

News Release



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It's the season for the very best in hockey



Photos: DAVE SANDFORD (World U20), AVANGARD OMSK (Jaromir Jagr)

HOME, SWEET(?), HOME: USA's U20 team had all the reasons to celebrate following its first-ever IIHF World U20 Championship gold last season and they will be under pressure to repeat at home in Grand Forks. Also Avangard Omsk will be at home (sort of) when the inaugural IIHF European Champions Cup will be played in St. Petersburg, Russia. The Russian champion recently signed Czech superstar Jaromir Jagr, right.

Christmas and New Year's is one of the best times for a hockey fan. Very few things can match the excitement and drama at an IIHF World U20 Championship and this year we can proudly add the IIHF European Champions Cup to the seasonal package.

RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL

■ As the IIHF World U20 Championship approaches its 29th edition, we can be perfectly confident in saying that the tournament has never been played in a more magnificent arena than the one that will be hosting the 2005 championship. The Ralph Engelstad Arena in Grand Forks, North Dakota (see more on pages 6-7) will be one major factor why visitors will remember the tournament for many years to come.

Ice hockey facilities simply don't come better than the one that was donated by the former goaltender from the North Dakota Fighting Sioux, Ralph Engelstad. The best players in the world born 1985 and 1986 can consider themselves very fortunate that "their" world championship was allocated to this university town in northern USA and to this building.

It wasn't that many years ago that the "World Juniors" were taking place with hardly anyone, with the exception of some 50 talent scouts, noticing it. This year's tournament will be played in front capacity crowds. College hockey fans in North Dakota and Minnesota as well fans from the Winnipeg area in Canada will guaran-

tee an unbeatable atmosphere for this championship which the IIHF is so proud of.

■ There is an ambition from USA Hockey and the organizing committee in Grand Forks and Thief River Falls to break the two year old World U20 Championship attendance record of 242,173 set in Halifax in 2003. I hope they will, and then Vancouver will have a new challenge to bring the record back to Canada in 2006.

As nowadays we can consider the IIHF World U20 Championship as one of the most established and popular hockey tournaments, the International Ice Hockey Federation is introducing two new club championship events around this festive period. The IIHF European Women's Champions Cup is the first-ever official club competition for women in IIHF history.

The four-team final, which will be hosted by Sweden, is the next step in the development of women's ice hockey. Improvement of the game at the club level is vital for upgrading the women's game on national team level.

■ In mid-January we will finally be welcoming the return of a major club competition in Europe as the city of St. Petersburg, Russia, will host the 2005 IIHF European Champions Cup. Since the demise of the European Hockey League in 2000, there hasn't been a competition that legitimately determines the best club team in Europe.



Continued on next page

Continued from page one:

■ After several years of investigating the best possible format and time, the IIHF, together with the national associations and their leagues, decided on a set-up that brings the reigning national champions of the top six ranked countries in Europe together for a long weekend on January 13-16.

One of the most captivating discussions among hockey fans concerns which league in Europe is the best. Is the Russian league really as good as they say? The Swedes are convinced that the Elitserien is the prime league in Europe. The Germans claim that the DEL is Europe's answer to the NHL, while the Czechs and Finns claim that their top teams can compete with anyone on the continent.

And this is why the IIHF Champions Cup is such an important event -- it will give answers to at least some of these questions and, above all, tell us which is the best club team in Europe.

■ In the future, we would like to take this one step further - to have the best team in Europe taking on the Stanley Cup champion for world club supremacy.

René Fasel
IIHF President

Money is up but scoring is down in Russian league

In the old Soviet league players didn't earn much, but they scored plenty of goals.

Things are quite different in the era of the PHL, the high-salary, pro hockey league of Russia. Today, scoring there is almost as meager as it was in the Italian soccer league during the infamous 1960s era of "catenaccio", the very defensive style which led to many games finishing with 0-0 scores.

Since the 1996-1997 season, there have been 30, 0-0 games in the Russian league. During the current 2004-2005-season (September - November), the PHL teams have produced nine scoreless games.

This can be compared to the Swedish league which played 14 scoreless games in the last nine seasons and only one during this campaign. The undisputed champion of defensive hockey is Lada Togliatti. The club has taken part in 14, 0-0 games since 96-97, with five of them played during the last (03-04) season.

The goals-per-game average in the Russian league as of mid-November is a paltry 4.22. The number can be compared to the Swiss league's 5.98 or the Germans' with 5.72. Even the Swedish league, where most teams traditionally play a cautiously defensive-minded game, has an average of 5.36 goals per game.



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Pre-Olympic drama moves to Act II in February

■ Switzerland's Claudia Riechsteiner scored the most dramatic goal of the women's Final Olympic Qualifications when her shot found the net with six seconds left to give the Swiss a 3-2 win over China in Beijing in the deciding game of the tournament. The shot, following a face-off in the Chinese zone, took Switzerland all the way to the XX Olympic Winter Games in Turin where they will take on USA in their first game on February 11, 2006.

This is the first time the Swiss women's national team has qualified for an Olympic ice hockey tournament.

Russia and Germany also won their women's Final Olympic qualification tournaments on the weekend November 11-14 (see complete results on page 11), which means that the women's Olympic tournament is now set.

Russia joins defending gold medallist Canada, the 2002 bronze medallist Sweden and host Italy in Group A, while Germany and Switzerland are seeded into Group B with the 2002 silver medallist USA

and fourth placed Finland.

■ In the men's Olympic competition, France, Poland and Norway all came one step closer to Turin 2006 participation as they won their Pre-Olympic qualification tournaments and earned berths to the Final Olympic Qualification tournaments on February 10-13.

The only drama in the men's Pre-Olympic qualifications occurred in the final game between host Norway and Hungary in Stavanger. Hungary was looking for an upset as it was leading 3-2 in the dying minutes when Patrick Thoresen got the equalizer with 1:35 left in the game to secure the trip to Switzerland for the Final Olympic qualification.



Photo: JAROSLAW MATYASIK, Nowy Targ

ONE STEP CLOSER TO TURIN: Poland's key players, Mariusz Czerkawski (left), Krzysztof Oliwa (right) and Michal Garbocz celebrate the team's 5-0 win over the Netherlands in Nowy Targ. Now, the real challenge comes in February.

■ The complete men's and women's approved Olympic schedules are posted on IIHF.com. Click to **TOURNAMENTS** on the left navigation.

See below for the Final Olympic Qualifications groups (number indicates current position in the IIHF World Ranking):

Men's Final Olympic Qualifications, February 10-13

Group A (Kloten, SUI)

9 Switzerland
14 Denmark
15 Japan
21 Norway

Group B (Riga, LAT)

10 Latvia
13 Belarus
16 Slovenia
20 Poland

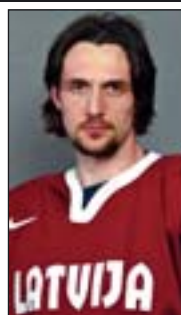
Group C (Klagenfurt, AUT)

11 Austria
12 Ukraine
17 Kazakhstan
18 France



In Memoriam: Sergei Zholtok 1972 - 2004

■ Latvia and International ice hockey suffered an enormous loss when national team player Sergei Zholtok, 31, died on November 3 after collapsing near the end of a game.



Zholtok was playing for his club Riga 2000 in an away game against Dynamo Minsk in the Belarus open championship, when he became ill near the end of a game. Apparently, he previously suffered from cardiac arrhythmia and according to an autopsy performed in Minsk, Zholtok died of heart failure.

"This is a terrible shock for Latvia and the entire ice hockey community," said IIHF President René Fasel. "Sergei was one of the finest players that Latvia had produced and it is such a tragedy when you see a young person and father pass away."

Zholtok was a standout on Latvia's national team and most recently played in the 2004 IIHF World Championship where he was the team's leading scorer

with three goals and two assists. He also represented his country at the IIHF World Championship in 1997, 1999, 2001, 2002 and helped his nation reach the top division in 1994. Zholtok started his international career on the Commonwealth of Independent States team that won gold at the 1991 IIHF World U20 Championship.

■ On the professional level, Zholtok was drafted by Boston in 1992, 55th overall, and played 588 NHL games with the Bruins, Ottawa, Montreal, Edmonton, Minnesota and Nashville. The Predators acquired him last March. Sergei Zholtok was survived by his wife, Anna, and his sons, Edgar and Nikita.

IIHF Association News

FINLAND: Kalervo Kummola, IIHF Vice-President, was named chairman of the Finnish Olympic Committee Council on November 2. Kummola is also the President of the Finnish Ice Hockey Association.

SLOVAKIA: General Secretary of the Slovak Ice Hockey Association Igor Nemecek was elected Vice President of the Slovak Olympic Committee at the SOC's General Assembly in Bratislava on 20th November.

To be determined: The best club team in Europe

■ For the first time since the demise of the European Hockey League in 2000, a team will legitimately be able to boast the title of the "Best club team in Europe 2005" following the IIHF European Champions Cup in St. Petersburg, Russia, 13-16 January.

The last EHL champion was Russian Metallurg Magnitogorsk which defeated Czech Sparta Prague 2-0 in Lugano. The first champion of the new IIHF European Champions Cup will be one featuring Avangard Omsk (Russia), HV 71 Jönköping (Sweden), HC Zlin (Czech Republic), Dukla Trencin (Slovakia), Kärpät Oulu (Finland) and Frankfurt Lions (Germany).

■ All participating teams are the national champions of the six highest ranked European hockey nations.

"This makes it a very exclusive club," said IIHF President René Fasel who will be the tournament chairman of the inaugural European Champions Cup. "To be invited you need to be the champion of your country, which furthermore must rank among the top six in Europe according to the IIHF World Ranking."

"This tournament will definitely determine the best club team in Europe and will also give us an indication about the strength of the best European hockey leagues," said René Fasel.

■ This is a very unlikely sextet which takes part in the first ever ECC. Three of the clubs (Avangard, HC Zlin and Frankfurt) won their first-ever national titles last spring, while it was the second championship title for HV 71 and Kärpät Oulu.

Of the six participants, only Dukla Trencin is a historically established powerhouse in their country, having won four Slovak national championships and one during the Czechoslovak era.

■ The six teams are seeded into two groups and the winners of each group will meet in the Gold Medal game on January 16 (see groups and format below). The IIHF European Champions Cup presents the biggest-ever prize money in European club hockey.

The teams will split the total prize sum of 600,000 Swiss francs, with 270,000 CHF going to the winner. The second placed team will receive 150,000 CHF.

LIONS OF WINTER: The Frankfurt Lions will have to appoint a new cup hoister as captain Paul Stanton retired following the club's historic championship run last spring in Germany.



WANT MORE GLITTER: Goalie Stefan Liv (left) and forward Peter Ekelund of HV71 celebrated the Swedish championship with medals and golden helmets. The want more gold in St. Petersburg in January.



GROUP A

HC Zlin

CZE

Founded: 1928
National champions: once (-04)
Most notable

players: F Jaroslav Balastik, F Petr Leska, F Martin Erat, D Roman Hamrlík, GK Igor Murin
Coach: Ernest Bokros
League position by Dec 3: 2nd, 27GP, 19W-1T-7L
Notable: Zlin had 14 league wins, one tie and one loss in 16 games between September 19 and October 26.



Kärpät Oulu

FIN

Founded: 1946
National champions: 2 (81,04)
Most notable

players: F Michael Nylander, F Jussi Jokinen, F Eero Somervuori, F Petr Tenkrat, D Josef Boumedienne, GK Nicklas Bäckström.
Coach: Kari Jalonen
League position by Dec 3: 1st, 27GP, 18W-5T-4L
Notable: Kärpät had eleven wins in twelve games between September 29 and October 26. The only loss came in overtime vs Ässät on October 9.



Frankfurt Lions

GER

Founded: 1959
National champions: once (-04)
Most notable

players: F Patrick Lebeau, F Dwayne Norris, F Martin Reichel, D Stephane Robidas, GK Ian Gordon.
Coach: Rick Chernomaz
League position by Dec 3: 3rd, 22GP, 9W-5T-6L
Notable: Frankfurt has 11 foreign and 16 German players on their roster.



■ Teams will play a single round-robin within the three-team group. The winner of each group will advance to the Gold Medal game. If the Gold Medal game is tied after regulation, there will be 20 minute overtime with teams skating four-on-four. If the score is still tied after the overtime period, there will be Game Winning Shot competition (Penalty Shoot-out).

■ Teams play for a total prize money sum of 600,000 CHF with the winner receiving 270,000 CHF and the losing finalist 150,000 CHF.

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

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

SCHEDULE

January 13
HC Zlin - Frankfurt Lions 15.00
Dukla Trencin - Avangard Omsk 18.30

January 14
Kärpät Oulu - HC Zlin 15.00
HV 71 Jönköping - Dukla Trencin 18.30

January 15
Frankfurt Lions - Kärpät Oulu 15.00
Avangard Omsk - HV 71 Jönköping 18.30

January 16
Group winners meet in Gold Medal game

GROUP B

Avangard Omsk

RUS

Founded: 1950
National champions: once (-04)
Most notable

players: F Jaromir Jagr, F Maxim Sushinsky, F Andrei Kovalenko, D Oleg Tverdovsky, GK Maxim Sokolov.
Coach: Valeri Belousov
League position by Dec 3: 11th, 30GP, 13W-6T-11L
Notable: Avangard released six players while adding three others during the November transfer window. Jagr, Kovalenko and goalie Norm Maracle were the additions.



Dukla Trencin

SVK

Founded: 1962
National champions: 5 times
Most notable

players: F Pavol Demitra, F Marian Gaborik, F Peter Fabus, D Jiri Hes, D Tomas Starosta, GK Miroslav Hala.
Coach: Robert Spisak
League position by Dec 3: 3rd, 28GP, 16W-5T-7L
Notable: Marian Hossa left Dukla in November to play with his brother Marcel in Mora IK of the Swedish league.



HV 71 Jönköping

SWE

Founded: 1971
National champions: -95, -04
Most notable

players: F Johan Davidsson, F Per Age Skråder, D Bryan McCabe, D Fredrik Olausson, GK Stefan Liv
Coach: Pär Marts
League position by Dec 3: 11th, 24GP, 7W-3T-14L
Notable: HV71 added McCabe, D Anders Eriksson and GK Brian Boucher during the November break.



The long and winding ro

By Jenny Wiedeke

■ ■ ■ A debate is raging throughout hockey nations of how to allocate precious funds. This argument is perhaps the most volatile when national associations decide how much money to put into their youth development programs.

In the early '90s, most hockey nations had no specific junior development program in place. Instead, most relied on the various club teams to develop the players, who were then thrown onto national teams.

■ ■ ■ In the late '90s the trend shifted as nations realized that they needed to do more than get their top players together for a mere three weeks to have any lasting impact on junior development. For the U.S., the decision was made by mediocre results in World Championship events. Canada wasn't in dire straights, but the biggest hockey nation had leeway in starting new programs.

Other nations continued to rely on the standard international break development, while others, such as Finland, found a middle ground, making the most of their time and resources by utilizing the international breaks for more than just games.

■ ■ ■ While no program has proven to be the magic key in player development, time has started to show that something is better than nothing. Below is how four nations have developed their junior players and the rewards, or consequences of their programs.

UNITED STATES

In 1997, USA Hockey made a ground-breaking commitment to development when it opened the doors to the National Team Development Program (NTDP). Essentially, USA Hockey anted up about two million dollars to develop the top 46 players in the nation, who moved to Michigan and trained for a full season as a team, playing in 80+ games. Obviously, the critics were numerous, as people couldn't believe that two million dollars was being spent on so few players.

■ ■ ■ The first few years, the program struggled as the results were less than stellar. Critics grew impatient, while the hockey world waited a few seasons to see what the long-term effects of the program would be. Finally, in 2001, USA Hockey's patience paid off as its junior teams started to consistently finish in the top five at IIHF World U18 and U20 Championships and make their way up to the medal podium on a regular basis.

"It was a risk, but one we had to take," said USA Hockey's Jim Johansson. "We have been pleased with the progress of our junior teams, and hope that we have only just begun to tap into our potential."

After last year's gold medal finish at the U20 World Championship, the NTDP was thrust into the spotlight, but there are critics that still maintain that the players on the team would have developed with or without the program. Overall, the NTDP has produced over 200 NHL draftees and close to 500 NCAA college players.

CANADA

Hockey Canada was the first nation to implement a junior development program in the early 80s when they started its 'Program of Excellence'.

■ ■ ■ The program was initially designed to prepare young Canadian players for the difference in international competition. Canada sent its junior teams on tough overseas trips to acclimate them to both the rigors of travel and the differing style of play.

Since those early days, the program has evolved into a three-tiered system that begins with participation in the U18 program and moves on to the U20 and ends with

"We have been very pleased with the progress of our junior teams and hope that we have only just begun to tap into our potential"

Jim Johansson, USA Hockey

the Men's national team. Each season there are about 150 players identified to take part in try-out and evaluation camps.

"What makes Hockey Canada's program different is the sheer number of players that it is able to reach and depth it produces," said former Hockey Canada President and IIHF Council Member Murray Costello. "No player is 'locked in' to any championship team making the process more competitive."

■ ■ ■ Now Canada, which has won the last two World Championships and the World Cup of Hockey, is reaping the benefits of its Program of Excellence with its men's teams. Other nations, like the U.S. and Finland, began their in-depth developmental programs later, and are just now experiencing success on junior level. But if Canada is any indication, those other nations could soon be even more of a force on the men's level as well.



THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD: The two neighboring nations U20 World Championship gold medal game. The U.S. won its first-

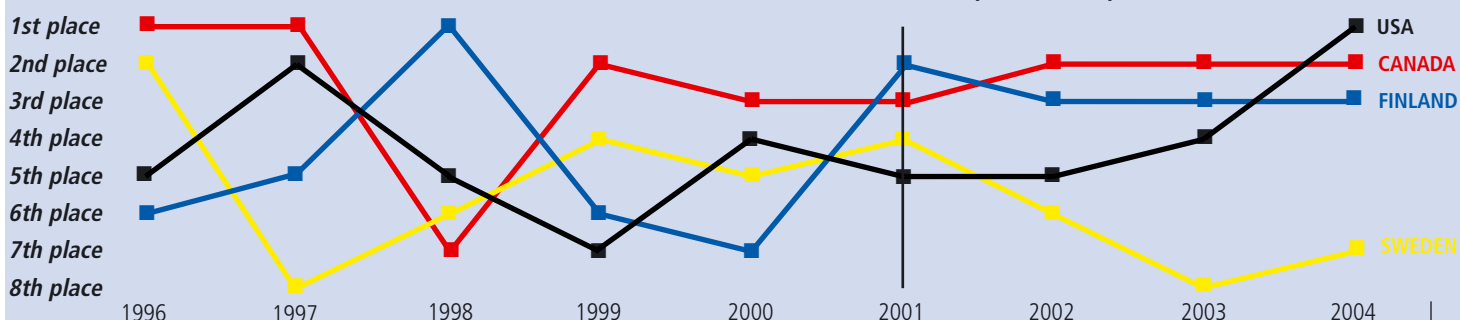
FINLAND

Finland has been the quiet contender at the last several World U20 Championships after getting bronze for three straight years.

The Finns have also quietly developed a junior program that seems, so far, to be the magic formula for the nation. Finland, like most other European countries, takes full advantage of the international breaks to bring teams together. But Finland has two key differences from its neighbours.

■ ■ ■ First, Finland utilizes physiological data more than any other nation, as players wear heart monitors during some games and are evaluated not only based on their on-ice performance, but also their off-ice conditioning. By emphasizing the off-ice aspect, Finland has been able

COMPARING RECENT U20 RESULTS BETWEEN FINLAND, CANADA, USA & SWEDEN



ad to becoming the best



that are paving the way in junior development also met in last year's ever gold, while Canada earned its sixth straight medal.

to compete for a full 60 minutes and even been able to 'steal' a few wins in the third period.

The Finns also have the Vierumaki Sports Institute. This sports camp serves as the headquarters for several Finnish national teams - none of which takes center stage more than hockey. Essentially, when a Finnish team comes together in Vierumaki, they have the top nutrition and training facilities at their fingertips at a minimal cost. The money saved can then be put into developing even younger groups of future Finnish stars.

■ For Finland, the program is a perfect balance between a more expensive and intensive program like those in North America and the other European nations, that participate in the international breaks, but don't use them to their full potential.

A good way to determine a nation's effectiveness in player development is looking at the results from past World U20 Championships.

Four nations were compared, Canada, Finland, Sweden and USA. In the late 90s, Finland, and the U.S. each started their developmental programs. While Canada started theirs in the 80s.

Before these programs were started, the trend was to have a strong 'class' and then drop significantly in the standings. But in 2001, when the developmental programs started to have an impact, that trend changed.

SWEDEN

It takes only one look at Sweden's recent results at the U20 World Championship to realize that they have slipped in the world of junior hockey. The last time the hockey nation earned a medal at the U20s was in 1996.

Sweden is in a tough position. For years, the defensive game was emphasized in its professional and junior leagues and that crippled an entire generation of players from being able to play offensively creative hockey. Add that to the fact that Sweden had no set junior developmental program, and the fall in the standings can start to be explained.

■ Sweden also has the problem that many other nations face of dealing with a new generation that is not accustomed to the sacrifice needed to play hockey. Many kids are drawn to the more-accessible football.

"Our kids have not been practicing hard enough," Sweden's Director of Development Tommy Boustedt said. "The quality is a lot better in other nations. Part of this has to do with our high standard of living, our kids aren't as hungry for success as you find in other countries."

The good news is that Sweden is facing the problem head on. Two years ago, the Swedes held what they called 'The Big Junior Inquiry' where essentially anyone associated with hockey in Sweden was invited to discuss what had gone wrong with the Swedish junior program, and ways to fix it.

■ Out of that meeting came two main initiatives. The first was identifying the 400 top 14 year-old players to focus on developing. From there, the Swedish Association works with the Swedish Olympic Committee to identify the top 30 players. This year, the top 10 players from the 1988, 1987 and 1986 birth years are part of the intense program. At the end of the season, the 86s will graduate to make room for 10 new 89s.

"Our goal is to play in the U20 World Championship final in three years," Boustedt said. "And after that we want to be competitive every year."

Already, the program is paying off as Sweden came out on top of the recent U20 Four Nations Tournament in November.

■ The bottom line that hockey nations all over the globe are realizing is that in today's competitive hockey environment, countries can no longer sit back and let the players develop on a local level. Instead, some kind of national junior development program is necessary to remain on top of not only the U20 standings, but the world of junior hockey.

Looking at 2001, the four nations were all on par with each other. However, after 2001, Canada, Finland and the United States each maintained or improved their standing at the U20s, while Sweden, which had no developmental program in place, plummeted in the standings.

Since 2001, Canada has on average finished in second place, while Finland has averaged third. The U.S. averages about a fourth place finish during the span, while Sweden has about a sixth-place finish.

Ask the Expert: Development key to success

■ No one sees the trends in junior hockey more than the scouts that follow the major tournaments year-in and out. One such scout is Anders Hedberg, a former Swedish national team General Manager who will follow the upcoming tournament as the Director of Player Personnel for the Ottawa Senators.



Anders Hedberg

Hedberg has played 100 national team games for Sweden and was the first Swede to play in a Stanley Cup final (1979). He has followed virtually every U20 championship for the last 15 years.

"There is no doubt that the U.S. has made the most progress of all nations in the last ten years," said Hedberg. "Their U17 and U18 programs in Ann Arbor have improved their junior teams dramatically. They are much more skilled today, without losing their traditional competitive attitude. The Ann Arbor program is the main reason for their progress."

■ If USA is the best trend in junior hockey, Hedberg is sorry to say that Sweden is quite the opposite.

"Unfortunately, Sweden thought in the early 90s that playing without the puck would lead to success," says Anders. "It was a common belief that playing a good trap was all you needed to win games. This spread rapidly through the Swedish system, to the juniors and younger. If you focus on things which are easy, you immediately lose skill in things which are difficult. To change a trend like this, is like finding a new cure - it takes years."

Hedberg likes comparing Sweden and Finland, two countries with a similar hockey culture and potential.

"The Finns have done a great job of identifying their strength and going with it," says Hedberg. "They have been very progressive with their junior program and that's why they have been so consistent on the junior level. Their work with goalies has been very impressive. It's no coincidence that Finland has so many good goaltenders today."

■ Hedberg also likes the Canadian approach in the last decade.

"Canada has always been successful at the U20s, but they are successful in a different way today. A young Canadian hockey player is much more skilled today, than he was 10 years ago. Pure skill and fundamentals are emphasized more in Canada than they were in before, when often superior goaltending and tight defence brought success in the world juniors."

"Still, goaltending is the biggest key to U20 success," says Hedberg, "You can forget any hopes of a medal without strong goaltending. A key reason USA defeated Canada last year was Al Montoya out-duelling Marc-André Fleury."

■ Overall, Hedberg is an advocate of development programs for juniors, not only for skill development. "If kids feel they are well taken care of at the age of 17 and 18, they feel a special bond with each other and the national team program. This makes them more committed to their nation in future senior competition like the World Championship, Olympics and World Cup."

Living Large: The Regal Ralph

By Jenny Wiedeke

■ ■ ■ There's a common belief that everything is bigger in America. If the venue for the 2005 IIHF World U20 Championship is any indication - that stereotype just might be understating things.

This holiday season, the top junior players will feel more like big league stars when they arrive in North Dakota for the 2005 IIHF U20 World Championship.

Of course, most are hoping that they end up playing in the NHL, but until they are called up, for two weeks they can enjoy the next best thing: playing in Ralph Engelstad Arena in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

■ ■ ■ For those outside of the United States, or North Dakota for that matter, the legend of 'Ralph', as he is affectionately called, and the legacy he left for his former University are unknown. But after this World Junior Championship, the world will know first hand about both, and will be buzzing about the major league venue located in a humble college town.

To get an idea of what the 10 teams at the championship are going to walk into when they arrive in Grand Forks consider the following: 'The Ralph' has 14 locker-rooms, a 2 million dollar, eight-sided video display scoreboard, seating for 12,086, 3.2 miles of brass accents on the floor, 300 televisions, over 3,000 square meters of Italian granite and 48 luxury suites.

■ ■ ■ The home lockerroom and weight room feature cherry wood lockers, an underwater treadmill, a hot tub large enough to fit an entire team, and state-of-the-art training equipment. Indeed, the glitter of Hollywood hockey has landed in the middle of the heartland of America.

The story of how the University of North Dakota was fortunate enough to inherit such a spectacular structure is nearly as impressive as the arena itself.

■ ■ ■ Looking at it simply, Ralph Engelstad, University of North Dakota hockey alumnus and former goaltender for the Fighting Sioux, announced in 1998 that he would be donating 100,000 million dollars for the construction of a new arena for the university.

Engelstad, who died in 2002, can best be described as a self-made man, who built his fortune of millions in the construction business from virtually nothing. He liked to tell people, "The harder I work, the luckier I get." He was such a high profile alumnus of the school that he was able to help convince administrators no to change the beloved mascot of the university, the Fighting Sioux, in the early part of the 21st century.

Engelstad was a man who believed in doing things 100 percent or not at all, so when he donated the money for the arena, he knew it would have to be the best and brightest in the nation.



BIGGER IS BETTER: The 220 players that compete at the 2005 IIHF U20 World Championship will feel like they've already landed in Grand Forks, North Dakota, at the new Ralph Engelstad Arena. Above, the sun sets on the state-of-the-art building. Right, the lobby of the arena is made of marble and granite.

■ ■ ■ The new arena would be a far cry from the building Engelstad himself played in while at UND. The Winter Sports Building, better known as 'The Barn', was known for its lack of physical beauty and its below 20 degree temperatures. The building didn't even have a mechanical zamboni as the ice was resurfaced by young fans, who would shovel snow off the ice in return for free admission.

The school eventually upgraded to a two-million dollar facility in 1972, however, as the 21st century neared that building too was becoming too outdated to attract any quality hockey players to the university. It was then that

long-time Fighting Sioux supporter Ralph Engelstad stepped up and volunteered to donate an unprecedented 100,000,000 dollars, specifically for the use of a new arena.

Coincidentally, the cost of the current Ralph Engelstad Arena was 43 times that of the 1972 arena, while the 1972 arena also cost 43 times that of the old 'Barn'.

■ ■ ■ What's phenomenal about the arena, besides the structure itself, is the fact that it is not home to an NHL team and not even a professional team, but rather an amateur college team.

For those outside the United States, the idea might seem ridiculous, but to those in Grand Forks, where the university dominates the headlines, the building, while an admitted extravagance

The Ralph By the Numbers:
So just what makes Ralph Engelstad Arena special?

| | |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | underwater treadmill |
| 2 | sheets of ice |
| 3 | zambonis |
| 3.2 | miles of brass accents |
| 4 | escalators |
| 5 | elevators |
| 14 | lockerrooms |
| 48 | luxury suites |
| 300 | televisions |
| 300 | flag poles |
| 4000 | tons of steel |
| 12,086 | capacity |
| 100,000 | square feet of Italian granite |
| 400,000 | square feet |
| 500,000 | concrete blocks |
| 1,100,000 | bricks |
| 2,000,000 | dollar scoreboard |

100,000,000 final cost in US Dollars

Ralph is Ready for the World



Photo: Courtesy of Ralph Engelstad Arena
led in the NHL when they step on the ice for the first time in Italian granite.

was needed to put the hockey program back on the map. There is so much pride in both the University and its building that the website for this year's U20 World Championship is www.ralphsworldjr.com, which undoubtedly had many people from foreign nations scratching their heads.

■ ■ The players who compete for the university are not allowed to earn a salary under the rules of the NCAA (the governing body of amateur athletics in the United States). However, ask many professional players and they will tell you that these 'amateur' players have it better than most of the 30 NHL teams' athletes.

Which is one reason that when the arena was completed, the top players flocked to play for the Fighting Sioux and the program began to flourish.

Unlike most teams in the U.S. the University of North Dakota plays on an international-sized ice sheet (NCAA rules allow for both sized rinks in its leagues). So, when USA Hockey was granted the hosting rights to the 2005 U20 World Championship, there was little doubt that the tournament would go to the town of Grand Forks rather than a major metropolis such as Minneapolis or Chicago.



"When you host a World Championship event, you always want to put your best foot forward and really show off your country," said Jim Johannson, the U.S. U20 Team Leader. "There was really no better place for us to bring the world to than the arena that hockey nation is buzzing about."

Already that decision is paying off as the local organizers are expecting a solid turnout for the games. For many in the region, it will be a first glimpse at a major international competition and for the U.S. team, it is the dream venue to defend their 2004 gold medal (a bonus as the defending champions, Team USA will get to use the UND lockerroom through the championship).

■ ■ Organizers are riding the momentum of the U.S. golden finish last year. Former UND player Zach Parise, who was a top forward last year, helped increase the interest of Grand Forks residents. Organizers can also count on Canadians making the hop across the border as Grand Forks is within driving distance of Winnipeg.

Don't forget the second venue in Thief River Falls, Minnesota (which is coincidentally Ralph Engelstad's hometown). Minnesota people are well known for their love and knowledge of hockey and are sure to turn out to support all the teams based in their neck of the woods during the preliminary round.

But for the players from both sides of the Atlantic, the main memory they will take home from the 2005 World U20 Championship will be of the towering Ralph Engelstad Arena and their first glimpse into the big time.

Division I: One step away from making a giant leap

While most eyes will be on the United States and the top division of the U20 World Championship, in December an equally alluring battle will be taking place as 12 teams fight for two promotion spots to the top division. This season in particular features several very promotion-worthy squads.

Group A:

The U20 Division I, Group A will perhaps be one of the most competitive promotion events at any IIHF World Championship this season. In the group there are arguably four teams that could very well make their way to the top division and remain competitive among the top 10 for many years to come.

Austria, Norway, France and Kazakhstan have each had a taste of the top division in the last five seasons and all four learned that it's not just making to the top level that is important, but what you do once you're up there that matters.

France was among the top 10 in 2002 when the championship was in the Czech Republic and lost in a record-long shootout against Belarus. Kazakhstan has spent the last few seasons bouncing up and down at both the U18 and U20 levels.

Norway, much like its men's team is on the verge of cracking into the elite ten, but also like its men's team, keeps coming up short. And finally, there's the Austrians, who came close last season to staying up, but ultimately became a victim of the two-team relegation system. Although last season, Austria had sensation Thomas Vanek and this year have no such standout.

As the host, Great Britain will have a mild advantage, but unfortunately, the Brits have drawn a tough pool to make any headway, especially since they're the new team to Division I.

Overall, it will be a fight to the finish to see which team makes its way to the top division.

Group B:

Estonia will play host to the Division I, Group B U20 Championship, but as a team it will have its hands full with the likes of Denmark, Ukraine, Slovenia and Latvia.

Denmark's national junior teams have been on a roll lately at both the U18 and U20 level, but whether they are ready to make the leap into the top division at the U20s remains to be seen. The Danes will be challenged greatly by the Ukraine, which will be eager to make a quick turnaround after getting relegated last year.

The dark horse that could spoil the party for Denmark and Ukraine is Slovenia, which boasts perhaps the strongest prospect among both Division I groups. Forward Anze Kopitar was his team's leading scorer at last year's U18 championship and is the getting the biggest buzz among scouts. But he will need strong shoulders to carry the Slovenians hopes at the upcoming Division I.

The long shots of the group include host Estonia, Latvia and Poland. While all three have strong hockey traditions, they are just a notch below the other three teams in the group. Latvia has the best chance to score an upset, but to win the entire tournament would take a string of unbelievable fortune.

Stoppers get their start at U20s

Since the 21st century began, perhaps no position more than that of the goaltender has provided NHL teams with more of a 'sure thing'. Top goaltenders from the U20s are all but guaranteed to be a first-round draftee as goaltending and U20 success seem to go hand-in-hand. Below are updates on a few of the puck stopping stars from recent U20 World Championships.



Name: Al Montoya
Class: 2004 - Team USA
NHL Draft: 6th overall - N.Y. Rangers
Current Status Since Finland, the buzz around Montoya has continued to build. He will be back in the red, white and blue this year to help the U.S. defend its gold medal. Rather than join the NHL, Montoya opted to stay at the University of Michigan for at least one more season to work on his college degree.



Name: Marc-Andre Fleury
Class: 2003, 2004 - Team Canada
NHL Draft: 1st overall - Pittsburgh
Current Status Fleury didn't have a stellar finish to his junior hockey career at last year's U20s, but that hasn't hampered his professional career as he played 22 games with Pittsburgh during the 03-04 season. He is in the AHL this season during the lockout, but many predict that he will be a key to Pittsburgh's future.



Name: Kari Lehtonen
Class: 2001, 2002 Team Finland
NHL Draft: 2nd overall - Atlanta
Current Status Lehtonen was the top-drafted goalie ever from Finland. After he was selected in 2002, he played in the AHL and had only four games in the NHL with Atlanta. Due to the lockout, Lehtonen is back in Chicago this year, where expectations are high.



Name: Rick DiPietro
Class: 2000, 2001 Team USA
NHL Draft: 1st overall - N.Y. Islanders
Current Status DiPietro could be responsible for starting the trend of goalies being taken high in the draft as the first-ever top drafted goalie. He was immediately named to the Islanders, where he struggled in his first season as a young starter. But after a few years in the AHL, he looks ready for NHL stardom.



Name: Roberto Luongo
Class: 1999 Team Canada
NHL Draft: 4th overall - N.Y. Islanders
Current Status Roberto Luongo has thrived in the NHL with Florida as the starter for the last four seasons. He has also been the go-to goalie for a deep Canadian national team and has two World Championship goal medals on his resume.

Slovenian sensation turning heads

■ In hockey, there's always talk of 'the next big star'. Normally, that star is a hulking defenseman, or agile forward from one of the 'Big Seven' nations. But this year, several scouts have turned their attention to the Balkan nation of Slovenia to watch one of the best 2005 Draft eligible forwards, Anze Kopitar.

Kopitar first hit the radar screen in January of 2003 at the European Youth Olympic Festival, but it was his performance at the 2004 U18 Division I World Championship in Austria that solidified his position as a true prospect. At the championship, Kopitar had six goals and two assists in a competitive field that featured among others, Switzerland and Austria.

Kopitar is a 6-2 center known for his shot and stick skills. Many have called him the complete package who could be the steal of the NHL Draft. Despite his young age, Kopitar played 21 games with the senior club, Kranjska Gora, in Slovenia and finished with 27 points. Now he's set his sites on the Swedish league with Södertälje's junior team, where he is sure to lose whatever remaining anonymity he has among scouts.

■ "I think he's the best junior player I've had and I used to coach the 19-year-old National team, and I coach the 17-year-old National team now," said the Södertälje's head coach Per Nygård. "I think Anze has fantastic potential. He has size, fantastic hockey sense, a really good shot, he's good on face-offs and positioning; he's more or less a complete package."

Kopitar's most immediate comparison can be made to last year's

Austrian sensation Thomas Vanek, who was a star for the University of Minnesota and was the core of his Austrian squad. Kopitar will most likely be under the same pressure that Vanek had last year, as he will be expected to provide leadership and the bulk of the offensive production for the Slovenians at this year's U20s, despite being an underage player.

■ Last year, Kopitar was nearly able to earn Slovenia a promotion into the U18 top division, but Switzerland took that resume builder away from the young star. But if Kopitar's performance in Sweden is any indication, he should be able to cope with the U20 pressure just fine. Already, after moving to a foreign country at the age of 17, Kopitar is off to a quick start, averaging more than one goal per game.

The only question that remains for the young Slovenian sensation is which NHL team will be the lucky one to draft the diamond in the rough.



THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN TOUCH Slovenian Anze Kopitar was easy to spot at last year's U18, Division I Championship, besides the yellow gloves, he was also responsible for most of his team's offense, totaling eight points.

2005 IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP SPECIAL



IIHF World U20 Championship records wait to be broken

DID YOU KNOW?



Canadian forward Patrice Bergeron could make history as the first player to win a World Championship gold medal with his country's men's senior team before winning a medal with the U20 team. Bergeron missed last year's U20s, but played on Canada's golden men's team. Most likely, he will be named to this year's Canadian U20 team and if Canada earns a medal, he will skate into the IIHF history books.

ALL TIME IIHF WORLD U20 STANDINGS

| Country | Years | Games | Wins | Ties | Losses | GF | GA | Points | Gold | Silver | Brz. |
|----------------|-------|-------|------|------|--------|-----|-----|--------|------|--------|------|
| Canada | 28 | 185 | 125 | 21 | 39 | 959 | 480 | 271 | 10 | 6 | 4 |
| Finland | 28 | 187 | 105 | 16 | 66 | 867 | 580 | 226 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| Sweden | 28 | 187 | 104 | 13 | 70 | 861 | 548 | 221 | 1 | 6 | 4 |
| United States | 28 | 185 | 85 | 9 | 91 | 770 | 735 | 179 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Soviet Union | 15 | 99 | 79 | 5 | 15 | 645 | 250 | 163 | 9 | 3 | 2 |
| Czechoslovakia | 16 | 106 | 61 | 12 | 32 | 565 | 342 | 134 | 0 | 5 | 6 |
| Russia | 13 | 88 | 60 | 8 | 20 | 370 | 185 | 128 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Czech Republic | 12 | 81 | 39 | 9 | 33 | 301 | 231 | 87 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Switzerland | 18 | 118 | 25 | 6 | 87 | 291 | 697 | 56 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Slovakia | 9 | 67 | 23 | 8 | 27 | 167 | 161 | 54 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Germany | 20 | 129 | 20 | 3 | 106 | 297 | 816 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Kazakhstan | 4 | 25 | 4 | 2 | 20 | 49 | 140 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ukraine | 4 | 26 | 3 | 1 | 17 | 37 | 132 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Poland | 6 | 41 | 2 | 2 | 37 | 69 | 361 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Norway | 5 | 33 | 3 | 0 | 30 | 66 | 297 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Belarus | 4 | 24 | 2 | 2 | 20 | 45 | 142 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| France | 1 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 42 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Austria | 2 | 11 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 14 | 99 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Japan | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 9 | 83 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |



Records were made to be broken:

All eyes will be on Canadian sensation Sidney Crosby at this year's World U20 Championship. The young star has been compared to the all-time 'Great One', Wayne Gretzky and could rewrite the U20 history books. Crosby already has one U20 championship under his belt as last year he had five points in Canada's silver finish in Finland.

IIHF World U20 Championship All-Time Record Book

U20 All Time Leading Scorers:

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

U20 All-Time Goal Scorers:

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

U20 All-Time Assist Leaders

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

Single Season Points Leaders:

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

Single Season Goal Leaders:

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

Single Season Assists Leaders:

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

IIHF World U20 Championships

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

*denotes unofficial tournament

A legend ends: The Russian bear has gone to sleep

■ The hulking defenseman who played a flawless game, brilliant and with ease on probably the most dominating national team in the history of the game, has been laid to rest

Former Soviet hockey great Aleksander Ragulin passed away late on November 17 in Moscow at the age of 63. Ragulin (born on May 5, 1941) was a defenseman on the dominant Soviet teams of the 60s and 70s and won 10 IIHF World Championship gold medals in the 12 championships in which he played between 1961 and 1973. With Ragulin as the anchor on defence, the Soviet national team captured nine straight IIHF World Championship titles between 1963 and 1971, a streak most likely never to be repeated.

Ragulin, nicknamed Rags by Canadians who played against him, also won Olympic gold medals in 1964 in Innsbruck, 1968 in Grenoble and 1972 in Sapporo.

■ The 13 major international titles that Ragulin won is equalled only by former Soviet goaltender Vladislav Tretiak. Ragulin also took part in the historic 1972 Summit Series between the Soviet Union and Team Canada. Overall, he played in 102 World Championship and Olympic games, scoring 14 goals.

He was named "Best Defenseman" at the 1966 IIHF World Championship and was selected to the All Star Team at four World

Championships (1963, 1965, 1966 and 1967) and at the 1964 Olympics.

■ For most of his club career, Ragulin represented CSKA Moscow where he won nine Soviet national championships. He amassed 427 games for CSKA and scored 63 goals.

"Aleksander Ragulin personified the Russian bear," said IIHF President René Fasel about the stalwart defenseman. "He was the kind of player that no forward really wanted to confront in the corner or in front of the Soviet net. Ragulin was probably the most dominating international defenseman in the 60s. We are all saddened by his premature death."

■ At the end of his career as Ragulin was slowing down, CSKA and national team coach Anatoli Tarasov, put him on a unit with speedy forwards Valeri Kharlamov, Anatoli Firsov and Vladimir Vikulov and he selected the young Gennady Tsygankov as his defensive partner. According to Tarasov, the five-man unit didn't participate in a single losing game during the 1971-1972 season, whether playing for CSKA or the national team.

Ragulin, who wore number 5 on his jersey for most of his career, was inducted to the IIHF Hall of Fame in 1997, the same year as the Hall of Fame of the International Ice Hockey Federation was founded.



Photo: SEVA KUKUSHKIN

THE MAN THEY CALLED "RAGS": Aleksander Ragulin, one of the true legends of international ice hockey, passed away at the age of 63. This photo was taken in 2002 with Ragulin posing in front of painting depicting him during his hey-day with CSKA Moscow in the late 60s. His record of ten IIHF World Championship gold medals, including, three Olympic gold medals will most likely never be equalled. Ragulin represented Khimik Voskresensk and CSKA Moscow during his club career, where he played over 500 games.



PUTTING THEIR HEADS TOGETHER: The second International Symposium on Concussion in Sport was held in Prague on November 4-6. The leading experts on concussions gathered in the Czech Republic capital to exchange information and present the latest research in the area. Overall, there were nearly 200 participants, including the speakers (pictured above) and abstract presenters, who presented their research in displays. A consensus on the findings from the symposium will be published in early 2005 and will be summarized in a future edition of the IIHF News Release.

RESULTS SUMMARY

Men's Olympic Pre-Qualification

Tournaments **GROUP A - Briançon, France**

| | | |
|--------------------|------|-----------------|
| Estonia - Bulgaria | 11-1 | (3-0, 2-0, 6-1) |
| Romania - France | 0-8 | (0-2, 0-2, 0-4) |
| Estonia - Romania | 3-4 | (2-0, 0-4, 1-0) |
| France - Bulgaria | 15-0 | (5-0, 4-0, 6-0) |
| Bulgaria - Romania | 1-6 | (0-3, 0-2, 1-1) |
| France - Estonia | 7-0 | (3-0, 2-0, 2-0) |

Briançon Final Standings

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|
| France | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 30 | - | 0 | 6 |
| Romania | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 10 | - | 12 | 4 |
| Estonia | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 14 | - | 12 | 2 |
| Bulgaria | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | - | 32 | 0 |

France, moves onto the Men's Final Olympic Qualification Tournament in February.

GROUP B - Nowy Targ, Poland

| | | |
|-------------------------|------|-----------------|
| Netherlands - Croatia | 10-3 | (3-0, 3-1, 4-2) |
| Lithuania - Poland | 1-6 | (0-2, 1-2, 0-2) |
| Netherlands - Lithuania | 3-1 | (1-1, 2-0, 0-0) |
| Poland - Croatia | 7-0 | (3-0, 3-0, 1-0) |
| Poland - Netherlands | 5-0 | (2-0, 2-0, 1-0) |
| Croatia - Lithuania | 4-6 | (1-1, 2-2, 1-3) |

Nowy Targ Final Standings

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|
| Poland | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 18 | - | 1 | 6 |
| Netherlands | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 13 | - | 9 | 4 |
| Lithuania | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 8 | - | 13 | 2 |
| Croatia | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 7 | - | 23 | 0 |

Poland moves onto the Men's Final Olympic Qualification Tournament in February.

GROUP C - Stavanger, Norway

| | | |
|--------------------------|------|------------------|
| Hungary - Serbia & Mont. | 13-0 | (2-0, 7-0, 4-0) |
| China - Norway | 2-16 | (2-1, 0-5, 0-10) |
| Hungary - China | 4-3 | (2-1, 1-2, 1-0) |
| Norway - Serbia & Mont. | 21-0 | (4-0, 7-0, 10-0) |
| Serbia & Mont. - China | 2-3 | (1-1, 1-1, 0-1) |
| Norway - Hungary | 3-3 | (1-0, 1-2, 1-1) |

Stavanger Final Standings

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|
| Norway | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 40 | - | 5 | 5 |
| Hungary | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 20 | - | 6 | 5 |
| China | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 8 | - | 22 | 2 |
| Serbia & Mont. | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | - | 37 | 0 |

Norway moves onto the Men's Final Olympic Qualification Tournament in February.

Women's Olympic Qualification

Tournaments **GROUP A - Podolsk, Russia**

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-----------------|
| Czech Republic - Russia | 0-3 | (0-3, 0-0, 0-0) |
| Japan - Czech Republic | 4-1 | (0-1, 2-0, 2-0) |
| Russia - Japan | 3-2 | (2-0, 1-1, 0-1) |

Podolsk Final Standings

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Russia | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 | - | 2 | 4 |
| Japan | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 6 | - | 4 | 2 |
| Czech Republic | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | - | 7 | 0 |

Russia qualifies for the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Torino.

GROUP B - Bad Tölz, Germany

| | | |
|-----------------------|------|-----------------|
| Kazakhstan - Slovenia | 17-0 | (4-0, 8-0, 5-0) |
| Latvia - Germany | 1-5 | (1-2, 0-1, 0-2) |
| Kazakhstan - Latvia | 4-1 | (1-0, 2-0, 1-1) |
| Germany - Slovenia | 10-1 | (3-0, 4-0, 3-1) |
| Slovenia - Latvia | 2-11 | (1-2, 0-7, 1-2) |
| Germany - Kazakhstan | 5-0 | (1-0, 2-0, 2-0) |

Bad Tölz Final Standings

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|
| Germany | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 20 | - | 2 | 6 |
| Kazakhstan | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 21 | - | 6 | 4 |
| Latvia | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 13 | - | 11 | 2 |
| Slovenia | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | - | 38 | 0 |

Germany qualifies for 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Torino.

GROUP C - Beijing, China

| | | |
|----------------------|------|-----------------|
| Switzerland - Norway | 8-0 | (2-0, 2-0, 4-0) |
| France - China | 1-7 | (1-3, 0-3, 0-1) |
| Switzerland - France | 4-3 | (0-1, 3-1, 1-1) |
| China - Norway | 10-0 | (1-0, 2-0, 7-0) |
| Norway - France | 2-4 | (1-0, 0-4, 1-0) |
| China - Switzerland | 2-3 | (0-0, 0-0, 2-3) |

Beijing Final Standings

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|
| Switzerland | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 15 | - | 5 | 6 |
| China | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 19 | - | 4 | 4 |
| France | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 8 | - | 13 | 2 |
| Norway | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | - | 22 | 0 |

Switzerland qualifies for 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Torino.

IIHF Continental Cup

Third Round

| | | |
|------------------------|-----|-----------------|
| Milano - Kazzinc | 0-0 | (0-0, 0-0, 0-0) |
| Storhamar - Sokol Kiev | 2-2 | (1-0, 1-1, 0-1) |
| Kazzinc - Sokol Kiev | 4-2 | (0-1, 2-1, 2-0) |
| Milano - Storhamar | 5-2 | (1-2, 1-0, 3-0) |
| Sokol Kiev - Milano | 0-5 | (0-2, 0-0, 0-3) |
| Storhamar - Kazzinc | 3-4 | (0-0, 3-1, 0-3) |

Round Three Final Standings

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|
| Milano (ITA) | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 10 | - | 2 | 5 |
| Kazzinc (KAZ) | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 8 | - | 5 | 5 |
| Storhamar (NOR) | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 7 | - | 11 | 1 |
| Sokol Kiev (UKR) | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | - | 11 | 1 |

Milano Vipers qualified to 2005 IIHF Continental Cup Super Final on January 7-9, 2005 in Szekesfehervar, Hungary. Milano will join Dynamo Moscow (RUS), HKm Zvolen (SVK) and Alba Volan Szekesfehervar (HUN) in the four-team final.

2004 Deutschland Cup

Various Locations, 9-14 November, GERMANY

Round Robin Results

| | | |
|------------------------|-----|---------------------------|
| Switzerland - Canada | 2-3 | (0-2, 0-0, 2-0, 0-0, 0-1) |
| Germany - USA | 1-5 | (1-2, 0-1, 0-2) |
| Switzerland - Slovakia | 4-2 | (2-1, 1-1, 1-0) |
| Canada - USA | 5-3 | (4-1, 1-2, 0-0) |
| Slovakia - Canada | 5-3 | (1-0, 1-0, 3-3) |
| Germany - Switzerland | 1-2 | (1-0, 0-1, 0-0, 0-0, 0-1) |
| Slovakia - Germany | 6-2 | (1-1, 0-0, 5-1) |
| USA - Switzerland | 4-2 | (1-0, 1-1, 2-1) |
| Germany - Canada | 2-5 | (0-3, 2-2, 0-0) |
| USA - Slovakia | 4-0 | (1-0, 2-0, 1-0) |

Deutschland Cup Final Standings

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|
| USA | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 16 | - | 8 | 6 |
| Canada | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 16 | - | 12 | 6 |
| Slovakia | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 13 | - | 13 | 4 |
| Switzerland | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 10 | - | 10 | 4 |
| Germany | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6 | - | 18 | 0 |

2004 Karjala Cup

Helsinki, FINLAND, 11-14 November

Round Robin Results

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----|---------------------------|
| Finland - Czech Republic | 0-3 | (0-0, 0-2, 0-1) |
| Sweden - Russia | 2-1 | (1-0, 0-1, 1-0) |
| Czech Republic - Sweden | 2-3 | (0-1, 1-1, 1-0, 0-0, 0-1) |
| Russia - Finland | 3-4 | (1-2, 1-1, 1-1) |
| Russia - Czech Republic | 6-3 | (2-1, 3-1, 1-1) |
| Finland - Sweden | 5-2 | (2-1, 1-0, 2-1) |

Karjala Cup Final Standings

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|
| Finland | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 9 | - | 8 | 6 |
| Sweden | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 7 | - | 8 | 5 |
| Czech Republic | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8 | - | 9 | 4 |
| Russia | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 10 | - | 9 | 3 |

U20 Four Nations Tournament

Piestany, Slovakia

| | | |
|------------------------|-----|-----------------|
| Norway - Germany | 1-6 | (0-3, 1-1, 0-2) |
| Slovakia - Switzerland | 3-4 | (1-2, 1-1, 1-1) |
| Germany - Switzerland | 5-5 | (0-3, 4-1, 1-1) |
| Slovakia - Norway | 7-2 | (2-0, 3-2, 2-0) |
| Switzerland - Norway | 3-3 | (1-1, 1-2, 1-0) |
| Slovakia - Germany | 2-2 | (1-1, 1-0, 0-1) |

Piestany U20 Final Standings

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|
| Germany | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 13 | - | 8 | 4 |
| Switzerland | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 12 | - | 11 | 4 |
| Slovakia | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 12 | - | 8 | 3 |
| Norway | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 6 | - | 16 | 1 |

U20 Four Nations Tournament

Vaxjo, Sweden

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

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

Vaxjo U20 Final Standings

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|
| Sweden | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 11 | - | 2 | 8 |
| Russia | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 8 | - | 7 | 6 |
| Finland | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | - | 8 | 4 |
| Czech Republic | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | - | 9 | 0 |

U18 Four Nations Tournament

Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----------------|
| Finland - Sweden | 2-2 | (0-0, 1-1, 1-1) |
| Switzerland - USA | 4-6 | (1-1, 2-4, 1-1) |
| Finland - Switzerland | 1-3 | (1-1, 0-2, 0-0) |
| Sweden - USA | 1-7 | (1-3, 0-3, 0-1) |
| Switzerland - Sweden | 3-5 | (1-1, 1-3, 1-1) |
| USA - Finland | 6-3 | (2-1, 2-1, 2-1) |
| Switzerland - Finland (bronze) | 3-6 | (3-2, 0-2, 0-2) |
| USA - Sweden (gold) | 1-0 | (0-0, 0-0, 1-0) |

Ann Arbor U18 Final Standings

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|
| USA | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 20 | - | 8 | 8 |
| Sweden | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 8 | - | 13 | 3 |
| Finland | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 12 | - | 14 | 3 |
| Switzerland | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 13 | - | 18 | 2 |

U18 Four Nations Tournament

Prievidza, Slovakia

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

Prievidza U18 Final Standings

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|
| Russia | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 13 | - | 5 | 6 |
| Czech Republic | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 7 | - | 4 | 4 |
| Germany | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 5 | - | 8 | 2 |
| Slovakia | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | - | 9 | 0 |

Women's Four Nations Cup

Lake Placid, N.Y., USA

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----|-----------------|
| Canada - Sweden | 3-2 | (1-0, 1-0, 1-1) |
| Finland - USA | 1-6 | (0-2, 1-2, 0-2) |
| Canada - USA | 1-1 | (1-0, 0-1, 0-0) |
| Sweden - Finland | 2-2 | (0-1, 2-1, 0-0) |
| Finland - Canada | 1-4 | (0-2, 1-2, 0-0) |
| Sweden - USA | 3-6 | (0-1, 2-1, 1-4) |
| Sweden - Finland (bronze) | 4-2 | (0-0, 3-0, 1-2) |
| USA - Canada (gold) | 1-2 | (1-1, 0-0, 0-1) |

Lake Placid Final Standings

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|
| Canada | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 10 | - | 5 | 7 |
| USA | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 14 | - | 7 | 5 |
| Sweden | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 11 | - | 13 | 3 |
| Finland | 4 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 6 | - | 16 | 1 |

U17 Four Nations Cup

Rochester, N.Y., USA

| | | |
|---------------------------------|------|-----------------|
| Switzerland - Slovakia | 0-4 | (0-0, 0-2, 0-2) |
| USA - Russia | 5-3 | (1-3, 2-0, 2-0) |
| Slovakia - Russia | 1-5 | (0-0, 0-4, 1-1) |
| USA - Switzerland | 10-3 | (5-3, 1-0, 4-0) |
| Russia - Switzerland | 10-0 | (4-0, 1-0, 5-0) |
| Slovakia - USA | 2-6 | (0-1, 2-2, 0-3) |
| Slovakia - Switzerland (bronze) | 2-3 | (2-1, 0-1, 0-1) |
| USA - Russia (gold) | 5-2 | (2-0, 3-0, 0-2) |

Rochester Final Standings

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|
| USA | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 26 | - | 10 | 8 |
| Russia | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 20 | - | 11 | 4 |
| Slovakia | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 9 | - | 14 | 2 |
| Switzerland | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 6 | - | 26 | 2 |

■ The Finnish hockey magazine *Kiekkolehti* has ranked the top seven European hockey countries' top leagues by rink quality. Sweden received the highest marks followed by Germany, Finland, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Russia and last, Slovakia.

■ The Czech league set a new attendance record for one game on November 2 when 15,785 spectators saw Slavia Prague lose to HC Kladno 3-2 at the Sazka Arena.

Locked out, but McCabe a sure lock for HV71

By Szymon Szemberg

■ ■ Bryan McCabe is one of the nearly 300 NHL players who has moved to Europe for the duration of the lockout in the National Hockey League. If the labour conflict continues well into 2005, the 29-year old Canadian will have to refocus his goals from capturing the Stanley Cup, the oldest trophy in the hockey world, to winning the newest prize in hockey's arsenal, the IIHF European Champions Cup in St. Petersburg, January 13-16.

"I have been told about this and I would love to win that one if there is no NHL season," said McCabe who instead of playing for the Toronto Maple Leafs has signed for Swedish champion HV71 in the city of Jönköping. "It would be a great thing to make HV71 the best team in Europe."

McCabe's story is not that unique in the hockey world right now, but the veteran of more than 700 NHL games is one of a select handful of players that can walk away from the lockout season with at least one Cup -- even if it's not Lord Stanley's.

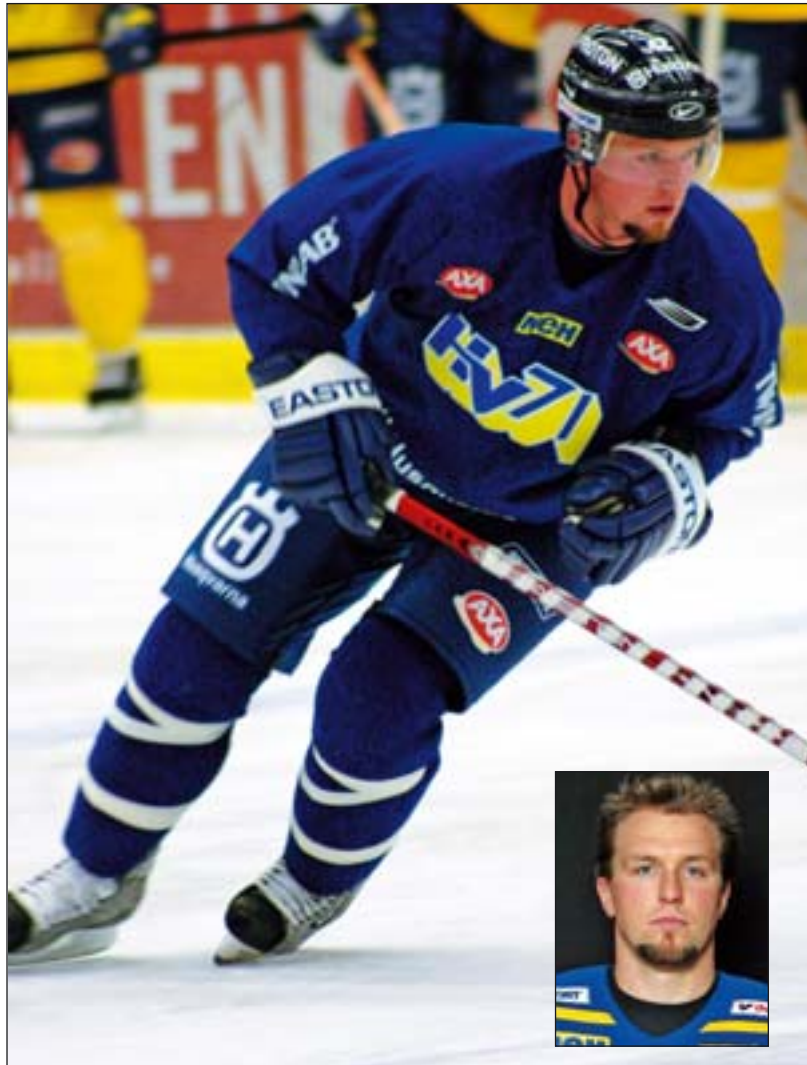
■ ■ Bryan McCabe is no stranger to the international game. He won two consecutive IIHF World U20 Championships with Canada in 1994 and 1995 and in his first international attempt as a senior, he contributed to Canada's IIHF World Championship gold medal in Helsinki in 1997. McCabe also played for his country in the 1998 and 1999 World Championships.

He was selected to the World U20 All Star Team in 1995 and also named tournament Best Defenseman by the directorate. A rather impressive international resume if one considers that McCabe is a prototypical NHL, physical defenseman, usually piling up between 120 and 140 penalty minutes per season, a style that normally does not mesh very well under international rules.

"But my game has changed," says McCabe who had a banner season with the Leafs in 2003-04 with 16 goals, 53 assists, compiling only 86 penalty minutes and logging over 25 minutes of ice time per game. "The more you stay out of the box, the more time you can spend on the ice. And last season I had had lots of quality ice time with players like Mats Sundin, Brian Leetch and Joe Nieuwendyk and that really helps your stats."

■ ■ As there was no sign of an end to the lockout in November, Bryan signed with the Swedish champion club, largely because his best Swedish buddy, Anders Eriksson, did the same. McCabe and Eriksson became good friends while playing in Chicago and Toronto together. In a rare twist of irony, Eriksson was the other defenseman on the 1995 World Juniors All Star Team representing Sweden, but they became friends first five years later in Chicago.

As almost all NHLers coming over to play in Europe, McCabe has experienced his share of adjustment problems. It's the same sport, but a different game:



Photos: DANIEL GUSTAFSSON, LARS ANDERSSON (portrait)

SAME COLOUR - DIFFERENT CLUB: Blue and White are the colours of the Toronto Maple Leafs, the NHL club which Bryan McCabe plays for when there is no lockout. Blue and White (and a little yellow) are the colours of HV 71 of Jönköping, the Swedish champions. HV71 has had a very rough run in the league, so the IIHF European Champions Cup comes as an opportunity for redemption.

"The size of the rink and no redline rule makes it really difficult in the beginning," says McCabe. "In the NHL you could simply follow the play and leave almost no gap between you and your forwards. With the allowed two-line pass you have to retreat because you don't want to let any players sneak behind your back to get that long pass. You cannot fall asleep."

McCabe likes the practises, which he finds quite different from the ones in the NHL. "They are great, there are a lot of flow drills, motion and individual skill drills. In Toronto we do mostly two-on-two or three-on-three battle drills. This will definitely help me in the future."

■ ■ The St. Catherine's, Ontario native obviously finds officiating very different. "You don't get away with as much here. I was sitting in the penalty box too much in the beginning," said McCabe who had twenty penalty minutes in his first two games in the Swedish league.

McCabe came in to HV71 at the right time to contribute. Since the start of the season, the team has been struggling and has not been able to play up to its championship potential. At the end of November, the Jönköping club was in 10th place in the 12-team Swedish Elitserien, where eight teams make the playoffs.

At the start of the season, the management of HV71

declared that the club would stick to its original roster and not join the "arms race" by signing locked-out NHL players, but the dismal start made them re-evaluate that policy.

■ ■ Apart from McCabe and Eriksson, the club also signed Phoenix goaltender Brian Boucher. If this pays off in an IIHF European Champions Cup victory and, later, a second consecutive Swedish championship, it will be gamble well worth taking.

After that, all McCabe has left to win, is the Stanley Cup.

Footnote: What's behind the name HV71? The club was founded in 1971 as a merger between two other clubs, Huskvarna IF and Vätterstad.



History of European club competition

■ ■ The original European Cup for club teams -- the competition which determined the best club team in Europe -- started in 1966 with the Czechoslovak giants of that time, ZKL Brno, winning the three first tournaments.

After the short ZKL era, followed the resounding dominance of Soviet Union's CSKA Moscow, the central army team which was virtually one-to-one with the Soviet national team. Between 1969 and 1990, CSKA claimed the top European club trophy 20 times. CSKA only lost the title in 1975 (to Krylia Sovetov, Soviet Union) and in 1978 (to Poldi Kladno, Czechoslovakia).

The CSKA domination ended in 1991 when the Swedes took over with Djurgarden, Stockholm winning back-to-back titles and Malmö IF claiming the European Cup in 1993.

The winners after that:
1994 TPS Turku (FIN)
1995 Jokerit Helsinki (FIN)
1996 Jokerit Helsinki (FIN)
1997 Lada Togliatti (RUS)

In 1997, the IIHF introduced the European Hockey League which operated for four seasons. The EHL winners:
1997 TPS Turku (FIN)
1998 VEU Feldkirch (AUT)
1999 M. Magnitogorsk (RUS)
2000 M. Magnitogorsk (RUS)

The EHL ceased operation following the 2000 season. The 2005 IIHF European Champions Cup will be the first competition to legitimately determine the club champion of Europe since 2000.