLDEN BOYS: Marcus Vinnerborg centre, Ivan Dedioula (BLR) left, Anders Karlberg (SWE) right, prior to 2007 IIHF World Championship gold medal game.

find the frame that showed the situation, so after a lengthy break I simply had to make the decision myself without being able to correctly review the play.

Q: There has been some criticism in media towards the exchange program, especially in your country. What is your comment?

A: I feel that there is no reason to be negative. I am not sure that those who wrote that fully understood the purpose of the program. One must see to all the good things that the exchange program has brought in terms of referee development and increased consistency between countries and leagues. You simply cannot focus on one game where a referee may not have had his best day.

Q: The IIHF and leagues are moving towards full implementation of the four-man officiating system. How do you feel being one of two referees as opposed to calling the game alone?

Q: What do you see as the biggest obstacle to implementing the four-man system?

I think gaining acceptance of having two referees on the ice will be a challenge. Sometimes people are not always eager for change. It is also important to establish consistency between the two referees on the ice. Coming from leagues with different skill emphasis, this will be critical. It is one reason our Referee Exchange Program is especially important this year, it will help to standardize the officiating across borders.

Q: But obviously there must be benefits to using four-officials, what are they?

Four eyes see much more than two. Ideally, the referee will be closer to the action and will be better able to make a proper judgment.

Q: With more officials being used, will some have to work two championships in one season?

This year will be a special transition season. Because the four-man system will be evaluated at the World U20 Championship, we will have many of our top officials there. This increases the chance that these same officials

A: With two referees you feel physically and mentally fresh for a full 60 minutes. That's not the case when you are alone. If you miss an infraction, there is always a good chance that the other referee can see it. I find the two-ref system very good.

2008 REFEREE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Nation	Name	Previous Experience
Czech Rep.	Milan Minar	U18(2), U20(2), WS(3)
Czech Rep.	Radek Husicka	WSDI
Czech Rep.	Vladimir Sindler	U20 (5), WS (7), OG
Finland	Jari Levonen	U18, WS, WSDI (2)
Finland	Sami Partanen	U18, U20
Finland	Aleksi Rantala	U18, U20DI (2), U18DI
Germany	Daniel Piechaczek	U18DI, U20DI, WSDI
Germany	Martin Reichert	U18DII, U20DI
Germany	Richard Schütz	U18, U20 (2), WS (4)
Russia	Vyacheslav Bulanov	U18, U20, WS (2), OG
Russia	Sergey Kulakov	U18DI (2), U20DII
Russia	Alexander Polyakov	U18 (2), U20 (3), WS (2)
Slovakia	Peter Jonak	U18, U20 (2), WS (3)
Slovakia	Daniel Konc	U18, U18DI (2), WSDI
Slovakia	Peter Orszag	U18 (2), U20, WSDI
Sweden	Soren Persson	U18
Sweden	Marcus Vinnerborg	U18, U20, WS (2)
Sweden	Ulf Ronnmark	U20 (2)
Switzerland	Danny Kurmann	U20 (4), WS (6), OG (2)
Switzerland	Brent Reiber	WS (3), WSDI (2)
Switzerland	Nadir Mandioni	U18, U20DI, WSDI (2)

will be at a second championship later in the season. So right now, yes, we will have some officials at two events but our goal is to have a deep enough base to go back to one international event per referee each season.

Are the officials prepared for the four-man system?

The camp over the summer went very well. And more games are using the four-man system, giving officials the experience they need. Of course, there will be growing pains and in the first event it might take a little bit for the system to run smoothly, but after seeing what our top officials are capable of, I think the learning curve will be fast.

When will the decision be made whether or not to use the system at the World Championship in Canada?

The decision will be made in January, 2008 after U20s.

All about the new four-man system

■ ■ ■ *This year, the IIHF will implement one of its biggest changes in officiating when it adopts the four-man system at the 2008 IIHF World U20 Championship. The system, which uses two referees and two linesmen, will be used at only the top IIHF World Championship events. To learn more about what to expect, Ice Times sat down with the IIHF's Manager of Officiating, Konstantin Kommissarov.*

Q: What made the IIHF decide to go with the four-man officiating system now?

We have had an eye on using the system for awhile. With the new rule enforcement, the game became much faster and it was becoming difficult for just one referee to call a game. As of right now, we have not committed to using four men at the World Championship in Canada, instead we will evaluate it this season at the earlier events.

What has the IIHF done to prepare for the implementation of the four-man system?

We held a Top 40 Referee Camp in Finland over the summer for the elite officials from around the world. The emphasis there was preparing for the four-man system. It was also a rare chance to get our top officials together.

Who are the Club Champions of the World?

ALL NATIONAL (MEN'S) CHAMPIONS FROM IIHF MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS:



FRANCE: Grenoble is great in 2007



SPAIN: Puigcerda is perfect



NETHERLANDS: Tilburg traps the title



SLOVAKIA: Slovan skates to first



SWEDEN: Gold helmets for MODO

Country	Champion
Andorra	no championship
Armenia	Urartu Yerevan
Australia	Penrith Bears
Austria	Red Bulls Salzburg
Azerbaijan	no championship
Belarus	Dynamo Minsk
Belgium	White Caps Turnhout
Bosnia & Herz.	no championship
Bulgaria	Akademika Sofia
Canada (Allan Cup)	Lloydminster
Canada (Memorial Cup)	Vancouver Giants
China	Harbin
Croatia	Medvescak Zagreb
Czech Republic	Sparta Prague
Denmark	Herning IK
DPR Korea	Pyongchol
Estonia	HK Stars Tallinn
Finland	Kärpät Oulu
France	Grenoble
Germany	Adler Mannheim
Great Britain	Nottingham Panthers
Greece	no championship
Hongkong	no championship
Hungary	Alba Volan
Iceland	Skautafelag Reykjavik
India	Rimo club Leh
Ireland	no championship
Israel	Haifa Hawks
Italy	SG Cortina
Japan	Cranes Kushiro
Kazakhstan	Torpedo Kazzinc
Korea	Yonsei University
Latvia	HK Riga 2000
Liechtenstein	no championship
Lithuania	Energija Elektrenai

Luxembourg	Tornado Luxembourg
Macao	no championship
Macedonia	no championship
Malaysia	Infemo Ice Kuala Lumpur
Mexico	San Jeronimo Osos
Mongolia	Ulaanbaatar
Netherlands	Destil Trappers Tilburg
New Zealand	Queenstown Rangers
Norway	Valerenga IF Oslo
Poland	Podhale Nowy Targ
Portugal	no championship
Romania	SC Miercurea Ciuc
Russia	Metallurg Mag.
Serbia & Mont	Partizan Belgrade
Slovakia	Slovan Bratislava
Slovenia	Olimpija ZM Ljubljana
South Africa	Western Gauteng
Spain	Club Gel Puigcerda
Sweden	MODO Örnköldsvik
Switzerland	HC Davos
Taipei	Taipei Bears
Thailand	no championship
Turkey	Kocaeli Spor Külübü
Ukraine	ATEK Kiev
USA (NCAA)	Michigan State Univ.

International leagues:

Asian Hockey League	Nippon Paper Cranes
Intl. Hockey League	Alba Volan
National Hockey League	
Anaheim Ducks	



LITHUANIA: Energija powers through



AUSTRALIA: Penrith peaks in 2007



AUSTRIA: Red Bulls are golden



CZECH REPUBLIC: Sparta strikes again



RUSSIA: Metallurg mighty in 2007



SWITZERLAND: Davos reaches the peak



FINLAND: Karpat Oulu all the way

■ Say goodbye to the IIHF Club Championship program as you know it and prepare for the new era of European club hockey. The 2007-2008 season will mark the final edition of the European Champions Cup. While the ECC was deemed a success, it was decided to expand the European club competition to include more teams in a league format. But not all is lost for ECC fans, as this year's group of six ECC teams will be the bridge between the old and new. Read on to see what's in store for club teams in the 2007-2008 season.

■ European Champions Cup (ECC) - Jan. 10-13:

The annual trip to St. Petersburg, Russia has become a right of passage for the top six nation's club champions. This year will be no different as Metallurg Magnitogorsk, Kärpät Oulu, HC Davos, Sparta Prague, MODO and Slovan Bratislava will once again battle for continental supremacy. The biggest question entering this year's ECC will be if Metallurg can become the fourth straight Russian team to skate to the title, or if Kärpät, a two-time finalist, can finally get over the hump to win the cup. Of course, the other four teams will do their best to play the role of spoiler. While it is with a hint of sadness that this year's edition of the ECC will be the last, there is also a surge of excitement associated with this year's cup as the winner is guaranteed to play in the IIHF's first-ever Victoria Cup, which will put the winner of the ECC against an NHL team in a

2007-2008 IIHF Club Championship Program

battle for world-wide bragging rights. Eventually, the winner of the new Champion's Hockey League will become the ECC champ is the representative.

European entry in the Victoria Cup, but it seems only fitting that the first-ever time, the ECC champ is the representative.

■ European Women's Champions Cup (EWCC) - Final Round Jan. 29-Feb. 3:

As with the men, the European women's club teams are also out to discover which will have bragging rights as Europe's best team. For the last three seasons, the EWCC trophy has felt right at home in Sweden with the women's AIK Solna team. AIK has earned three straight titles and has an automatic berth in the final round, while the other four teams will be determined through a preliminary round process. Overall, there will be four preliminary groups (played in October with the winner moving onto the finals for the five-team, round robin final).

■ Continental Cup (CC) - Final Round Jan. 4-6:

With so many changes to the European club competition on the horizon, there is one tournament that will remain unchanged. The Continental Cup continues to be the biggest of all the Club events with a six rounds and dozens of teams. In recent year's the Continental Cup has also been the most unpredictable. The CC remains a key event in club hockey. In 2008-09, the Continental Cup will be connected to the new Champion's Hockey League.

15 ways to celebrate 100 years



The secret is out: This season the International Ice Hockey Federation is celebrating its 100-year anniversary and is planning a celebration that will be remembered for at least the next 100 years. Just what can you expect in the next year? Read on to find out...

Sport Activities

Of course the bread and butter of any sports federation is, what else, but the sport itself, which is why the primary focus of the IIHF 100-year celebrations will focus around the game and its athletes. The several planned activities include:

International Youth Hockey Skills Challenge:

Each participating nation will hold on-ice skill tests to determine the most skilled male and female youth hockey player. A Skills Challenge will also be held for goaltenders. The 20 best goalies worldwide, determined by the overall global ranking will travel to Canada for a final Skills Challenge during the World Championship. The participants will get to attend a championship game, and of course, see how they stack up against the world's elite.

Global Charity Game:

The Global Charity Game will raise money for a charitable cause. The goal is to dedicate Friday, February 29th (Leap Day) to international ice hockey. Participating nations will determine a playing round of their top club games which will be dedicated to the IIHF Global Charity Game. For every goal scored in the designated games, a sponsor will donate a sum to an international charity organization.

IIHF World Youth Hockey Festival:

Hockey Canada will host an international youth ice hockey festival from May 2-4 for players aged 12 to 15. Teams from all over the world and Canada, will travel to Quebec City or Halifax to compete against local teams as well as teams of other nations, while experiencing a World Championship game.

IIHF World Oldtimer's Tournament:

On the other end of the spectrum from the Youth Hockey Festival will be the World Oldtimer's Tournament which will be held in both host cities of the 2008 World Championship, May 5-10. With over 140 adult recreation teams across the world and four divisions by age (19-35, 35-45, 45-55, 55 plus), these two adult tournaments will be a life time experience for players and families from around the globe.

Two New IIHF Events:

While the 100-year anniversary is good time to reflect on hockey's past, it is also the perfect opportunity to establish new traditions. The IIHF is using the centennial to introduce two new events. The first is a World Women's U18 Championship which will be held in January 2008. Six of the participating eight nations qualified for the tournament in February 2007 at three IIHF Women's U18 Invitational Tournaments, while the other two, Canada and the United States were automatically offered a spot.

The second event, the Victoria Cup, will be held in the autumn of 2008. In cooperation with the NHL, the IIHF will organize the tournament on European soil featuring an NHL team. The event is a milestone for international ice hockey, marking the first match-up between the club teams from both sides of the Atlantic. The date, site and format of the event are still under discussion. (For more see side bar)

IIHF Ice Rink Project

A temporary ice rink will be constructed in the garden of the IIHF headquarters in November. It will be open for three months and will host various events. The major goal is to involve, all age groups, all skill levels. Everybody is encouraged to come and play ice hockey at the IIHF Ice Rink. The official face-off will be November 29.

International Fan Appreciation Day

The IIHF wants to honour the people that have supported and contributed so much to the development and success of the game over the last decade. The International Fan Appreciation Day will be the first week of May in Halifax and Quebec. Fan villages downtown and at game venues will turn into places that will create memorable life-time experiences for all fans.

Historical Activities

The Top 100 International Hockey Stories

Based on their impact on the ice hockey world, stories will be ranked from 100 to 1, culminating with the event in international ice hockey that created the biggest stir. Throughout the season, starting on October 1, 2007, the stories will be released one by one according to a regular publishing schedule on www.IIHF.com. The final Top 10 countdown will take place at a Centennial Gala evening in Quebec City on May 17.

Centennial All-Star Team

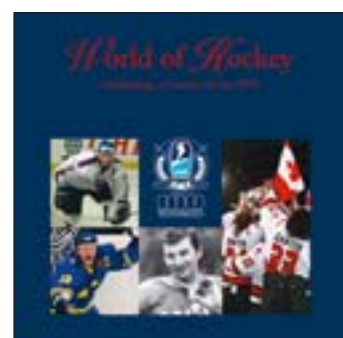
Picking an all-star team for any given World Championship is always a tough task, so imagine how daunting it is to pick the All-Star team for the last 100 years. To complete this important job, the IIHF has enlisted the help of a panel consisting of 50 ice hockey experts from 17 countries with a balance between North American and European countries and includes people whose opinions are universally respected. The names of the voters will be made public following the announcement of the team. The announcement of the team, which will have one goaltender, two defensemen, a center and two wingers, will take place in combination with the countdown of the Top 10 International Ice Hockey stories.

Anniversary Book

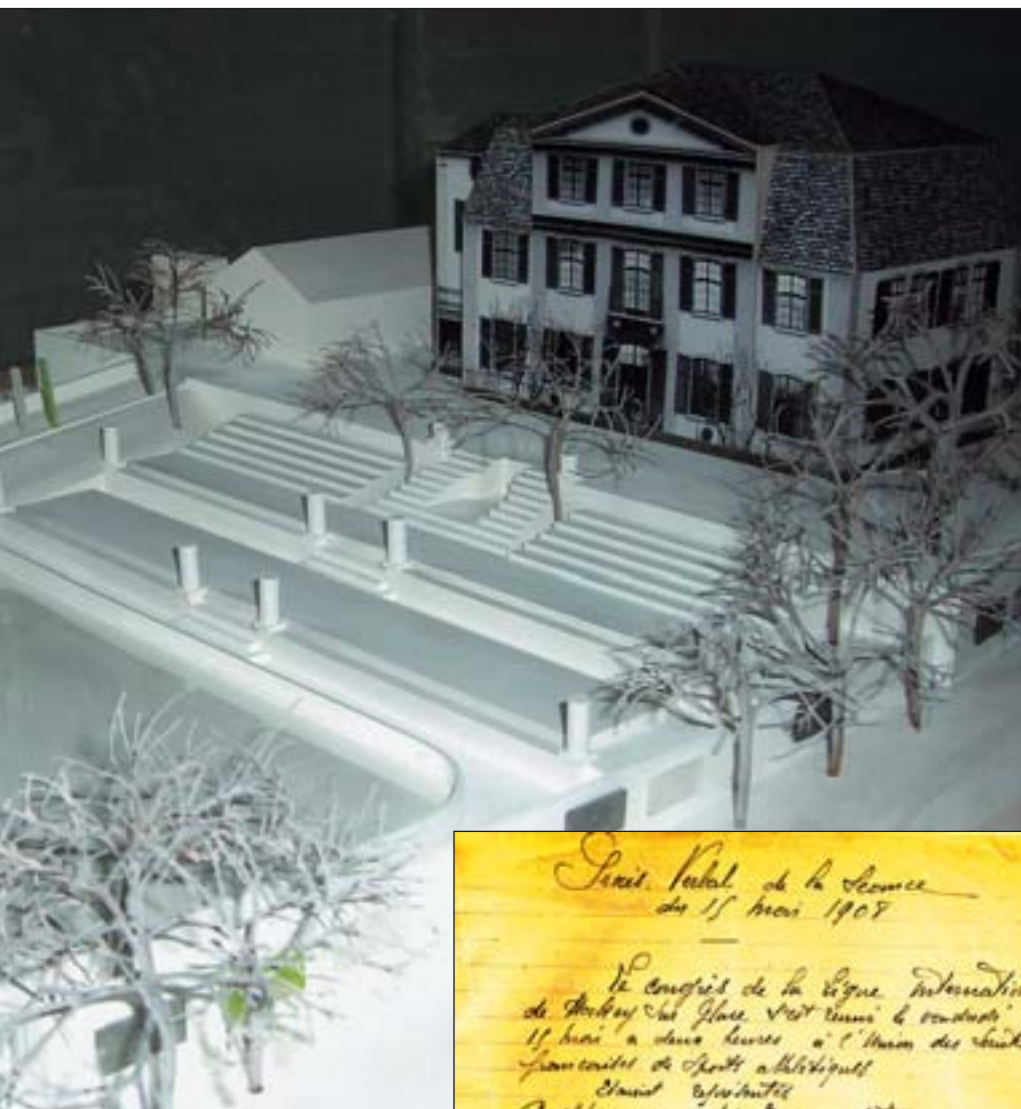
The IIHF is producing a lavish coffee-table book to mark its 100th anniversary. It provides a complete history of the game, 1908-2008. The first section will focus on 12 distinct periods or



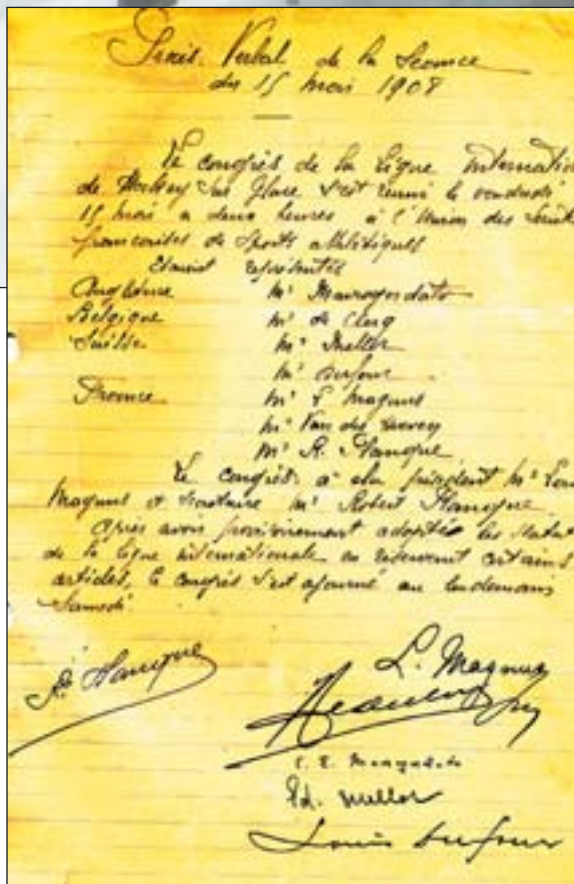
HISTORY IN THE MAKING: The International Ice Hockey Federation backyard. The ground of the IIHF headquarters will be turned into a represented above in a scale model, is expected to open in November.



BOOK WORMS REJOICE: The IIHF 100-year Anniversary Book will be on bookshelves in early 2008.



Photos: IIHF ARCHIVES
will celebrate hockey all around the world, including its own temporary ice rink for teams from near and far to use. The rink, to the right is the founding document of the IIHF.



eras of the game. The second section is dedicated to the IIHF and its member nations, while the third section is statistical and will include all major IIHF events. A follow-up book with the Top 100 Hockey stories and a summary of the centennial year is also planned.

Triple Gold Club Induction

The IIHF will use the occasion of its 100th anniversary to formally induct the 19 players who form the elite Triple Gold Club. This group are the players to win Olympic gold, the IIHF World Championship gold and the Stanley Cup. This ceremony will begin a new tradition of honouring future Triple Gold Club members.

100-Year Exhibitions

For young players today, it is difficult to imagine a goal-tender playing without a mask, or players skating without helmets. To educate everyone, both young and old, on the evolution of the game, the IIHF has several exhibitions planned.

The Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto will host an exhibition on 100 years of international ice hockey starting in fall 2007. The launch of the exhibition will go along with the Hockey Hall of Fame Induction Celebration. November 13, will be dedicated to the IIHF by launching

the 100th anniversary display along with a reception for the release of the IIHF Centennial Book.

On September 26, almost a year after the launch of the 100-year exhibition at the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto, a temporary exhibition about ice hockey will be opened at the IOC Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Be sure to check back to IIHF.com for a listing of events in your country. If you would like further information on how to participate in any of the mentioned projects, please email Kristina Koch at the IIHF (koch@iihf.com).



There's more to this parking lot than meets the eye

Thousands of people in Montreal drive by it every day. Hundreds more walk past it. What just a few know is that they are passing is more than just another city block, it is the site where organized ice hockey got its beginning.

On March 3, 1875, the first true hockey game took place at a rink in Montreal. It was an indoor game featuring two teams, a referee, and a puck. The score was recorded, and the game was reported in the Montreal Gazette the day of the game to attract the interest of fans. A report was published in the Gazette the next day detailing the events of the game. While the first game was on March 3, 1875, the rink was opened on December 24, 1862,

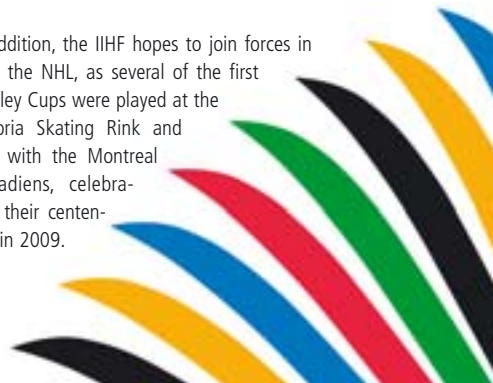
The IIHF would not have the chance to celebrate 100 years of ice hockey, had there not been the Victoria Skating Rink in Montreal. Students of McGill University held the first organized ice hockey game and placed the cornerstone for modern ice hockey, while clearing the path for foundation of the IIHF in 1908.

Instead of allowing those in Montreal to walk by without a second thought, the IIHF wants to recognize this important site of hockey history, which is currently a car rental agency. Despite the change of ownership, one can still see how just where the hockey rink fit before the area was urbanized. In fact, the ice hockey rink's current North American dimensions of 200' x 85' were established by the perimeter set by the surrounding street of the Victoria Rink (see photo above).

In recognition of this historic event and unique site, the IIHF will place a tangible, commemorative marker at the former location of the Victoria Skating Rink, which was closed and torn down in 1937.

The IIHF has taken the first initial steps to ensure that this jewel of hockey history will not be overlooked any longer. In cooperation with the City of Montreal, during the 2008 General Congress which is to be held at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel, located only a few hundred away from the birthplace of organized ice hockey, the IIHF hopes this landmark gets the attention it is due.

In addition, the IIHF hopes to join forces in with the NHL, as several of the first Stanley Cups were played at the Victoria Skating Rink and also with the Montreal Canadiens, celebrating their centennial in 2009.



Nothing is impossible in the

■ ■ Looking at a map, ice hockey is played in many remote and unlikely places. And it is often such lands that are overlooked by the hockey world. But as the following story from the Australian Ice Hockey League demonstrates, some of the best and most dramatic accomplishments in sports are those that are often hardly known by the greater general public. While only a handful of players will ever take the stage in an Olympic or in a World Championship medal game, all around the world there are those who play in their own all-or-nothing dramas. *By Jenny Wiedeke*

When people think about Australia, it evokes images of white sand beaches blue skies and crystal clear water. It's not a place too many people would associate with ice hockey.

But in the land down under, there is indeed an eight-team league and over 3,000 registered players that would argue, that while the nation is not home to 16,000-seat arenas and multi-million dollar players, Australia is indeed a country that knows and loves its ice hockey.

■ ■ Never mind the fact the nation has appeared in only one Winter Olympic Games in the sport (1960) and has only cracked the top 20 once in its 67-year history (1962). It's the small victories that make for great stories around the 'barbie'. Like the tale of this year's national champions, the Penrith Bears.

Teetering on the brink of financial ruin at the start of the season, the Bears were able to turn their potential horror story into a fairy tale finish, winning the Goodall Cup before a home crowd at their new rink, the Penrith Ice Palace, in overtime.

This was a team that had much to overcome. It is one of the few squads in the western part of the nation, and is located in a rugby-crazed town. "Penrith is a critical growth area for our sport, as it is home to the biggest junior rugby league competition in Australia," said IHA Marketing Director Rick Williams. "Folks out here love their rugby and they are the people that we believe would enjoy our 'Rugby on Ice'," Williams said.

■ ■ So while the rest of the hockey world was out on a golf course -- the Australian season takes place from June through September, the winter months for the Southern Hemisphere country -- The Penrith Bears began their mission to win the hearts of their town, save the team from financial ruin, oh and win a championship, too.

Thanks to the support of the local media and a well-timed 25th anniversary, the Bears were able to solicit a new home at Penrith and get financial backing.

The race to the play-offs was gut-wrenching for the Bears, who looked like they would miss out on the playoffs, until an unexpected loss by the Brisbane Blue Tongues in the final, round rocketed the Bears into fourth place and into the playoffs.

The team gained further momentum when it was announced that the championship would be held on home ice in Penrith.

The Bears showed their intent in their semi-final, defeating the first-placed Adelaide Avalanche, 4-1, and found themselves matched up against the Newcastle North Stars.

■ ■ For those unfamiliar with the finer points of Australian hockey, meeting Newcastle in the final game would be the equivalent of taking on Montreal in the height of their NHL heyday, not exactly the match-up of choice. In fact, Newcastle was aiming for their third Goodall Cup and had the league's top scorer on the roster, Brad Wanchulak.

From the first whistle, Newcastle took control, and a sequence of thrilling end-to-end rushes began. But early penalties stifled Newcastle's momentum and gave the Bears hope. The game was scoreless for much of the second period, but the Penrith struck taking a 1-0 lead. Soon the lead doubled as the home fans rejoiced at the unlikely lead. But like any good defending champion, Newcastle took control and scored two third-period goals to send the game into overtime.

The overtime was the first-ever for the Goodall Cup, which has a history that dates back only to 2002. The historic overtime didn't last long. After an initial exchange of chances, the Bears were awarded a power-play and Czech-born defenceman Rob Pasminka, hammered home a one-timer from inside the blue line. The bulging of the netting and blowing of the whistle signified a magic end to the season for the Bears, their first Goodall Cup since it was designated to be the AIHL prize in 2002.

Sure it didn't make any national news reels, or even garner a second glance from most of the hockey world. And yet, the thrill of the victory was never-the less just as sweet as for any NHL champion.

A fairytale ending for a team who had it all to lose.

-- with files, *Ice Hockey Australia.com*

In action: *Adrian Esposito and Warren Jayawardene stop the North Stars attack.*



GRIN AND BEAR IT: Pekka Kankaanranta the playoff series MVP has his hands full after the entire team celebrates their national championship, while the news is spread throughout



Australian Hockey League 2006-2007

Team	GP	W	L	OTW	OTL	GF:GA	TP
Adelaide	28	17	7	1	3	101:78	56
Melbourne	28	14	7	4	3	92:69	53
Newcastle	28	13	6	4	5	106:87	52
Penrith Bears	28	14	8	4	2	112:84	49
Brisbane	28	15	9	0	4	107:101	46
West Sydney	28	10	1	0	1	105:93	42
Canberra	28	6	2	0	2	84:124	20
Central Coast	28	2	2	0	1	71:142	9



Play offs:

Semifinal:

Adelaide - Bears 1:4

Melbourne - Newcastle 3:6

Final:

Newcastle - Bears 2:3 OT

Australia's top club league is called the Australian Ice Hockey League. Made up of eight teams that hail mostly from the South Eastern part of the country. Complete details on the league can be found at www.theaihl.com.au

Land Down Under



Victory puts the Bears in charge on ice

■ From Page 88
Newcastle took control early placing the Bears on the back foot with their relentless attacking style. Fortunately for the Bears, Newcastle gave away two penalties and this halted their attack. The momentum turned in favour of the Bears who took a 2-0 lead in the second period after goals to Vlad Rubes and Warren Jayaramane. Newcastle refused to lay down, fighting back hard to take the final into overtime for the first time in the history of the competition. The crowd were on their feet in anticipation but didn't have to wait long. Three minutes into overtime, contact between the North Stars goalie and a Bears forward saw benefit of the doubt given to the Bears' player, and the North Stars were penalised for hooking. After winning the next faceoff, the Bears set up an umbrella attack and sent the puck out to Rob Psaminika. He hammered home a huge goal and the Bears took the title and Goodall Cup. "It was such a fairytale finish," Mr Williams said. "We weren't sure what would happen this year but everyone is so happy with the win and their new home here in Penrith. The rink want us back and the boys said they aren't going anywhere. Penrith have got us for good it seems and we hope they are as happy as we are about it."



Bears in control

TODD DAGWELL

THE panther has been replaced by the bear as Penrith's top dog after a "gutsy" 3-2 win by the Penrith Bears over the Newcastle North Stars in the Australian Ice Hockey League grand final last Sunday. The Bears wrapped up a tumultuous season with a fairytale ending that left the capacity home crowd at Penrith Ice Palace screaming from the rafters. "It was an absolute packed house and the atmosphere was electric," Bears general manager Rick Williams said. Formerly the Sydney Bears, the team was on the brink of financial collapse at the start of the year before Penrith threw them a lifeline and provided them with a new cave to call their own. "The Bears have been moved around a lot and they finally found a home in Penrith where they

really felt wanted. That acceptance has enabled them to play so much better," Mr Williams said. The race towards the play-offs was gut-wrenchingly close and the Bears looked like missing out until an unexpected loss by the Brisbane Blue Tongues in the final round rocketed them into fourth place. The Bears' final chances received a major boost when it was announced Penrith Ice Palace had won the opportunity to host the final series. On Saturday the Bears sharpened their claws and easily defeated Adelaide Avalanche 4-1 in the semi-final to secure their place in the big one on Sunday. Newcastle defeated Melbourne in the other semi and were raging hot favourites to win their third straight National Title. ■ To Page 87



Penrith Bears put in an awesome performance to win the Australian Ice Hockey League grand final. Picture: DAVID HILL/OUTLINE

Factfile: Australia

- **Population:** 20,264,082
- **Coastline:** 25,760 km
- **Religions:** Catholic 26.4%, Anglican 20.5%, other Christian 20.5%, Buddhist 1.9%, Muslim 1.5%, other 1.2%, unspecified 12.7%, none 15.3%
- **Languages:** English 79.1%, Chinese 2.1%, Italian 1.9%, other 11.1%
- **Registered ice hockey players:** 3258
Male: 1723; Junior: 1287; Female: 248
- **2007 IIHF Events:** WS Div. II; Women's Div. III: U20 Div. II; U18 Div. II.
- **Rinks:** 21
- **Association:** Ice Hockey Australia was founded in 1950.
- **National champions since 2002:**
2002 Adelaide Avalanche
2003 Sydney Bears
2004 Newcastle Northstars
2005 West Sydney IceDogs
2006 Newcastle Northstars
2007 Penrith Bears

Photos: COURTESY OF ICE HOCKEY AUSTRALIA

team won the Australian national championship. In his right hand is the championship trophy, while he holds the MVP plaque in his left hand. Above, the Australian region of the Bears' title.



Journey Men:

Australia will host the 2008 IIHF World Championship, Division III in Newcastle this April. Normally, it is the Australians and New Zealanders that have a lengthy journey to get to events, but this year the tables are turned as the Kiwis will have the shortest trip -- although one that still registers over 1,000 miles. Just how long of a journey awaits the participating teams in April? Look below to find out:

Nation	Distance to Capital City
China	8,691 km (5,400 miles)
Serbia	15,654 km (9,728 miles)
Israel	14,187 km (8,815 miles)
Mexico	12,819 km (7,966 miles)
New Zealand	2,137 km (1,328 miles)

Photo: CIA WORLD FACTBOOK



HOPPING ALONG: Team Australia fields teams in every IIHF category. Most recently the women's team earned a promotion from Division III up to the second division after edging Great Britain for the promotion. At the junior level, the squad has traditionally competed in Division II, where the men's team also normally competes. The men's team is currently ranked 33rd in the IIHF World Ranking and moved up one place last season. The women's team is ranked 23rd. In Australia, Rugby is considered the most popular team sport.

A CONTINENT AND A COUNTRY: Not too many countries can claim that they are their own continent, but the Land Down Under is just that. It takes around four hours to fly from coast to coast as the nation is just slightly smaller than the continental United States. While Sydney is the nation's best-known city, it is actually Canberra that is the capital of the country. Overall, Australia has just over 20 million inhabitants.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

IHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS		
MEN'S		
2008	CANADA, Quebec City & Halifax	01.05-18.05.08
2009	SWITZERLAND, Zurich & Bern	24.04-10.05.09
2010	GERMANY, Cologne & Mannheim	07-23.05.10
2011	SLOVAKIA, Bratislava & Kosice	30.04-15.05.11
2012	FINLAND, Helsinki & Turku	28.04-13.05.12
2013	SWEDEN, Stockholm & Malmö	TBA
2014	APPLICANTS: HUN, BLR	
IHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group A		
2008	AUSTRIA, Innsbruck	13-19.04.08
IHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group B		
2008	JAPAN, Sapporo	13-19.04.08
IHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group A		
2008	ROMANIA, Brasov	07-13.04.08
IHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group B		
2008	AUSTRALIA, Newcastle	07-13.04.08
IHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III		
2008	LUXEMBOURG, Luxembourg City	31.03-06.04.08
IHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III QUALIFICATION		
2008	BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA, Sarajevo	15-17.02.08
WOMEN'S:		
IHF WORLD WOMEN CHAMPIONSHIP		
2008	CHINA, Harbin	04-13.04.08
2009	FINLAND, Vantaa & Hämeenlinna	05-12.04.09
2011	APPLICANTS: GER	
2012	USA, TBA	TBA
IHF WORLD WOMEN CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I		
2008	LATVIA, Ventspils	10-16.03.08
IHF WORLD WOMEN CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II		
2008	FINLAND, Vierumäki	25-30.03.08
IHF WORLD WOMEN CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III		
2008	HUNGARY, Miskolc	06-12.04.08
IHF WORLD WOMEN CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION IV		
2008	ROMANIA, Miercurea Ciuc	23-29.03.08
IHF WORLD U18 WOMEN CHAMPIONSHIP		
2008	CANADA, Calgary	07-12.01.08
UNDER 20:		
IHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP		
2008	CZECH REPUBLIC, Pardubice & Liberec	26.12.07-05.01.08
2009	CANADA, Ottawa	TBA
2010	CANADA, TBA	TBA
2011	USA, TBA	TBA
IHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group A		
2008	GERMANY, Bad Tölz	09-15.12.07
IHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group B		
2008	LATVIA, Riga	12-18.12.07
IHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group A		
2008	ITALY, Canazei	09-15.12.07
IHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group B		
2008	ESTONIA, Tallinn	10-16.12.07
IHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III		
2008	SERBIA, Belgrade	16-24.01.08
UNDER 18:		
IHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP		
2008	RUSSIA, Kazan	13-23.04.08
2009	USA, TBA	TBA
IHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group A		
2008	POLAND, Torun	02-08.04.08
IHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group B		
2008	LATVIA, Riga	02-08.04.08
IHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group A		
2008	FRANCE, Meribel & Courchevel	30.03-05.04.08
IHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group B		
2008	ESTONIA, Tallinn	23-29.03.08
IHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III, Group A		
2008	MEXICO, Mexico City	02-08.03.08
IHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III, Group B		
2008	TURKEY, Izmit	03-09.02.08
OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES		
2010	CANADA, Vancouver	12-28.02.10
IHF IN-LINE CHAMPIONSHIPS		
2008	SLOVAKIA, Bratislava	21-28.06.08
IHF CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS		
IHF EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS CUP (ECC)		
2008	RUSSIA, St Petersburg	10-13.01.08
2007		
IHF EUROPEAN WOMEN CHAMPIONS CUP		
	First Round	05-07.10.07
	Second Round	30.11-02.12.07
	Final: SWEDEN, Stockholm	29.01-03.02.08
2007-2008		
IHF CONTINENTAL CUP		
	First Round: ROU	14-16.09.07
	Second Round: DEN, NED & POL	12-14.10.07
	Third Round: FRANCE	16-18.11.07
	Super Final: LATVIA, Riga	04-06.01.08
NATIONAL TEAM BREAKS		
2007-2008	1st International Break	Aug. 27 - Sept. 2
2007-2008	2nd International Break	Nov. 5 - 11
2007-2008	3rd International Break	Dec. 10 - 16
2007-2008	4th International Break	Feb. 4 - 10
2008/2009	1st International Break	Sept. 1 - 7
2008/2009	2nd International Break	Nov. 3 - 9
2008/2009	3rd International Break	Dec. 15 - 21
2008/2009	4th International Break	Feb. 2 - 8
2009/2010	1st International Break	Aug. 31 to Sept. 6
2009/2010	2nd International Break	Nov. 2 - 8
2009/2010	3rd International Break	Dec. 14 - 20
2009/2010	4th International Break	Feb. 8 - 14
2010/2011	1st International Break	Aug. 30 - Sept. 5
2010/2011	2nd International Break	Nov. 8 - 14
2010/2011	3rd International Break	Dec. 13 - 19
2010/2011	4th International Break	Feb. 7 - 13
OTHER INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS		
IHF WORLD OLDTIMERS FESTIVAL		
2008	CANADA, Halifax & Quebec City	05-11.05.08
WINTER UNIVERSIADE		
2009	CHINA, Harbin	18-28.02.09
CONGRESSES		
IHF SEMI-ANNUAL CONGRESS		
2008	SWITZERLAND, Montreux	25-27.09.08
IHF ANNUAL CONGRESS		
2009	SWITZERLAND, Bern	07-09.05.09
IHF ANNUAL & GENERAL CONGRESS		
2008	CANADA, Montreal	20-24.05.08



ONE SIDED: Early autumn was the perfect time for Canada and Russia's U20 teams to replay the famous 1972 Summit Series. Unfortunately the series wasn't nearly as competitive as in '72 as Canada romped 7-0-1.

Border Crossing: Teams & players making the leap

Hockey has entered a new and exciting era where clubs, leagues and federations are constantly looking for new structures and establishing new frontiers. These new frontiers are more often than not crossing borders that have long established hockey's boundaries.

By Szymon Szemberg

The NHL has been an international league since 1924 when the Boston Bruins became the first U.S.-based franchise to team up with Canadian teams. While, with very few exceptions, leagues in Europe have always been strictly national. But this is not the case anymore.

■ ■ Searching for increased quality of competition, clubs in Europe are more and more thinking regionally, rather than being confined by national boundaries. The Austrian league is the current frontrunner in this mentality, having opened its doors to top teams from Slovenia and Hungary. Acroni Jesenice and Olimpija Ljubljana are the Slovenian entries in the 'Erste Bank' Liga, while Alba Volan Szekesfehervar is the Hungarian representative.

The Slovenians and Hungarians are attracted by the higher level of play in the Austrian league, where Red Bulls Salzburg are the leading club boosted by resources from energy-drink billionaire Dietrich Mateschitz. No sooner did the Slovenians and Hungarians join the Austrian league, than Salzburg's Swedish General Manager, Hardy Nilsson, announced that his Red Bulls are thinking about leaving the Austrian league to join the German DEL.

■ ■ North of Austria, three Baltic nations not only share common history, but they are now also shareholders in the newly formed 'Samsung Premjerliga'. Latvia, the dominating hockey country in the Baltic region, has five teams in the league but it is for the 2007-08-season joined by Big Diamonds (Narva, Estonia) and Energija Elektrenai (Lithuania).

"The reason for the movement is obviously to increase the level of competition," said Maris Baldoniks, General Secretary of the Latvian Ice Hockey Association. "We are all small countries and since we have so much in common it makes sense to co-operate."

■ ■ Regional thinking and co-operation over the borders is the foundation of the Asian Hockey League (AL) which has operated since 2004. Heading into its fourth season the seven-league team will have five franchises in Japan, two in South Korea and one in China. The most interesting club will be Beijing-based China Sharks, a merger between Hosa and Changchun Fuao and supported by the NHL's San José Sharks.

It is the first time an NHL-team has actively engaged in an Asian team as San José will be sending three coaches and five players to the China Sharks.

"We want to see ice hockey grow in China, to be as popular as basketball, soccer and help the country make it to the Olympics some day," said San José Sharks President & CEO Greg Jamison.



Photo: GEPA-PICTURES

A BULL MARKET: NHL star Anze Kopitar logged some serious miles in the pre-season, travelling from his native Slovenia to Los Angeles for the King's training camp. The NHL team then returned to European soil to take part in a pre-season tournament in Salzburg, Austria.

■ ■ The NHL has earlier showed interest in the Asian market by opening the regular season in Tokyo in 1997, 1998 and 2000. Now the focus has switched to Europe, where for the first time the NHL opened its regular season in London, England September 29-30. The Los Angeles Kings and defending Stanley Cup champion Anaheim Ducks sold out both games in the new O2 Arena.

■ ■ Other decisions marked by 'thinking outside the box' have seen leagues include their junior national teams in the national league system. Finland and Switzerland have for some years now included their U20 team in their respective second division, but Slovak Ice Hockey Association went one step further prior to this season.

The Slovaks selected 22 juniors to form a club team which will be on a 35-game schedule in Slovakia's top professional league, the 'Extraliga'. This is a unique experiment on this level and the program is set for three seasons.

"We made this decision to help stop the migration of Slovak players to the Canadian junior leagues," says Igor Nemecek of the Slovak Ice Hockey Association. "We think that by giving the juniors this option to play against the best in our country, they realize that they can develop more by competing against Slovak professionals than by playing against Canadian juniors. Our goal is to have at least 14 out of the 22 players to go to the 2008 World U20 Championship in the Czech Republic."

Super series one sided

■ ■ Canada's U20 team made it clear that the Cold War era is over as they completely dominated Russia's U20 squad in a revival of the 1972 Super Series.

It was clear from the first puck drop that this would be a Canadian-dominated affair, after sweeping the Russian leg of the tour, winning all four games and out-scoring their rivals 17-6.

Once back on home soil, the Canadians clinched the series with an emphatic 8-1 win in Winnipeg. Canada's only blemish came in Game 7, when the squad skated to a 4-4 tie. Overall the series ended with a Canadian-led 7-0-1 record.

■ ■ The series was staged to mark the 35th anniversary of the 1972 Summit Series with the then Soviet Union. That series, which featured the men's national teams went down to the wire with Canada winning the final three games in Moscow to capture the series, 4-3, with one tie.

Photo: SKODA/Sergei Kivrin, "FIS", Moscow,

MIRROR MIRROR ON THE WALL:

During the 2007 IIHF World Championship in Russia, official sponsor Skoda Auto held its first-ever photo contest for all accredited photographers at the event. Skoda received several entries, but it was this photo, captured by Sergei Kivrin, that captured the jury's eye.

As Slovakia's Peter Podhradsky left the ice, Kivrin snapped the optical illusion. Anatoly Maltsev and Vladimir Vyatkin claimed second and third place, respectively.

On the jury were: Vladislav Tretiak, Head of the Organising Committee; Kimmo Leinonen, IIHF Director of Marketing; Bruno Marty, Executive Director Infront; Franz Reindl, Managing Director German Eishockey Federation; Kirils Smelkovs, Foto-Journalist, SIA 'Preses Tilts' Latvia; and Martin Lauer, Head of Corporate Communication Skoda.



From Football to Ice Hockey:

Craig Thompson looks to duplicate his success

By Szymon Szemberg

Craig Thompson was one of the men behind the success story with the UEFA Champions League in the early 90s. Now, as the CEO of the newly formed OVATION Sports marketing company, he will be the IIHF's closest ally with the Champions Hockey League, due to start in the 2008-2009-season.

■ ■ What are the things that you are most proud of with your legacy of the UEFA Champions league?

A: When we started the UEFA Champions League it was in the early nineties and there was a lot of trouble with fan violence and the European Club championship was not as well exposed as it should have been. We wanted to upgrade the image of football, reduce the violence and attract a broader and higher-level audience. So we focused on the 'higher image of football' as our key theme. We brought this to life with the logo - eight stars representing the eight star clubs of Europe and the star players on those teams. We produced an opening sequence for TV for all the games where the star players were shown as Greek Gods in marble that then came to life in front of your eyes. All of this was set to classical music to uplift the image. As a result we built the Champions League into one of Europe's top sport properties, achieved very high TV audiences, and brought in over 1 billion Swiss Francs annually - most of which went back to the participating clubs.

■ ■ Why ice hockey now?

A: It's one of the fastest, most exciting and most spectator friendly sports that exist. It has some unique elements that no other sports have. The combination of speed and skill that the players exhibit is unique. Considering all that, I feel that the sport is hugely underexposed, especially on the European club level.

■ ■ This is the IIHF's third attempt to launch a top European club competition after the old European Cup (1965-97) and the European Hockey League (1997-2000). Why will the Champions Hockey League succeed?

A: We have analyzed the previous attempts and we think that we have identified four major things that will make the CHL attractive for the clubs, fans and media.

A) The format will pit only the truly best teams against each other, with clubs from lower ranked leagues being able to qualify to be among the best.

Name: Craig Thompson,

Born: California, USA in 1949

Background: Moved to Europe in 1986 to work with the International Volleyball Federation and later with the International Equestrian Federation (1987).

In 1988 joined ISL Marketing as Vice President. Joined TEAM and was a Managing Director of the marketing agency when it became the commercial partner of the UEFA Champions League in 1992. Founded OVATION Sports AG in 2007 that will be the IIHF's commercial partner for the Champions Hockey League and the Victoria Cup.



Photo: THOMAS FREYER

NO YELLOW CARDS HERE: Ovation Sports founder Craig Thompson poses in front of the International Ice Hockey Federation headquarters with a hockey stick. Thomson has traded in the cleats of football for the skates of hockey as he takes on the challenge of getting the Champions Hockey League off the ground.

B) The financial incentives for the clubs will be attractive
C) The CHL-champion will be guaranteed a game against an NHL-challenger playing for the Victoria Cup every Fall.
D) We will use our Champions League experience to organize the games at a level not seen before in Europe.

■ ■ Before the IIHF and OVATION decided to work together with this project, your group did a feasibility study. What did it show?

A: We approached potential sponsors and broadcasters and showed them our CHL concept. The response was very encouraging. What we basically were told is that if we launch the CHL and the Victoria Cup as envisioned, we will create something that sponsors and broadcasters will be willing to be associated with. We found out that ice hockey is one of the few major European sports that does not have a strong club championship and the fans want the chance to follow their teams to become European Champion.

■ ■ What is the vision you have for the CHL?

A: The CHL will be the ultimate stage for an European ice hockey club championship, presented as a modern, fast, sport entertainment, while respecting the sport and honoring its traditions. We want the CHL to become Europe's second biggest club competition after soccer.

■ ■ So you don't envision any revolutionary rule changes, like awarding two goals for a shot from centre ice?

A: No, as I said we want to honor the traditions of the sport. The sports side will be governed by the IIHF while our group will do the branding and marketing of the league. But basically we like ice hockey as it is.

■ ■ Your former project, the UEFA Champions League, has a very specific brand concept that makes the broadcasts and the games easily recognizable. Are there similar plans for the CHL?

A: Yes. Branding of the CHL is a key element in this whole project. Everything from the ice and the arena to the TV-graphics, fan merchandise, match programs, team jerseys, website and TV studios will be part of the branding concept. There should never be a doubt that the game a fan watches either on TV or in the arena is a Champions Hockey League game. And yes, the club jerseys will be clean from advertising. That's very important.

■ ■ Why?

A: One of the most important things is to make the top European hockey clubs recognizable among sports fans. Everyone in Europe knows Real Madrid and Manchester United, but how many know AK Bars Kazan or Farjestad outside of their home countries? One way to achieve that is to increase the recognition and value of the club brand, the logo and the colors. This is what the club jersey should display and this shouldn't get lost in endless patches of advertising.

■ ■ What do you think that the CHL can do for the clubs?

A: It can strengthen their fan base in Europe and further increase their financial stability. With new economic conditions the clubs may be able to compete for some of the players who now leave for the NHL.