

Host Switzerland scores a perfect 10



THE RED SEA: One reason Switzerland has been able to stage such successful World Championships is the immense fan support of hockey in the tiny country. Hockey is the top winter sport, and is only second behind football year-round. Bern, a host city for 2009, holds the current club attendance record in Europe.

World class, record-setting host on its way to being a world contender



Here is a fact that many hockey fans probably are not aware of: The 2009 IIHF World Championship will be the 10th men's major championship to be played in Switzerland (including the 1928 and 1948 Olympics, which until 1968 also counted as World Championships)

RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL

■ ■ This makes Switzerland the record holder among all IIHF's host organizing countries, surpassing Sweden and Czechoslovakia / Czech Republic which both have hosted the World Championships nine times.

This may appear a little strange to some as Switzerland - as opposed to the Swedes and the Czechs - have not been a true world hockey power since the pioneer years of the sport, in the 20s and 30s.

■ ■ But what makes Switzerland such a suitable host is the combination of passion for winter sport and the ability to stage well organized events. It was especially evident in the three consecutive IIHF World Championships held in the country - in 1961, 1971 and 1990.

The host nation did not participate in any of these three championships (Switzerland was simply not good enough) but the fans still came out to support the events and the organization was outstanding. Today it would be unthinkable to organize an event like this without the host team taking part.

Which immediately brings us to the next topic; how much ice hockey has improved

and increased in prestige in Switzerland. Today, the Swiss are almost a sure bet to play in the quarterfinals and basically every year they surprise one of the true giants of the sport. No fan in the country will forget the 3-2 and 2-0 wins over the Czech Republic and Canada respectively in the 2006 Olympics in Torino. Last year in Quebec City, Sweden was defeated, 4-2.

■ ■ But Swiss hockey has not only made progress on national team level. No true hockey fan missed the fact that the ZSC Lions of Zurich are the reigning club champions of Europe after winning the inaugural Champions Hockey League in January.

The 73rd IIHF World Championship in Bern and Kloten-Zurich will not only provide Russia with the opportunity to defend its World crown from Canada 2008, but it will also be the last championship before the XXI Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver, Canada. This bodes for a very interesting event as many players will use this occasion to "audition" for the Olympic team in 2010.

■ ■ In the five post-World War II championships organized in Switzerland the winning teams were Sweden (1953, 1998), Soviet Union (1971, 1990) and Canada (1961). If you exchange Soviet Union with Russia, there is no question that this trio is among the heaviest favorites to win the gold when final game is over on May 10. Yes, these three countries are 1-2-3 in the current IIHF World Ranking.

As the president of the International Ice Hockey Federation, I am immensely proud to invite all hockey fans to the 73rd IIHF World Championships in Switzerland.

René Fasel
IIHF President

NEWS & NOTES

■ ■ **UNITED STATES:** U.S. goalkeeper **Jessie Vetter**, who plays for the University of Wisconsin, was named the winner of the 2009 Patty Kazmaier Memoria Award. In its 12th year, the award is presented annually to the top player in NCAA (college) women's ice hockey.

■ ■ **KAZAKHSTAN:** **Andrei Shayanov** was named head coach of Kazakhstan after the resignation for **Yerlan Sagymbayev**. Shayanov is the head coach of Kazakhstan's KHL team Barys Astana. Sagymbayev, resigned after the team's third-place finish at the Final Olympic Qualification in Oslo.

■ ■ **CANADA:** The Montreal Stars won the inaugural Clarkson Cup after defeating the Minnesota Whitecaps, 3-1. The inaugural North American women's club championship featured the top two teams from both the WWHL (Minnesota Whitecaps, Calgary Oval X-Treme) and CWHL (Montreal Stars and Brampton Canadettes).

■ ■ **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES:** The 2009 IIHF Challenge Cup of Asia was hosted and won by the United Arab Emirates. UAE beat Thailand in the title game. It was the second year that the Challenge Cup of Asia was held.

■ ■ **RUSSIA / CANADA:** The Russian men and the Canadian women won the hockey tournaments at the 24th Winter Universiade in Harbin, China. The Universiade has been organized by the FISU since 1959 and both the summer and winter events take place every two years during non-Olympic years. 2,366 participants from 44 countries took part in this year's Winter Universiade in Northern China.

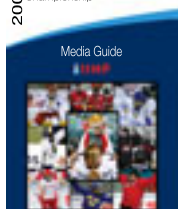
■ ■ **JAPAN:** The Nippon Paper Cranes from Kushiro won the Asian league, topping Korea's Anyang Halla, which was the first non-Japanese regular-season winner in the league. The Asian League features the top teams from China, Japan and Korea.

IIHF World Championship Official Media Guides



The IIHF has produced official media guides for both the men's and women's World Championships. For those that are not able to attend the events, a copy can be ordered by emailing the IIHF. Please send an email to media@iihf.com. Include in the email a postal

address (electronic copies are not available) and which media guide you would like to receive. Please be advised that media guide supplies are limited and all requests for copies may not be fulfilled.



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WM 2014: And then there were four

■ ■ The bid process for the 2014 IIHF World Championship continued after all potential applicants met with the Event Committee in mid-March at the IIHF headquarters in Zurich.

The list of applications was trimmed from five to four after the Czech Republic withdrew its application to host. The Czechs still hold the World Championship attendance record after the 2004 event in Prague and Ostrava.

■ ■ The four nations that are still in the hunt for the rights to host the 2014 Worlds are Belarus, Hungary, Latvia and Ukraine.



Of the quartet, only Latvia has ever staged and IIHF top level men's World Championship when they hosted the 2006 edition in Riga.

Belarus, Hungary and Ukraine have all staged lower division World Championships, while Belarus most notably hosted the U18 World Championship in 2004.

The final decision for the 2014 host will be made at the IIHF Annual Congress in Bern this May.

Aljancic named new Slovenian president

■ ■ Ernest Aljancic is back as president of the Slovenian Ice Hockey Association. The 64-year old was elected on March 23. The election comes after a period of turbulence in Slovenian ice hockey and the delegates voted on a man with a proven track record. Aljancic took over the reigns at the Slovenian Ice Hockey Association in 1998, when the national team played on the Division II level.

Under his leadership, Slovenia advanced to the top-16 elite division in 2002. Since then, the Balkan nation has been in the top division on five occasions, but were relegated last year after finishing 15th at the World Championship in Canada



Aljancic left the position in 2006 as he also became honorary president, but two years later, supported by the four biggest clubs, Aljancic has been called back to duty as the association faces major financial difficulties. Aljancic said that he will give one year to improve the economic situation and then will leave the leadership to a younger force. He has been an IIHF Council Member since 2003.

Vancouver schedule set

■ ■ The schedule for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver was finalized by the IIHF following the Final Olympic qualification tournaments. The preliminary round schedule for the men's tournament can be found below. All men's preliminary round games will be played in the CHP arena, which is the arena for the NHL's Vancouver Canucks.



Men's Preliminary Round Schedule:

16.02	A	12:00	USA - SUI
	A	16:30	CAN - NOR
	B	21:00	RUS - LAT
17.02	C	12:00	FIN - BLR
	C	16:30	SWE - GER
	B	21:00	CZE - SVK
18.02	A	12:00	USA - NOR
	A	16:30	SUI - CAN
	B	21:00	SVK - RUS
19.02	C	12:00	BLR - SWE
	B	16:30	CZE - LAT
	C	21:00	FIN - GER
20.02	A	12:00	NOR - SUI
	B	16:30	LAT - SVK
	C	21:00	GER - BLR
21.02	B	12:00	RUS - CZE
	A	16:45	CAN - USA
	C	21:00	SWE - FIN

After the preliminary round, all teams will be ranked in a joint ranking 'D'. This ranking (1-12) will be used for seeding the teams in the playoff games. The teams ranked, 1D, 2D, 3D and 4D will receive a bye into the quarterfinals, while the teams ranked 5-12 will play one qualification game with the winners moving onto the quarterfinals.

The joint ranking will be used for calculating the Final Ranking at the conclusion of the 2010 Olympic Winter Games Men's Tournament.

IIHF News

■ ■ The IIHF Council decided to relegate two teams from this year's World Women's Championship to return the format back to eight teams at the elite level. China and Japan were the two teams that were relegated. Since 2004, the event was played with nine teams seeded into three groups. The nine-team format came after the championship was cancelled in 2003 after the SARS epidemic in China and room had to be made for the promoted team from Division I. After four seasons with the nine teams, the council voted that a more appropriate format for the championship is an eight-team event with two preliminary round groups of four teams.

OBITUARIES

■ ■ Hungarian national team player **Gábor Ocskay** died of heart attack on March 25, just four days after he won the Hungarian national championship with Alba Volan. The 34 year-old player appeared in 187 national team games for Hungary and was expected to be on the roster for the World Championship in Switzerland. He was a member of the 2008 Hungarian national team that won the promotion to the top division in Sapporo, giving Hungary its first spot in the elite division in 70 years.

■ ■ Former Russian defenseman **Igor Stelnov** passed away at the age of 46. On the club level, he won nine Soviet championships and eight European Cups with CSKA Moscow. Internationally, he won the Olympic gold in 1984 and 1988 with the Soviet Union. He also earned a gold and silver at the IIHF World Championship in 1986 and 1987, respectively.

■ ■ **Jaroslav Pitner**, former national team coach for Czechoslovakia, died at the age of 83. Nicknamed the General of Hockey, Pitner coached Czechoslovakia from 1966-1973, leading them to the World Championship title in Prague in 1972. The victory was fifth on the IIHF's list of the 100 Top Stories of the Century.

Italy and Kazakhstan punch tickets to 2010 Worlds

Italy makes the quick leap back to elite 16, Kazakhstan back after three years

■ ■ It was like a traditional wedding at this year's Division I World Championships. There was something old: Italy's Roland Ramoser in his 16th World Championship event. Something new: Lithuania's new state-of-the-art arena in Vilnius, which hosted Group B. Something borrowed: Italy was clearly on borrowed time at the Division I level, making the quick turnaround back to the top division after just one year. And finally, something blue: the Slovenian national team after coming oh so close to the promotion again, yet losing the decisive game against Kazakhstan.

Old fox Ramoser fixes Italy's return

What an incredible comeback story for Italy and forward Roland Ramoser. In his 16th World Championship event, the 39-year old Ramoser led the Group A tournament in scoring and also scored the game-winning goal in the deciding game, a 2-0 win over Ukraine.

It was a spring that the Italian veteran will never forget. Just before the Group B event kicked off in the Polish city of Torun, Ramoser was instrumental in the Bolzano Foxes' Italian championship title run.

Just a few days later, it was time to refocus on bringing Italy back to the top-16 nations at the World Championship, from which the Italians were relegated after finishing in last place in Canada 2008.

Ramoser is one of the most durable players in the history of international hockey. This year's event was his 16th consecutive IIHF World Championship appearance which puts him second on the IIHF's all-time list. Only Austria's Martin Ulrich has more, 17.

If one only includes top pool championships, Ramoser has 12 of them, leaving only Finland's Petteri Nummelin ahead of Ramoser among active players, with 13.

And the Ramoser success story continued all the way to the picturesque city of Torun. Despite almost hitting 40, Ramoser led the championship in scoring with five goals and three assists for eight points in five games. Ramoser was consistent through the final and decisive game against Ukraine where he broke the deadlock after 14 minutes of the second period.



While Italy was promoted to the 2010 IIHF World Championship in Germany next year, Romania moves a step down to Division II, after five consecutive losses.

Narrow win brings Kazakhs back

■ ■ It was close, but at the end of the day a fully-deserved victory and promotion went to Kazakhstan, who returns to the top-16 pool after a three-year absence. Forward Ilya Solarev was the hero, scoring both goals in the 2-1 final win over Slovenia.

It seemed close – and it was – but very few of the 4,800 fans who watched the final game of the Group A tournament could deny that the best team had won and earned promotion to Germany 2010.

Ilya Solarev, from KHL club Barys Astana, had only one goal prior to the deciding game for promotion against Slovenia on April 17. But he doubled his output when things mattered most.



Assisted by another veteran, defenseman Michele Strazzabosco, Ramoser scored on a power-play and the marker stood as the game, championship and promotion-winning goal. Ramoser was also on the ice when linemate Nicola Fontanive scored the insurance goal, an empty netter with 1:24 left in the game.

Another Italian hero was goaltender Thomas Tragust, who had the shut-out and completed the championship with only four goals against, in five outings. Tragust was given the Best Goaltender Award, while teammate Trevor Johnson was named Best Defenseman. Ukraine's consolation was Andri Mikhnov's Best Forward recognition.

Italy and Ukraine dominated this event from the first puck drop, but there was always the feeling that Italy was slightly better. The feeling was confirmed by the emphatic scores; 11-0 against Romania, 5-2 against Great Britain, a 4-0 shutout of the Netherlands and the host Poland was defeated 4-2 in a very competitive game, prior to the decider against Ukraine.

Solarev put the Kazakhs ahead after 8:24 of the opening period and he notched the game-winner exactly midway through the contest. It wasn't until 16:11 of the last stanza that Slovenia got the puck past Alexei Kuznetsov in the Kazakh net and it was too little, too late.

After Mitja Sivic's contact goal, Slovenia pulled goalie Andrej Hocevar but coach John Harrington's team couldn't get the equalizer. It was a huge disappointment for Slovenia and the 1980 Lake Placid miracle man Harrington, who had to do without the services of NHL star Anze Kopitar.

Kazakhstan won because of a balanced attack and very good defense. Only in the 13-2 thrashing of newcomer Australia did the Kazakhs concede more than one goal in one game.

They opened the event by defeating host Lithuania 5-1, continued with beating Croatia 6-1, Japan 3-1, in a very close contest, and finally Slovenia 2-1.

Despite the excellent play by goaltender Kuznetsov, it was Slovenia's Andrej Hocevar who was named Best Goaltender, while Japan's Aaron Keller was Best Defenseman. Vadim Krasnoslobotsev (Kazakhstan) was selected as Best Forward after scoring nine points (3+6) in five games.

He was tied in championship scoring with Japan's Takeshi Saito who was 5+4.

Australia fought bravely but they couldn't avoid relegation to Division II next year. They lost all five games, with none of the games being close. The Aussies' goals differential was 7-40.

Kazakhstan's last visit to the top division was in Latvia 2006.

GOING UP: *Italy and Kazakhstan both celebrate their promotions back to the Elite 16 nations at the men's World Championship. Both countries had to survive close deciding games, but both had what it took to join the world's best in 2010 in Germany.*

2009 IIHF WORLD WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP RECAP

Take Two: USA wins women's again

It's less than one year before the Olympics kick off in Canada, and the host nation must be a little nervous. After dominating the women's hockey scene for the last decade, Canada has finally met some serious resistance as the USA won its second straight gold medal at the World Women's Championship with a convincing 4-1 win against Canada. The title put the Americans on top of the IIHF Women's World Ranking for the first time in history, and more importantly gave the nation momentum heading into Vancouver 2010. While the medal finishers remained unchanged from last year, the lower part of the standings was filled with surprises as the 2008 Cinderella Swiss had to fight for their lives to avoid relegation, while newly promoted Kazakhstan cruised to a sixth-place finish. In 2011, the Women's Worlds will be without an Asian entry as both China and Japan were relegated to Division I.

PHOTOS: HHOF- IIHF Images



A FAMILIAR SIGHT: The United States bench erupts after winning the 2009 World Women's Championship in Finland with a 4-1 victory against Canada. It was similar to the scene last year in Harbin, China (left) when the Americans took the title. It is the first time that the U.S. won back-to-back titles against Canada. The American women's program is definitely on an upswing after winning the last two U18 women's titles to go with the pair of gold medals at the senior events in 2008 and 2009.



THE CLOCK STRIKES 12: The fairy tale ended for Switzerland when Kazakhstan stacked up well against last-year's fourth-place finisher and sent the Swiss packing to the relegation round. Once in the bottom three, the Swiss barely avoided getting shipped down to Division I with two narrow, one-goal victories against China and Japan.



THE CLOCK KEEPS TICKING: Like a Swiss watch, the Finnish women's national team has become a symbol of reliability at the Women's Worlds. The nation has skated in every bronze medal game at the event and this year topped Nordic rival, Sweden, for the bronze medal. The host celebrated its win, but now turns its attention to staying on the podium in 2010.



DOWN & OUT: Last year, last-minute heroics saved China its spot in the women's top division, but with two teams getting relegated this year the Chinese could not hang on to their spot among the elite. They finished in last place among the nine nations.



TO BE CONTINUED...

Few doubt after this year's Women's Worlds results that Canada and the U.S. will be the teams to beat in Vancouver. While the eight-team format leaves more room for an upset from an outside nation, few would be disappointed to see the North American giants square off in the golden game next February when the next women's hockey chapter will be written.

USA wins latest U18 superpower summit

Russians are no match for Americans on home ice in U18 gold medal game

■ ■ Team USA did something that no other team at the U18 World Championship has been able to do when it won the gold medal on home ice in Fargo, North Dakota. The win ended an 11-year winless streak for the host nation and also brought the Americans back on top of the U18 standings for the first time since 2006.

A familiar sight

The gold medal game was truly a meeting of the two U18 giants as Russia and the U.S. squared off for the fourth time in the golden meeting. The two nations have dominated the championship standings. Russia paces all nations with eight U18 medals, missing the podium only three times, while the Americans have seven overall medals to their credit.

So when it was once again Russia and USA meeting in the final game, few were surprised that the two teams had once again risen to the top of the standings. But onlookers were surprised when the Americans completely dominated Russia in the golden game with a stunning 5-0 triumph.

The U.S. out-shot Russia 43-17 in front of a near sell-out crowd and dominated the game from the first whistle to the last buzzer. In the first 10 minutes, the Americans held a solid 2-0 lead and with the Russians showing no signs of life it soon became clear that it would be enough for the gold. The golden game was truly a team effort with five different players scoring in the win.

Building Momentum

The final was a far cry from nip and tuck preliminary round between Russia and the U.S., which the Russians won, 6-5. The loss meant that the Americans missed the quarterfinal round bye and had to win three straight games in order to claim the gold.

In the quarterfinals, the U.S. easily sent the Czechs packing with a 6-2 win. The Czechs, which were on the verge of the relegation round, seemed content to skate for fifth. Next up was a well-rested Canadian team in the semi-finals. The meeting was another classic battle between the North American rivals as the U.S. scored two, third period goals in a 2-1 win to set up the meeting with Russia in the golden game.

Losing Momentum

Unlike the Americans, the Canadians, which won their preliminary round group, lost their magic touch when the medals were on the line. After the semi-final loss against the U.S., the Canadians lost another one-goal game, this time in a shootout, in the bronze medal game against Finland. Both the Finns and the Canadians were the top teams entering the medal round, and both were upended. For Finland, the bronze medal was a step in the right direction. It was the team's first medal at U18s since a silver in 2006, and the nation's fifth-overall medal.

Looking ahead

■ ■ There is no doubt that the Americans have etched their place in the U18 hockey world as the team to beat. Its four gold medals is now a tournament record and the team trails only Russia in the overall medal count. For Russia, it marked the second year of getting thumped by a North American nation in the final game, last year Canada won the final by a whopping 8-0 margin.

It is becoming evident that this year's Final Four, Canada, Finland, Russia and USA, are the U18 teams to beat. The quartet are the only ones that have ever won the gold medal and currently overwhelm all other nations with their total medal count. But the Americans have about 365 days to start worrying about their three top foes, until then, they can celebrate their fourth title.

Notebook:

■ The three medal teams also took the three directorate awards. The best goaltender was Russia's Igor Bobkov, Finland's Toni Rajala the top forward, while Cam Fowler of the U.S. was the top defenseman.

■ Germany and Norway were relegated to Division I. For the Germans, the move down is tough after finishing in fifth place last year and skating in the top division since 2004. Norway was just promoted last year and makes the quick return to Division I.



OH SAY CAN YOU SEE: The U.S. was a force in the playoff round at the World U18 Championship, giving up only three goals in three games on the road to gold. It is the fourth U.S. gold medal at the event.

Ten years of the U18 Worlds

■ ■ The IIHF World U18 Championship reached a major milestone before this season, celebrating its 10th anniversary. The annual tournament was started in 1999 as an expansion to the European U18 Championship. The following is a year-by-year look at the greatest hits that the championship has produced so far.

■ **1999 - Fussen, Germany:** Finland wins the inaugural U18 championship on the strength of its goal-keeping with Ari Ahonen in net. Slovakia becomes the surprise bronze medalist as a little-known forward named Marian Gaborik leads his team and comes away with the Directorate Best Forward award.

■ **2000 - Kloten, Switzerland:** Finland goes for its second straight title, this time led in net by Kari Lehtonen. The Nordic nations are strong at the championship as Sweden follows its 1999 silver medal with a bronze in 2000. Russia wins its first of what will be many U18 medals, while the Swiss are the surprise of the event, making it to the bronze medal game.

■ **2001 - Helsinki, Finland:** Home ice proves to be Finland's downfall, that and a Russian forward

named Ilya Kovalchuk, who is the tournament's top forward. Kovalchuk leads Russia to its first gold medal, while Tobias Stephan backstops the Swiss to their first, and last medal, at U18s, a silver. The Finns have to settle for bronze, which proves to be their last podium appearance for four years.

■ **2002 - Piestany, Slovakia:** Under pressure for its standing U18 national team to produce, the U.S. finally strikes gold with a dramatic win over Russia. The tournament is Alexander Ovechkin's international debut and he finishes as the leading scorer with 18 points. American Ryan Suter is named the Best Defenseman. Canada makes its debut at the U18s with a lowly sixth-place finish.

■ **2003 - Yaroslavl, Russia:** Canada follows up its shaky debut with a gold medal in 2003. The surprise silver medalist is Slovakia. amazingly, not a single player from either team is in the top 10 in scoring. The forward that dazzles is once again Ovechkin, who is named the Best Forward with 13 points, but has to settle for the bronze medal on home ice.

■ **2004 - Minsk, Belarus:** Russia debuts Evgeni Malkin, and comes away with the gold medal after a close 3-2 win against the Americans. Malkin is named the tournament's Top Forward. With Marek Schwarz in net, the Czech Republic skates to the bronze medal, following up its bronze finish in 2002.

■ 2005 - Ceske Budejovice, Czech Republic:

The Americans make up for the silver disappointment with a golden finish in 2005, crushing Canada, 5-1, in the gold medal game. Phil Kessel is the star for the Americans, leading all scorers with 16 points. Sweden takes the bronze medal in its first podium finish since 2000.

■ **2006 - Angelholm, Sweden:** The U.S. continues to be the team to beat at the U18s as its standing national team program goes for its second straight gold. Finland falls 3-1 to the Americans in the gold medal game, while Canada loses the bronze medal against the Czech Republic. The Americans dominate the scoring leaders as Pat Kane, Jamie McBane and Erik Johnson lead the pack.

■ **2007 - Tampere, Finland:** Russia ends the U.S. bid for a three-peat with a dramatic 6-5 win in the gold medal game. It is the third gold-medal meeting for the two nations. Despite the loss, the Americans have the top individual players as James van Riemsdyk, Kevin Shattenkirk and Josh Unice sweep the individual awards.

■ **2008 - Kazan, Russia** - Russia fails to win on home ice again as Canada thumps the hosts, 8-0, in the golden game. The Americans go for their fifth-consecutive podium finish with the bronze win against Sweden. Russia's Nikita Filatov and Sweden's Victor Hedman emerge as the players of the future after strong individual performances.

Rich in history, Switzerland

By Szymon Szemberg

■ ■ *Switzerland has always been a country of contradictions, which is also the case with hockey. No other nation has organized so many IIHF World Championships. The Swiss Alps were one of the first places in Europe where the game got a foothold. But when the sport began to develop from pastime to a serious game, the Swiss missed the train.*

Just like hockey's world governing body, the Swiss Ice Hockey Association, one of the IIHF's four founding nations, celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2008. But hockey arrived in Switzerland well before that.

What was a mixture between ice hockey and European bandy was played in Davos in 1883 and in Zurich four years later. Documented games with recorded scores were played in the Lausanne region in December 1899.

■ ■ The first real hockey clubs were organized in the early 1900s and the country boasted many ice rinks around in the first decade. HC Bellerive Vevey became the first Swiss hockey champion in 1909.

It is worth mentioning as a comparison that, at that time, Finland was not even close to playing hockey, the Swedes were still playing bandy, it would take another eight years before the NHL was born and it would take another 37 years before the Soviet Union could, for the first time, celebrate a national champion in hockey.

So when the IIHF's predecessor LIHG organized their first event - the European Championship in 1910 - Switzerland and the Alpine village of Les Avants was the obvious choice.

Switzerland was dominant in the early days and it became the most utilized host for IIHF events. The 2009 IIHF World Championship will be the record 10th men's major championship to be played in this country (including the 1928 and 1948 Olympics, which until 1968 also counted as World Championships).

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS PLAYED IN SWITZERLAND

1928 St. Moritz (Olympics, also the 3rd World Championship)

Canada wins in superior fashion, Switzerland takes bronze after defeating Great Britain, 4-0, in a key game. But Sweden, which started with hockey far later than the Swiss, win the silver medal after a 4-0 shutout of the host.

1935 Davos (9th World Championship)

The pre-War era was Switzerland's best hockey epoch. With world-class forwards 'Bibi' Torriani, Hans and 'Pic' Cattini, the Swiss are the best team in Europe, getting beat to the gold only by Canada, 4-2, in the final. The Swiss score impressive wins against Czechoslovakia, 4-0, Sweden, 6-1, and Great Britain, 1-0, en route to silver.

1939 Basel/Zurich (13th World Championship)

The Swiss are still the best in Europe, but they get 'only' bronze as the USA claims silver behind Canada. Switzerland defeats the Czechoslovaks twice and also score an impressive preliminary round win over the Americans, 3-2.

1948 St. Moritz (Olympics, also the 15th World Championship)

The host again wins Olympic bronze, but one result shows the Swiss' European dominance is all but over. Czechoslovakia wins the silver thanks to an emphatic



7-1 win over Switzerland, which is still led by the now aging Bibi Torriani (36).

1953 Zurich/Basel (20th World Championship)

An all-time low for the IIHF event as only four nations confirm participation and only three finish the event. The Czechoslovak team was ordered home after the death of the country's president, Klement Gottwald. Neither Canada nor the U.S. takes part. Out of three teams, Switzerland comes in third. They lose to Sweden twice (9-2 and 9-1) and to West Germany, 7-3. Yes, officially it's a bronze medal, but in reality the Swiss era as a dominate force in hockey is over. And the next year the Soviet Union enters the scene and the new age in international hockey begins.

1961 Geneva/Lausanne (28th World Championship)

When the first modern World Championship was staged in Switzerland, the once dominating country was not even represented in the main event. The supposed host lost the qualification game against West Germany, 6-5, in overtime. In the B-event they lose to Norway (6-0) and Poland. Canada wins once more, but the 1961 tournaments marks also the end of the Canadian command. From now on the CCCP-dressed boys would dominate. Switzerland opened an era of double-digit losses to the best teams.

1971 Berne/Geneva (38th World Championship)

Very little happens in a decade for the Swiss and the hostcountry is again not present when the World's elite pays a visit to the nation's capital. The Soviet team wins its tenth consecutive World title despite losing three out of four points to Czechoslovakia. Switzerland finds some solace in winning Pool-B to earn promo-

Switzerland opens its Alps to the world



HELLO, ICE HOCKEY COUNTRY:

Switzerland is known for many things: Cheese, cows, clocks, chocolate. But few equate the small Alpine nation with outstanding hockey success. While the country has hosted the World Championship a record 10 times, including in 1928 in St. Moritz (left), it hopes to make a name for itself in the standings. Leading the way, and holding the weight of the Swiss' expectations in Bern will be NHL defenceman, Mark Streit, who is essentially the first Swiss skater to have a successful career in the NHL. Will he be enough to get Switzerland past its perennial quarterfinal hump?



tion to next year's World Championship. The opening game of the 1972 Worlds is a rude awakening and shows how far the Swiss are from the top: Czechoslovakia - Switzerland 19-1.

1990 Berne/Fribourg (54th World Championship)

Switzerland's demise in hockey reflects its hosting frequency. A record 19 years pass before the IIHF allocates its banner event to the 'has-been' hockey power. Incredibly, Switzerland once again misses promotion from the 1989 Pool-B where they finish fourth (behind Norway, Italy and France) and for the third consecutive time a World Championship in Switzerland is played without the host taking part.

1998 Zurich/Basel (62nd World Championship)

Only two years after the 1990 fiasco, Switzerland has its first major success in half a century when they finish a splendid fourth in the 1992 Worlds in Prague. And six years after that, Switzerland hosts the championship for the ninth time, with a rookie coach named Ralph Krueger. The Canadian with German roots repeats coach Bill Gilligan's success from 1992 - the Swiss make it to the semi-finals and lose the bronze-medal game against the Czechs. Still, fourth place is a clear indication that Switzerland's era as an underachieving hockey nation is over.

Under Ralph Krueger Switzerland has defeated all top nations in major events, Canada and the Czech Republic in the Olympics (2006) and Russia and Sweden in the World Championships.

Whatever the 2009 IIHF World Championship will bring, Switzerland's days as pushover are definitely over.

Ralph Krueger: The Swiss watch that keeps on ticking

■ It was 1998 when Switzerland hosted its last World Championship, in Zurich and Basel. At the same time, Ralph Krueger had his first World Championship as the head coach of Switzerland and led the promoted team to fourth place.

Eleven years later, the format has changed, the venues have changed, coaches have come and gone, the IIHF has a different logo and even the World Championship trophy is new. But one thing has remained constant, Switzerland head coach Ralph Krueger

■ It is the 49 year-old's 12th World Championship behind the Swiss bench, and after all these years he still looks forward to the opening day of the World Championship like a child on Christmas morning.

"It's always special, no tournament is the same," Krueger says. "I really love tournaments. I'm a tournament coach. It's always a new experience."

■ If anyone would know about changes in the last decade, it's Krueger, who has watched the hockey world spin around him, while he remains a constant.

"The game has changed with rule changes and the new rule interpretation. It has opened up, it's more exciting. And every player has become a better athlete. We as a sport have developed dramatically. The principles haven't changed like the character you need. It's still the best team sport in the world. It's an honest game. You can't have egos."

Like most coaches, Krueger has weathered highs and lows. "After the good first phase we had the crash in Salt Lake City. We had a few emotional challenges that took away a lot of energy. Since then, we have been more constant. Our highest point was the 2006 Olympics in Turin. Beating Canada and the Czechs with all their NHL stars was a great accomplishment."

■ More important for Krueger than final placement in the World Championship is the seventh place in the IIHF World Ranking. "We have developed much in recent years and become more stable. But it will be a challenge to defend seventh place in the ranking."

Now Krueger has reached Bern, the team's home rink at the 2009 World Championship. Will his team surprise on home ice again, just as they did in 1998 when Krueger was a rookie coach with the Swiss? "It seems that they believe in us and trust that we have become a better team. We want to win every game and we're capable in upsetting any country," Krueger says.

2009 IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW

The records show Switzerland is the host with the most

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP HOSTING HISTORY

9	Sweden	(1949, 1954, 1963, 1969, 1970, 1981, 1989, 1995, 2002)
9	Switzerland	(1928, 1935, 1939, 1948, 1953, 1961, 1971, 1990, 1998)
8	Czechoslovakia	(1933, 1938, 1947, 1959, 1972, 1978, 1985, 1992)
7	Austria	(1930*, 1964, 1967, 1977, 1987, 1996, 2005)
6	Finland	(1965, 1974, 1982, 1991, 1997, 2003)
5	West Germany	(1930*, 1936, 1956, 1955, 1983)
4	France	(1924, 1930*, 1951, 1968)
4	Soviet Union	(1957, 1973, 1979, 1986)
3	Italy (1934, 1956, 1994); Norway (1952, 1958, 1999) United States (1932, 1960, 1962)	
2	Germany (1993, 2001); Great Britain (1937, 1950); Poland (1931, 1976) Russia (2000, 2007)	
1	Canada (2008); Belgium (1920); Czech Republic (2004); Latvia (2006); Yugoslavia (1966)	

YEAR-BY-YEAR GOLD MEDAL GOALS

1920 OG	Chris Fridfinnson 1:55 1st (CAN 12-SWE 1)
1930 WM	Alex Park 1st (CAN 6-GER 1)
1933 WM	John Garrison 6:00 OT (USAs 2-CAN 1)
1934 WM	Jim Dewey 9:00 3rd (CAN 2-USA 1)
1935 WM	Norm Yellowlees 2nd (CAN 4-SUI 2)
1938 WM	Pat McReavy 7:00 1st (CAN 3-GBR 1)
1992 OG	Igor Boldin 15:54 3rd (RUS 3-CAN 1)
1992 WM	Roger Hansson 9:14 2nd (SWE 5-FIN 2)
1993 WM	Andrei Nikolishin 7:03 1st (RUS 3-SWE 1)
1994 OG	Peter Forsberg SO (SWE 3-CAN 2)
1994 WM	Luc Robitaille SO (CAN 2-FIN 1)
1995 WM	Ville Peltonen 17:39 2nd (Finland 4-SWE 1)
1996 WM	Martin Prochazka 19:41 3rd (CZE 4-CAN 2)
1997 WM	Owen Nolan 1:56 2nd (CAN 2-SWE 1)
1998 OG	Petr Svoboda 8:08 3rd (CZE 1-RUS 0)
1998 WM	Johan Tornberg 10:07 3rd (SWE 1-FIN 0)
1999 WM	Jan Hlavac 16:32 OT (CZE 3-FIN 1, FIN 4-CZE 1)
2000 WM	Jan Tomajko 3:35 3rd (CZE 5-SVK 3)
2001 WM	David Moravec 10:38 OT (CZE 3-FIN 2)
2002 OG	Joe Sakic 18:22 2nd (CAN 5-USA 2)
2002 WM	Peter Bondra 18:20 3rd (SVK 4-RUS3)
2003 WM	Anson Carter 13:49 OT (CAN 3-SWE 2)
2004 WM	Jay Bouwmeester 0:20 3rd (CAN 5-SWE 3)
2005 WM	Vaclav Prospal 4:13 1st (CZE 3-CAN 0)
2006 OG	Nicklas Lidstrom 0:10 3rd (SWE 3-FIN 2)
2006 WM	Jesper Mattsson 14:36 1st (SWE 4-CZE 0)
2007 WM	Colby Armstrong 9:11 2nd (CAN 4-FIN 2)
2008 WM	Ilya Kovalchuk 2:42 OT (RUS 5-CAN 4)



IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

ALL-TIME RECORD BOOK

Most World Championships (top pool)

1. Jiri Holik	TCH	14 (1964-1977)
Sven Tumba (Johansson)	SWE	14 (1952-1966)
3. Lasse Oksanen	FIN	13 (1964-1977)
Dieter Hegen	FRG	13 (1982-1998)
Petteri Nummelin	FIN	13 (1995-2007)
Ronald Pettersson	SWE	13 (1955-1967)
Vladislav Tretiak	URS	13 (1970-1983)
Udo Kiessling	FRG	13 (1973-1991)
9. Jörgen Jönsson	SWE	12 (1994, 97-07)
Alexander Maltsev	URS	12 (1969-1983)
Roland Stoltz	SWE	12 (1957-1968)
Alexander Ragulin	URS	12 (1961, 63-73)
Roland Ramoser	ITA	12 (1994-02, 06-08)
Vladimir Petrov	URS	12 (1969-1981)

Most World Championship Games

1. Jiri Holik	CZE	123 games
2. Lasse Oksanen	FIN	117 games
2. Vladislav Tretiak	URS	117 games
4. Oldrich Machac	TCH	113 games
5. Udo Kiessling	FRG	109 games

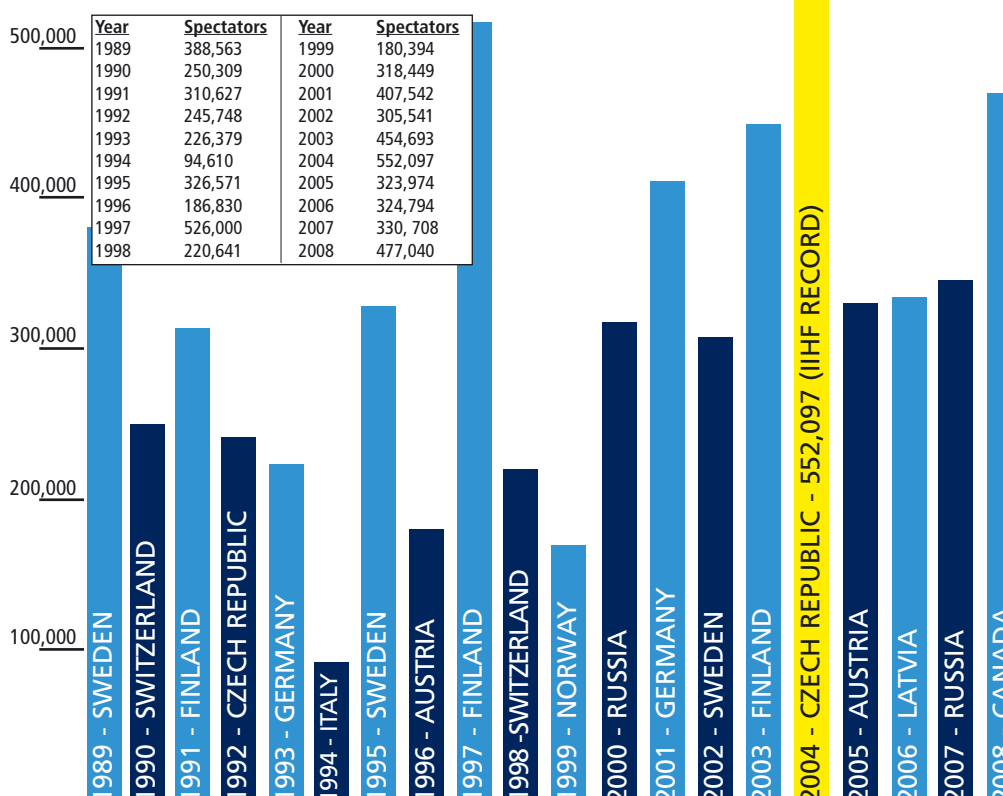
Most World Championship Points

1. Boris Mikhailov	URS	169 points
2. Valeri Kharlamov	URS	159 points
3. Alexander Maltsev	URS	156 points
4. Vladimir Petrov	URS	154 points
5. Sven Tumba	SWE	127 points

Most World Championship Medals

1. Vladislav Tretiak	URS	13	10G, 2S, 1B
2. Alexander Ragulin	URS	12	10G, 1S, 1B
3. Alexander Maltsev	URS	12	9G, 2S, 1B
3. Vladimir Petrov	URS	12	9G, 2S, 1B
5. Vitaly Davydov	URS	10	9G, 1S
5. Vyacheslav Starshinov	URS	10	9G, 1B

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ATTENDANCE (since 1989)



WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MEDALISTS

	G	S	B	Total
Canada	24	12	9	45
Sweden	8	18	14	40
Soviet Union	22	7	5	34
Czechoslovakia	6	12	16	34
USA	2	9	5	16
Finland	1	6	3	10
Czech Republic	5	1	3	9
Switzerland	0	1	8	9
Russia	2	1	2	5
Great Britain	1	2	2	5
Slovakia	1	1	1	3
Germany	0	1	2	3
Austria	0	0	2	2
West Germany	0	1	0	1

2008 WORLDS AT A GLANCE

DIRECTORATE AWARDS

Goaltender:	Nobokov, Evgeni	RUS
Defenseman	Burns, Brent	CAN
Forward	Heatley, Dany	CAN
MVP	Heatley, Dany	CAN

MEDIA ALL STARS

G:	Eveni Nabokov, RUS
D:	Mike Green, CAN; Tomas Kaberle, CZE
F:	Dany Heatley, CAN; Rick Nash, CAN; Alexander Ovechkin, RUS

MEDAL GAME RESULTS

Gold Medal Game:	Canada 5, Russia 4 (OT)
Bronze Medal Game:	Finland 4, Sweden 0
Relegated teams:	Italy & Slovenia

2009 IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW

Russia tops '09 pre-Championship ranking report

■ ■ There has been a general feeling in the hockey world that Russia has been underachieving since the IIHF introduced the World Ranking in 2004. As late as in 2006 (prior to the 70th IIHF World Championship in Riga, Latvia) Russia was only sixth in the men's ranking, behind Sweden, Czech Republic, Canada, Finland and Slovakia.

But after a bronze at home in Moscow and the gold in Quebec City, the Vyacheslav Bykov-led Team Russia is back at the top and has a solid chance to be the new leader of the IIHF Men's World Ranking at the conclusion of Switzerland 2009.

In the pre-Championship report, both Russia and Canada are on top with 2000 points, but Russia is listed first because of its higher finish in the most-recent event, Canada 2008. As most remember, Russia defeated the host in the gold medal game.

■ ■ The race for the top position in the 2009 IIHF Men's World Ranking (which will be established immediately following the gold medal in Bern on May 10) is tighter than ever. Russia and Canada are tied for first, Finland is only ten points behind the duo, while Sweden is 25 points behind.

Generally, 20 points separate the various positions when the World Ranking points are awarded following a championship. However, there are jumps as great as 40 points meaning it won't take a big swing for the positions of the bubble teams to shift.

■ ■ Ultimately, the Pre-Championship Report to the right is the best gauge of what exactly the 16 teams in Switzerland must do to climb, or hold onto their current spot, in the ranking. The points in the right column represent what the ranking looked like at the end of the 2008 season, following Canada 2008. The 2009 Pre-Championship Report has already had the points for the 2005 World Championship dropped from its total, while the points from the 2007 and 2008 World Championship, the 2006 World Championships and Olympics have been devalued by 25 percent.

Example: Value of the gold medal

- Year 1: 100% value -- 1200 points
- Year 2: 75% value -- 900 points
- Year 3: 50% value -- 600 points
- Year 4: 25% value -- 300 points
- Year 5: 0% value -- 0 points

■ ■ To tally a team's final ranking after the 2009 IIHF World Championship, add the points they receive for their finish in Switzerland to the 2009 Pre-Championship report.



TOP DOG: Canada and Russia will duel for first place in the World Ranking.

In the '09 Pre-Championship Report the values of the 2008, 2007 and 2006 events are already reduced by 25% and the 2005 Championship is dropped. The right column shows the values the teams had after Canada '08 before the values were adjusted for the Pre-Championship Report. To get the 2009 final ranking, add the points from the Switzerland finish to the value in '09 Pre-Championship Report.

2009 IIHF PRE-CHAMPIONSHIP REPORT				POINTS EARNED	
Rank	Country	Pre Swiss '09	After Canada '08	Top Division	
1	RUS	2000	3400	1	1200
2	CAN	2000	3410	2	1160
3	FIN	1990	3385	3	1120
4	SWE	1975	3400	4	1100
5	CZE	1875	3265	5	1060
6	USA	1815	3105	6	1040
7	SUI	1765	3020	7	1020
8	SVK	1680	2955	8	1000
9	BLR	1660	2845	9	960
10	NOR	1625	2735	10	940
11	GER	1620	2740	11	920
12	LAT	1590	2740	12	900
13	DEN	1565	2660	13	880
14	ITA	1510	2580	14	860
15	FRA	1440	2410	15	840
16	SLO	1430	2460	16	820
17	AUT	1425	2445	Division I	
18	UKR	1395	2435	17	800
19	KAZ	1365	2405	18	780
20	HUN	1310	2220	19	760
21	POL	1260	2175	20	740
22	JPN	1245	2120	21	720
23	LTU	1150	1970	22	700
24	NED	1115	1935	23	680
25	EST	1115	1930	24	660
26	CRO	1055	1790	25	640
27	ROU	1025	1770	26	620
28	GBR	995	1645	27	600
29	CHN	950	1650	28	580
30	KOR	835	1365	Division II	
31	SER	825	1425	29	560
32	AUS	785	1300	30	540
33	BEL	755	1230	31	520
34	BUL	740	1305	32	500
35	ISR	690	1190	33	480
36	ESP	685	1120	34	460
37	MEX	625	1010	35	440
38	ISL	590	965	36	420
39	NZL	530	890	37	400
40	IRL	480	775	38	380
41	RSA	450	755	39	360
42	TUR	450	765	40	340
43	LUX	420	695	Division III	
44	PRK	345	645	41	320
45	MGL	295	415	42	300
46	GRE	180	240	43	280
47	BIH	150	200	44	260
48	ARM	70	200	45	240
				46	220

Switzerland's secret weapon

Canadian-born Ryan Gardner makes rookie debut at age 31

By Martin Merk

■ ■ *The Swiss national team has a new rookie on its squad this season - but it's not your typical 20 year-old wide-eyed kid. It's a weathered veteran that has finally earned the chance to don the Swiss jersey. After playing in the Swiss league for so long, Gardner finally got his Swiss passport and now looks forward to helping his adopted country in the upcoming World Championship. The IIHF caught up with the towering forward for a few questions before his debut for the Swiss.*

How did you end up as a native Canadian playing in Switzerland?

I was living in Switzerland for eight years because my dad played here. But we were only in Switzerland during the hockey season. I went back to Canada from 1988-1999 and then made my return to Switzerland.

You spent most time of your life in Switzerland. Which aspects of the country do you identify with?

I was in Canada as a teenager, but was in Switzerland when I was younger, and again now. When I was here as a kid, the school system here was strict. I learned discipline...and German. Being in a different country helps you to communicate better. I also enjoy the food here, especially the Italian food while I was in Ticino. I'm happy that I could live in the two best countries in the world.

And what parts of Canada do you identify with?

I learned to read the game better in Canada. There was also more contact because of the size of the rinks, but hockey has improved in Switzerland a lot. On experience I had in Canada that you can't find in Switzerland is living in a really big city (Toronto) on my own as a junior.

Do you see yourself more as a Canadian or a Swiss?

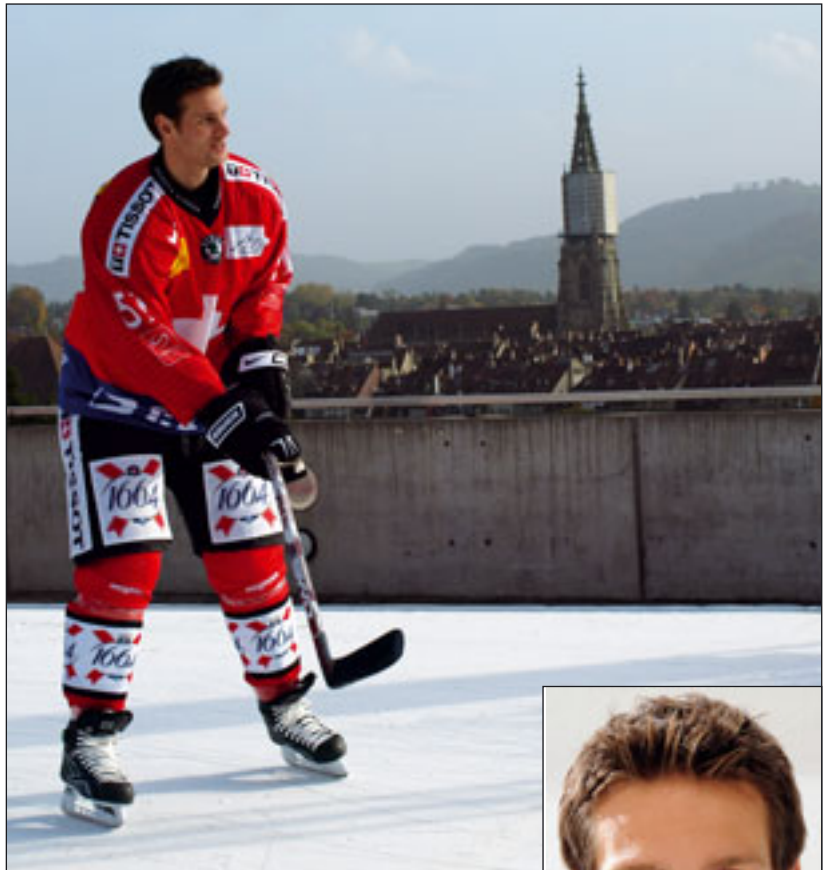
One could say I'm more Canadian but in the hockey world, it's almost the same. It's difficult to say what I have from which country.

Did you also consider playing for the national team when you applied for the Swiss passport?

That was a thought for sure and also for my family. I asked about getting my Swiss passport while I was living in Lugano. I just wanted to see if it was possible after living in Switzerland for 12 years. When it became known that I was going for my Swiss passport, I got a phone call from Ralph Krueger last spring, too see when I would be naturalized and to see if I would be interested in joining the national team. Unfortunately it was too late for the World Championship in Canada last year.

But it seems everything worked out since now you make your debut on home ice?

It's going to be great, it doesn't happen so often. Fans and the whole country will be behind us and push us.



HOME SWEET HOME: Ryan Gardner had his eyes on the skyline of Bern when he was announced as a member of the Swiss national team. The Canada native hopes that he can help Switzerland get past the quarterfinal hump when he makes his debut in for the Swiss national team at the 2009 World Championship.



What do you expect from the Swiss team?

Everything is possible. It has been a great team in the past. And with our NHL players we can even be better. Such players can be very dangerous. And we will have fans that will help us too. We want to go for a medal but we are still away from the quarterfinals and there you need to play the game of your life. Any team can beat anybody in one game.

What are your personal goals for the future?

My most immediate goal is to make the team and then to have a big role on the squad. With the national team I really want to go for a medal. In general and beyond the World Championship, I want to improve every day.

How is it for you as a Canadian-born player to represent Switzerland - are you looking forward to meeting Canada on the ice?

We already had an exhibition game against Canada in November. I'm proud to be Swiss also and I'm thankful for this opportunity. And I want to prove that I'm a good player.

Let's talk about your club career. You won the Championship Hockey League with the ZSC Zurich Lions. How would you describe that?

It was great. It was one of the biggest highlights in my career. Who would have believed that a team of a small country could win? It was a great feeling at the end.

What made it possible that Zurich won against the big-name teams?

We had very good players. I think people underestimate Switzerland. We were also very well prepared, the game plan was good. We played the system we wanted to.

Do you sometimes think about an NHL career?

Yes, always. It's everybody's dream but as years go by, I'm also fortunate about what I have here.

Ryan Gardner Fact File

- Born: April 18, 1978 in Akron, Ontario
- ☐ Played 12 years in Switzerland including Ambri, Lugano and Zurich
- ☐ International: Played for Jokerit Helsinki (2003) and Team Canada (2004-2006) at the Spengler Cup
- ☐ His father Dave, uncle Paul and grandfather Cal all played in the NHL.
- ☐ Trophies: Champions Hockey League (2009), European Super Cup (2000), 3-time Swiss Champion (2003 & 2006, 2008)