

## Spasibo Sochi, hello Minsk!



Photos: Andre Ringuette, Jeff Vinnick / IIHF-IIHF Images

**Olympic Memories:** Canada's double, Teemu's triumph, and Switzerland's bronze comeback were just a few of the highlights that we saw in the Sochi 2014 ice hockey tournaments.



■ ■ Two months after the Olympics, and there is still more action to go.

### RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL

We were privileged to witness a fantastic set of hockey tournaments in Sochi. From a heart-stopping finish in the women's gold medal game to a reaffirmation of Canada's place atop the men's Olympic hockey world, Russia had a lot to offer for fans of our sport.

Organizing a total of 52 games in just over two weeks is no small feat. From the opening ceremony to the final whistle in the men's gold medal game, the teams of workers and volunteers at the Bolshoy and Shayba arenas were always ready to help with smiles on their faces. Though their home team wasn't able to bring home a medal, every Russian should be proud of the way the country came together to showcase the best of itself at the Olympic Games.

■ ■ Congratulations to Canada for once again doing the double. The men's national team proved it is truly a force

to be reckoned with, and did so with a dominant display of defensive skill and timely scoring from some of the world's biggest hockey stars.

And a big congratulations to the Canadian women's team, winning the most thrilling game of the Olympics. The achievement of the "Golden Girl" Marie-Philip Poulin, who has now scored two Olympic gold-medal winning goals, and her teammates is truly remarkable and a testament to how good a women's hockey team can be.

The final against the United States will be remembered for years to come, and I salute both programs for setting the standard for women's hockey that I hope all the other hockey nations will reach. There is no reason to believe after watching the gold medal finale that women's hockey is no less entertaining than the men's game, and we must do our best to encourage more parity in the sport.

■ ■ But for now, as spring is around the corner we turn our attention to the 78th IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship, where we will travel to the Belarusian capital of Minsk for the first time ever.

This country has lived and breathed hockey for as long as I can remember, and in visiting the preparations for the tournament I can say with certainty that Belarus' hockey fans are ready for a great World Championship. Who knows? Maybe Belarus' hockey team can draw inspiration from the country's record gold medal haul at the Olympics and surprise everyone like it did in Salt Lake in 2002.

■ ■ As the Worlds draw closer, so too does the IIHF Annual Congress. This year we have been reviewing proposals for changes to playing rules, Statutes and Bylaws, and the implementation of a new Disciplinary Code. It is important for the IIHF to cooperate with all our stakeholders in order to put out the best conditions for international hockey, and we are grateful for all the assistance that our MNAs have provided with these initiatives.

So to cap off an already memorable year for ice hockey, I will see you all in Minsk!

René Fasel  
IIHF President

# Rule proposals heading to Congress

## Summer workshop, new rulebook scheduled for June

■ With major rule proposals set to be voted on at the upcoming IIHF Congress, a workshop for the introduction of the new rules and the new IIHF Rule Book format is being planned for the summer.



Some of the proposals put forth include moving the blue line to reduce the size of the neutral zone, and pushing the goal line back closer to the end boards. Another proposal would forbid goalies from freezing the puck coming off a shot from outside the blue line, while others are designed to further ensure good sportsmanship among players on the ice.

All successful proposals will be integrated into the new IIHF

86 rule proposals on 57 rules both major and minor were submitted last year. After receiving rule change proposals from various Member National Associations and IIHF Committees, the IIHF Competition Committee reviewed the proposals, circulating them first through other committees and then the IIHF Council. Following Council's review, the proposals were distributed to all member national associations.

During Congress, a special Rules Session will be held to review the major rule proposals with Congress delegates to ensure their understanding and application of the proposals. All major Rule Proposals (defined as affecting the play of the game) will be discussed during this IIHF Rules Workshop on May 22, 2014 in Minsk, Belarus. The Congress will then vote on each major rule proposal during the IIHF Annual Congress.

Rule Book, which will be applicable starting from July 1, 2014 until June 30, 2018. The June Rules Workshop together with the Referee-in-Chief summit will discuss how to apply the new major rules. Since the introduction of new rules has the effect of eliminating or affecting other rules, the workshop will be designed to address this 'domino effect' as well. The workshop and summit will be held jointly and is scheduled for 13-14 June in Frankfurt, Germany.

The workshop will also introduce the new look, structure and layout of the IIHF Rule Book that has been in the works throughout this season. The aim of the Rule Book redesign is to incorporate all rule information within a single source.

### OBITUARIES

**Doru Tureanu**, IIHF Hall of Fame member passed away on 11 March at age 60.



Tureanu devoted his entire playing career to his home-town club Dinamo. Having made his debut at the age of 14, Tureanu played between 1969 and 1987, winning six domestic championships during an era in Romanian ice hockey when city rivals Dinamo and Steaua not only shared the Mihai Flamaropol ice rink in Eastern Bucharest, but also the duopoly of league championships.

With 112 points (74 goals and 39 assists) Tureanu represented Romania during two Olympic Winter Games (Innsbruck 1976 and Lake Placid 1980) and in 17 IIHF World Championships between 1971 and 1987, which included many memorable moments and one participation in the top division in 1977. He was inducted into the IIHF Hall of Fame in 2011.

**Lars-Ake Sivertsson**, passed away in February at the age of 73. The forward played in two IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships winning bronze in Tampere 1965 and finishing in fourth place in Ljubljana 1966.

The Mora native joined Brynas Gavle in 1960 winning six domestic championships with the team before retiring in 1971. In 215 games in the top league he scored 169 goals and had 40 assists.

# Minsk is ready for the Worlds

## Hockey-crazed Belarus happy to be in the spotlight



By Slava Malamud

■ When it comes to hockey legacy, Belarus may not be one of the world's heavy hitters, but it ranks with the best of them when it comes for appreciating the game.



Belarus hockey's pride and joy, Minsk Arena (pictured) will host the gold medal game on 25 May.

It is not a secret that Belarus will not be on anyone's list of European hockey superpowers. The former Soviet republic has certainly had its moments in the sun since beginning to play internationally 22 years ago, but the memorable Olympic semifinal appearance in 2002 and an odd IIHF World Championship quarter-final now and again constitute the entirety of the country's achievements on the world stage as of now.

Still, there is at least one thing in which Belarus has a leg up on most European countries, including even its much more heralded "big brother" to the East, Russia. For Belarus, you see, is a true hockey nation. In the sense that hockey is at least as popular as football there, even surpassing it at times.

"Well, when FC BATE Borisov was winning in the UEFA Champions League against teams like Lille and Bayern Munich, football was ahead," says Piotr Rabukhin, the 2014 IIHF World Championship promotion manager. "But as the football successes waned and as the Worlds got closer, hockey again became the undisputed number one in Belarus."

One could perhaps trace this phenomenon back to the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City when the little-regarded Belarusian squad toppled the mighty Swedes in the quarter-final in what was perhaps one of the most exciting and wildest contests in Olympic history. Though the creator of that triumph, then-head coach Vladimir Krikunov, prefers to downplay his team's role.



Can Belarus put together a miracle like in Salt Lake?

"The hockey boom in Belarus was already happening back in the Soviet days, when Dynamo Minsk first made the USSR Top League," says Krikunov, not being all that modest since that success was also his creation. That Dynamo Minsk team of the late 1980s was Krikunov's first coaching experience and some of his charges went on to play for him in Salt Lake City.

He won't deny, though, that beating Sweden had really

put Belarus on the map, and not only in hockey terms.

"After (Salt Lake City) they were saying that we did more for the country's international relations than the entire Ministry of Foreign Affairs ever did," laughs Krikunov. "The country's President said he had never before got so many calls from other world leaders in one day."

Well, that is to be expected, since in Belarus hockey is a matter of state importance. According to Krikunov, the game really took off in the country after its outspoken President Alexander Lukashenko started playing himself and became Belarus hockey's most prominent PR agent. It is no surprise, then, that when it comes to organizing the World Championship, there was no shortage of governmental support for the project.

"It is tough to organize something like this for the first time," says Rabukhin, "but in our case, things are definitely easier. We have no problem with issues like promotional budget and logistics. The organizing committee is headed by the Prime Minister, the promotional subcommittee by the Minister of Information, the volunteer program by the Minister of Education, and so on. All the local logistics are handled by the city hall. All we have to do is take care of the tournament itself."

In Belarus, much like in Russia, when things get done on such a grandiose scale, they usually get done well. To quote Krikunov, "when we promise something to the world, we keep those promises." But no matter how much help comes from up high, nothing can succeed without the enthusiasm of the fans. Luckily for Minsk, the people of Belarus won't let anyone doubt their love for hockey.

Dynamo Minsk, the country's KHL representative, led the league in attendance in 2011-12 and 2012-13, boasting average crowds in excess of 14,000, and was the second-best attended team in Europe. This season, with

the team's on-ice fortunes taking a sharp turn for the worse, the attendance fell – all the way to second place in the league and still over 10,000 per game. A mediocre season is clearly not enough to significantly dampen Minsk's love for the game. Not with the KHL's finest arena in their city.

"We started selling World Championship tickets back in late September and the bulk of them was gone by late November," says Rabukhin. "As for the final, the tickets we put out for online sales were all sold in seven minutes."

Most of the ticket buyers are Belarusian, with Russians in second place and always enthusiastic Latvians closely behind. Finland and Germany round out the top five. Neither the ticket holders nor the accredited media will need a visa to enter the country, an unprecedented move on Belarus' part.



Minsk Arena (top) and the newly-built Chizhovka Arena (bottom).

"Hockey in Minsk is undoubtedly a holiday, a festivity," says Rabukhin. "This is why our official slogan is "Together We Celebrate". When we watch Dynamo, we celebrate by ourselves. This time, we have the world coming over to share in our celebration. This is why we do things the way we do them. In Belarus, when you are expecting guests for a holiday, you put your house in order. You paint what needs painting, you clean what needs cleaning, you cook all the best food. All to make the guests comfortable."

A worthy endeavor, no doubt, but if while doing that the home team can also swing another on-ice miracle for a celebration of its own, Belarus' love for hockey may begin rivaling that of Canada.

### NEWS & NOTES

**CANADA:** Hockey Canada appointed **Rob Blake** as Team Canada's general manager and **Dave Tippett** as head coach for the 2014 IIHF World Championship.

Now an assistant GM with the Los Angeles Kings Blake, 44, played 20 years in the NHL as an elite defenceman. Tippett, 52, has twice served as an assistant coach for Canada at the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship, winning silver in 2009. He was head coach of the NHL's Phoenix Coyotes for five seasons, leading them to two playoff appearances and two 40-win seasons.

**CANADA:** **Bob Nicholson** announced that he will step down as President and CEO of Hockey Canada. Nicholson has worked for Hockey Canada since 1990 and prior to that for the British Columbia branch. During his 15 years as President/CEO, Canada has won seven Olympic gold medals in ice hockey and numerous gold medals in all categories of the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship program. Nicholson, who was elected for a four-year term on the IIHF Council in 2012, confirmed he will stay on with his role as IIHF Vice President.

**RUSSIA:** **Oleg Znarok**, a double Gagarin Cup winner with Dynamo Moscow and the only man to lead two different clubs to the KHL's grand final, has been announced as the next coach of Russia's national men's team.

Aside from coaching up the Latvian national team into a consistent top division hockey nation, Znarok has been working as the Dynamo Moscow coach for the last three years. He has been to three Gagarin Cup finals in four years, winning the last two with Dynamo in 2012 and 2013.

**CZECH REPUBLIC:** The Czech Ice Hockey Association approved **Vladimir Ruzicka** as head coach of the men's senior national team, replacing Alois Hadamczik.

Ruzicka took over the team in the summer of 2004 and led it to World Championship gold in 2005. Then Hadamczik was coaching the Czechs for three seasons, then Ruzicka for two including another world title in 2010. Hadamczik resigned following the Czechs' sixth-place finish at the 2014 Olympics in Sochi with only two wins in five games.

**IIHF:** Samuel Ammann has been hired by the IIHF as Event Coordinator starting from March 2014. Before joining the IIHF, Ammann worked for the Office for Economy and Labour in Zurich for five years. In September 2013 he successfully finished his training as Business Engineer at the SGO School in Glattbrugg.



**USA:** USA Hockey announced that **Peter Laviolette** will coach the 2014 World Championship team and **Mark Osiecki** will become the 22nd U.S. world junior head coach. Laviolette most recently served as an assistant coach for the 2014 U.S. Olympic Men's Ice Hockey Team in Sochi, Russia, and was the head coach of the 2006 U.S. Olympic Men's Ice Hockey Team in Turin, Italy. Prior to that, Laviolette was head coach at the IIHF Men's World Championship in back-to-back years (2004, 2005).

Osiecki, a native of Burnsville, Minnesota, has won gold medals at the U20 level as an assistant coach in 2010 and 2013, and bronze in 2011.

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# Ten things we learned from Sochi

## Defence and goaltenders ruled the roost, Canada still golden at 2014 Olympic Games

By Lucas Aykroyd

■ If you want to learn something about hockey, there's nowhere better to do so than on the world's biggest stage. In February, Sochi offered a compelling snapshot of the strengths and weaknesses of the global men's hockey powers. Here's what stood out.

### 1) Defence wins championships – really!

It was a dominant performance by the Sidney Crosby-captained Canadians, who allowed just three goals in six games – a new Olympic record – en route to gold.

Starting goalie Carey Price, Canada's last line of defence, performed his role to a T, virtually error-free even with a lower-body injury. NHL all-star defencemen like Shea Weber and Duncan Keith rarely allowed opponents to establish any kind of forecheck, and kept them to the outside as much as possible. The forwards backchecked relentlessly and had tons of offensive zone puck possession, despite scoring just 17 goals. The Canadians may not play regularly on the big rink, but they owned it, big-time.

### 2) Canada has some great coaching

"Does anybody know who won the gold medal? See you, guys." Those were Canadian coach Mike Babcock's parting words at his gold medal game press conference. While he might have sounded cocky, the 50-year-old Detroit bench boss and his staff of Ken Hitchcock, Claude Julien, and Lindy Ruff certainly had the right to be proud.

Their meticulous planning – aided by expert consultant and ex-Switzerland coach Ralph Krueger – enabled Canada to end an overseas Olympic drought dating back to 1952. When opponents are as stifled as Canada's were, much of the credit belongs behind the bench.



Photo: Andre Ringuette / IHHOF-IIHF Images  
Mike Babcock added another Olympic gold to his resume.

### 3) Crosby and Toews are truly clutch

For most players, scoring in an Olympic gold medal game is once in a lifetime. But considering that Crosby and Jonathan Toews did it in 2014 for the second straight time, it's hard to argue that coincidence was involved.

Remarkably, Toews, a Triple Gold Club member since 2010, opened the scoring at 12:50 in Vancouver against the U.S., and at 12:55 in Sochi against Sweden. Crosby's 2-0 goal on Henrik Lundqvist wasn't an overtime winner, but in its own way, it was as dazzlingly opportunistic as what the Pittsburgh Penguins captain did in the Vancouver final. Love them or hate them, you must respect the way these two gifted centres step up.

### 4) Russia reevaluating

For the hosts, there's no way to put a pretty face on Sochi. The Russians squandered a unique opportunity to win on home ice. They turned in the worst performance by a host nation, relative to potential and expectations, since hockey's 1920 Olympic debut.

Things should have been different with superstars Yevgeni Malkin and Alexander Ovechkin in their prime in front of passionate fans. But the team's inability to mesh NHL and KHL talent, coupled with the now-fired Zinetula Bilyaletdinov's inflexible coaching, led to failure at the fifth straight "NHL Olympics." This waning superpower needs a watershed moment, like when legendary coach Anatoli Tarasov read Canadian fitness guru Lloyd Percival's The Hockey Handbook in the 1950's.

### 5) KHL still a ways to go

Often touted as the world's second-best league, the KHL hasn't seen its stars shine brightly on the Olympic stage since its 2008 inception. For instance, only four KHLers cracked the top 30 in Sochi scoring: Russia's Alexander Radulov, Latvia's Lauris Darzins, and Finland's Petri Kontiola and Jori Lehtera. The only KHLers ever to medal at the Olympics are Finns. En route to bronze, Finland used four in Vancouver and eight in Sochi.

For Russia, this is particularly damning, considering that the 28-club circuit specifically adjusted its schedule to suit the national team.



Photo: Andre Ringuette / IHHOF-IIHF Images  
Russia's disappointing finish was a tough pill to swallow.

### 6) Injuries don't faze Nordic nations

Give Canada credit for winning gold without top snipers Steven Stamkos and John Tavares. But remember, the champions have far more depth than either second-place Sweden or third-place Finland.

Tre Kronor had a perfect record prior to the final despite lacking captain Henrik Zetterberg and 2010 NHL scoring champ Henrik Sedin (not to mention Nicklas Backstrom's unfortunate doping disqualification versus Canada). And



Photo: Jeff Vinnick / IHHOF-IIHF Images  
For all its offensive firepower, defence is something Canada took to extremes. In Sochi, the defending champs from Vancouver allowed just three goals in six games.

who'd have believed that the Finns, with a huge hole at centre ice, could eliminate both Russia and the Americans? Their team play was impeccable minus Valterri Filppula, Mikko Koivu, Aleksander Barkov, and Saku Koivu.

### 7) Sun setting for Czechs, Slovaks?

The only surprising result for the former Czechoslovakia at these Games was when the Slovaks fell 3-1 to overachieving Slovenia in round-robin play. The Czechs, who came fifth, and the Slovaks, who were 11th, have gotten all the mileage they can out of aging stars like Jaromir Jagr and Marian Hossa. With little top-end young talent on the horizon, finishing off the Olympic podium is likely to become routine for both nations.



Photo: Andre Ringuette / IHHOF-IIHF Images  
Zdeno Chara and Jaromir Jagr likely played their last Games.

### 8) Swiss need more sharpshooters

At last year's IIHF World Championship, the Swiss won silver and tied for the tournament goals lead (35). So the inability of coach Sean Simpson's crew to generate offence in Sochi was disappointing, to say the least. The Swiss scored just

three goals in four games, exiting with a 3-1 qualification playoff loss to Latvia. They have competent, hard-working skaters aplenty, but at the Olympic level, they could use an anomaly like Austria's Michael Grabner or (better still) Slovenia's Anze Kopitar.

### 9) Timing is everything

In the Olympics, choices and omissions are magnified hundredfold, especially when the games are as tight as in Sochi. Just ask the hosts. What if Fyodor Tyutin's disallowed go-ahead goal against the U.S. had counted? What if Zinetula Bilyaletdinov had started reigning Vezina Trophy winner Sergei Bobrovsky in goal against Finland in the quarter-finals?

Or what if Finnish starter Tuukka Rask hadn't gotten sick before the semi-final versus Sweden? What if Latvian goalie Kristers Gudlevskis had stopped Shea Weber's 2-1 quarter-final winner? What if American sniper Phil Kessel's scoring touch hadn't deserted him against Canada? We'll never know, but it's fascinating to speculate.

### 10) Golden era for goalies

The save percentages sum it all up nicely. In 2010, U.S. netminders Ryan Miller and Tim Thomas recorded a cumulative 94.1 save percentage to lead the tournament. But in 2014, Canada's Carey Price and Roberto Luongo combined for an unbeatable 97.6 save percentage.

In Sochi, there were seven nations whose save percentages topped 93.0, compared to just two in Vancouver. For PyeongChang, the shooters must develop new strategies to outwit their masked foes.

### Top Performers: Directorate Awards and Media All-Star Team



Carey Price, G, CAN  
Directorate Best Goaltender  
5-0-0, 0.59 GAA, 97.17 SVS%



Henrik Lundqvist, G, SWE  
All-Star Team Goaltender  
5-0-1, 1.50 GAA, 94.34 SVS%



Drew Doughty, D, CAN  
All-Star Team Defenceman  
6 GP, 4G, 4A, 6P, +4



Erik Karlsson, D, SWE  
Directorate Best Defenceman  
All-Star Team Defenceman  
6 GP, 4G, 4A, 8P, +5



Mikael Granlund, F, FIN  
All-Star Team Forward  
6GP, 3G, 4A, 7P, +3



Phil Kessel, F, USA  
Directorate Best Forward  
All-Star Team Forward  
6GP, 5G, 3A, 8P, +6



Teemu Selanne, F, FIN  
MVP  
All-Star Team Forward  
6 GP, 4 G, 2 A, 6P, +3

### The Numbers Game: Olympic stats

■ Russia has always been known for its ability to produce offence. But in the last three Olympics, the Russians haven't lived up to their reputation in key situations. The 2014 host nation has been outscored by a whopping 17-6 margin in its last five medal round games, dating back to its 2-0 quarter-final victory over Canada in Turin 2006. Russia hasn't won a medal since taking bronze in Salt Lake City 2002.

■ The U.S.'s Phil Kessel and Austria's Michael Grabner didn't just share the tournament goal-scoring lead (five). They actually equalled or exceeded the output of entire nations. Slovakia only scored five goals overall, and Norway just three.



Photo: IHHOF-IIHF Images  
Grabner Kessel

■ Starting Canadian goalie Carey Price put himself into the record books with a shut-out streak of 164:19 to close the Games. That tied with Canada's Don Head (1960) for the fourth-longest streak of all time, and the longest in the modern era (1954 and after). Price didn't concede another goal after Latvia's Lauris Darzins scored on a breakaway at 15:41 of the first period in a 2-1 quarter-final win for Canada.



Photo: IHHOF-IIHF Images  
Price recorded a 0.59 GAA

■ Canada's goals allowed record was the lowest total since the Canadians won a three-game Olympics in 1928 with zero goals given up. Canada also scored remarkably little: its 17 goals were the fewest ever tallied by a gold medalist.

■ Remarkably, not a single player broke into double digits in penalty-minute totals in Sochi. Five players tied for the Olympic lead with eight PIM apiece. Quite a contrast with Vancouver 2010, where Finland's Joni Pitkanen recorded a tournament-high 29 PIM, or Turin 2006, where Russia's Ilya Kovalchuk and Finland's Jarkko Ruutu tied for the fourth-most in bin time in Olympic history (31 PIM).

■ While Finnish defenceman Olli Maatta didn't come away with an All-Star berth, the 19-year-old did pull off a notable feat en route to the bronze medal. His five points put him in a tie for fourth place in the tournament scoring derby. The last teenager to crack the Top 10 in Winter Games scoring was Russia's Yevgeni Malkin, who tied for sixth place with six points in 2006 at age 19.



Photo: IHHOF-IIHF Images  
Maatta

■ If Finnish goaltender Kari Lehtonen played for Switzerland, he would have led the team in scoring at this tournament. The Dallas Stars veteran registered two assists in a 6-1 preliminary round win over Norway. No Swiss player had more than one point in the tournament. Lehtonen now shares the Olympic career record for goalie assists with the Czech Republic's Tomas Vokoun.

■ The IIHF first used quarter-finals at the 1992 Albertville Olympics, and no nation has ever cracked the quarter-finals with fewer registered senior male players than Slovenia (148) this year.



# How to win gold in 65 days

## Kevin Dineen's incredible takeover leads to wild Sochi finish

By Andrew Podnieks

■ On December 16, 2013, Kevin Dineen was a just-fired NHL coach looking for work. A day later he was named coach of the women's national team for Canada, and 65 days later he had a gold medal around his neck in Sochi, Russia.

It was a supersonic journey that left little time for him to breathe, but it ended with perhaps the most dramatic moment of the 2014 Olympics and being part of possibly the finest women's hockey game ever played.

**How did you become coach of the women's team?**

I had been coaching in Florida for two and a half years and I was fired. I was in a funk for three or four weeks but then I reached out to Bob Nicholson, president of Hockey Canada, and offered my services for the upcoming World Championships. About three weeks later, he called back and asked if I'd be interested in coaching the women's team. It was a phone call out of the blue. It turned out to be one of, if not THE, best experiences of my life.

**What was your first order of business?**

I was looking straight ahead, thinking about what was important for the team. For the first few days I was just trying to learn the players' names, where their strengths were, organizing the staff. I had enough on my plate. I didn't reach out to Dan [Church] and I didn't ask what had happened. It was more important for me to move forward.

**What are the differences between coaching men and women?**

For me, it's more about the similarities than differences. They play to win every time they step on the ice. Their attention to detail is amazing. The quality of hockey is very high, and they're the best athletes in the world at what



**"He coached to win. He understood how to bring out the best in players, and he understood who was going on any given night and how to get the team in the right direction. So I really can't say enough about him. I have a lot of respect for him and what he's done."**

- Hayley Wickenheiser on Team Canada women's coach Kevin Dineen, who unexpectedly replaced Dan Church in December 2013.



Kevin Dineen and Team Canada's journey to Sochi gold had drama and thrills right up until the very end.



Moments after Poulin's OT winner gave Canada its fourth Olympic gold.

they do. Probably the biggest difference is that I did a lot of explaining, for why I put a line together or had someone on the power play, that kind of thing.

**Why did you take the "C" away from Hayley Wickenheiser?**

One of the most gratifying moments for me during this whole time was talking to Hayley post-Olympics. We have a real mutual respect. I think she understands why I made the decision. I had a really hard and difficult conversation with her at the time, and it was tough for a few days. She wasn't happy about it—I can't blame her; I've had that happen to me—but I explained to her I felt it was best for the team. It wasn't fun, but there was respect.

**You didn't beat the U.S. for the rest of December. Were you worried?**

Ya, sure I was. I talked to the team about it as well. They were physically and mentally exhausted, but there was a method to the madness. But I think every person who was part of our team would agree that the ten days we spent in Austria in January was a real turning point in our season. We gelled as a team, and it was a special time. I didn't doubt my abilities, but when the wins

aren't coming, doubt does creep into your mind. But we played two exhibition games in Austria, and there was about three or four days between them. That's when we took off. We just found our swagger and went to Sochi feeling good about ourselves.

**How important was the win in the preliminary round against the U.S.?**

Well, what I think of was Meghan Agosta scoring two goals on her birthday. I think that was an important moment for the group. It's just a small example of the many good things that happened during those three weeks.

**Did you feel confident or concerned going into the gold-medal game?**

I've been around the game for a long time as a player and a coach, my whole family has, so I really relied on our veteran leadership—Jayna Hefford, Gillian Apps, so many players—but we also had leadership from young players through their play, their enthusiasm. When we were down going into the third period, we felt if we kept doing things the right way, good things would follow. Even heading into the overtime, I felt really good about our team and felt the months and years of training would give us an advantage, and fortunately things went right.

**After that first goal it just seemed you'd win the game.**

Natalie Spooner got the puck and went end to end. It was incredible. It really set the Americans back on their heels. It was a defining moment and made a statement to our team.

**What did you talk about during the third intermission?**

Shannon Szabados stood on her head to give us a chance to win. We talked about how we were going to execute during the 4-on-4. We also had a good discussion about the sacrifices and commitment the players put in to get to this moment, and what an advantage that would be for us.

**What about Malmo in 2015?**

I am the women's head coach as of today, but I don't know where life will lead from here. I'm with the men's U18 team now and then have to head home and see my family for a few weeks and decide where to go from there.



# Three for Schelling

## Europeans make tournament honour roll

By Martin Merk

■ While North American teams finished first and second in women's hockey, some Europeans shone with individual skills as reflected by the awards and All-Star Team.

Swiss goalkeeper Florence Schelling was honoured three times being named Most Valuable Player, Best Goalkeeper and All-Star Goalkeeper. It was also thanks to her fine performance in the key games that the Swiss reached the semi-finals where they played a tight game with Canada (3-1 loss) before claiming a historic Olympic bronze in a 4-3 win over Sweden.

Two Finns won the other individual awards as Jenni Hiirikoski was named Best Defenceman and Michelle Karvinen, the scoring leader before the medal day, Best Forward. It's the first time ever the three individual awards went exclusively to Europeans. At the last three Olympics only American and Canadian players were selected.

■ In the Media All-Star Team, Schelling was selected in the net, Team USA's Megan Bozek and Hiirikoski as defencemen, and Americans Amanda Kessel and Hilary Knight as well as Canada's Meghan Agosta as forwards.

It's the first time in Olympic women's ice hockey players from Finland and Switzerland made the All-Star Team. In 2002 and 2010 only North American players were selected. In 2006 when Sweden surprisingly reached the gold medal game, Kim Martin Hasson and Maria Rooth made the All-Star Team as well.

### Top Performers: Directorate Awards and Media All-Star Team



**Florence Schelling, G, SUI**  
MVP  
Directorate Best Goaltender  
All-Star Team Goaltender  
2-0-4, 3.97 GAA, 91.30 SVS%,



**Megan Bozek, D, USA**  
All-Star Team Defenceman  
5GP, 1G, 4A, +5



**Jenni Hiirikoski, D, FIN**  
Directorate Best Defenceman  
All-Star Team Defenceman  
6GP, 3G, 2A, 5P, +3



**Michelle Karvinen, F, FIN**  
Directorate Best Forward  
6GP, 5G, 2A, 7P, +4



**Amanda Kessel, F, USA**  
All-Star Team Forward  
5GP, 3G, 3A, 6P, +8



**Meghan Agosta, F, CAN**  
All-Star Team Forward  
5GP, 3G, 1A, 4P, +4



**Hilary Knight, F, USA**  
All-Star Team Forward  
5GP, 3G, 3A, 6P, +1

# IIHF World Rankings

## Canada moves up after double Olympic gold



### Men's World Ranking

Rank	Country	Points	Move
1	SWE	4000	0
2	FIN	3905	0
3	CAN	3840	2
4	RUS	3840	-1
5	CZE	3760	-1
6	USA	3705	0
7	SUI	3555	0
8	SVK	3485	0
9	NOR	3350	0
10	LAT	3295	1
11	GER	3260	-1
12	FRA	3065	1
13	DEN	3050	-1
14	SLO	3045	3
15	BLR	3030	-1
16	AUT	2985	-1
17	KAZ	2900	-1
18	ITA	2830	0
19	HUN	2595	0
20	GBR	2540	2
21	UKR	2475	-1
22	JPN	2405	-1
23	KOR	2400	2
24	NED	2355	0
25	POL	2350	-2
26	LTU	2145	0
27	ROU	2075	0
28	EST	2000	0
29	ESP	1910	1
30	CRO	1895	-1
31	SRB	1730	0
32	MEX	1505	4
33	ISR	1440	6
34	AUS	1330	-2
35	ISL	1240	-2
36	BEL	1210	-2
37	NZL	1120	-2
38	CHN	1000	0
39	BUL	940	-2
40	TUR	825	0
41	RSA	790	0
42	IRL	705	0
43	LUX	680	0
44	GRE	610	0
45	PRK	600	0
46	MGL	415	0
47	UAE	275	0
48	GEO	180	0

### Women's World Ranking

Rank	Country	Points	Move
1	CAN	4160	1
2	USA	4100	-1
3	SUI	3840	2
4	FIN	3775	1
5	SWE	3760	1
6	RUS	3715	-2
7	GER	3585	-
8	JPN	3395	2
9	CZE	3360	-
10	NOR	3225	1
11	DEN	3185	6
12	SVK	3185	-4
13	AUT	3070	-1
14	FRA	2955	2
15	CHN	2935	-
16	LAT	2895	-3
17	KAZ	2850	-3
18	NED	2715	2
19	GBR	2615	-1
20	ITA	2610	-1
21	HUN	2580	1
22	POL	2265	5
23	SLO	2210	-2
24	KOR	2195	4
25	CRO	2110	-1
26	ESP	2065	3
27	PRK	1720	-1
28	AUS	1645	-5
29	NZL	1615	-4
30	ISL	1355	-
31	BEL	1325	-
32	RSA	1215	-
33	TUR	970	1
34	BUL	900	-1
35	MEX	480	-
36	IRL	435	-1
37	HKG	420	-
38	ROU	135	-2

Note: The IIHF World Rankings displayed here reflect the results of the 2014 Olympics and the four most recent IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships (2010-2013).

A second edition of the men's World Ranking this season will be published following the 2014 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship.

# Canada girls three times golden

## North Americans still tops at 2014 U18 Women's Worlds, Czechs win bronze



By Adam Steiss

■ ■ Three minutes, three goals. It came down to a disastrous defensive collapse by Team USA to give Canada the 2014 IIHF U18 Women's World Championship gold medal.

Tied 0-0 late in the second period, the U.S. gave up three quick goals in as many minutes and could not mount a comeback in the third, losing the championship game 5-1.

Canada won its third straight and fourth overall gold medal at the women's U18 tournament, the most of any country now after being tied with the U.S. with three golds apiece.

"It was the best game I think I've ever seen us play," said forward Sarah Potomak, who scored twice in the game for Canada. "We pressured them as much as we could, we buried our chances and then the game was ours. The first goal opened the floodgates and we just kept going."

Potomak finished the tournament with nine points in five games (5G, 4A), putting her a point in front of U.S. forward Taylor Cianfarano for the tournament scoring title.

"I'm just speechless because we just won the World Championship, but I couldn't have done it without my teammates," she said.

It would have been hard to top the 2013 championship final, a 2-1 overtime thriller that saw Canada tie the game with 12 seconds left in the third period, and as expected the game was a tight defensive battle right from the beginning.

"The USA came out really hard against us and I think it took us a bit of time to adjust to the tempo and the pace of the game," said head coach Laura Schuler. "But the girls stuck with the process from the beginning right up until the end, they believed and they worked their tails off."

But with just over five minutes remaining in the second period, Team USA's Patricia Marshall was called for delay of game. Canada won a faceoff near the blue line on the power play and forced the puck in deep to the side of the USA net, where Victoria Bach got a shot off that trickled past O'Neil and into the open crease, where Potomak sat waiting to bury the rebound.

The goal swung the momentum all the way to the Canadian side, as less than a minute later during an odd-man rush Bach got her second assist on a goal by Eve-Audrey Picard.

Before Team USA could blink they were in an even deeper hole when, at 1:26 left in the period 2013's overtime hero Karly Heffernan made a great pass to Samantha Coogan, setting her off on a breakaway where she beat O'Neil between the legs to give Canada a commanding 3-0 lead.



Canada is the all-time leader in U18 gold medals, overtaking the U.S. with four championships, including the last three.

But it was the Czechs who were the better team at the back end today, as Czech goaltender Klara Peslarova held on for the shutout earning her team its first U18 women's bronze medal in six years.

At 1:14 in the second period the Czech Republic was finally able to solve the Russian defence and got on the board with a power play goal from Tejlarova, her first of the tournament coming on a wrist-shot near the slot area and assisted on a cross-ice pass from Vendula Pribylova.

It was Russia's first appearance in a U18 Women's Worlds medal game. Prior to 2014, the country never finished better than seventh place and was actually relegated in 2010. But led by team captain and Sochi Olympian Anna Shokhina, Russia recovered from a 6-1 defeat to the U.S. in its opening game to post wins over Sweden and Hungary to advance to the playoff round for the first time ever, where they nearly posted a huge upset over Canada but fell in overtime 1-0 in the semi-final.

"I told the girls that this is how life is sometimes after the game," said Russian head coach Alexander Ulyankin. "Still I think we set a new standard for Russian hockey at this level and I expect us to continue to be as competitive in the future as we were in this tournament."

The Czech Republic takes home its first bronze medal in six years. The first and only time the team had won bronze before was in 2008 at the inaugural U18 Women's World Championship in Calgary.

"I thought we had a really good first period and a good game plan going in," said USA head coach Jeff Kampersal. "But we kind of deviated a bit from the game plan in the second and got a little individualistic, when they scored the first goal we got rattled, then when they scored the second I was going to call a timeout but figured we'd be able to get into the intermission, but that wasn't the case and that third goal was a crusher."

Canada did hand the U.S. a couple of lifelines in the third period, giving up a power play goal to Alexandra Laing with two players in the box. Canada would give up another two-man advantage with just under nine minutes to go in the frame, but goaltender Shea Tilley was up to the challenge and kept the U.S. from getting any more pucks in the net. Another goal from Picard and an empty netter from Potomak sealed the win and the gold for Canada.

"I think you have a flashback of everyone that's lifted the trophy before you and you want to make them proud," said Lauren Wildfang when describing the feeling of lifting the trophy as a gold medal-winning captain for Team Canada. "That's the feeling you get of the legacy that's been left before, and now you're leaving a new one."

■ The 2014 IIHF U18 Women's World Championship bronze medal went to the Czech Republic following a 1-0 shutout of Russia in Budapest. Captain Aneta Tejlarova had the game's only goal in the second period while goaltender Klara Peslarova stopped all 20 shots against her.

"Absolutely not (laughs)," said Tejlarova when asked if she thought her goal was going to end up as the game winner. "But we persevered and played a great game defensively."

"I was really nervous towards the end about giving up a bad bounce and a goal late," said Peslarova, who came in as a backup in the Czechs' 4-0 loss to Finland in last year's bronze medal game. "But as the time went down closer and closer I believed that we would do it, it's an unbelievable feeling."

Russia, which made it this far by playing some of the best defence of any Russian team, U18s or otherwise, came into the third period down 1-0 and needing a goal to keep its bronze medal hopes alive.

Photo: Jana Chytilova / IIHF/IIHF Images

# Czech women win Division IA

## Senior team will face Japan in top division qualification tournament

By Henrik Manninen

■ ■ Solid defence was key for the Czech Republic as they return to winning ways to seal gold at the 2014 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship Division I Group A on home ice in Prerov.

2014 continues to be a prosperous year for Czech women's hockey. Less than two weeks after their under-18 team has won bronze at the 2014 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championships, four straight wins at the 2014 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division I Group A on home ice in Prerov secured the gold medals ahead of the final round of games. An ensuing qualification play-off with Japan, last ranked at the Olympics, will later this year decide which of the two teams will make the step up to the top division at the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship in Malmö, Sweden.

"Our development is going in the right direction and we showed already last year that we can play equal with teams in the top division such as Sweden, Russia and Germany," said Czech head coach Jiri Vozak, who worked as assistant coach to Karel Manhart as the Czech national team suffered double heartbreak last year, first missing out on Olympic qualification to Sochi and then a couple of months later ending up on the losing side in a two-legged relegation decider against Sweden at the 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championships in Ottawa - their inaugural appearance in the top division.



The Czech Republic will play Japan in a qualification series for promotion to the top division.

Photo: Karel Svec

Under Vozak's first season at the helm, the Division I Group A appeared to have sent the Czechs on the right course. Buoyed by a roster that includes seven newly crowned bronze medalists from the U18 Women's World Championships, the hosts clocked up three straight wins against France (3-0) Austria (2-1) and Norway (2-0) to set them up against neighbours Slovakia in a showdown with major importance for both countries.

■ Carried forward by a boisterous crowd of just over 2,000 inside the newly refurbished ice arena in Prerov, the Czechs surged forward from the outset, but despite pinning down the Slovaks deep into their zone, only one sole goal by the Czech Republic's Simona Studentova separated the two teams going into the first intermission.

When Slovakia's Lenka Srokova boomed in a power-play goal high past 17-year-old World Championship rookie netminder Klara Peslarova to tie the game at 13:04 of the middle frame, nerves started to creep at both teams. Earning a 15-9 shot advantage in the second period, the Czechs continued to create chances, but squandered them in equal measure with Denisa Krizova being the main culprit as she failed to convert two golden opportunities at the end of the second period.

In the end all came good for the Czechs. The crowd had hardly found their seats as Krizova atoned for her earlier misses. This time she was the instigator behind Czechs' winning goal and needed only ten seconds into the period to find Vendula Pribylova, who made it 2-1. With 2:39 left of the encounter, captain Alena Polenska hit the final nail in the coffin as the Czechs stretched their lead to 3-1.

■ Newly promoted France entered the tournament as the lowest ranked team, but having beaten both Slovakia (3-1) and Austria (7-2), they look to cap off a fine tournament with a medal. A win against Norway could take them to the silver medals, as the Czech Republic look to finish the tournament with an unblemished record and a win against Denmark ahead of their upcoming play-off games with Japan for a place at the 2015 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship.



# Tornado wins Champions Cup

## Women's club team among most successful in history with third straight win

By Rainier Gmach

■ ■ Russian champions Tornado Moscow will stay at the top of the European women's hockey world for the third straight year, posting an unblemished record at the 2014 European Women's Champions Cup final.

It is the fourth EWCC title for Tornado, which has cemented itself as one of the world's premier professional women's clubs. They have tied Swedish club AIK Stockholm, which won the first four EWCC tournaments (2005-2008) and finished second this year.

"We wanted to win this tournament again for sure. Although it is the 4th time we always have in our mind that it is more difficult to defend the title as to win it for the first time, because all the teams are extra motivated to beat us," said Tornado Manager Olga Votolovskaya. "But we have been prepared for that very well. Our special thanks goes to Zuzana Tomcikova and Kelley Steadman, who made the big difference for us this time."

Steadman, Iya Gavrilova and Anna Shokhina combined for 17 points in three games, with Steadman leading the charge with five goals and one assist. Tomcikova recorded a 1.00 GAA and a 96.55 save percentage, allowing just two goals in the whole tournament as her team went undefeated.



Tornado is undefeated in each of its last three EWCC finals.

Photo: hockeywomen.de

4:3, things looked good for a potential second medal for a German team in this competition (OSC Berlin won bronze in their home tournament in 2010).

"First, we really wanted to win a medal here. Second, me and the team wanted to face eye to eye to the other teams, not hide ourselves," said Planegg coach Brian Ashton. "We learned that we still have to improve to be on the same level as the other top European teams. The success against Stockholm showed us that we are on the right way, the players earned a lot of self-confidence with this game. The performance of my team made me proud as they all played on their highest level."

But after losing versus Espoo on Friday, Planegg needed a victory from the Finnish champion on Sunday in the derby versus AIK Stockholm. With only one second to go in the second period of this game, Espoo scored the game's first goal. But in the last period, Espoo couldn't produce any more offence while AIK scored three to claim silver in the tournament.

Steadman was selected as the Directorate Top Forward for the tournament, while Tomcikova and Planegg's Kathrin Lehmann claimed Top Goaltender and Top Defence-man honours respectively.



## U18 Women's World Championship Directorate Awards

**Klara Peslarova, G, Czech Republic**  
Directorate Best Goaltkeeper  
3-1-2, 1.52 GAA, 95.08 SVS%



**Jincy Dunne, D, USA**  
Directorate Best Defenceman  
5 GP, 3 A, 3 P, +3



**Taylor Cianfarano, F, USA**  
Directorate Best Forward  
5 GP, 6 G, 2A, 8P, +8



# Swiss League, club top annual Attendance Ranking



The Swiss National League A is the league with the highest attendance, and SC Bern the most popular club.

By Martin Merk

■ The IIHF has published the annual European club ice hockey attendance study based on the regular season. Same as last year the Swiss National League A is the league with the highest attendance, and SC Bern the most popular club in Europe.

Swiss club SC Bern has the highest attendance in Europe for the 13th consecutive year. While the team went through a disappointing season on the sporting side – SC Bern became the first reigning Swiss champion to miss the playoffs – this didn't seem to spoil the hockey parties in the country's capital. In average 16,347 fans came to each game – a new European record after last year's number of 16,330. That's 95.32 per cent of the PostFinance Arena's capacity.

Otherwise the top-10 look quite different. Belarusian KHL team Dynamo Minsk dropped from second to sixth place in a difficult season for the club. Eisbären Berlin also had a lower number, and same as SC Bern missed the quarter-finals as the reigning champion, but still moved up from third to second place.

SKA St. Petersburg is now the KHL team with the best attendance and follows in third place, two spots up. Germany's Kölner Haie and Adler Mannheim are fourth and fifth. Slovan Bratislava is the seventh and last team this year to reach five digits thanks to a rising number of fans in the seats.

Frölunda Gothenburg, the most attended Swedish club team, Finland's Jokerit Helsinki and ZSC Lions Zurich from Switzerland complete this year's top-10.

Latvian KHL team Dinamo Riga made the biggest move from 30th to 13th place with 8,083 fans. Two promoted teams also made a big jump in the ranking after moving up to their countries' top league for this season. Sweden's Leksands IF improved from 58th to 26th place and Switzerland's Lausanne HC from 72nd to 28th place.

Number 46 in the list saw a new entry with Admiral Vladivostok. The KHL team in the Far East port city was created from scratch last summer and averaged 5,256 spectators in its first season of existence. On the other hand another KHL team created from scratch in 2012 seemed to lose appeal, as Czech club Lev Prague suffered the biggest drop among the top-100 teams, from 18th to 54th.

The top-100 teams came from 16 different countries: Austria, Belarus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France,

Germany, Great Britain, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Norway, Russia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine.

The top-100 also includes six teams from minor leagues including Djurgården Stockholm with 6,142 fans in Sweden's second-tier league Allsvenskan. Germany's Löwen Frankfurt averaged 3,708 fans in the third-tier Oberliga.

The Swiss National League A remains the European league with the highest attendance. In average, 6,872 fans came to NLA games. That's a growth of 3.8 per cent and a new European record for a national league. Lausanne's promotion in place of SCL Tigers Langnau made the biggest difference in the team's attendance fortunes. In total eight out of 12 teams had growing numbers.

The German Deutsche Eishockey Liga (DEL) remains in second position. Its attendance grew by 2.8 per cent to 6,343 spectators. Eight out of the 14 teams in the league enjoyed growing numbers.

The Swedish Hockey League moved from fourth to third place at the expense of the Russian-based Kontinental Hockey League. The average attendance went up by 4.6 per cent to 5,978 although only five of the 12 teams actually had increasing numbers. The two promoted teams Leksand and Örebro along with Frölunda were the biggest contributors in the overall growth.

The Russian KHL couldn't keep up with the growth and had 4.8 per cent fewer fans in average than one year ago now averaging 5,812 fans. 16 out of 27 clubs that existed last year saw shrinking attendances – a trend that continued in the second-tier VHL league. Even new Croatian KHL entry Medvescak Zagreb had lower numbers than last year when it played in the Austrian league.

The numbers in the three leagues ranked behind the KHL, the Finnish Liiga (4,974), the Czech Extraliga (4,948) and

Rank	Previous	Club	Country	Avg
1	1	SC Bern	SUI	16347
2	3	Eisbären Berlin	GER	12738
3	5	SKA St. Petersburg	RUS	12133
4	4	Kölner Haie	GER	11712
5	6	Adler Mannheim	GER	11283
6	2	Dynamo Minsk	BLR	10426
7	7	Slovan Bratislava	SVK	10013
8	11	Frölunda Gothenburg	SWE	9362
9	8	Jokerit Helsinki	FIN	9252
10	9	ZSC Lions Zurich	SUI	9048
11	15	Hamburg Freezers	GER	8506
12	10	Lokomotiv Yaroslavl	RUS	8404
13	30	Dinamo Riga	LAT	8083
14	12	HC Pardubice	CZE	8037
15	13	Avangard Omsk	RUS	8026
16	14	Medvescak Zagreb	CRO	7828
17	22	Genève-Servette	SUI	7722
18	19	Salavat Yulayev Ufa	RUS	7662
19	25	Sparta Prague	CZE	7117
20	17	Kometa Brno	CZE	7034
21	21	Amur Khabarovsk	RUS	7023
22	26	Sibir Novosibirsk	RUS	6936
23	16	HIFK Helsinki	FIN	6763
24	28	Linköpings HC	SWE	6697
25	23	HV71 Jönköping	SWE	6587
26	58	Leksands IF	SWE	6574
27	24	Fribourg-Gottéron	SUI	6570
28	72	Lausanne HC	SUI	6528
29	27	EV Zug	SUI	6159
30	32	Djurgården Stockholm	SWE-2	6142
31	20	Traktor Chelyabinsk	RUS	6122
32	35	Kärpät Oulu	FIN	6086
33	31	Färjestad Karlstad	SWE	5963
34	36	MODO Örnsköldsvik	SWE	5701
35	29	Brynäs Gävle	SWE	5701
36	42	Tappara Tampere	FIN	5686
37	55	Düsseldorfer EG	GER	5683
38	44	Dynamo Moscow	RUS	5676
39	39	Malmö Redhawks	SWE-2	5667
40	62	HC Ambrì-Piotta	SUI	5631
41	45	Kloten Flyers	SUI	5627
42	51	Krefeld Pinguine	GER	5513
43	53	Vitkovice Ostrava	CZE	5367
44	38	Skoda Plzen	CZE	5279
45	54	Nottingham Panthers	GBR	5259
46	new	Admiral Vladivostok	RUS	5256
47	37	Atlant Mytishi	RUS	5248
48	82	Augsburger Panther	GER	5235
49	48	Skellefteå AIK	SWE	5225
50	61	Ilves Tampere	FIN	5210

## Regular-Season average league attendance (EU)

Rank	Previous	League	2014	2013
1	1	Switzerland - National League A	6872	6620
2	2	Germany - Deutsche Eishockey Liga	6343	6172
3	4	Sweden - Swedish Hockey Liga	5978	5717
4	3	Russia - Kontinental Hockey League	5812	6106
5	5	Finland - Liiga	4974	5213
6	6	Czech Republic - Extraliga	4948	5169
7	7	Austria - EBEL	2935	3547
8	9	Great Britain - Elite Ice Hockey League	2012	1977
9	8	Slovakia - Extraliga	1794	2018
10	10	Norway - Get Ligaen	1741	1627

the Austrian-based EBEL (2,935) also went down.

The British Elite Ice Hockey League grew its attendance to 2,012 and overtook the Slovak Extraliga whose ninth position is challenged by Norway and France with growing numbers of fans.

The league with the worldwide biggest attendance remains the National Hockey League with 17,953 spectators (as of 18 March) followed by the top four European leagues and the American Hockey League (5,310 fans).

# IIHF Snapshots

## Olympic postcards from around the world

■ One great thing about ice hockey at the Olympics is the great following all around the world as sport fans get the opportunity to follow the puck all over the places.

IIHF.com asked fans on Facebook and Twitter and got messages and photos from a plane in Asia to a ship near Angola, from a ski lift in Switzerland to TPS Turku's U17 team's team bus to a hotel room in Las Vegas to shopping malls in Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates and even from a church in Halifax and a Swedish church in England.

Sport fans watched the men's gold medal game while following us in social media networks in countries such as Brazil, Ecuador, Israel, Moldova, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Tonga, Venezuela or Uzbekistan, to name just a few – all united by our sport.

There's no better way to whet one's appetite for hockey than a great game and hopefully Sochi or PyeongChang 2018 in four years will give inspiration to a new generation of players and help new countries get on the hockey map.



Clockwise from top: René Fasel in Sochi for the torch relay, the gold medal game on at a Swiss ski cottage, Swedish church, British museum, and Australian rink.



Hungary's national men's U18 team earned promotion for the second year in a row.



Switzerland won the 2014 IIHF U18 Women's World Championship Division I Group A.



Estonia's senior men's team swept the field to win the Division IIA World Championship.



Chinese Taipei has won more Challenge Cup of Asia titles than any other nation, with three.



Hong Kong returned to the IIHF World Championship program after a 25-year absence.



Winning the Division IIB tournament, Spain's men's teams have a gold and two silvers in 2014.

# They said it: quotes from Sochi 2014

By Lucas Aykroyd

■ ■ Pride and passion, candor and controversy, delight and disappointment. The comments of players, coaches, and team officials added plenty of color to the 2014 Olympics in Sochi, Russia. Let's look back at some of the most quotable moments.

***"Someone asked me what kind of dog he would be if he was a dog. I said: 'He's a Jack Russell terrier.' He needs his attention directed or he gets in a little mischief. He needs it guided. But today it was all funnelled in the right way."***

-American forward David Backes on T.J. Oshie after his St. Louis teammate scored four times on six shootout attempts to give the U.S. a 3-2 win over Russia.



Photo: Jeff Vinnick / HHOF-IIHF Images



Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

***"None of us has ever participated in an Olympic medal game, so before the game we were incredibly nervous."***

- Swiss netminder Florence Schelling on her team's emotions before rallying to beat Sweden 4-3 for bronze, the first Olympic medal ever for Switzerland's women.

***"Marie-Philip Poulin is the best hockey player in women's hockey, hands down."***

- Canadian veteran Jayna Hefford on Poulin, who scored twice, including the game-winner, against the Americans in the gold medal game for the second straight Olympics.



Photo: Jeff Vinnick / HHOF-IIHF Images



Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

***"No emotion right now."***

- Alexander Ovechkin after the Russians lost 3-1 to Finland in the quarter-final and were eliminated on home ice.



Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

***"You will see when I put it out on eBay."***

- Swedish star defenceman Erik Karlsson when asked how much winning the silver medal meant to him.

***"I played my first national team game 26 years ago, and if somebody would tell me that I'm going to win four Olympic medals, it would be hard to believe. It's overwhelming, for sure."***

- Tournament MVP Teemu Selanne after Finland beat the Americans 5-0 for bronze.



Photo: Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

***"Well, we've got 25 really good ones."***

- Slovenian Anze Kopitar on how his nation is able to compete with other Olympic powers despite having just 148 registered male players.



Photo: Jeff Vinnick / HHOF-IIHF Images



***"I was actually talking to Gigi Marvin before, and she goes: 'I don't even feel like we're out of***

***the United States right now.' Minus maybe all the volunteers that are speaking Russian to us. It's been a great Olympic Games. The Olympic Village, the venues, everything's amazing."***

-Four-time American Olympian Julie Chu on the quality of the Sochi experience.