

# News Release

FAIR PLAY  
AND RESPECT



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Photos: DAVE SANDFORD (World Cup photo), CHRISTER HÖGLUND (Swedish league photo)

**LET THEM PLAY:** Mario Lemieux (left) won the World Cup in 2004, but he and other skilled players would be even greater winners if the referees called the games by the rule book. The first indications from the recently launched IIHF Referee Exchange Program is that the games are better and more entertaining when the official calls it strictly. "This is how hockey should be played" wrote a Swedish paper after Russian referee Sergei Karabanov (in the background, right) worked a game between Farjestad and MoDo in the Swedish league.

## The game is fine - just call it by the book

The recently launched IIHF Referee Exchange Program has given us an early, but clear, indication about how our game can be improved: Make the officials call the game by the rule book. Yes, it's that simple.

### RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL

■ Everyone involved in ice hockey in the last months has read many proposals about how to make the game better. There has been almost no limit to the amount of far-fetched ideas thrown out like making goals bigger, goalies smaller, pucks lighter, sticks heavier, overtime periods, shoot-outs, three points for a win, no points for a tie and so forth.

The ideas are all well meant, but probably will make it no further than the paper they are written on. After international hockey adopted the rule which allows the two-line pass five years ago, we feel we do not need any major changes. What we now need is all federations, associations, leagues and their respective referee supervisors to pull out the 13 x 21 cm publication of 127 pages called the "Official IIHF Rule Book 2002-2006" from the shelf, put it on the table and say: "We will call the game according to this book."

■ And the interpretation must be the same, regardless if it's the first period of the first game of the season or overtime in the last game. Not only as the President of the IIHF, but also as a former referee, I am very encouraged by the first reviews from the IIHF Referee Exchange Program, see coverage on pages 6 - 7 in this issue.

It took courage from the IIHF Sport Development Manager of Officiating Konstantin Komissarov and Peter Andersson, the Swedish league referee supervisor, to instruct Russian referee Sergei Karabanov to call the Farjestad vs Modo game in the Swedish Elitserien strictly by the aforementioned book.

■ According to reports, the first period was somewhat chaotic, with players being penalized left and right, but after that the combatants adapted and the rest of the game was a brilliant performance from two skilful teams loaded with talented players. End-to-end action with speed and finesse, just like the game was meant to be played.

■ After the game Mr. Karabanov received great reviews from the players, coaches and media. The biggest Swedish newspaper ran this headline the following day: "Wow... he called the game by the book."

Everyone agreed that our game is far better off without the endless clutching and grabbing and other means of sabotage.

We have been hearing the same kind of things from other games which were made part of the Referee Exchange Program.

■ I cannot emphasize enough the importance of this strict interpretation. Apart from the obvious, the safety of the players, we must insist on creating an environment where the best players are allowed to perform as the best players. We should never accept conditions where lesser competitors, often referred to as "role players", are able to hook, slash and hold and in this way neutralize the stars.

I am happy to say that we have come a long way in achieving this, looking back to all post-1998 IIHF World Championships. The IIHF Referee Exchange Program will hopefully send this message down to the national leagues, starting with the participating nations: Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Russia, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland.

■ Later on, this will hopefully have a global impact.

Continued on next page

Continued from page one:

■ The IIHF Semi-Annual Congress in Belek, Turkey adopted a policy on abuse and harassment (see page 10) to protect young players from different kinds from mistreatment. This is a clear statement from the IIHF that the world governing body of ice hockey does not tolerate harassment or abuse in any form, in any country, on any level.

By doing this, the IIHF acknowledges that the problem exists and we are happy for the response we received from the national associations during the workshop in Belek. Many associations were earlier reluctant to recognize the problem within their own domains. With the IIHF taking the initiative and adopting the policy, it is now much easier for the associations to approach this domestically.

■ The lockout of NHL players, although it is an internal affair between the National Hockey League and its player's union, has already had far-reaching ramifications on the European national leagues. When this was written, 200 NHL players had signed "lockout contracts" in 15 different European leagues, and some of them, like Sweden's Peter Forsberg, are committed for at least a full season.

It will be very interesting to evaluate the consequences of this exodus of players a little bit further down the line. As they say, hindsight is 20-20.

René Fasel  
IIHF President

## IIHF/Infront extend sponsorship with Skoda Auto until 2011

■ ZUG, Switzerland: Infront Sports & Media, the marketing partner of the IIHF, has announced that Skoda Auto has extended its official main sponsorship of the IIHF World Championships for seven more years, from 2005-2011.



This brings the contract into line with the IIHF partnership with Infront, which in July this year was also prolonged until 2011.

The extension between the IIHF and Infront creates a relationship between a sports federation and a marketing company that will have lasted 30 years, believed to be unique in sport. It builds on a partnership dating back to 1981 and includes all television and marketing rights to the IIHF World Championships, as well as responsibility for the host broadcast of the event.

Skoda has been an IIHF sponsor since 1992, which means that the new contract to 2011 will create a 20 year partnership.



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## Olympic schedules presented at IIHF congress

■ The Olympic ice hockey schedule for the 2006 Winter Games in Turin, Italy was presented to the participating nations during the IIHF Semi-Annual Congress in Belek, Turkey (September 30 – October 2).

Defending 2002 Olympic men's gold medallist Canada will face host Italy on opening day, February 15, at the 10,500-seat Palasport Olimpico. The opening day also features the match ups of Germany – Czech Republic, and Russia – Slovakia. Both Finland and the U.S will also play on the first day of action against qualifying teams, which will be determined later.

■ The complete men's and women's Olympic schedules are posted on IIHF.com.

"We feel very privileged to play the host nation on the opening day of the Olympic tournament," said Hockey Canada President Bob Nicholson on hand in Turkey for the IIHF Congress. "This will be a big game in Canada, especially considering the vast Italian community in our country."

The IIHF along with the IOC and the Turin 2006 organizers have constructed a compressed 12-team men's

schedule, which will see teams play six games in the opening eight days. The teams that end up in the Gold Medal game will play eight games in twelve days. The final is on February 26.

"We have tightened the schedule to accommodate the NHL if it decides to make a break in their schedule just like in 1998 and 2002 and to make the entire player pool available for the greatest sport event there is," said IIHF President René Fasel. "But this schedule works perfectly for all scenarios."



■ Bob Nicholson echoed the sentiments of René Fasel, "Our choice is obviously to have a best-on-best tournament," said Nicholson. "We won the gold medal for the first time in 50 years in Salt Lake City with our best players and we want to repeat this feat with our best players."

Also in the women's tournament, Canada starts against host Italy. Canada beat USA for the gold medal in Salt Lake City 2002. Three teams in the eight-team Olympic women's tournament are still to be decided by qualifying tournaments in November 2004.

■ Both schedules are subject to change. They will be final once approved by all participating nations.

## Suspensions for Lithuania and Serbia-Montenegro

■ The IIHF Disciplinary Committee handed down five suspensions to players involved in the IIHF World Championship Division II, Group B game between Lithuania (LTU) and Serbia & Montenegro (SCG). The game, which was won by Lithuania, 14-3, featured 502 penalty minutes.

After reviewing video and various reports, the following disciplinary measures were decided upon:

**Aleksandar Kasic (SCG).** After further review, it was decided that Mr. Kasic is suspended for the first three games that the senior team from Serbia and Montenegro plays in the next IIHF World Championship.

**Bojan Jankovic (SCG).** After further review, it was decided that Mr. Jankovic is suspended for the first three games that the senior team from Serbia and Montenegro plays in the next IIHF World Championship.

**Mihajlo Raznatovic (SCG).** After further review, it was decided that Mr. Raznatovic is suspended for the first two games that the senior team from Serbia and Mont. plays in the next IIHF World Championship.

**Marko Zidjarevic (SCG).** After further review, it was decided that Mr. Zidjarevic, the head coach of Serbia and Montenegro, will receive a warning as he failed to keep the conduct of his players under control.

**Andrius Kaminskas (LTU).** After further review, it was decided that Mr. Kaminskas is suspended for the first game that the senior team from Lithuania plays in the next IIHF World Championship.

**Arturas Svedavicius (LTU).** After further review, it was decided that Mr. Svedavicius is suspended for the first three games that the senior team from Lithuania plays in the next IIHF World Championship.

**Dimitrij Medvedev (LTU).** After further review, it was decided that Mr. Medvedev, the head coach of Lithuania, will receive a warning as he failed to keep the conduct of his players under control.

■ In addition to the above individual player and coach penalties, both nations' Ice Hockey Associations were fined. Serbia and Montenegro was fined 2,000 CHF, while Lithuania was fined 1,500 CHF

## Leksand and Mora to host 2007 IIHF World U20 Championship

■ The Swedish Ice Hockey Association announced at the IIHF Semi-Annual Congress in Belek, Turkey that the sites of the 2007 IIHF World U20 Championship will be the cities of Leksand and Mora. The tournament will be held December 26, 2006 – January 5, 2007.

Both cities are located in central Sweden, with the distance of 50 km between them. The tradition-rich hockey communities are approximately a 2.5 hour car drive away from the capital, Stockholm.

Sweden, also the organiser of the 2006 IIHF World U18 Championship, announced in Belek that the event will be co-hosted by the cities of Halmstad and Ängelholm in the southern part of the country.

## 2005 European Champions Cup featured extensively on IIHF.com

■ As the inaugural IIHF European Champions Cup (January 13-16 in St. Petersburg, Russia) is approaching, the IIHF.com has launched a new section entirely devoted to Europe's prime club competition. Each of the six participating teams, HC Zlin (CZE), Frankfurt Lions (GER), Kärpät Oulu (FIN), Avangard Omsk (RUS), Dukla Trencin (SVK) and HV 71 Jönköping (SWE) is featured on a separate page with every piece of information you need about the national champions.

Apart from the club basic info, team schedule with league-game scores leading up to the ECC updated after each round, each page carries an updated roster with bios and stats from the last five seasons for each player.

[IIHF.com/hockey/ECC/ECC\\_Startup.htm](http://IIHF.com/hockey/ECC/ECC_Startup.htm)



World Cup photos: DAVE SANDFORD, Courtesy of Hockey Canada

**FAMILIAR POSE:** Team Canada players know by now how to pose for this traditional winner's photo following two consecutive IIHF World Championship titles (2003 and 2004), the Olympic gold medal (2002) and now the World Cup of Hockey 2004. Just like in Salt Lake City, the team was captained by Mario Lemieux (left), who at the age of 39 had an excellent tournament. After the final game victory against Finland, 3-2, Lemieux was presented the World Cup trophy by the Swedish Hall of Famer Borje Salming. An appropriate choice in Toronto, where Salming was a hero 1973 - 1989 and also a defensive standout in the inaugural 1976 Canada Cup.

## Undefeated, undisputed heavy weights of hockey world

■ It's a bit ironic that Canada, which has participated in international ice hockey since 1920 with much success, is experiencing its most dominant period 84 years later. This is especially impressive when you consider that Canadian hockey teams won games 19-0, 21-1 and even 47-0 in the early years. But in those days many of the opposing teams could barely skate, the level of competition was low and the contenders few.

As Canada won its second consecutive IIHF World Championship in Prague last spring, the official website of the championship, IHWG.net, described this as the "Golden Era" of Canadian hockey. The victory at the 2004 World Cup of Hockey now adds to the World Championship double and the Olympic victory in Salt Lake City in 2002.

It's safe to say that the prestige of the Canadian national team has never been as high as it is right now. On top of that, Canada is number one in both the men's and women's IIHF World Ranking. (The World Cup of Hockey does not count for the World Ranking since it is not an official IIHF event.)

■ Never before has a national team been able to claim this triple crown of being the reigning IIHF World Champion, Olympic gold medallist and Canada Cup/World Cup winner.

The Soviet Union enjoyed almost total domination in the early 1980s as they won the 1981 IIHF World Championships and the Canada Cup the same year in superior fashion, but the loss to Team USA in the "Miracle on Ice" game in Lake Placid in 1980 squandered the chances for a, then, unique triple.

The Soviet Union bounced back to win the Olympics in Sarajevo four years later as well as the 1984 IIHF World Championship, but it was Canada this time that deprived the Soviets of the coveted grand slam by "stealing" the 1984 Canada Cup at a time when Viktor Tikhonov's men were virtually unbeatable.

■ The situation today is a far cry from how Canadians felt about their game a mere three years ago. Leading up to the Salt Lake City Olympics, Team Canada had not won Olympic gold for 50 years, it had

lost the 1996 World Cup finals to the U.S. and the last IIHF World Championship win dated back to 1997.

Canada, with its hockey esteem at its very lowest and 0-for-3 in men's top senior competitions, turned to national icon Wayne Gretzky to be the executive director of the men's national team program before the 2002 Olympics.

■ Since then, Canada has won four major titles and lost only one (the 2002 IIHF World Championship in Sweden as they were defeated by eventual gold medallist Slovakia in the quarter-final.)



**FALCONS HONOURED:** Martin Brodeur displays the "Royal Gold" jersey that was worn by Canadian goaltender colleague Walter Byron and his Winnipeg Falcons 84 years ago in the 1920 Olympics in Belgium. Team Canada wore the commemorative jersey in its WCH game vs the U.S. in Montreal.

■ Canada is on the same kind of roll as the Czech Republic was a few years ago, as the Czechs won every close game, every overtime and every penalty shootout to claim the top prize in the 1998 Olympics, the 1999, 2000 and the 2001 IIHF World Championship.

Regardless of whether Canada is struggling or even occasionally outplayed, they enjoy such momentum in international hockey that they always find a way to win. The World Cup semifinal against the Czech Republic in Toronto was a perfect example. Despite leading 2-0 and 3-2, Canada was outshot and outplayed for most of the evening at the Air Canada Centre.

The Czechs were 5-0 in shots on goal in the opening minutes of the overtime but, sure enough, one shot for Canada was all they needed as Vincent Lecavalier scored the overtime winner at 3:45.

■ Which leads us to Canada's amazing record in extra-time situations. In fact, Canada is 10-3 in all international overtime games (79%) and 13-6 in all OT and shootout results (68%), by far the best success rate of any nation. This includes the IIHF World Championship, Olympics and Canada Cup/World Cup. Asked by the *IIHF News Release* to explain this, Wayne Gretzky said on the day after Lecavalier's OT marker:

"I think Canadian players are used from their early years to play in overtime situations," said Gretzky. "From the very beginning Canadian kids are used to perform under this pressure, while European are not brought up with overtime the same way as us. I want to think that we have an advantage there."

Kevin Lowe, the assistant executive director added:

"A Canadian team always plays to win in overtime, while the Europeans play not to lose," said Lowe. "There is definitely a distinction between the two attitudes. In tournaments where you have the penalty shootout, we always want to win before that. Many teams we play against rather wait for the shootout than go for the win."

**SZYMON SZEMBERG**  
Toronto

# New hockey league in Asia could be a key to the future

■ ■ A new multi-national ice hockey league in Asia started its inaugural season. The Asian hockey league, includes teams from Japan, Korea, China and Russia and was brought about thanks in large part to long-time Asian hockey proponent Shoichi Tomita. The IIHF had a chance to sit down with the IIHF Vice President to talk about the the new league and the future of hockey in the region.

**Q: How would you describe the starting phase of the new Asian Hockey League?**

A: The start of the league has been even better than I expected. We had two very exciting games in Tokyo on the opening night as Kokudo defeated Golden Amur 5-4 and the Icebucks beat Halla Winnia, 2-1. We had a full house and the crowds were both very enthusiastic. It was the best start we could possibly hope for.

**Q: Can you tell us about the format of the league?**

A: There are eight teams that will play 42 games each. The teams will play a round-robin schedule, and will play each other six times through the season, three times at home and three on the road. At the end of the regular season, the top four teams will make it to the playoffs. We tried to minimize the travel with the format, but it is very difficult when you have teams so spread out. (see map below)

**Q: What are the major concerns?**

A: As people are aware, we have had historic problems between the countries involved in the league. This joint venture should help improve the mutual understanding between the nations. Everyone must understand that we are not here to fight each other but to improve so we can be better on the international stage.



**FREQUENT FLIERS:** The Asian hockey league operates with eight teams from all over the region. Travel will be one of the biggest costs of the league as there are few easy road trips for the participating teams. The four teams from Japan (Nikko Ice Bucks, Nippon Paper Cranes, Oji Paper and Japanese champion Kokudo Tokyo), will have the easiest travel schedule, especially neighbours Nikko and Kokudo, but the two teams from China (Harbin and Qiqihar) and the team Korea (Halla Winnia) will find themselves flying the friendly skies often. But the champion of travel will be Amur, the Russian team from Khabarovsk, which will play in both the Asian League and as part of the Russian League.



IIHF Vice President Shoichi Tomita

**Q: So that is the ultimate goal of the Asia League?**

A: Yes. The only way for players to improve is to play in more competitive games. We think this league will give Asian players that opportunity. Then ideally, the players will bring the skills that they've acquired

from the league games to the IIHF World Championship making the Asian teams better on the international scene.

**Q: How important is the league for the development of ice hockey in Asia?**

A: Very important. Because of the economic situation in Asia, teams folded in Japan, Korea and China. So the success of this league is crucial for the improvement and development of hockey in the region. If things work out for us, it will bring youngsters, fans and investors back to hockey.

**Q: What does the league need in order to improve?**

A: The league and the teams need to move into modern arenas in major Asian cities. We are hoping to build a new arena in Tokyo and there are plans to expand to Beijing and Shanghai in China.

**Q: Where is the greatest potential for expansion?**

A: Obviously in China. It's a huge country with a massive population but only 400 registered players. Right now we are very happy to have Qiqihar and Harbin from China in the league, but we are definitely hoping for more. Teams in Beijing and Shanghai are our primary goals. I hope that this league can eventually expand to twelve teams so we can play in two groups with six teams in each.

**Q: How involved are you personally in the project?**

A: I try to stay in the background as much as possible and let other people have the initiative. But as an IIHF vice president I must of course assume a leading role in the development aspect and contacts between the national associations.

**Q: What is the ultimate sign of success for the Asian Hockey League?**

A: To make our product attractive so we can catch the attention of a potential sponsor. With a serious investor, we will be able to establish a headquarters and improve the administration. We would like the league to become so strong so it could support the teams financially. Right now they pay for all the expenses themselves.

For scores and stats from the Asian hockey league, please visit the official website at [website: www.alhockey.com](http://www.alhockey.com)

## OBITUARIES

■ ■ **CZECH REPUBLIC:** Ivan Hlinka, one of the greatest players in the history of Czechoslovak and Czech ice hockey, died in a car accident near the Czech city of Karlovy Vary August 16.



Ivan Hlinka

Hlinka was recently re-appointed as coach for the Czech national team, which was about to start its preparations for the 2004 World Cup of Hockey. In a ceremony during the 2004 IIHF World Championship in Prague, Hlinka was named the best Czech player of all time. A few weeks later, he replaced Slavimir Lener as the national team coach.

"Ivan's death is a terrible blow to Czech and International ice hockey and obviously to his family", said IIHF President René Fasel. Not many world class players become world class coaches, but Hlinka was one of the few who made the transition."

"He led Czechoslovakia to world championship gold medals as a player and to the Olympic title as a coach. Ivan was also one of only two Europeans to coach in the NHL. He was globally acclaimed. His tragic death is very, very disheartening."

■ ■ **RUSSIA:** Moscow Spartak forward and Detroit Red Wings prospect Anatoly Ustyugov passed away on Sept. 27 as a result of injuries sustained during a mugging. He was 27.

Anatoly, joined Torpedo Yaroslavl in 1994 and played there until 1997. In 1997-98 he played for Torpedo Nizhny Novgorod and in 1998 he moved to Khabarovsk and played for Amur until 2003. During the 2004 season he was in Lada uniform and joined Spartak this year where he played eight games.

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

■ ■ **SWEDEN:** The Swedish Ice Hockey Association released national team head coach Hardy Nilsson from his duties on Sept. 23. Nilsson had two years remaining on his contract with the association. The General Manager of the Swedish national team program, Cleas-Göran Wallin, will serve as an interim replacement along with other coaches to be named later. Nilsson had served as national team coach since the 2000 IIHF World Championship in Russia.

■ ■ **CZECH REPUBLIC:** National team coach, Vladimir Ruzicka will remain at the helm the Czech squad for the 2005 IIHF World Championship next spring in Austria. Czech hockey officials officially rubber-stamped his extension Sept. 23 after Ruzicka led the Czechs to a semifinal showing at the recent World Cup of Hockey.

■ ■ **IIHF:** The IIHF recently published its address directory. Below are a few changes and additions to include in the book:

### Changes:

- Franz Reindl email (GER): [franz.reindl@deb-online.de](mailto:franz.reindl@deb-online.de)
- Michael Pfuhl email (GER): [michael.pfuhl@deb-online.de](mailto:michael.pfuhl@deb-online.de)
- Croatian Association email: [hshl@zg.tinet.hr](mailto:hshl@zg.tinet.hr)
- Chinese Taipei Phone: +886-2-8771-1451 and 1503 e-mail: [tpe@hockey-hotline.com](mailto:tpe@hockey-hotline.com) Internet: [www.hockey-hotline.com](http://www.hockey-hotline.com) Inline email: [richkhlee@hotmail.com](mailto:richkhlee@hotmail.com)
- Liechtensteiner Association postal address: Almeindstr. 11

### Additions:

- Internet Address of UAE Association: [www.uaehf.com](http://www.uaehf.com)
- Torino 2006 Organizer: New phone for Jukka-Pekka Vuorinen: +39 - 011 - 11 24 144

## NHL LOCKOUT

# Go East, Young Man

## Few teams resist temptation of signing lockout players

■ If you're a hockey fan, it's been tough to miss the news of National Hockey League's player lockout. Despite being a lockout of only one league that operates in just two nations, the NHL lockout is having global implications on the sport in many ways.

■ The influx of NHL players returning to their native countries or traveling to foreign nations to play the 2004-2005 season has had an enormous impact on virtually every European league.

As of mid-October, there were over 200 NHL players that had signed with European teams, which is roughly one-third of the league's players. Of course the arrival of NHL stars has a trickle down effect as last season's imports are displaced to other leagues, levels and nations.

European team owners and general managers must also play a game of chance as no one knows just how long the big name imports will be locked out by their NHL teams. If the lockout were to end tomorrow it would leave teams that gambled on NHL talent with large voids in their rosters and no imports.

The players must also weight the pros and cons of relocating to a foreign country, many with families either back home or with them in Europe.

■ Teams in the various European leagues are taking different approaches to this extraordinary situation. Clubs like Lada Togliatti (RUS), Dynamo Moscow (RUS) and MoDo (SWE) are stocking their rosters with virtually every lockout-player that comes their way. These three clubs lead the pack with six NHL-players each.

Other clubs are trying to go against the flow. Russian champions Avangard Omsk and Swedish champions HV 71 Jönköping stated early that they don't want to tinker with team chemistry want to avoid a situation where several impact players would have to leave midway through the season if the labour situation between the NHL and the player's union gets resolved.

As of mid-October, these two teams had not signed any players from the lockout-pool. Swedish giants Färjestad, Karlstad had initially the same policy as HV71 and Avangard, but eventually, they couldn't resist the temptation as rivals Modo, Frölunda, Djurgården and Timrå were loading up with NHLers. At the end of September, Färjestad suddenly made a drastic turn and signed defensive stalwarts Zdeno Chara from Ottawa and Sheldon Souray from Montreal.

## Across the Pond: NHL Players currently in Europe

<b>Austria (2 players)</b>			<b>Finland (14 players)</b>			<b>Germany (9 players)</b>			<b>Slovakia (13 players)</b>			<b>Sweden (41 players)</b>		
Klagenfurt	Mike Siklenka (CAN)	NYR	Espoo Blues	Ryan Malone (USA)	PIT	Mannheim	Jochen Hecht (GER)	BUF	Bratislava	Lubomir Visnovsky (SVK)	LA	Davos	Rick Nash (CAN)	COL
Villach	Jason Krog (CAN)	ANA	HIFK	Jarkko Ruutu (FIN)	VAN	Mannheim	Sven Butenschön (GER)	NYI	Kosice	Jiri Bicek (SVK)	NJR	GCK (NLB)	Andy Sutton (CAN)	ATL
<b>Belarus (1 player)</b>			HIFK	Marek Zidlicky (CZE)	NSH	Mannheim	Cristobal Huet (FRA)	MTL	Kosice	Martin Strbak (SVK)	PIT	Langenthal	Eric Boguniecki (USA)	STL
Dynamo Minsk	Konstantin Koltsov (BLR)	PIT	HIFK	Lasse Pirjeta (FIN)	PIT	Frankfurt	Stephane Robidas (CAN)	CHI	Kosice	Ladislav Nagy (SVK)	PHO	Lugano	David Aebischer (SUI)	COL
<b>Czech Republic (52 players)</b>			HPK	Jani Rita (FIN)	EDM	Ingolstadt	Marco Sturm (GER)	SJ	Liptovsky	Martin Cibak (SVK)	TB	Lugano	Alex Tanguay (CAN)	COL
C. Budejovice	Radek Martinek (CZE)	NYI	HPK	Riku Hahl (FIN)	COL	Ingolstadt	Andy McDonald (CAN)	ANA	Skalica	Josef Balej (SVK)	NYR	Morges (NLB)	Martin Gelinas (CAN)	CAL
C. Budejovice	Vaclav Prospal (CZE)	TB	Jyväskylä	Duvie Westcott (CAN)	COL	Iserlohn	Mike York (USA)	EDM	Skalica	Zigmund Palffy (CZE)	LA	SC Bern	Danny Briere (CAN)	BUF
C. Budejovice	Radek Dvorak (CZE)	EDM	Kärpät Oulu	Michael Nylander (SWE)	NYR	Hamburg	Jim Dowd (CAN)	MIN	Skalica	Marian Gaborik (SVK)	MIN	SC Bern	Chris Clark (USA)	CAL
Kladno	Jan Hrdina (CZE)	NJ	Kärpät Oulu	Janne Niinimaa (FIN)	NYI	Kassel	Nick Schultz (CAN)	MIN	Sibir Novo.	Alexander Karpovtsev (RUS)	FLA	SC Langnau	Martin Gerber (SUI)	CAR
Kladno	Ivan Huml (CZE)	BOS	Lukko	Esa Pirnes (FIN)	LA	<b>Great Britain (1 player)</b>			Sibir Novo.	Alexei Semenov (RUS)	EDM	SC Langnau	Tim Connelly (USA)	BUF
Kladno	Frantisek Kaberle (CZE)	CAR	Lukko	Tomi Pettinen (FIN)	LA	Cardiff	Rob Davidson (CAN)	SJ	SKA	Alexei Khavanov (RUS)	STL	Thurgau	Marc Savard (CAN)	ATL
Kladno	Tomas Kaberle (CZE)	TOR	Lukko	Pasi Nurminen (FIN)	ATL	<b>Italy (5 players)</b>			SKA	Garth Snow (USA)	PIT	Zug	Niko Kapanen (FIN)	DAL
Kladno	Jaromir Jagr (CZE)	NYR	Mulhouse	Ville Nieminen (FIN)	CAL	Asiago	Rico Fata (CAN)	PIT	Lokomotiv	Igor Korolev (RUS)	CHI	<b>Switzerland (16 players)</b>		
Liberec	Jiri Fischer (CZE)	DET	Mulhouse	Steven Reinprecht (CAN)	CAL	Bolzano	Jamie Lundmark (CAN)	NYR	Lokomotiv	Denis Shvidki (RUS)	FLA	Ajoie (NLB)	Jeff Halpern (USA)	WSH
Liberec	Ales Kotalik (CZE)	BUF	<b>France (3 players)</b>			Cortina	Matt Cullen (CAN)	CAR	Lokomotiv	Petr Schastlivy (RUS)	ANA	Ambrì-Piotta	Kim Johnsson (SWE)	PHI
Liberec	Radim Vrbata (CZE)	CAR	Epinal	Steve Gainey (CAN)	PHI	Milano	Craig Adams (CAN)	CAR	Magnitogorsk	Sergei Gonchar (RUS)	BOS	Davos	Niklas Hagman (FIN)	FLA
Liberec	Vaclav Nedorost (CZE)	FLA	Mulhouse	Steven Reinprecht (CAN)	CAL	Milano	Niklas Sundström (SWE)	MTL	Magnitogorsk	Petee Sykora (RUS)	CZE	Davos	Joe Thornton (CAN)	BOS
Litvinov	Tomas Kurka (CZE)	CAR	<b>Germany (9 players)</b>			<b>Latvia (3 players)</b>			Magnitogorsk	Dmitri Kalinin (RUS)	BUF			
Litvinov	Martin Rucinsky (CZE)	VAN	Mannheim	Jochen Hecht (GER)	BUF	Riga 2000	Karlis Skrastins (LAT)	COL	Magnitogorsk	Kiril Safronov (RUS)	NSH			
Litvinov	Martin Skoula (CZE)	ANA	Mannheim	Sven Butenschön (GER)	NYI	Riga 2000	Darby Hendrickson (USA)	COL	Magnitogorsk	Andrei Nazarov (RUS)	PHO			
Litvinov	Jiri Slegr (CZE)	BOS	Frankfurt	Stephane Robidas (CAN)	CHI	Riga 2000	Sergei Zholtok (LAT)	NSH	Magnitogorsk	Oleg Kvasha (RUS)	NYI			
Olomouc	Jaroslav Svoboda (CZE)	DAL	Ingolstadt	Marco Sturm (GER)	SJ	<b>Norway (1 player)</b>			Magnitogorsk	Alexander Korolyuk (RUS)	SJ			
Pardubice	Jan Bulis (CZE)	MTL	Ingolstadt	Andy McDonald (CAN)	ANA	Vålerenga	Anders Myrvold (NOR)	DET	Magnitogorsk	Dmitri Kalinin (RUS)	BUF			
Pardubice	Milan Hejduk (CZE)	COL	Iserlohn	Mike York (USA)	EDM	<b>Poland (1 player)</b>			Magnitogorsk	Andrei Zuzynin (RUS)	MIN			
Pardubice	Ales Hemsley (CZE)	EDM	Hamburg	Jim Dowd (CAN)	MIN	Nowy Targ	Krzysztof Oliwa (POL)	CAL	Magnitogorsk	Oleg Kvasha (RUS)	NYI			
Plzen	Martin Straka (CZE)	LOS	Kassel	Nick Schultz (CAN)	MIN	<b>Russia (38 players)</b>			Magnitogorsk	Vityaz	Alexander Korolyuk (RUS)			
Plzen	Jaroslav Spacek (CZE)	COL	<b>Great Britain (1 player)</b>			AK Bars	Fred Brathwaite (CAN)	COL	Magnitogorsk	Kiril Safronov (RUS)	NSH			
Plzen	Milan Kraft (CZE)	PIT	Cardiff	Rob Davidson (CAN)	SJ	AK Bars	Denis Arhipov (RUS)	NSH	Magnitogorsk	Marian Hossa (SVK)	OTT			
Plzen	Martin Cibak (SVK)	TB	<b>Italy (5 players)</b>			AK Bars	Ilya Kovalchuk (RUS)	ATL	Magnitogorsk	Ronald Petrovicky (SVK)	ATL			
Slavia Prague	Josef Stumpel (SVK)	LA	Asiago	Rico Fata (CAN)	PIT	AK Bars	Alexei Morozov (RUS)	PIT	Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Slavia Prague	Josef Vasicek (CZE)	CAR	Bolzano	Jamie Lundmark (CAN)	NYR	AK Bars	Sergei Varlamov (UKR)	STL	Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Slavia Prague	Tomas Kloucek (CZE)	ATL	Cortina	Matt Cullen (CAN)	CAR	CSKA	Alexander Frolov (RUS)	LA	Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Sparta Prague	Jan Hlavac (CZE)	NYR	Milano	Niklas Sundström (SWE)	MTL				Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Sparta Prague	Karel Pilar (CZE)	TOR	<b>Latvia (3 players)</b>						Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Sparta Prague	David Vyborny (CZE)	COL	Riga 2000	Karlis Skrastins (LAT)	COL				Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Sparta Prague	Josef Melichar (CZE)	PIT	Riga 2000	Darby Hendrickson (USA)	COL				Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Sparta Prague	Petr Nedved (CZE)	PHO	Riga 2000	Sergei Zholtok (LAT)	NSH				Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Trinec	Michael Rozsival (CZE)	PIT	<b>Norway (1 player)</b>						Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Trinec	Pavel Brendl (CZE)	CAR	Vålerenga	Anders Myrvold (NOR)	DET				Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Trinec	Radek Bonk (CZE)	MTL	<b>Poland (1 player)</b>						Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Trinec	Branislav Mezei (SVK)	FLA	Nowy Targ	Krzysztof Oliwa (POL)	CAL				Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Vitkovice	Martin Prusek (CZE)	OTT	<b>Russia (38 players)</b>						Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Vitkovice	Marek Malik (CZE)	VAN	AK Bars	Fred Brathwaite (CAN)	COL				Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Vitkovice	Pavel Kubina (CZE)	TB	AK Bars	Denis Arhipov (RUS)	NSH				Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Vitkovice	Vaclav Varada (CZE)	OTT	AK Bars	Ilya Kovalchuk (RUS)	ATL				Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Vsetin	Rostislav Klesla (CZE)	COL	AK Bars	Alexei Morozov (RUS)	PIT				Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Vsetin	Roman Cechmanek (CZE)	LA	AK Bars	Sergei Varlamov (UKR)	STL				Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Vsetin	Branko Radivojevic (SVK)	PHI	CSKA	Alexander Frolov (RUS)	LA				Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Vestin	Radovan Somik (SVK)	PHI							Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Zlin	Martin Erat (CZE)	NSH							Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Zlin	Roman Hamrlik (CZE)	NYI							Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Zlin	Petr Cajanek (CZE)	STL							Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Znojmosti	Patrik Elias (CZE)	NJ							Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Znojmosti	Martin Havlat (CZE)	OTT							Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			
Znojmosti	Karel Rachunek (CZE)	NYR							Magnitogorsk	Richard Zednik (SVK)	MTL			

*italics indicates players that have left team.*

# Referees are earning their stripes

By Jenny Wiedeke

■ ■ Coming soon to an ice rink near you... a referee from a far away land. The IIHF Referee Exchange Program is underway and the initial reviews are positive as seven nations learn the ups and downs of following one rule book.

In October 2003, Peter Forsberg, Zdeno Chara and the Sedin twins were just starting the season with their NHL teams, while referee Sergei Karabanov was busy calling Russian League games.

■ ■ None of them could have known that one year later they would all meet on Swedish ice when Modo and Farjestad met in a Swedish Elite League game.

They were all in Farjestad thanks to the IIHF Referee Exchange Program - a new initiative that is taking referees from the top seven European hockey nations and sending them packing all across the continent to officiate games in the various leagues.

Never before had the different nation's leagues opened their doors to foreign referees on such a large scale, and never before had the referees had the opportunity not only to check out the differing nation's styles, but also be evaluated by Referee Supervisor from that country.

"Having the referee supervisor was bonus," Karabanov said. "Before the Modo-Farjestad game, Peter Andersson (Swedish Referee Supervisor) told me about some specific things that I needed to be aware of in the Swedish League. After the game he was able to come in and give me immediate feedback about my performance."

■ ■ Despite the fact that there is only one rulebook that governs international hockey, the way it is interpreted in various countries differs. One of the goals of the exchange program is for the officials to call the game strictly according to the book. Something, which has been bit of a shock to players.

For example in the Modo - Farjestad game, the players were whistled for 12 minutes of penalties in the first period. But once they realized that the game was being called truly 'by the book' the players adapted and played flowing game for the remaining 40 minutes.

The program is admittedly in its infancy and the aim is that as time goes on neither the players nor referees will be forced to do any adapting as officiating becomes more universal. But some things will always vary from nation to nation as Karabanov learned.

■ ■ "In Sweden the hockey games have the atmosphere of a holiday," Karabanov said. "Games are also quicker and the situations on the ice change faster than in Russian league and they are less rough than in Russian League."

Karabanov is also one of the many referees who will not only be officiating in a different country this season, but



**A TWO-MINUTE DEBATE:** Russian referee Sergei Karabanov has a quick word with Modo's Peter Forsberg, during a game in Sweden.

who will also get to see several of the NHL locked-out players in action. In the Modo-Farjestad game alone, Karabanov had nine NHL players on the ice.

"It was a blessing that the program got started this year," said IIHF Manager of Officiating, Konstantin Kommissarov. "We tried for a long time to get the program started and now in its first year our referees are seeing some of the most talented players in the world around the European Leagues, which will only improve their skills even more."

■ ■ In the first part of the season, Swiss referee Danny Kurmann, had covered the most international games.

In the first two months of the referee exchange program, he called six games in three nations (Sweden, Finland and the Czech Republic).

One of the biggest advantages Kurmann saw to the program was the variety of players and teams he had the chance to officiate in his first three trips.

## Rave Reviews from Sweden

The Swedes had high praise for Russian Sergei Karabanov's officiating after a 3-3 tie between Modo and Farjestad:

### Swedish newspaper Aftonbladets headline :

"A Russian referee revolution - this is how hockey should be played in Sweden"

### MoDo coach Kent Forsberg after the 3-3 tie

"Hockey is better off if its called like this."

### Jorgen Jonsson, captain of Farjestad:

"Karabanov showed very clearly early in the game what level of officiating he wanted."

# Referees in new European nations



Photo: Christer Höglund

Sweden. One year ago it seemed unlikely that the former NHL star and the Russian would meet on Swedish ice.

Switzerland is a smaller country," said Kurmann. "You see a lot of the same players and teams year in and year out. This program has opened a whole new door and introduced a lot of us to a different style of game."

The IIHF Referee Exchange Program officials work with local linesmen, making for a mixed officiating crew. Each referee will travel to all of the nations that are participating and in most cases will work two games over a weekend. Some of the games will be local 'derby' games, while others will feature the top league teams fighting for a playoff spot.

By the end of the first season of the program, virtually every European Club team will have had at least one game called by an official participating in the exchange program. Some key games that referees will cover in the first part of the season includes rivals Dusseldorf vs. Cologne

in Germany's DEL and Swiss NLA leaders ZSC Lions vs. Lugano. As the season moves on, more top notch games await the enlisted officials.

"The leagues really got on board with the program," Komisarov said. "Not only did they willingly assign games to the foreign referees, but they gave them some of the more challenging match-ups that will improve their skills."

By the end of the season, the 14 officials from the seven participating nations will have called a total of 140 games. Each referee will have a chance to travel to five nations and oversee ten games each.

■ ■ ■ So while referees can look forward to a 'holiday atmosphere' at the Swedish League games, they know that their job is far from a day at the beach.

## Tour de Europe: Referee Exchange Schedule

Below is a list of the games that will be a part of the IIHF Referee Exchange Program from now until the holiday break. By the end of the season, the 14 officials involved will have whistled 140 total games.

### OCTOBER

DATE	HOME TEAM	AWAY	REFEREE	NATL.
20	Dynamo M (RUS)	Lokomotiv	Reiber	SUI
21	Brynäs (SWE)	Farjestad	Minar	CZE
22	Ingolstadt (GER)	DEG Metro	Henriksson	FIN
22	Skalica (SVK)	Liptovsky M.	Karabanov	RUS
23	Mora (SWE)	Sodertalje	Minar	CZE
24	Nürnberg (GER)	Frankfurt	Henriksson	FIN
24	Dubnica (SVK)	Poprad	Karabanov	RUS
26	Karpat Oulu (FIN)	Assat	Schuetz	GER
27	Espoo (FIN)	JYP	Schuetz	GER
29	ZSC Lions (SUI)	Lugano	Favorin	FIN
29	Zlín (CZE)	Vsetín	Andersson	SWE
29	Kosice (SVK)	Zilina	Turcan	CZE
29	Hannover (GER)	Ingolstadt	Jonak	SVK
30	SCL Tigers (SUI)	Zug	Favorin	FIN
31	Trinec (CZE)	Slavia Praha	Andersson	SWE
31	Nitra (SVK)	Trencin	Turcan	CZE
31	Kassel (GER)	Mannheim	Jonak	SVK

### NOVEMBER

4	Modo (SWE)	Lulea	Bulanov	RUS
4	Ilves (FIN)	SaiPa	Karabanov	RUS
5	Davos (SUI)	Fribourg	Jonak	SVK
5	Trencin (SVK)	Kosice	Ronnmark	SWE
6	Timrå (SWE)	HV71	Bulanov	RUS
6	Tappara (FIN)	Lukko	Karabanov	RUS
6	Ambri Piotta (SUI)	Kloten	Jonak	SVK
7	Zilina (SVK)	Bratislava	Ronnmark	SWE
18	Köln (GER)	DEG Metro	Reiber	SUI
19	Krefeld (GER)	Iserlohn	Reiber	SUI
19	Kosice (SVK)	Zvolen	Schuetz	GER
20	SC Bern (SUI)	ZSC Lions	Andersson	SWE
21	Sparta Praha (CZE)	Karlový Vary	Schurr	GER
21	Bratislava (SVK)	Trencin	Schuetz	GER
21	Kloten (SUI)	Lausanne	Andersson	SWE
22	Linköping (SWE)	Lulea	Lauff	SVK
23	HV71 (SWE)	Mora	Lauff	SVK
23	Slavia Praha (CZE)	Zlín	Schurr	GER
25	Pelicans (FIN)	Karpat	Turcan	CZE
26	Zug (SUI)	Ambri Piotta	Minar	CZE
27	Blues (FIN)	Assat	Turcan	CZE
27	Lugano (SUI)	Rapperswill	Minar	CZE
29	Frölunda	Mora	Henriksson	FIN
30	Malmö (SWE)	Timrå	Henriksson	FIN

### DECEMBER

2	Magnitogorsk (RUS)	Novokuznetsk	Ronnmark	SWE
3	Kladno (CZE)	Jihlava	Favorin	FIN
3	Rapperswill (SUI)	SCL Tigers	Lauff	SVK
3	Nitra (SVK)	Bratislava	Kurmann	SUI
4	St. Petersburg (RUS)	CSKA Moscow	Ronnmark	SWE
4	Kloten (SUI)	Lugano	Lauff	SVK
4	Frankfurt (GER)	Nürnberg	Minar	CZE
5	Plzeň (CZE)	Vitkovice	Favorin	FIN
5	Skalica (SVK)	Kosice	Kurmann	SUI
5	Mannheim (GER)	Köln	Minar	CZE
10	Lausanne (SUI)	Rapperswill	Schuetz	GER
11	Fribourg (SUI)	ZSC Lions	Schuetz	GER

Schedule subject to change

# Gold Up for Grabs:

## *2005 Championship season could hold many surprises*

■ ■ After a successful 2004 season, the IIHF looks ahead with great anticipation to the 2005 World Championship events. This year, the IIHF will hold championships in four major categories: Men, Women, U20 and U18. Below is a preview of what fans can expect at the top division tournaments.

### IIHF World Championship: Vienna & Innsbruck, Austria

**Background:** In 2003, it took overtime for Canada to take the gold medal against Sweden. In 2004, the Canadians needed no extra time to grab their golden prize. Could Canada have the beginning of a dynasty? It's too soon to tell. While Canada was golden the last two years, both years entering the championship they weren't considered the favourites. But despite not having any buzz at the start of the championship, Canada earned the respect by the end.

**The Contenders:** In hockey, there was the Big Six: Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, Russia, Sweden and the United States. Now Slovakia can be added to make it an exclusive club of seven teams that will all compete for a medal at this year's World Championship in Austria. If any other team ends up on medal podium, it will be both a huge achievement for that nation and an enormous hockey upset. Of the seven teams, Canada, Sweden and Finland all look strong, while no one knows quite what to expect from the United States and Russia.

**The Rest of the Pack:** Teams like Denmark, Latvia, Belarus Switzerland and Germany, who have experienced mild success at the World Championship in the past, now need to step it up to give their nations the kick they so desperately need. With the advent of the IIHF World Ranking, some interesting rivalries could deepen between the likes of Switzerland and Germany, and Latvia and Belarus. But ultimately, all of these nations are still a notch below the world's elite teams and need a big performance to get the breakthrough they all desire.

**Bottom Line:** The medals are up for grabs between seven nations - the real drama will lie with who goes home with what color among those countries.

### World Women Championship: Linköping, Sweden

**Background:** While Canada and the United States are considered equals on the women's hockey stage, its fair to say that Canada is the dominant of the duo, taking home every gold medal possible with the exception of the 1998 Olympic Gold. Last year, the U.S. took a bite out of Canada's armour, ending the nation's impressive nine-year unbeaten streak. But Canada still won when it mattered most, during the gold medal game.

**The Contenders:** The question of the championships in the past has been who will win, USA or Canada? This

year, that question will still be on the tip of everyone's tongue as the two-team championship is still a reality. The good news is the race for the bronze medal has been heating up in recent years as Sweden, Finland, Russia and China continue to improve. The bad news is that those four nations are still behind the top two.

**The Rest of the Pack:** At this year's championship in Sweden, the format will be restored to normal as two groups of four will participate, which is good for the teams that are not in the medal race as one fewer team will be relegated this season. This year's championship will also be a big step for the emerging nations to set the tone before the 2006 Olympic Games.

**Bottom Line:** Look for the 2005 Championship to have two big battles: a fight for gold between the U.S. and Canada and a duel for bronze between Sweden and Finland.

### IIHF World U20 Championship: Grand Forks, USA

**Background:** The IIHF World U20 Championship will return to the U.S. for the first time since 1996 when Boston hosted. What a difference eight years has made for the Americans. The U.S. has gone from a middle of the pack team with empty arenas to defending champions in two venues that are sure to sell tickets.

**The Contenders:** But don't look for the American's repeat efforts to go smoothly. Standing in their way will be three-time bridesmaids, Canada, who will have a semi home-ice advantage in bordering North Dakota, had a young team at last year's championship and returns many veterans with a sour silver memory. Also in the hunt will be Russia, an underachiever last year. The Czech Republic should also be a contender, backed by young goalie Marek Schwarz. Perennial bronze medalists, Finland, may also upgrade their finish this year.

**The Rest of the Pack:** The other end of the spectrum will also be interesting to follow in Grand Forks as two of the 10 solid teams will be relegated. Germany just made

its way back up to top division and will be a formidable foe for teams that have been on the brink of relegation for the past few years. Both Sweden and Switzerland will have to turn things up a notch if they hope to be among the world's top 10 at next year's U20s.

**Bottom Line:** The medal colours may change from last year, but look for the U.S., Canada and Finland to grab the hardware. The potential spoiler will be Russia.

### IIHF World U18 Championship: Pilsen, Czech Republic

**Background:** Russia showed the junior hockey world at last year's U18 IIHF World Championship that it doesn't need a big-name player to win a gold medal. It was the first year in recent memory that the Russian roster didn't feature an Ovechkin or Kovalev, yet the Russians pulled through with a team effort and took home the gold.

**The Contenders:** This year, the Russians will again be contenders, but they will be challenged by at least three other nations: Canada, Czech Republic and the United States. If any of these three nations is deserving of the gold medal, it's the Czech Republic, which has come close at the U18 championship but only gotten as high as a bronze finish. The Czechs will also have home ice. The Americans and Canadians have both invested heavily in their junior programs and for both nations, the investment has paid off as their teams are, and should remain, competitive at the junior level.

**The Rest of the Pack:** Scandinavian nations, Finland and Sweden, both struggled last year. For Finland, the struggle should end this year, but Sweden could continue to have problems as there are no prospects to jump start their suffering junior program. Switzerland also needs to convince critics that it belongs among the top 10 at this level after coming up from relegation last year.

**Bottom Line:** At this year's U18's, it will come down to five nations, Russia, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland and the United States, battling for three medals.



**TIME FOR A CHANGE?** Finland has won seven bronze medals in the eight IIHF World Women Championships since 1990. Will they be able to break Canada's and the USA's domination at the 2005 women's championship in Sweden?



## UPDATED IIHF CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP		
2005	AUSTRIA, Vienna & Innsbruck	30.04 - 15.05.05
2006	LATVIA, Riga	May 2006
2007	RUSSIA, Moscow & St Petersburg	TBA
2008	CANADA, Halifax & Quebec City	TBA
2009	SWITZERLAND, Zurich & Bern	TBA
2010	APPLICANTS: BLR, GER, SWE, SVK	

IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group A		
2005	HUNGARY, Debrecen	17-23.04.05

IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group B		
2005	NETHERLANDS, Eindhoven	17-23.04.05

IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group A		
2005	CROATIA, Zagreb	10-16.04.05

IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group B		
2005	SERBIA & MONTENEGRO, Belgrade	04-10.04.05

IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III		
2005	MEXICO, Mexico City	07-12.03.05

IIHF WORLD WOMEN CHAMPIONSHIP		
2005	SWEDEN, Linköping & Norrköping	02-09.04.05

IIHF WORLD WOMEN CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I		
2005	SWITZERLAND, Romanshorn	27.03-02.04.05

IIHF WORLD WOMEN CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II		
2005	ITALY, Asiago	14-20.03.05

IIHF WORLD WOMEN CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III		
2005	SOUTH AFRICA, Cape Town	03-09.03.05

IIHF WORLD WOMEN CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION IV		
2005	NEW ZEALAND, Dunedin	01-04.04.05

IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP		
2005	USA, Grand Forks & Thief River Falls	25.12.04-04.01.05
2006	CANADA, Vancouver, Kelowna & Kamloops	26.12.05-05.01.06
2007	SWEDEN, Mora & Leksand	26.12.06-05.01.07
2008	APPLICANTS: BLR	

IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group A		
2005	GREAT BRITAIN, Sheffield	13-19.12.04

IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group B		
2005	ESTONIA, Narva	13-19.12.04

IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group A		
2005	ROMANIA, Bucharest	03-09.01.05

IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group B		
2005	SPAIN, Puigcerda	13-19.12.04

IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III		
2005	MEXICO, Mexico City	10-16.01.05

IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP		
2005	CZECH REPUBLIC, Ceske Budejovice & Plzen	14-24.04.05
2006	SWEDEN, Halmstad & Angelholm	12-22.04.06

IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group A		
2005	SLOVENIA, Maribor	03-09.04.05

IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group B		
2005	POLAND, Sosnowiec	02-08.04.05

IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group A		
2005	ESTONIA, Kohtla-Järve	14-20.03.05

IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group B		
2005	ROMANIA, Bucharest	21-27.03.05

IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III		
2005	BULGARIA, Sofia	07-13.03.05

IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III QUALIFICATION		
2005	TURKEY, Ankara	18-20.02.05

## OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION PROGRAM

MEN'S FINAL OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION TOURNAMENT - GROUP A		
2005	SWITZERLAND, Kloten	10-13.02.05

MEN'S FINAL OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION TOURNAMENT - GROUP B		
2005	LATVIA, Riga	10-13.02.05

MEN'S FINAL OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION TOURNAMENT - GROUP C		
2005	AUSTRIA, Klagenfurt	10-13.02.05

MEN'S OLYMPIC PRE-QUALIFICATION TOURNAMENT - GROUP D		
2005	FRANCE, Briançon	11-14.11.04

MEN'S OLYMPIC PRE-QUALIFICATION TOURNAMENT - GROUP E		
2005	POLAND, Nowy Targ	11-14.11.04

MEN'S OLYMPIC PRE-QUALIFICATION TOURNAMENT - GROUP F		
2005	NORWAY, Stavanger	11-14.11.04

WOMEN'S FINAL OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION TOURNAMENT - GROUP A		
2005	RUSSIA, Podolsk	11-14.11.04

WOMEN'S FINAL OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION TOURNAMENT - GROUP B		
2005	GERMANY, Bad Tölz	11-14.11.04

WOMEN'S FINAL OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION TOURNAMENT - GROUP C		
2005	CHINA, Beijing	11-14.11.04

## OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES

2006	ITALY, Turin	10-26.02.06
2010	CANADA, Vancouver	February 2010

## IIHF IN-LINE CHAMPIONSHIPS

IIHF IN-LINE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP		
2005	TBA	TBA

## IIHF CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS

2005 IIHF CONTINENTAL CUP		
	First Round (ROM & CRO):	24-26.09.04
	Second Round (LAT, FRA & POL):	15-17.10.04
	Third Round (NOR):	19-21.11.04
	Final (HUN):	07-09.01.05

2005 IIHF EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS CUP		
2005	RUSSIA, St Petersburg	13-16.01.05

2005 IIHF EUROPEAN WOMEN CHAMPIONS CUP		
	Preliminary Round (LAT & ITA)	14-17.10.04
	Final (SWE)	16-19.12.04

## NATIONAL TEAM BREAKS

2004/2005 Season		
	1st International Break	- Aug. 30 - Sept. 5, 2004
	2nd International Break	- Nov. 8 - 14, 2004
	3rd International Break	- Dec. 13 - 19, 2004
	4th International Break	- Feb. 7 - 13, 2005

2005/2006 Season		
	1st International Break	- Aug. 29 - Sept. 4, 2005
	2nd International Break	- Nov. 7 - 13, 2005
	3rd International Break	- Dec. 12 - 18, 2005
	4th International Break	- Feb. 6 - 12, 2006

## OTHER INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

IIHF WORLD OLDTIMERS FESTIVAL		
2005	SLOVENIA, Bled & Jesenice	02-08-04-05

WINTER UNIVERSIADE		
2005	AUSTRIA, Innsbruck & Seefeld	12-22.01.05

EUROPEAN YOUTH OLYMPIC WINTER FESTIVAL		
2005	SWITZERLAND, Monthey & Champéry	22-29.01.05

## CONGRESSES

IIHF SEMI-ANNUAL CONGRESS		
2004	PORTUGAL, TBA	TBA

IIHF ANNUAL CONGRESS		
2005	AUSTRIA, Vienna	12-15.05.05
2006	LATVIA, Riga	TBA
2007	RUSSIA, TBA	TBA
2009	SWITZERLAND, TBA	TBA

IIHF ANNUAL & GENERAL CONGRESS		
2008	FRANCE, Paris	June 2008



**BIG RED LOOKING AHEAD:** *The Austrians are eagerly awaiting their chance to play host to the world's top 16 hockey nations in April when the 2005 IIHF World Championship comes to Vienna and Innsbruck. Last year, Jaromir Jagr (pictured above) and the Czechs played host to the annual championship.*

# Concussion Symposium set for November in Prague

■ The only headache an athlete should get is from the roar of the crowd.

Which is why the IIHF, FIFA (soccer's international governing body) and the International Olympic Committee are holding their Second International Symposium on Concussion in Sport.

The symposium will bring together the leading experts in the field of sports-related head injuries and will examine ways to both prevent and rehabilitate effected athletes.

■ Despite advances in helmet technology, concussions remain a major source of concern for the IIHF especially for the safety and well-being of our athletes. The same can be said for FIFA's athletes, who routinely collide during games.

"The only way to make headway against the occurrence of concussions in our sport is to get the world leaders on the topic together in one room," IIHF Council Member and Medical Committee Chairman Murray Costello said. "What makes this symposium even more beneficial is we're bringing together experts from various sports that bring a whole new view point. Ultimately, if it helps reduce the number of concussions in sport, we'll consider the symposium a success."

The First International Symposium on Concussion in Sport was held in November 2001 in Vienna, Austria and highlighted the latest research on concussions in sport. This Symposium resulted in widely accepted Return to Play Guidelines, which were published in three sports medicine journals.

■ This second symposium will consider the latest research on head injuries with an emphasis first on rehabilitation, recovery and return to play, and secondly on guidelines to establish an effective con-

ussion management program. At the second symposium studies will be presented from the NHL and the National Football League (American Football's top professional league). Other major topics discussed will cover clinical features of concussions, neuropsychological testing, concussions involving children and rehabilitation, treatment and returning to competition after suffering a concussion.

■ Each of the above will be accompanied by a comprehensive review of progress made since the initial symposium by leading medical experts in head trauma from around the world.



**CRUNCH:** Not all concussions can be avoided, but at the Second International Symposium on Concussion in Sport experts will hope to find a way to help athletes recover from head injuries and find ways to prevent the majority of all concussions.

## IIHF adopts new abuse policy

■ During its semi-annual congress in Belek, Turkey (Sept. 30 – Oct. 2), the International Ice Hockey Federation and its 63 affiliated nations unanimously adopted a policy on harassment & abuse to protect players and other participants from verbal, physical, emotional and sexual mistreatment.

"This is a vital step in showing that the world governing body of ice hockey is observant and does not tolerate harassment or abuse in any forms," said Murray Costello, IIHF Council Member and the chairman of the IIHF Medical Committee.

### IIHF Policy on Harassment & Abuse

*Every ice hockey player in member Federations of the International Ice Hockey Federation has the right to participate in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment and to be treated with respect, dignity and fairness in the process. The International Ice Hockey Federation and each of its member Federations do not accept and will not tolerate harassment, abuse or violence in any of its many forms, and particularly where people in positions of responsibility unfairly exercise their power and authority over others.*

Costello, the former President of the Canadian Hockey Association and an NHL player with Chicago, Boston and Detroit, is convinced that no sports body can ignore mistreatment from coaches or other people in power that misuse their authority.

■ "We know that these things have happened in the past and are happening in all sports and ice hockey is no exception. We must be open about it, treat it seriously and create awareness about harassment and abuse among our 63 member federations. This is the only way we can put an end to mistreatment."

For more information, please visit [www.iihf.com](http://www.iihf.com).

## Happy Campers will be found all over Europe this season

■ The IIHF is taking its show on the road.

The show that will be coming to a country near you is the 2004-2005 Regional Hockey Development Camps. This year, there will be eight Development Camps in eight different nations with over 20 nations taking part.

The Regional Hockey Development Camps started back in 2000 as part of the IIHF's Hockey 2000 program. The program has grown and evolved into the current Development camp format, which gives players, aged 15, from the various nations a chance to play with players from across the globe.

■ The idea is to bring four nations that are at a similar talent level, along with two developing nations to compete and train for a week. The host nations have 17 players, while the travelling nations have up to 15 players. This year two camps will also feature 'mentor players' as Russia will send four players to two camps.

"We have the bigger development camps during the summer, but these smaller camps really allow for more individualized attention," IIHF Youth Hockey Manager Darryl Easson said. "Players are both students and teachers during the week which is an interesting dynamic to watch develop."

This year, there will be two blocks of camps. The first four will be held in the fall in late October and early November. The second group of camps will be in February.

"We've had success with this program in the past and look forward to continuing to expand it as the years go on," Easson said.

Below is a complete schedule of this year's IIHF Hockey Development Camps.

### Fall Camps

**Camp 1:**  
Oct. 19 -23 2004  
Great Britain (Host)  
Netherlands  
Austria  
Norway  
Belgium

**Camp 2:**  
Nov. 2 - 6 2004  
Italy (Host)  
Croatia  
Germany  
Slovenia  
Spain

**Camp 3:**  
Nov. 2 - 6 2004  
Hungary (Host)  
Romania  
Bulgaria  
Serbia & Montenegro  
Bosnia

**Camp 4:**  
Nov. 2 - 6 2004  
Latvia (Host)  
Russia (Mentor)  
Poland  
Lithuania  
Estonia  
Belarus

### Winter Camps

**Camp 5:**  
Feb. 7-13, 2005  
Netherlands (Host)  
Norway  
Great Britain  
Austria  
Belgium

**Camp 6:**  
February 2005  
Slovenia (Host)  
Germany  
Hungary  
Italy  
Spain

**Camp 7**  
February 2005  
Croatia (Host)  
Romania  
Serbia & Montenegro  
Bulgaria  
Bosnia

**Camp 8**  
February 2005  
Lithuania (Host)  
Russia (Mentor)  
Latvia  
Estonia  
Belarus  
Armenia

## RESULTS SUMMARY

## 2005 IIHF Continental Cup

## First Round

## GROUP A - Romania

Miercurea-Ciuc (ROM)  
Slavia Sofia (BUL)

26 Sept. Miercurea Ciuc - Slavia Sofia 17 : 2

## Final Standings

Miercurea Ciuc 1 1 0 0 17 - 2 2  
Slavia Sofia 1 0 0 1 2 - 17 0

## GROUP B - Croatia

Medvescak (CRO)  
Energija (LTU)  
HC Jaca (ESP)  
Partizan (SCG)24 Sept. HC Jaca - Energija 4 : 8  
24 Sept. Medvescak - Partizan 21 : 1  
25 Sept. Energija - Partizan 25 : 2  
25 Sept. Medvescak - HC Jaca 3 : 1  
26 Sept. Partizan - HC Jaca 1 : 15  
26 Sept. Energija - Medvescak 4 : 4

## Final Standings

Energija 3 2 1 0 37-10 5  
Medvescak 3 2 1 0 28- 6 5  
HC Jaca 3 1 0 2 20-12 2  
Partizan 3 0 0 3 4 - 61 0

## 2004 World Cup of Hockey

Various Locations, 30 August - 14 September, 2004

## Preliminary Round: European Group

Finland - Czech Republic 4 - 0 (1-1, 0-0, 3-0)  
Sweden - Germany 5 - 2 (1-1, 4-1, 0-0)  
Sweden - Czech Republic 4 - 3 (1-0, 3-0, 0-3)  
Germany - Finland 0 - 3 (0-1, 0-1, 0-1)  
Czech Republic - Germany 7 - 2 (0-0, 5-0, 2-2)  
Finland - Sweden 4 - 4 (3-3, 1-0, 0-1) OT

## Preliminary Round, European Group Standings

Finland 3 2 1 0 11 - 4 5  
Sweden 3 2 1 0 13 - 9 5  
Czech Republic 3 1 0 2 5 - 6 2  
Germany 3 0 0 3 4 - 13 0

## Preliminary Round: North American Group

Canada - United States 2 - 1 (1-0, 1-1, 0-0)  
Canada - Slovakia 5 - 1 (0-2, 0-1, 1-2)  
United States - Russia 1 - 3 (0-0, 1-1, 0-2)  
United States - Slovakia 3 - 1 (2-1, 0-0, 1-0)  
Russia - Canada 1 - 3 (0-0, 0-2, 1-1)  
Slovakia - Russia 2 - 5 (1-1, 0-2, 1-2)

## Preliminary Round, North American Group Standings

Canada 3 3 0 0 10 - 3 6  
Russia 3 2 0 1 9 - 6 4  
United States 3 1 0 2 5 - 6 2  
Slovakia 3 0 0 3 4 - 15 0

## Quarterfinal Round

Finland - Germany 2 - 1 (0-0, 1-0, 1-1)  
Sweden - Czech Republic 6 - 1 (2-0, 1-0, 3-1)  
Russia - United States 3 - 5 (1-0, 1-1, 3-2)  
Canada - Slovakia 5 - 0 (0-0, 4-0, 1-0)

## Semifinal Round

Finland - United States 2 - 1 (0-0, 0-1, 2-0)  
Canada - Czech Republic 4 - 3 (0-0, 2-1, 1-2, 1-0) OT

## Final Round

Canada - Finland 3 - 2 (1-1, 1-1, 1-0)

## European Ice Hockey Challenge

## Asiago, ITALY, 2-4 September 2004

Poland - Slovenia 4 - 2 (1-1, 1-0, 2-1)  
Italy - Netherlands 3 - 2 (0-0, 2-2, 1-0)  
Netherlands - Poland 5 - 7 (0-2, 3-2, 2-3)  
Slovenia - Italy 3 - 1 (1-0, 0-1, 2-0)  
Slovenia - Netherlands 5 - 4 (1-3, 2-0, 2-1)  
Italy - Poland 2 - 1 (0-0, 0-1, 2-0)

## Asiago Final Standings

Poland 3 2 0 1 12 - 9 4  
Slovenia 3 2 0 1 10 - 9 4Italy 3 2 0 1 6 - 6 4  
Netherlands 3 0 0 3 11 - 15 0

## Riga, LATVIA, 3-5 September 2004

France - Belarus 2 - 6 (1-1, 1-1, 0-4)  
Latvia - Ukraine 7 - 4 (4-1, 1-0, 2-3)  
Latvia - France 6 - 3 (3-0, 1-1, 2-2)  
Ukraine - Belarus 1 - 5 (0-3, 0-1, 1-1)  
Ukraine - France 7 - 1 (3-0, 1-1, 3-0)  
Belarus - Latvia 1 - 5 (0-3, 0-1, 1-1)

## Riga Final Standings

Latvia 3 3 0 0 18 - 8 6  
Belarus 3 2 0 1 12 - 8 4  
Ukraine 3 1 0 2 12 - 13 2  
France 3 0 0 3 6 - 19 0

## Szekesfehervar, HUNGARY, 3-5 September 2004

Denmark - Norway 3 - 2 (2-1, 1-0, 0-1)  
Croatia - Hungary 3 - 8 (2-3, 1-4, 0-1)  
Denmark - Croatia 10-0 (2-0, 1-0, 7-0)  
Norway - Hungary 2 - 2 (1-0, 1-1, 0-1)  
Norway - Croatia 7 - 2 (2-0, 4-1, 1-1)  
Hungary - Denmark 1 - 3 (0-0, 1-2, 0-1)

## Szekesfehervar Final Standings

Denmark 3 3 0 0 16 - 3 6  
Norway 3 1 0 1 11 - 7 3  
Hungary 3 1 0 1 11 - 8 3  
Croatia 3 0 0 3 5 - 25 0

## U18 Eight Nations Challenge

## Piestany, SLOVAKIA, 10-15 August 2004

United States - Finland 3 - 1 (0-0, 0-0, 3-1)  
Czech Republic - Russia 3 - 1 (1-1, 0-0, 2-0)  
Canada - Switzerland 7 - 1 (3-0, 3-0, 1-1)  
Slovakia - Sweden 2 - 5 (1-0, 0-3, 1-2)  
Russia - United States 2 - 3 (0-1, 2-1, 0-1)  
Czech Republic - Finland 4 - 3 (3-1, 0-1, 0-0, 1-0) OT  
Sweden - Canada 2 - 8 (1-4, 1-2, 0-2)  
Slovakia - Switzerland 2 - 0 (1-0, 1-0, 0-0)  
Finland - Russia 1 - 5 (1-1, 0-0, 0-4)  
Czech Republic - USA 5 - 1 (3-0, 0-0, 2-1)  
Switzerland - Sweden 1 - 3 (0-0, 1-1, 0-2)  
Slovakia - Canada 3 - 6 (0-1, 2-2, 1-3)

## Relegation Round:

Russia - Switzerland 3 - 2 (1-1, 0-0, 1-1, 1-0) OT  
Slovakia - Finland 2 - 1 (0-1, 2-0, 0-0)

## Semi-Final Round

Czech Republic - Sweden 3 - 1 (2-0, 1-1, 0-0)  
Canada - United States 4 - 0 (3-0, 0-0, 1-0)

## Third place game

United States - Sweden 0 - 3 (0-0, 0-2, 0-1)

## First place game

Canada - Czech Republic 4 - 1 (1-0, 3-0, 0-1)

## U20 Four Nations Tournament

## CZECH REPUBLIC, 3-5 September 2004

Czech Republic - Sweden 2 - 1 (0-0, 1-1, 0-0, 1-0) OT  
Finland - Russia 2 - 5 (2-2, 0-2, 0-1)  
Czech Republic - Finland 4 - 1 (2-1, 1-0, 1-0)  
Russia - Sweden 3 - 1 (0-0, 2-1, 1-0)  
Finland - Sweden 5 - 3 (2-1, 0-1, 3-1)  
Czech Republic - Russia 7 - 2 (2-1, 2-0, 3-1)

## Final Standings

Czech Republic 3 2 1 0 0 13 - 4 8  
Russia 3 2 0 0 1 10 - 10 6  
Finland 3 1 0 0 2 8 - 12 3  
Sweden 3 0 0 1 2 5 - 10 1

## Best Player Awards

Goalkeeper: Vladimir Koutsky (CZE)

Defenseman: Ladislav Smid (CZE)

Forward: Aleksander Nikulin (RUS)

## Women's U22 Select Series

Lake Placid, NEW YORK 25-28 August 2004

## Round Robin

Canada - USA 1 - 3 (0-0, 0-2, 1-1)  
USA - Canada 4 - 2 (0-1, 1-1, 3-0)  
Canada - USA 2 - 3 (1-1, 1-1, 0-1)

USA win series with 3-0-0 record

## U20 Summer Hockey Challenge

Fussen, GERMANY 5-8 August 2004

## Round Robin

Czech Republic - Switzerland 3 - 1 (0-1, 2-0, 1-0)  
Germany - Slovakia 1 - 4 (1-1, 0-1, 0-2)  
Switzerland - Slovakia 2 - 1 (0-0, 2-1, 0-0)  
Germany - Czech Republic 2 - 7 (0-2, 0-2, 2-3)  
Germany - Switzerland 1 - 5 (1-3, 0-2, 0-0)  
Slovakia - Czech Republic 2 - 1 (0-0, 0-1, 2-0)

## Final Standings

Czech Republic 3 2 0 1 11 - 5 6  
Slovakia 3 2 0 1 7 - 4 6  
Switzerland 3 2 0 1 8 - 5 6  
Germany 3 0 0 3 4 - 16 0

**CHANGING OF THE GUARD:** USA veteran Chris Chelios and young Canadian star Dany Heatley look to get in on the action during the 2004 World Cup of Hockey. Chelios, who was making one of his last appearances with Team USA, which won the World Cup in 1996, lost the Cup to Heatley and his Canadian teammates.



**ALAN & FRIENDS:** Montrealer Alan Maislin (left) is all smiles as he dons the Israeli national team jersey along with new national U18 coach Jean Perron (right). Sergei Matin, the General Secretary of the Ice Hockey Federation of Israel, can expect a brighter future for the country's hockey program with strong recruits like the Canadian duo.

Photos: Shlomi Levy

# Perron is chosen for a very special mission

*By Szymon Szemberg*

**BELEK, Turkey:** Jean Perron is going where no Canadian coach has gone before -- well at least no Stanley Cup winning coach. Perron, who led the Montreal Canadiens to the Stanley Cup in 1986 and coached Team Canada in the 1984 Olympics, is the new head coach of Israel's national junior team. The former pro coach will lead the emerging hockey country in the 2005 IIHF World U18 Championship, Division III in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The highly-surprising assignment was made public by the Ice Hockey Federation of Israel during the IIHF Semi-Annual Congress in Turkey in late September.

"We want to win the division III championship and be promoted to division II," said Jean Perron. "There is no question about that. During my first visit to Israel last summer I got to coach that group for the first time and I was surprised how much hockey they knew and how excited they were. And they wanted to learn."

This will be the first time in 20 years that Jean Perron will return to an IIHF championship event. Perron was the assistant coach under Dave King for Canada's Olympic team in Sarajevo in 1984.

■ The man behind this sensational coup is Alan Maislin, a 59-year old Montreal-based businessman, who assumed the position as chairman of the Israeli Ice Hockey Association in 2003 and has since then worked on a complete overhaul of the nation's hockey program.

Maislin comes from a well known business family that has always been close to the Montreal hockey scene.

"The Maislins have always had two passions, sports and transports," said Perron.

Today, Alan Maislin is passionate to relocate his sports enthusiasm from the cradle of hockey to the land of the Bible.

"My ambition is to make hockey one of the most popular sports in Israel," said Maislin during a break in the congress sessions in Belek, Turkey. "Sports fans in

Israel know soccer and basketball, but very few people know that there actually is hockey being played in the country. We want to make hockey the coolest game in town."

That goal shouldn't be too difficult to reach. The temperature in the troubled Middle Eastern nation seldom sinks below 30 degrees Celsius. One of the few places where it actually drops consistently is in the northern community of Matula, which holds the country's only hockey arena, with two ice sheets.

■ The Matula rink, which is located just on the Lebanese border, is home for all of Israel's 100 or so registered hockey players, an improvement of 100 percent in the last six months.

"This year alone we have added 50 kids to our program," said Maislin. "But you can't really expand a program if you don't have rinks and skilled coaches."

The first problem will be addressed soon, as plans for a new rink with two ice sheets in the greater Tel-Aviv area could materialize in a new facility in the most populated area in the country.

■ To solve the second problem, Maislin has turned to people he knows from back home.

The chairman of the Ice Hockey Federation of Israel has known Jean Perron for many years (they work together in Maislin's transportation company in Montreal) and one year ago he asked the Stanley Cup winner if he wanted to coach Israel's under-18 team, leading up to the World Championship in Sofia, Bulgaria in March 2005.

"I approached Jean about it and he jumped at the opportunity", said Maislin. "He was in Israel for ten days in the summer working with the team and he will be back in February for final preparations and then travel to Sofia to coach the team. He is very excited and sees potential in this group."

Contract?

"There is no money on this level", said Maislin. "It's all voluntary".

■ Perron is not the only high-profile Canadian coach that Maislin has contacted to give middle east hockey a boost. Ken Hitchcock, who was on the coaching staff of Team Canada's World Cup-winning team, will run a hockey school in Matula next summer. Maislin has also enlisted high-profile Canadian coaches Jacques Demers, Pierre McGuire and Pierre Page to an advisory committee.

Perron's initial involvement in the Israeli junior program has already brought astonishing results. For the first time ever, an Israeli-born hockey player will attend a Canadian high school as 16-year old Oren Zamir will play for Notre Dame high school in Saskatchewan this season.

"As soon as I saw him, I knew he was something else," said Perron. "Oren has great skills and he is a leader. Unfortunately, he can't get the competition he needs in Israel, so I helped him to get to Notre Dame which has an excellent program. He will be a great asset to our team in the world championship."

■ Before going to Bulgaria in March, the Israeli junior team will go on a North American tour. They will play against Team Mexico in Los Angeles and will after that go to Toronto for a couple of games.

When asked about what is the ultimate goal of this ambitious program, Maislin answers immediately:

"The Olympics. I want that Israel one day can play Olympic hockey. I believe that we have the potential. To survive in this country you have to have mental toughness and our players won't have problems with being tough. Now, we just need to add some skill. And probably a hot goalie."

He already has an Olympic coach.

■ Israel, currently ranked 36th is the IIHF World Ranking, has two teams participating in the IIHF World Championship program. The men's senior team plays in division II, while the U18 team is in the division III. The men's team has traditionally been stocked with immigrants from the former Soviet republics and from North America.