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From the IIHF President

A great start to 2015

by René Fasel

A new year, and a new look for Ice Times as we move to a digital format for the IIHF's official newsletter. This is the first step for what I hope will be plenty of digital offerings from the IIHF as we move into the future.

We've had some time to recover after a thrilling start to the 2015/2016 hockey season, which saw Canada reclaim the World Junior hockey trophy in a wild gold medal finale in Toronto.

International hockey's premier junior tournament added another memorable chapter to the history books, as Toronto and Montreal held court to a tournament that somehow managed to surpass already sky-high expectations.

It wasn't just the finale that left people talking, but other storylines that developed through the tournament that not many of us expected. A bronze medal finish for Slovakia, and a great

run by top division newcomers Denmark all the way to the quarter-finals were both memorable events. I applaud both teams, and also the local Canadian fans that enthusiastically adopted both teams and cheered them on through the tournament.

The spirit of ice hockey was alive and well by the time Canada and Russia faced off for gold, and the camaraderie and sportsmanship displayed by the teams added a spirit of friendship to what was an excellent World Juniors.

Team Canada's win over Russia was not the only story of January. The United States capped off a great U18 women's competition in Buffalo with an equally exciting final game against arch rivals Canada.

On the heels of our first two top division tournaments of the year, the international hockey world got some great news when the NHL and NHLPA announced the return of the World Cup of Hockey. The world cannot get enough of international hockey competitions, and having this tournament come back is a blessing for our sport.

With this in mind, we also celebrated a successful inaugural season of the Champions Hockey League. This tournament has grown

to fill a need for more European club hockey exposure across the continent, and I hope that in the future more leagues will be added and that the CHL continues to grow.

As we move into the middle of the international hockey season, we turn our attention to the preparations for the top division senior men's and women's tournaments. First on the list is the 2015 IIHF Women's World Championship, which we preview in this issue. With the thrilling games we watched in Sochi 2014, I feel that hockey fans in Malmo, Sweden should be in for a great tournament.

Just over a month later, we will drop the puck in Prague and Ostrava on 1st May, kicking off the 2015 IIHF World Championship. Stay tuned, lots of great hockey left!

The world cannot get enough of international hockey competitions...



News and Notes



IIHF

The 2015 IIHF International Coaching Symposium will take place 8-10 May 2015 in Prague, Czech Republic, during the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship.

The symposium is organized by the International Ice Hockey Federation, Czech Ice Hockey Association, World Championship Organizing Committee, and the International Ice Hockey Centre of Excellence.

The Symposium includes many interesting seminars related to the 16-20 age category, presented by leading figures from Czech and international ice hockey.

IIHF

The IIHF announced in December 2014 a landmark three-year partnership with integrity specialists Sportradar. Under the partnership, Sportradar will monitor a total of three flagship tournaments from 2015 to 2017 and will deliver a total of 12 educational workshops, which will be targeted at participating players, officials, administrators and coaches.

Sportradar's Fraud Detection System will monitor the world's betting markets on the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship, IIHF World Junior Championship and IIHF Ice Hockey U18 World Championship for the next three seasons, ensuring that any suspicious odds movements or patterns are flagged, analysed and forwarded to the IIHF.

Furthermore, each of those tournaments will find Sportradar experts travelling to the host cities and providing all relevant participants with valuable insight and understanding of the global markets on ice hockey and the dangers posed by fixers.

"Very few sports excite and engage fans like ice hockey does. And we want to keep it that way," said IIHF President René Fasel. "The integrity of our World Championships and our sport are central to that."

CANADA

A record-breaking average audience of 7.1 million Canadians watched Canada's thrilling 5-4 victory over Russia on TSN (6 million) and RDS (1.13 million), making it the most-watched broadcast on record on specialty television in Canada. The gold medal game ranks as the most-watched World Juniors game ever – 6% higher than the 2011 gold medal game (6.7 million viewers on TSN and RDS). Overall, 13.4 million unique Canadian viewers tuned in to watch Team Canada reclaim World Junior gold. Audience levels on TSN and RDS peaked at 9.7 million viewers at 10:31 p.m. ET in the game's dying seconds as Canada held on for the victory.

Overall, 19.4 million Canadians – or more than half the country's population – tuned in to watch some or all of TSN and RDS's wall-to-wall coverage of the 2015 IIHF World Junior Championship in Toronto and Montreal – a 14% increase compared to the last time it was played in Canada. Russia's semi-final victory over Sweden on Sunday was the most watched non-Canadian World Juniors semi-final game ever, with an average audience of 1.46 million viewers on TSN and RDS.

FINLAND

Jukka Jalonen, the former coach of the Finnish men's national team, will lead the U20 national team to the 2016 IIHF World Junior Championship on home ice.

He will replace Hannu Jortikka, who resigned after the seventh-place finish at the 2015 World Juniors in Canada.

The 52-year-old Jalonen was an assistant coach with the Finnish men's national team at the 2008 IIHF World Championship and became the head coach after the tournament. He coached Finland at five IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships between 2009 and 2013 and at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games leading his country to gold at the 2011 World Championship – the second after 1995 for the country – and an Olympic bronze medal in Vancouver 2010.

Jalonen left the national team to coach KHL club SKA St. Petersburg where he was released in April 2014 after losing in the conference semi-finals.

"As a coach, the Young Lions and the World Juniors on home ice are an inspiring combination. It was an easy decision to say yes, when asked to take up the position," Jalonen said.

FYR MACEDONIA

FYR Macedonia's national team stepped out on the ice for its first pair of international exhibition games. The two matches between the country's men's national team against neighbouring Bulgaria's U20 national team, played at the new Hockey Arena Boris Trajkovski in the capital city of Skopje on 20th and 21st December, saw the two evenly matched sides record a shootout victory each.

The international debut follows recent attempts to push forward the development of the game in the southernmost former Yugoslav state which became independent in 1993. In mid-November this year, the Skopje Ice Festival saw local team Metalurg finish top against cross-border opponents Spartak Subotica of Serbia, Bulgaria's Chervena Zvezda Sofia and Iraklis Thessaloniki in Greece during a weekend of hockey festivities played at FYR Macedonia's only full-sized functional ice rink at the Boris Trajkovski Sports Centre. Add to that mid-December's start a four-team strong domestic championship, which offers careful cause for optimism.

GREAT BRITAIN

Pete Russell has been named head coach of Great Britain's senior national team. The 40-year-old, who recently won gold at the U20 World Championship Division II Group A, replaces Doug Christiansen.

He will be assisted by Tommy Watkins and Richard Hartmann and the trio's first tournament in charge will be April's 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division I Group B in Eindhoven, Netherlands.

Russell is Great Britain's most successful junior coach and has won four golds, one silver and two bronze medals in 11 tournaments in charge of GB U20s and GB U18s.

The Ayr-born former netminder, who is coach of the Swindon-based Okanagan Hockey Academy, had a successful time in charge of EPL side Slough Jets, winning the playoffs and coach of the year in 2009-10 and the EPL Cup in 2010-11.



SWITZERLAND

The Swiss Ice Hockey Federation on 12 January submitted an application to host the 2020 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship and withdraws for 2019, which means that Slovakia remains the only applicant for the 2019 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship.

The Swiss announced that the 11,200-seat Hallenstadion in Zurich will be the main venue of the bid. The secondary host city remains open but Lausanne and Zug were named potential candidates.

Switzerland, 7th in the World Ranking, hosted the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in 1935, 1939, 1953, 1961, 1971, 1990, 1998 and most recently in 2009 in Berne and Zurich-Kloten.



JAPAN

The Japanese Ice Hockey Federation elected a new Council at an extra-ordinary assembly and Takujiro Horiguchi was selected as new President at the first Council meeting.

The 69-year-old, who has chaired the Ibaraki Prefecture Ice Hockey Federation, will succeed Seiji Kaneko.

Koichi Adachi and former Japanese Olympian Tsutomu Hanzawa were named Vice Presidents, Takami Okoshi will serve as new General Secretary.

Obituaries

Vlastimil Bubnik

Vlastimil Bubnik, the legendary winger who represented Czechoslovakia in the '50s and '60s, passed away at the age of 83.

Born on 18th March 1931 in Kelc, Vlastimil Bubnik played for SK Kralovo Pole, Rude Hvezdy Brno, ZKL Brno and Vitkovice Ostrava in the Czechoslovak league scoring 300 goals in 16 seasons. He was an icon in Brno, the second-largest Czech city, where he was part of all 11 league titles in club history and where he was nicknamed Vlasta. He captained the team for many years and built the league's best line with Bronislav Danda and Slavomir Barton.

Bubnik participated at the Olympic Winter Games in 1952 in Oslo, 1956 in Cortina, 1960 in Squaw Valley and 1964 in Innsbruck where he won bronze and represented his native Czechoslovakia in 127 games scoring 121 goals. Bubnik won one World Championship silver medal in 1961 and bronze medals in 1955 and 1963.

He was selected as Best Forward of the 1961 World Championship and once scored eight goals in one game, a 18-2 win at the 1955



Worlds against Finland that helped him earn top scoring honours at the event with 16 goals. From 1961 to 1964 he was the captain of the Czechoslovak national team.

Bubnik was one of the best scorers in Olympic men's ice hockey history – only Teemu Selanne collected more points – and not only represented his country in ice hockey but also in football in 11 international games scoring four goals. He played in the top Czechoslovak hockey league during 18 years and in the top football league for 10 years.

Bubnik was inducted into the IIHF Hall of Fame in 1997 and into the Czech Hall of Fame in 2008.



Basil Hansen

Former Australian Olympian Basil Hansen passed away on 2nd January. He was 88 years old.

Hansen started his playing career in Melbourne at the St Moritz ice rink where he played for the Monarchs and represented his state of Victoria in the Goodall Cup final three times. He took part in the 1960 Olympic Winter Games in Squaw Valley, USA, with the Australian national ice hockey team scoring one goal in the four games he played.

After ending his career in 1962 he turned to coaching and was the patron of Ice Hockey Victoria. He was awarded life membership by the Monarchs Ice Hockey Clubs, Ice Hockey Victoria and Ice Hockey Australia.



Jean-Paul Parise

Former NHL and Team Canada player Jean-Paul Parise died from lung cancer at the age of 73. He passed away at his home in the Minneapolis suburb of Prior Lake.

Parise was born in Smooth Rock Falls, Ontario, but spent most of his hockey career with the NHL's Minnesota North Stars, both as a player and later as an assistant coach. He also played for the Boston Bruins, the Toronto Maple Leafs, the New York Islanders and the Cleveland Barons in the NHL. In 890 regular-season games the forward scored 238 goals and had 356 assists.

Internationally he's remembered for participating in six of the 1972 Summit Series' eight games. He scored two goals and had four points.

Ten things we learned from Toronto and Montreal

By Lucas Aykroyd

As we look back on the 2015 IIHF World Junior Championship in Montreal and Toronto, here are 10 lessons that stand out from another thrilling U20 showcase.



One thing is for sure: World Junior fever is infectious



Canada-Russia is the main rivalry

Before the World Juniors, there's often talk about how the Canadians are mainly concerned with the United States nowadays. After beating the U.S. 5-3 on New Year's Eve, Canadian captain Curtis Lazar said: "I have a feeling that if we want to come out on top in this tournament, we're going to have to go through these guys again."

But forget about feelings. Let's focus on facts. Since 2000, Canada and Russia have faced off for gold seven times – twice in the last five years. In the same span, Canada and the U.S. have played for gold twice – once in the last six years. Demographics and economics may well push the Americans past Russia as Canada's main U20 rival, just not yet.

Canada has skills that thrill

Historically, Europeans have viewed Canadian hockey as simple and straightforward: dump it in, hit, get to the net, bang in a rebound. Yet in Canada's pulse-pounding 5-4 gold medal win over Russia, each of the winners' goals was a work of art.

When Anthony Duclair scored 23 seconds in, it was on a beautiful Max Domi set-up from behind the net. Nick Paul's 2-0 deflection was set up by a brilliant cross-ice pass from Brayden Point. The tape-to-tape Josh Morrissey stretch pass on Connor McDavid's 3-1 breakaway goal was pure finesse. Ditto for Domi's use of a Russian defenceman on his 4-1 tally, and Sam Reinhart's tricky tip on the rush to make it 5-1. There was no hint of "winning ugly" here. It was also a great omen for Canada's future.



U.S. underachieves north of border

Since this tournament debuted in 1977, the United States has only won one gold medal (2010) in 11 World Juniors held in Canada. This year's fifth-place finish was another let-down – albeit not as bad as playing in the relegation round in 2012 or falling to pesky Slovakia in the 2009 quarter-finals.

What plagues the Americans when they suit up on Canadian ice? With five NHL first-round draft picks on this year's roster – not to mention potential #1 2016 choice Jack Eichel – it's not a lack of talent. Aside from a gold medal in Saskatoon 2010, the States have not been able to rise to the occasion amid red-and-white World Junior mania.



Slovakia can still surprise

Nobody predicted Slovakia would take the bronze medal at these World Juniors.

Why would they? The Central European nation had come in eighth place at four out of the last five tournaments. But they got amazing goaltending from MVP Denis Godla, who rebounded after being pulled in a 8-0 shellacking against Canada. Martin Reway justified the "C" on his jersey with timely scoring (4G+5A=9P). Even without another Marian Hossa or Pavol Demitra waiting in the wings, the Slovaks just can't be counted out due to their heart and desire.



Denmark's on the rise

In 2018, the Danes will host the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship for the first time ever. If the play of their juniors in Toronto is any indication, they'll make the fans in Copenhagen and Herning pretty happy.

Led by scoring stars Nikolaj Ehlers and Oliver Bjorkstrand, the newly promoted Danes took points from Russia (a 3-2 shootout loss) and the Czechs (a 4-3 overtime loss) before earning their first victory in World Junior history (4-3 over Switzerland in OT). Finishing eighth was a monumental accomplishment for the underdog squad that warmed up for the tournament with a surprise silver-medal run at the (non-IIHF) World Junior A Challenge in Kindersley, Saskatchewan.



Scoring still Finland's Achilles heel

Teemu Selanne and Jari Kurri are among the greatest scorers in NHL history. But unfortunately, Finland has never managed to clone them. The traditional Finnish problem – lack of firepower – doomed coach Hannu Jortikka's team this year.

Stumbling through group play with just one win, the defending World Junior champions never got more than two goals per game. They scored three against archrival Sweden in the quarter-final, but since the Juniorkronorna had six, that was a moot point. Hosting the 2016 tournament in Helsinki, the Finns must find a way to score more power play goals than they did here (zero).



Czechs aren't quite there yet

Somewhat like the Edmonton Oilers, the Czech Republic is supposed to be getting better, but their fans must be impatient with the lack of results.

The Czechs won U18 silver last year – their best finish ever – but at the U20 level, their sixth-place finish in Toronto was the same old story. Boston Bruins prospect David Pastrnak (1-6-7) was the only player who cracked the top 30 in scoring. Their goaltending save percentage (86.7) and penalty-killing percentage (56.2) were the tournament's worst. The last Czech medal was 2005's bronze. When will this drought end?



Sweden missed killer instinct

Given Sweden's undisputed talent, it's strange that it has only won the World Juniors twice (1981, 2012). And heading into this year's semi-final, the unbeaten Swedes appeared to have the edge over Russia, particularly on special teams. But they lacked the jump they needed to make it to their fourth straight gold medal game, while Russia looked energized in a 4-1 win. Failing to beat Slovakia for bronze added insult to injury. The Swedes have only themselves to blame, though. While even a comparatively less star-studded group, like this year's team, looked more confident than the squads who finished out of the medals from 1997 to 2007, Sweden still needs more "eye of the tiger" in must-win situations.



Defence is Canadian trump card

When Canada won Olympic gold last February in Sochi, its powerful group of defencemen set the tone. It was a similar story in Toronto as the Canadians ended their six-year WJC title drought.

Coach Benoit Groulx's team allowed just nine goals in seven games, and blueliners Shea Theodore, Josh Morrissey, Madison Bowey, and Darnell Nurse all ranked among the top 10 plus-minus players. Other nations are producing elite goalies and world-class forwards too, but Canada's blue line depth and talent is difficult to match.



World Junior fever is infectious

Attracting an average audience of 7.1 million viewers on TSN and RDS, the Canadian TV audience for the 2015 World Junior gold medal game was the largest ever. Overall tournament attendance (366,730) was the third-highest in history. And in 2016, the Finns are hoping to set a new European attendance record of 150,000 in Helsinki.

With five different champions in the last five years, it's hard to predict who'll take home next year's gold. But one thing is for sure: World Junior fever is infectious.

Video highlights: 2015 World Junior gold medal game



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

Directorate Awards

Best Goaltender-Denis Godla, Slovakia
(4W-3L, 1SH, 93.75 SV%, 1.74 GAA)

Best Defenceman-Vladislav Gavrikov, Russia
(7 GP, 8SG, -2)

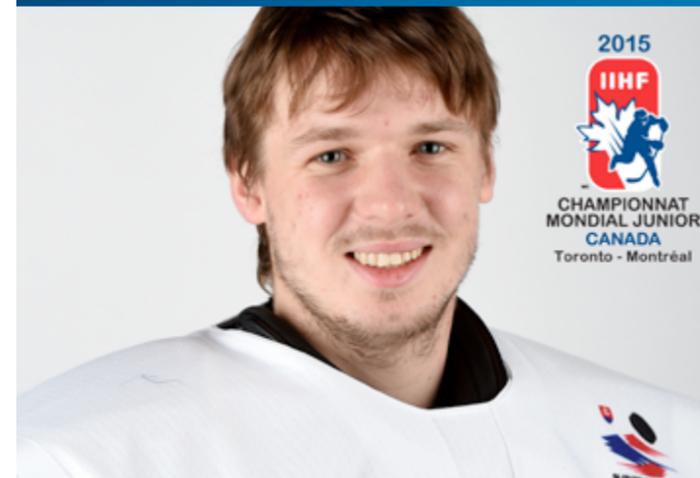
Best Forward-Max Domi, Canada
(5G, 5A, 10P, +10)

Media All Star team

Goalkeeper - Denis Godla, Slovakia
Defenceman - Gustav Forsling, Sweden
Defenceman - Josh Morrissey, Canada
Forward - Sam Reinhart, Canada
Forward - Max Domi, Canada
Forward - Connor McDavid, Canada
Most Valuable Player (MVP) - Denis Godla, Slovakia



Directorate Top Goaltender, All-Star Goaltender, MVP

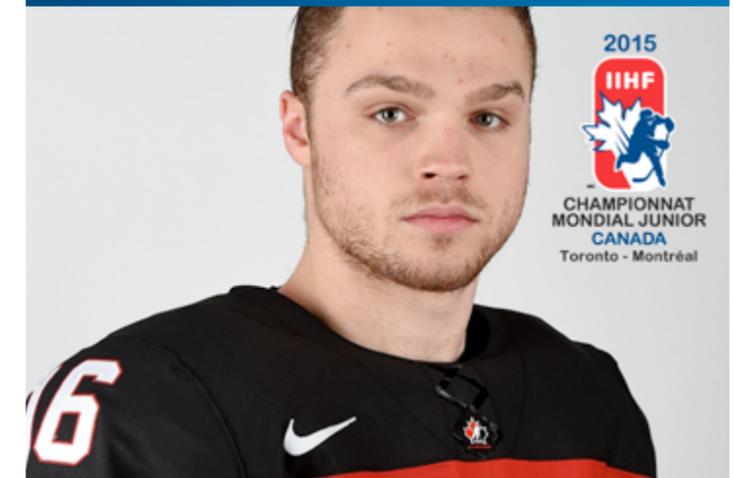


Denis Godla G, Slovakia

The 19-year-old raised eyebrows in Montreal after registering 37 saves in a 2-1 upset of defending champions Finland. When the Slovaks squeaked into the playoffs Godla turned it up, shutting out the Czechs 3-0 in the quarter-finals and earning player of the game honours in the team's huge upset of Sweden in the bronze medal game.



Directorate Top Forward, All-Star Forward



Max Domi F, Canada

Domi's impeccable playmaking ability and his speed with the puck set the tone for a relentless and confident Canadian team that opponents had trouble keeping up with. His ten-point performance in the tournament on the team's top line left no doubt that the son of former NHLer Tie Domi will compete for an NHL roster spot next year.

World Cup of Hockey returns

Eight-team competition set for September 2016

The World Cup of Hockey will return in September 2016 in Toronto, Canada when eight teams, comprised of the world's best hockey players, compete for a best-on-best international hockey championship, the National Hockey League (NHL®) and National Hockey League Players' Association (NHLPA) announced.

The World Cup of Hockey is a joint effort of the NHLPA and the NHL, in cooperation with the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF). It is expected that more than 150 of the best players in the NHL will participate in this tournament in what should be the biggest celebration of the game.

"The IIHF welcomes the return of the World Cup of Hockey, a fantastic event that should help to raise the profile of our sport and promote the game worldwide," IIHF President René Fasel said. "I applaud the NHL, the NHLPA, and the national associations for their



The eight-team tournament will start on Sept. 17, 2016. All games will be played at Air Canada Centre in Toronto.

hard work and close collaboration in bringing back such a premier international tournament to the hockey calendar."

The eight teams will be divided into two Groups of four, and each will compete in three tournament games within their assigned Group in a round-robin format. The top two

finishers in each Group will advance to a single game semi-final against a team from the other Group. Winners of the semi-final games will advance to a best-of-three final round. All tournament games (round-robin, semi-final and final) will be played at the Air Canada Centre in Toronto from September 17 - October 1, 2016.

"We are thrilled to partner with the NHLPA in planning and producing what we expect will be the world's best international hockey tournament," NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said. "The 2016 World Cup of Hockey will highlight not only our global reach, but also the skill and passion of the world's best athletes. We would like to thank our international partners – the IIHF and their members – for their cooperation in helping to make this event a reality."

"We expect the 2016 World Cup of Hockey to be the most competitive tournament of its kind, with the world's top players and best athletes," said Don Fehr, NHLPA Executive Director. "We look forward to working with the NHL, and the IIHF and its Federations on this extraordinary event. We expect that this is the initial step in a series of events that will elevate our game over the next few years, including a World Cup in 2020." The eight teams participating in the 2016 World Cup of Hockey will include Team Canada, Team Czech Republic, Team Finland, Team Russia, Team Sweden, Team USA, Team Europe and Team North American Youngstars.

Team Europe will be comprised of a pan-European roster of players from birth countries outside of the Czech Republic, Finland, Russia and Sweden – in short, all of the other Eu-

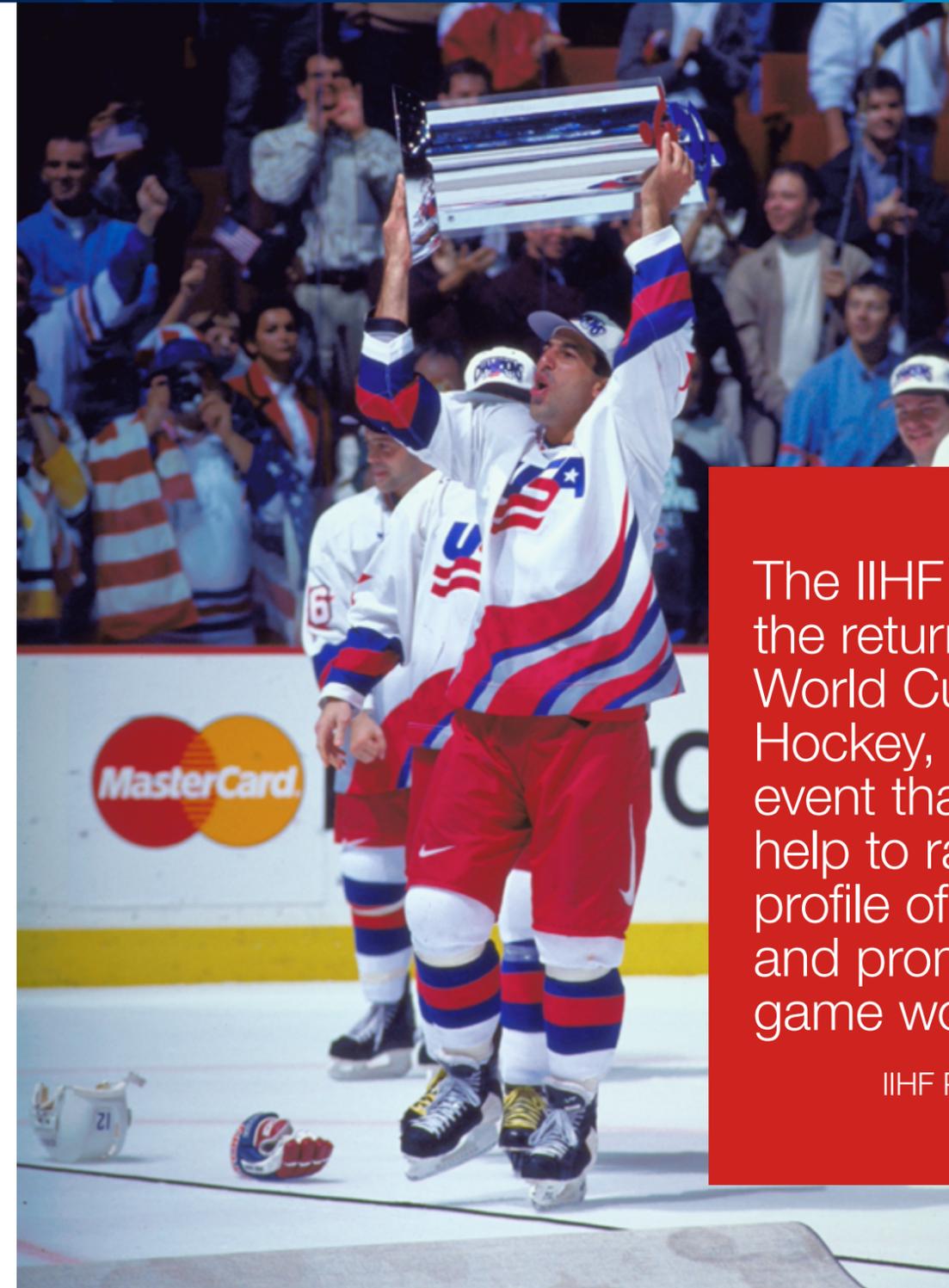
European countries who are developing world class hockey players in ever-increasing numbers. Countries such as Slovakia, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, France, Denmark, Norway, Latvia, Belarus, Estonia, Slovenia, Kazakhstan and Lithuania (among others) will all be eligible for representation on Team Europe.

The players for Team North American Youngstars will be selected from a pool of the best young hockey players from Canada and the United States. Those players age 23 and under will be available for selection exclusively by Team North American Youngstars.

All eight teams will be comprised of 23 players, including 20 skaters and three goalies. Each National Association has the right to select its own team and must announce at least 16 members of its roster, including at least two goalies, no later than March 1, 2016, with the balance of each team's roster to be announced no later than June 1, 2016. To select the rosters of Team Europe and Team North American Youngstars, the NHL and NHLPA will jointly name each of the management teams.

The 2016 World Cup of Hockey is scheduled to be played on NHL-sized rinks using NHL rules and officiated by NHL officials. Other competition matters, such as the anti-doping

policy governing the tournament, the framework and procedure for supplementary discipline, the medical protocols, media and broadcasting policies and access, etc., will be the responsibility of the NHL and NHLPA in consultation with third parties, including the IIHF, where appropriate.



USA forward Chris Chelios hoists the World Cup of Hockey trophy after defeating Canada 5-2 at the inaugural tournament in 1996.

The IIHF welcomes the return of the World Cup of Hockey, a fantastic event that should help to raise the profile of our sport and promote the game worldwide.

IIHF President René Fasel

Jincy does it

USA reclaims U18 gold on captain's OT winner

By Adam Steiss

The United States has recaptured the U18 Women's World Championship crown from Canada, ending a three-year gold medal streak by the Canadians in a thrilling final game in Buffalo, USA.

Captain Jincy Dunne's second goal of the game, a wrist shot to the top corner 51 seconds into overtime on the power play, gave the U.S. a 3-2 win over rivals Canada and its first U18 gold since 2011.

The victory was a sweet end for the 17-year-old's international U18 hockey career. Dunne, tabbed by many to be the next U.S. female hockey star, twice settled for silver at the hands of the Canadians in the last two U18 finals. Playing on home ice in 2015, she wasn't about to let her last chance at a U18 gold slip through her hands.

"Oh my gosh, it was the most incredible feeling in the world," an elated Dunne said later, gold medal around her neck. "For me, three years,

and we finally won the gold. I didn't really get a chance to celebrate because I got attacked by my teammates. That's when I knew it went in. But just to be able to share that experience with my team like that...my family was in the crowd. It was so amazing."

The gold gives the Americans four in total—the same number as Canada—since the U18 started in 2008.

The game was played before a packed house at HarborCenter in downtown Buffalo, site of the 2015 U18 Women's Worlds. The 2015 tournament set the second-highest attendance for a women's U18 World Championship with approximately 13,500 total spectators.

"Playing before such a large crowd was nerve-wrecking for sure," said Canada's player of the game, goalie Marlene Boissonault. "But to know there are family and friends at home supporting us was fantastic."

Russia's U18 women's team won its first ever medal in this event, defeating rivals Czech Republic, 5-1, to win bronze and avenge a 1-0 loss in the bronze game a year ago in Budapest. It was a deserved win as the Russians dominated from start to finish.

"We really wanted this game today because



Captain Jincy Dunne (center) smiling as the United States anthem plays at the end of the gold medal game.

we remember Budapest and how close we came last year," said Russian captain Anna Shokhina, one of the stars today with a goal and two assists. "We're a year older now, and we deserved this win."

The top Russian line of Alevtina Shtaryo-

va-Shokhina-Fanuza Kadirova was almost unstoppable, generating chance after chance and accounting for three goals and eight points in the game. All three are legitimate candidates to make the senior national team for the Women's Worlds in Malmo, Sweden, in April.

2015 IIHF U18 Women's World Championship



Valeria Tarakanova, RUS



Micah Hart, CAN



Fanuza Kadirova, RUS



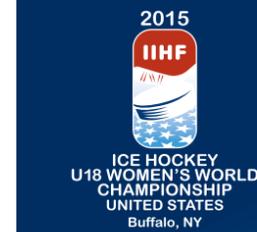
Melissa Samoskevich, USA

Directorate Awards

Top Goaltender: Valeria Tarakanova, RUS
 Top Defenceman: Jincy Dunne, USA
 Top Forward: Sarah Potomak, CAN

Media All-Stars

Goaltender: Valeria Tarakanova, RUS
 Defenceman: Jincy Dunne, USA
 Defenceman: Micah Hart, CAN
 Forward: Fanuza Kadirova, RUS
 Forward: Sarah Potomak, CAN
 Forward: Melissa Samoskevich, USA



Directorate Top
Defenceman



Jincy Dunne
D, USA

Guiding the Americans through the tournament with impeccable play at the blue line and timely scoring, Dunne showed the world why she is the consensus top U.S. hockey prospect, scoring the game-winning shootout goal against Canada in the opener, then later winning it all with a great goal in OT to retake the gold.



Directorate Top
Forward, All-Star
Forward, MVP



Sarah Potomak
F, Canada

Sarah Potomak left Buffalo with a trio of individual awards, and just barely missed out on going two-for-two for gold medals in the tournament after winning gold in 2014. Still, the future looks bright for this promising forward from Western Canada.

Four in a row



SKIF Nizhni Novgorod won the final tournament of the European Women's Champions Cup, crowning themselves as the best women's hockey club team of the continent.

The Russians defeated Finnish host Espoo Blues (3-1), Swedish champion Linköpings HC (2-1) and Switzerland's HC Lugano (7-4).

After the last three editions of the EWCC had been won by a Russian club, Tornado Moscow Region, the EWCC winner from 2009, SKIF Nizhni Novgorod, entered the stage in Espoo as pre-tournament favourite. They had a slow start in the opening game but ultimately came out on top 3-1 against the host club, Espoo Blues.

The quest to return the EWCC trophy back to Russia did not get easier on the second day of competition, as Linköpings HC came in and outshot SKIF 41-19. The Swedes entered the game in strong shape after stream-rolling over Swiss champion HC Lugano 9-0 on the opening day.

"The biggest challenge was to make the girls

clear that although Linköping beat Lugano 9-0, they are not invincible and that we can play with them at the same level. With discipline in the game we can beat any opponent," SKIF head coach Oleg Namestnikov told R-Sport.

However, at 11:31 of the second period a goal from Linköping's Norwegian defender Ingrid Morset broke the deadlock. But the joy only lasted for four minutes when SKIF star forward Karoliina Rantamaki tied the game at one. At 7:17 of the third frame Maria Pechnikova gained SKIF the lead and the 2-1 score remained until the final buzzer.

Thanks to the tight win SKIF sealed the tournament win and completed its streak in Espoo with a 7-4 victory on Sunday against winless HC Lugano.

"It was one of the best games in my career. Everything worked out as it should," SKIF netminder Raisanen said about the deciding win against Linköping. "For me this is the first big win, I still can't realize what happened. The girls came to congratulate me and I even didn't realize we had already won the tournament."

Linköpings HC, which had the two leading scorers of the tournament with Swiss forward

Stefanie Marty (1+7=8) and Austrian top goal scorer Denise Altmann (4+3=7), finished the tournament in second place. Host Espoo Blues claimed the bronze medals after earning the only win against HC Lugano. Vilma Tanskanen completed her hat trick with the 6-5 overtime goal at 3:39 of the extra period.

Denmark, France make history



France will for the first time ever compete at the top division of an IIHF women's hockey tournament, after winning the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship Division I on home ice in Vaujany.

The French ended the tournament with five wins and zero losses, outshooting their opponents in every game and outscoring them 21-9.

During the past six years the French women's U18 national team won four Division I medals but never managed to earn promotion to the



top division. This time, in her seventh year in IIHF competition with the team, head coach Nolwenn Rousselle led the team to gold.

2016 will mark the first year France will have a women's team compete in the top division when the U18 Women's Worlds will be held in St. Catharines in the Canadian province of Ontario. Potentially up to ten players will be eligible to return from this year's squad.

Danes qualify

The Danish U18 women's national team won the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship Division I Qualification for the first time in its history. The victory assures Denmark of a spot in the U18 women's Division I tournament that will be played next year, an impressive achievement considering this is the first year that the Danish program has participated in this age category.

The Danes made it through the round robin tournament with an unblemished 5-0 record, defeating Kazakhstan 4-0 on the final day to finish atop the standings.

Women get ready for battle

Story lines aplenty as 25th anniversary approaches

By Andrew Podnieks



The city of Malmö is getting ready to host its second major IIHF event in as many years. Last year it was the U20, and in another few weeks it will be the Women's World Championship, now celebrating 25 years of play.

Of course, front and centre will be the Canada-United States rivalry. Every one of the previous 15 tournaments (the tournament wasn't an annual event until 1997) has featured a gold-medal game between the North Americans, and while the world is closing the gap, it might not be enough to interrupt that expectation for Malmö.

The only change in representation from 2013 is that the Czechs are out and Japan in for 2015. The two nations played a thrilling qualification after Sochi, Japan winning the decisive

third game, 2-1, to earn the Malmö invitation.

The Japanese have not played at the top level of the WW since 2009 and in five previous appearances have managed to avoid demotion only once (in 2008). Scoring goals will likely be their biggest challenge.

Canada's roster will be loaded with experience, but will miss one of the most impactful female players in history in Hayley Wickenheiser, out with a foot injury. However the team will not lack for proven talent. Although 10 players are making their Worlds debut, they will be bolstered by a total of 11 veterans who won gold in Sochi.

Oddly, Canada will be playing its third major tournament in a row with a new coach. Dan Church was behind the bench in 2013, followed by Kevin Dineen in Sochi. For Malmö, it will be Doug Derragh. Another coach, another system to learn. How will Canada perform?

The United States will also have a veteran roster led by new head coach and former NHLer Ken Klee. Indeed, the U.S. has won gold at five of the last seven Women's Worlds and has been as dominant in this event as they have been frustrated at the Olympics, which they haven't won since 1998.





Team Canada will be without the services of women's hockey legend Hayley Wickenheiser, out with a foot injury.

With a team as deep as the States, Klee has an enviable job picking who he will bring along to Malmo. Stars like Amanda Kessel, Kendall Coyne, Hilary Knight, the Lamoureux sisters...the list goes on.

Barring a huge upset of one of the North American teams, the chase for bronze might be the fiercest ever this year. Switzerland,

behind the stellar goaltending of Florence Schelling, comes in as third-place finishers in Sochi (and, previously, in 2012) and a credible contender for another medal in 2015.

Finland, led by star defenceman Jenni Hiirikoski, is also hoping for a return to the net by Noora Raaty, who played in the second men's league and made an appearance with the women's national team in an exhibition game. The Finns, however, haven't won a medal since 2011.

Russia won bronze in 2013 under general manager Alexei Yashin but finished a disappointing sixth in Sochi. The U18 team was dominant in the bronze game in Buffalo and a good result in Malmo would come as no surprise.

Sweden, meanwhile, has taken a downturn in recent years since its big stars from the "Mirakel" in 2006 have retired. The team hasn't won a medal since 2007, and given the stiffer competition in recent times a medal on home ice will be no easier than in recent years.

Rounding out the eight-team tournament will be Germany. Like Japan, it lacks the firepower to pose a serious threat to its opponents, but the Germans have managed to stay at the top level since 2011, a goal it hopes to achieve again in Malmo.



Sweden and Switzerland battled for Olympic bronze in an intense game in Sochi and could be headed for a rematch.

The recent format for the tournament remains the same given its success and popularity. Thus, the top four teams will be in Group A (United States, Canada, Russia, Finland) and all automatically advance to the playoff round.

Group B will consist of Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, and Japan. The last two teams will play a relegation series while the top two

join the quarter-finals. While an expected gold-medal game between the North Americans should provide thrilling hockey, the fight for bronze will be equally thrilling given the number of teams now capable of competing for third place.

Twenty-five years after the first Women's Worlds, the 2015 edition promises to be the most competitive ever.


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Lulea lifts first CHL trophy

Wild comeback win caps successful opening season

By Henrik Manninen



The Champions Hockey League final looked like it was going to be an uphill struggle for Lulea. Trailing by two goals, the home team eventually turned up the heat in spectacular fashion, scoring four unanswered goals in the third period to be crowned the first champions of the re-launched CHL.

Down 2-0, Kristian Nakyva was the instigator of the heroic turnaround with a power-play goal 7:43 into the final frame, the comeback completed with Lulea's third consecutive man advantage thanks to a Johan Forsberg strike. Dean Kukan added to the scoreline with an empty-netter 64 seconds from the end.

"We knew as a team that we were able to come back," said Kukan, the 21-year old year

Swiss defenceman following Lulea's 4-2 win on home ice at the Coop Norrbotten Arena. "In our last match in the Swedish championship on home ice, we did just that from having been two goals down and this time around we had a little bit luck scoring from three-power play goals," he continued.

It was a missed opportunity for Frolunda Gothenburg after having been in the driver's seat for most of the game, leading by two goals ahead of the final frame before penalty calls were to ruin their night.

"The five minutes we played box play after that penalty did have an effect, but I am not going to comment further on that," said Frolunda Gothenburg's Artturi Lehtonen. "Right now the feeling is just very empty."

It was a fitting end to a victorious CHL campaign, where the odds had been stacked against Lulea in each of their four play-off rounds on their way to lifting the cup, with comebacks staged against Salzburg, Lukko Rauma, Skelleftea and finally Frolunda Gothenburg.

Having played 31 consecutive seasons in the Swedish top division, Lulea has been a unabashed success story in Swedish ice hockey since first winning promotion in the mid-1980's.



Formerly lowly Lulea now sits atop Europe as winners of the inaugural Champions Hockey League season.

"Throughout the season, when we have been going through a rough patch in the SHL, our performances in the CHL have made us stronger. I think the CHL trophy can mean a lot to us, as we are not pleased so far how things have progressed in the SHL, where we now need to improve in order to take the next step," said Lulea's head coach Joakim Fagervall.

The wild finish closed out a historic inaugural season for the Champions Hockey League. Going into the season, the task of organizing

a tournament with 44 teams from all over Europe seemed monumental.

"We are extremely pleased with what we have accomplished in our first year," said CHL CEO Martin Baumann. "Few people realize what it takes to put together a league with 44 teams, and just the fact that we delivered 161 games without any logistical incidents is very satisfactory."

"Our final game in Luleå was exceptional, full house, fantastic atmosphere and this is what

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we mainly will be judged against in our first season”.

And the success was mirrored in the fan-base, with still more room to grow. All told, 16 broadcast partners televised the CHL Final to 28 countries and territories. All 161 games were produced and shown on various platforms across Europe and the United States.

“Obviously, as a start-up venture we have our challenges, but I believe that we have been very good in identifying them together with our membership and our marketing partner Infront.”

The Champions Hockey League has decided to change the playing format for the 2015/2016 season. The CHL will expand the Group Stage from 44 to 48 teams, divided into 16 groups with three teams in each.

“With this adjustment of our format, we want to make our league more attractive for the fans by starting the playoff phase sooner and creating more knock-out games and more one-game elimination matchups,” said Champions Hockey League chairman Anders Ternbom.

Neman wins Continental Cup

Belarusians to play in Champions Hockey League

By Martin Merk



Belarusian champion Neman Grodno has won the 2015 IIHF Continental Cup Super Final, at the same time earning a qualification spot for next season's Champions Hockey League.

The team from the city of 350,000 inhabitants at the Neman River close to the border with Lithuania and Poland was already known as the tournament winner by the final day, going undefeated in the Super Final. Host Fischtown Pinguins Bremerhaven claimed second place after defeating the Angers Ducs 3-2 in a shootout. The French had to settle for the bronze medals.

“I’m very, very happy with the win and the entire tournament. It was the second time I reached the final as a coach and winning here with Neman is a beautiful debut for me



with the club,” said Neman head coach Vasilii Spiridonov, who led Metallurg Zhlobin to a second-place finish two years ago.

“My team was physically a little bit stronger than Bremerhaven and mentally the team was better prepared than our opponents. That was an important factor in the win because Bremerhaven is a very skilled team,” Spiridonov said. “Big thanks to the organizers who did a great job. It was a great atmosphere in the arena and it was touching to receive the warm

applause of the German fans after our win.”

“From our view Neman Grodno was the best team and deserved to win here,” added Fischtown Pinguins team manager Alfred Prey. The club became the second Belarusian team to win the competition after Yunost Minsk in 2007 and 2011.

And the win will also ensure them a wild card to play in the 2015/2016 Champions Hockey League as the first Belarusian team to do so.

Gallery



BUFFALO, U.S.A. - JANUARY 12: Russia's Anna Shokhina #19 celebrating with the third place trophy after a 5-1 bronze medal game win over the Czech Republic at the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship. (Photo by Matt Zamboni/HHOF-IIHF Images)



TORONTO, CANADA - DECEMBER 27: Denmark's Georg Sorensen #39 prepares to take on Sweden during preliminary round action at the 2015 IIHF World Junior Championship. (Photo by Andre Ringuette/HHOF-IIHF Images)



MONTREAL, CANADA - DECEMBER 27: Slovakia's Denis Godla #30 turns to cover the puck against Team Finland during preliminary round action at the 2015 IIHF World Junior Championship. (Photo by Richard Wolowicz/HHOF-IIHF Images)



TORONTO, CANADA - DECEMBER 30: Switzerland's Noah Rod #26 leaps out the way as Denmark's Georg Sorensen #39 covers up the puck and Anders Krosgsgaard #2 looks on during preliminary round action at the 2015 IIHF World Junior Championship. (Photo by Andre Ringuette/HHOF-IIHF Images)



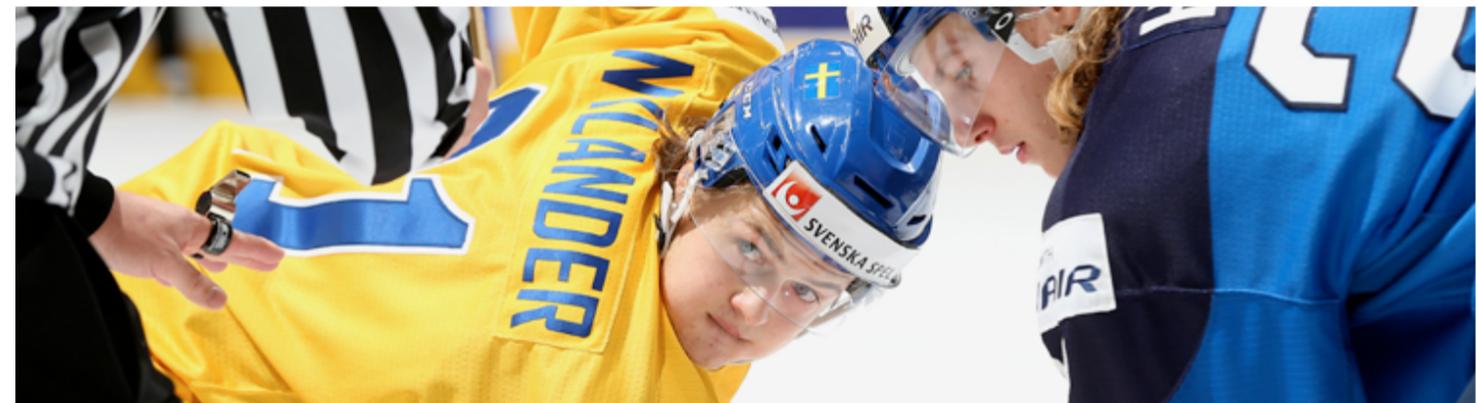
TORONTO, CANADA - DECEMBER 28: The puck goes off the crossbar behind Ludovic Waeber #1 during preliminary round action against Russia at the 2015 IIHF World Junior Championship. (Photo by Andre Ringuette/HHOF-IIHF Images)



MONTREAL, CANADA - JANUARY 2: Ivan Barbashyov #22 celebrates after scoring Team Russia's first goal of the game during quarterfinal round action at the 2015 IIHF World Junior Championship. (Photo by Richard Wolowicz/HHOF-IIHF Images)



TORONTO, CANADA - JANUARY 4: Canada's Curtis Lazar #26 skates with the puck while fending off Slovakia's David Soltes #21 during semifinal action at the 2015 IIHF World Junior Championship. (Photo by Andre Ringuette/HHOF-IIHF Images)



TORONTO, CANADA - JANUARY 2: Sweden's William Nylander #21 faces off against Finland's #27 Roope Hintz during quarterfinal round action at the 2015 IIHF World Junior Championship. (Photo by Andre Ringuette/HHOF-IIHF Images)



TORONTO, CANADA - JANUARY 4: Canadian fans salute Slovakia's Denis Godla #30 after his goaltending performance against Canada during a 5-1 semifinal loss at the 2015 IIHF World Junior Championship. (Photo by Andre Ringuette/HHOF-IIHF Images)



BUFFALO, U.S.A. - January 5: The Czech Republic's Martina Maskova #17 looks on during warm-up prior to preliminary round action against Russia at the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship. (Photo by Francois Laplante/HHOF-IIHF Images)



BUFFALO, U.S.A. - January 5: Switzerland's Kaleigh Quennec #18 celebrates at the bench with teammates after a goal against Finland during preliminary round action at the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship. (Photo by Matt Zambonin/HHOF-IIHF Images)



BUFFALO, U.S.A. - January 5: Canada's Sarah Poto-mak #26 celebrates after a third period goal against the U.S. during preliminary round action at the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship. (Photo by Francois Laplante/HHOF-IIHF Images)



TORONTO, CANADA - JANUARY 5: Canadian players celebrate after a 5-4 gold medal game win over Russia at the 2015 IIHF World Junior Championship. (Photo by Andre Ringuette/HHOF-IIHF Images)



BUFFALO, U.S.A. - January 9: Japan's Ayu Tonosaki #1 and teammates are greeted by members of Team USA prior to relegation round action against Switzerland at the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship. (Photo by Matt Zambonin/HHOF-IIHF Images)



BUFFALO, NEW YORK - JANUARY 12: Team USA players and staff celebrate after a 3-2 OT win over Canada in the gold medal game at the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship. (Photo by Francois Laplante/HHOF-IIHF Images)

Rooth's Hall of Fame career

Swedish hockey star to be inducted at 2015 Worlds

by Andrew Podnieks

At age 35, Maria Rooth will be the youngest ever IIHF Hall of Famer when she is inducted at the ceremonies in Prague in 2015 during the World Championship. As well, she has just given birth to her second child, both daughters.

Alice, who weighed 3.0 kilos when she entered the world on February 8, 2015 will join two-and-a-half year-old Lowa with their mummy, and perhaps in 20 years or so the two girls will follow their mother and play hockey at the Olympics.

When did you first start skating?

I grew up in Angelholm near an ice rink, and I think I started skating when I was about five. My parents took me to the games there and my brother Daniel, who is four years older, also played. It was only natural that I wanted to play, but there were 600 boys in our town playing and only one girl—me. But my team-



mates treated me as one of them, and I did pretty well, so they respected me.

Who was your favourite player growing up?

When we were young and we played hockey in the streets, I always wanted to be Wayne Gretzky because he was the best player there was.

Why did you keep playing during your teen years at a time when there were so many other things a young girl could do?

That was a time when I started to realize there were other girls playing, and through that I discovered we had a national team. I still loved playing hockey, and that was great motivation for me, thinking about playing for the national team.

Did you meet any players who would also play for the team?

The one girl I met and played with from about age 13 to 18 was Erika Holst. I travelled and played some games with her team during these years. We became buddies and, we both made it to the national team.

How did Shannon Miller recruit you for the University of Minnesota-Duluth in the States?

I think it started at the 1998 Olympics in Na-

gano. That was my first Olympics, of course, and I was 18. I think she was looking for players who weren't from Minnesota because all of those girls wanted to go to Minneapolis and play for the Gophers, so she knew she had to recruit outside the U.S. and even Canada. I think she noticed me there and gave me a call later, and I accepted.

Were you nervous about going to the U.S. and playing NCAA?

Yes, I was, but I knew about college hockey and that was one of my ambitions. It became a goal of mine to get there, so her timing for calling was perfect.

When you think about Turin and the 2006 Olympics, what stands out the most for you?

A couple of things. We had such good team chemistry, which I hadn't experienced before. We had done all we could do in the gym and training, and we had teammates who all knew their role and accepted their role. And, of course, the other thing that stands out is the semi-final game because we had never beaten the U.S. And the game went to overtime and a shootout, which was so cool.

In that game, the Americans were leading 2-0, which usually is enough to win the game. What happened?



Rooth reacts after scoring the historic shootout winner against the United States at the 2006 Olympics.

The night before the game we had a big talk, and we went through every scenario. Even if we were down, we felt this was going to be our game, this was going to be our day.

We were going to beat them. We had that mindset, even when we were down. We never gave up and Kim [Martin] was awesome in net. Our mental strength in that game was huge.

You had a good game as well, scoring

both goals and the shootout winner. If you close your eyes, can you see your goal in the shootout?

Ya, I can. We had practiced shootouts a lot, and I had confidence because I had already scored twice. I knew what I wanted to do. I never changed my mind, and I knew I could score.

Here we are in 2015, nine years later, and that game did not bring about a new era in women's hockey in Sweden as we had



After her playing career Rooth moved on to coaching and now runs a hockey school in Sweden.

thought in 2006. Why not?

At the time, we thought the win would result in more happening, but I think the changes were subtle. Women's hockey became more real to the people. It was a sport they wanted to follow and it became more accepted. A lot of people watched that game, and a lot of girls started to play as a result.

But a lot of players from my generation on the team retired after that year or soon after, leaving a big gap. That was a huge hole for the

younger kids to fill, and I think some things got lost about how to train, how to eat, how to dedicate yourself every day.

How involved are you in hockey now?

For now, I have my hockey school, which is only one week in the summer, but it seems to take up a lot more time than that. But apart from that, I don't do much on a full-time basis. I'll help with the national team at camps in the fall and spring, developing girls who are 13-15 and 16-18.

Coming up



**IIHF ICE HOCKEY
WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP**
SWEDEN, Malmö
28.03-04.04.2015

**IIHF ICE HOCKEY
WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
DIVISION I Group B**
CHINA, Beijing
06-12.04.2015

**IIHF ICE HOCKEY U18 WORLD
CHAMPIONSHIP
DIVISION II Group A**
ESTONIA, Tallinn
22-28.03.2015

**IIHF ICE HOCKEY
WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
DIVISION I Group A**
FRANCE, Rouen
12-18.04.2015

**IIHF ICE HOCKEY
WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
DIVISION II Group A**
GREAT BRITAIN, Dumfries
30.03-05.04.2015

**IIHF ICE HOCKEY U18 WORLD
CHAMPIONSHIP
DIVISION II Group B**
SERBIA, Novi Sad
16-22.03.2015



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