

## The world of hockey knows no borders



**WE ARE THE WORLD:** A glimpse at the hockey world. 1: Team Canada celebrates its U20 title. 2: The European Champion's Cup was won by Russia's Ak Bars Kazan. 3: The Asian Winter Hockey Games were a big success. Pictured is United Arab Emirates. 4: The IIHF and Malaysia come together. 5: Yutaka Fukufuji makes his NHL debut.

## The opening of 2007 is proof positive of our game's global impact



For the International Ice Hockey Federation, there is one primary goal: To have the game of hockey expand all around the world. And I am pleased to say that if the start of this calendar year is any indication, hockey's reach is going beyond anyone's wildest expectations.

### RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL

■ ■ So much has happened in the hockey world in the last few months, that I couldn't restrict myself to just one topic for this editorial. Instead, I wanted to take this chance to highlight the global growth of the game by focusing on some of the news you may or may not have heard in the last few months. I hope you enjoy our 'World Tour'.

1. Canada once again showed its dominance at the IIHF World U20 Championship by taking home its third consecutive title. I have never seen a nation so crazy for its junior team as Canada - in fact the nation's enthusiasm for the entire sport of hockey, from men's to juniors to women's remains unparalleled. I congratulate Canada's U20 team on the extremely difficult feat of winning three straight 'World Junior' crowns. I am equally as enthusiastic for the nation to host the upcoming IIHF World Women Championship in Winnipeg. I know that nothing less than the best awaits the nine participating teams.

2. As heartily as I congratulate Canada on its 'triple crown', so I do with the Russian Superleague on its third consecutive European Champion's Cup title. Russia has shown since we started this event that they are indeed the European league to beat. Ak Bars Kazan lived up to expectations and hoisted the Silver

Stone trophy. I am also pleased to announce that the ECC will return to St. Petersburg in 2008.

3. I had the opportunity to travel to China for the Asian Winter Games and I was quite impressed with the steps that hockey is taking in the entire Asian region. Sure, some of the games were lopsided, but the teams competed, learned, and most importantly enjoyed playing our great sport. For many of these teams it was their first chance to compete on the international stage. Let me tell you, I am confident that it will not be the last such opportunity.

4. As part of my trip to Asia I was fortunate enough to meet with the representatives from the participating Asian Winter Games teams. The Chinese association showed a dedication to expanding the sport in their vast country that was most impressive. As you can read on page eight, this will be one busy office in the next year, with three IIHF World Championship events planned.

5. While Japan has not yet been able to return to the top division of the men's World Championship, it continues to be a role model for developing hockey nations. The most recent milestone was when 24 year-old Yutaka Fukufuji played in his first-ever NHL game with Los Angeles. This is a major step not only for this young man, but for all of Japan.

■ ■ Wherever you are sitting while you read this, know that great things are happening all over the globe with our sport. It may be in your neighborhood, or thousands of miles away, but in the end we are all working for the good of the game. And finally I wish all those teams going into their playoff seasons the best of luck!

**René Fasel**  
IIHF President

## Leinonen returns home to serve Finnish ice hockey

■ Kimmo Leinonen, the PR and Marketing Director of the IIHF, will join the Finnish Ice Hockey Association on August 1, 2007. Leinonen will first serve as Project Leader responsible for the commercial activities of FIHA and their development. Additionally, the FIHA Board of Directors has appointed Leinonen as General Secretary of the next IIHF World Championship to be held in Finland. Finland is one of four candidates for the 2012 IIHF World Championship together with Czech Republic, Hungary and Sweden.

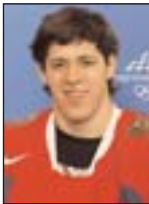


LEINONEN: Joins FIHA.

Leinonen, who joined the IIHF in 1995, will continue in his current position with the IIHF until the end of June. However, the IIHF and FIHA have agreed that Leinonen will be able to reinforce FIHA in the bid process for 2012. "The IIHF is sad to lose Kimmo," said IIHF President René Fasel. "However, we respect his decision to go back to Finland to pursue his career in the important position in Finnish ice hockey. It has been wonderful twelve years having Kimmo at the IIHF. We wish him the best of luck in his new job."

## Court dismisses claim for Malkin to return to Russia

■ A United States federal court has dismissed two complaints filed by Evgeni Malkin's former Russian team against the Pittsburgh Penguins player, the team and the NHL. The dismissal by the U.S. District Court in New York had been expected since Nov. 15, when judge Loretta A. Preska denied Metallurg Magnitogorsk's request for a temporary injunction blocking Malkin from continuing to play in the NHL. The Russian team declined to appeal that ruling.



MALKIN: Stays in NHL.

Metallurg claimed the 20-year-old was under contract when he left the club during training camp in August to travel to the United States and play for Pittsburgh. The Russian team did not seek Malkin's return, but wanted financial compensation for losing its star player.

■ This is the third time Russian hockey authorities lost a court case regarding a player who they claim had been recruited by an NHL club in violation of existing laws. In January 2006, Dynamo Moscow's lawsuit against Alexander Ovechkin was dismissed by a U.S. District Court judge. In 2004, the Court of Arbitration in Sport (CAS) in Lausanne ruled against the Russian Ice Hockey Federation in a case that involved Nikolai Zherdev, who left CSKA Moscow to play for Columbus.

-- with files from AP

## Robert Müller's miraculous recovery from cancer draws ovations in comeback

■ Under normal circumstances, sitting on the bench for almost an entire game and playing the last five minutes doesn't do it for German national team goaltender Robert Müller. But on February 7, this was

exactly what the 26-year old Müller's duty was in an international exhibition game against Slovenia in Ingolstadt, Germany. Müller, a veteran of 112 national team games, seven IIHF World Championships and one Olympics, was the happiest man on earth. His marginal effort had colossal meaning since it came 83 days after surgeons had removed a malignant tumor from his brain.

■ Despite not having played any serious hockey in three months, the German national team management didn't hesitate to select Müller for the February international break competition. The Adler Mannheim keeper was greeted with a rowdy ovation by the 3,530 fans in Ingolstadt when he replaced Yuri Ziffser in the 54th minute.

"I have experienced a lot in hockey, but this was something very special," said Müller who was being treated



Photo: DEB

**FEELS SO GOOD:** Usually Robert Müller is not a happy camper on the bench. But being the backup goalie on February 7, when Germany met Slovenia in Ingolstadt, was one of the highlights of his career. Müller played just over five minutes.

with chemotherapy and lost all his hair in the process. "I am obviously very happy to be back so soon, but I must have patience, it will take a while before I have my rhythm back."

Franz Reindl, the General Secretary of the German Ice Hockey Association, was overjoyed: "This is nothing less than sensational. No one had expected such a fast recovery."

■ Müller is the second international player to make an astounding recovery after recently being diagnosed with cancer. 19-year old Phil Kessel of the NHL Boston Bruins and who represented the U.S. in the last IIHF World Championship in Riga, was operated for testicular cancer on December 11. He was back playing with the Bruins against Ottawa on January 9, less than one month after the surgery.

## Association News

**CANADA:** Hockey Canada named **Steve Yzerman** as its General Manager of Team Canada at the 2007 IIHF World Championship. Yzerman was part of Canada's Olympic gold medal winning team in Salt Lake City in 2002 and represented Canada at the 1983 IIHF World U20 Championship, the 1984 Canada Cup, the 1996 World Cup, the 1998 Olympics, and in three IIHF World Championships, 1985, 1989 and 1990 where he was named the tournament's Top Forward. Yzerman retired this year after 22 campaigns with the Detroit Red Wings and is currently a vice-president with the NHL-club.

**SWEDEN:** The Swedish Ice Hockey Association announced that national team coach **Bengt-Ake Gustafsson** has signed a new three-year contract, extending his commitment to the Tre Kronor through the Vancouver Olympics in 2010. Gustafsson last season became the first coach to lead a national team to an Olympic gold medal and the IIHF World Championship gold medal in the same year.

**FINLAND:** The Finnish Ice Hockey Association announced that **Jukka Rautakorpi** will take over the head coaching duties of the Finnish national U20 team. Rautakorpi is currently the head coach of Swedish club Leksands IF and he will leave the club at the end of this season. His first major task will be leading the Finnish juniors at the 2008 IIHF World U20 Championship in the Czech Republic.

**USA:** **John Hynes**, the current National Team Development Program head coach was tabbed to lead the U20 national team for next year's World Championship in the Czech Republic. Hynes has either been the head coach or assistant coach with eight U.S. teams that have participated in IIHF World Championships, including five times with the U.S. National Under-18 Team (1999, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006)

and three times with the U.S. National Junior Team (2002, 2004, 2006).

■ USA Hockey also announced the formation of a National Team Management Advisory Group, whose task will be to assist in the selection of future U.S. men's national teams. The group includes NHL general managers **Brian Burke** (Anaheim Ducks), **David Poile** (Nashville), **Ray Shero** (Pittsburgh) and **Don Wadell** (Atlanta).

## Obituaries

■ Former Swedish national team coach **Tommy Sandlin** died of a heart attack on December 27, 2006. He was 62. Sandlin led the Swedish national team 1978-80 and 1987-90. His biggest international success was leading Tre Kronor to the 1987 IIHF World Championship gold medal, Sweden's first in 25 years. Sandlin also won two Olympic bronze medals for Sweden, in 1980 and 1988. On the national scene, he captured eight Swedish national titles, seven with Brynäs and one with Modo

■ Former Soviet national team player **Andrei Lomakin** died on December 12, 2006 after a battle with cancer. He was 42. Lomakin was a forward on the Soviet national team in the 80s and early 90s and was part of the Olympic team that won the gold medal in 1988. Lomakin also took part in the 1991 IIHF World Championship and two Canada Cup tournaments, 1987 and 1991. After a seven-year career with Dynamo Moscow, he played four seasons in the NHL, with Philadelphia and Florida and finished his career in the German DEL with Frankfurt in 1997.

■ **Sigge Bröms**, who played on Sweden's first two IIHF World Championship gold medal teams in 1953 and in 1957, passed away on January 14, 2007. He was 75. Bröms also represented Sweden in the 1956 and 1960 Olympic Winter Games. He actively took part in the organization of the 2007 IIHF World U20 Championship in his home town of Mora just prior to his death.

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### International Ice Hockey Federation

Brandschenkestrasse 50  
Postfach CH-8039 Zürich  
Switzerland

Phone +41.44.562.22.00  
Fax +41.44.562.22.29  
Email office@iihf.com

www.iihf.com



# A puzzle: Who will win women's medals?

By Jenny Wiedeke

■ ■ The 2007 World Women's Championship could be known as the 'Changing of the Guard' event. After becoming an Olympic sport in 1998, many of the women pioneers have either retired or are coming close to hanging up the skates. Waiting in the wings is a new generation of players ready to take over the reigns.

So far, this newer generation has provided the sport with more parity than it has ever seen. Consider that America had not won a gold medal at an IIHF Women's Championship until it took the top spot in 2005. It was also a young Swedish team that toppled the Americans in the semi-final game at the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Torino to end the North American dominance of the top two spots.

■ ■ Gone are the days of nations simply accepting the natural pecking order of the sport. And at no other time in the history of women's hockey will that pecking order be challenged than at this year's World Championship in Winnipeg. Now, more than ever, the signs are pointing to a wide open field, thanks to the three 'R's'.

■ ■ **Retirement:** At the start of a new Olympic cycle, the national teams from the powerhouses countries always find themselves with many new faces. This year, Canada lost long-time leader Cassie Campbell. The team

also must face that two of its four top scorers from the Olympics, Hayley Wickenheiser and Carolyn Ouellette along with goaltender Kim St. Pierre are not getting any younger. To the south of Canada, the Americans have no player left from its 1998 Olympic gold medal team and the less-than-graceful Cammie Granato omission from the 2006 Olympic team highlighted the dilemma that the women's national teams face as their first generation of stars age. These teams are now faced with the keeping of loyalty to the older leaders of the game, while trying to introduce younger players to the international level.

■ ■ **Revenge:** With parity comes great story lines for the teams, and of course, the media. No one loves a chance at getting some good old fashioned revenge. In the case of the women's game, at the top of the standings, there is a triangle tale developing. First, there's the Canadian squad, who despite winning the gold medal in Torino, will be eager to avenge its 2005 gold medal game shootout loss against the Americans at the World Championship. Add to the fact that Canada is on home ice and there's a strong case for redemption. Meanwhile the Americans will, of course, be eager to show the world that its bronze in Torino was nothing more than a fluke. While a medal of any color might be nice, a gold would silence the critics.

Of course the Swedes don't have revenge to gain against any team at the championship, but unlike the Americans they want to gain the respect of the world by proving that Torino was not indeed one-time deal.

At the other end of the standings, look for an interesting subplot to unfold between China and Switzerland. The Swiss women qualified for the Olympics by knocking out the Chinese in a last-minute win at the Olympic Qualification Tournament. It was a bitter loss for the Chinese and one that they are sure to remember if the teams meet.

■ ■ **Rivalries:** With the still relative newness of the women's game on the international stage, the bulk of the rivalries are still geographically based. Besides the obvious Canada-USA rivalry, there are several other notable story lines. With all the talk of the Swedish women's team after the Olympics, there is once squad that is eager to get a chance to knock the Swedes off the medal podium; the Finns. Keep in mind that the Finns have traditionally had the stronger and more stable program with eight total medals compared with Sweden's three at the World Championship and Olympics. The Swedes just won at the right time and were thrust into the spotlight. Look for the Finns to be more that eager to meet up against Sweden.

The Swiss-Germany rivalry could also heat up. With the Swiss back from Division I, and fresh off of a strong Olympic showing, the preliminary round game between the teams could be one of the most competitive early in the tournament.

**PUTTING THE PIECES IN PLACE:** Will USA have a second straight World Women's gold medal to celebrate, or will Canada build on its 2006 Olympic success? Meanwhile, can the youth movement in Sweden, led by goaltender Kim Martin, play the role of spoiler again?

## IIHF takes first step to adding Women's U18 event

■ ■ With the women's game continuing to grow globally, the IIHF has taken the next step to ensure the upward trend continues.

"It is the goal of the IIHF Women's Committee to start an U18 Women's World Championship event as early as 2008," IIHF Director Rob van Rijswijk confirmed.

While the plan is in its early stages, the IIHF has already taken the first step in the process to get such a championship underway. Over the February international break, three women's invitational tournaments were held in Germany, Czech Republic and Finland. Should the IIHF be able to start the U18 event in time for the 2008 season, the results from those three invitationals would serve as a qualification for the top division. (see results on page 10).

■ ■ So why a U18 Championship event, and why now? "In every nation, it is important to get people involved

with hockey at as young of an age as possible," van Rijswijk explains. "One of the greatest thrills for an athlete is to represent their country in international competition and the sooner we can make that happen for women, the better."

■ ■ The U18 age group was decided upon because the women tend to make their national teams at a much younger age, therefore if the Championship was for the U20 age group, there would be too great of an overlap between the Women's World Championship and its junior counterpart.

Several steps must still be taken for the U18 World Women's Championship to happen. It must first gain official IIHF approval from the Council and Congress, and then of course a host nation must be found.

■ ■ "We know it will be tough to have this event ready for 2008," says van Rijswijk. "But it is an important step for the women's game to take."



**LOOKING AHEAD:** Noora Raty may have been the back-up for Team Finland in Torino, but she was the star during the February break when Finland won its Women's Invitational Tournament. For Raty and other young players, a U18 Women's event could provide important international experience.

## 2007 IIHF EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS CUP

## What if the national team learned from the Russian clubs?

By Szymon Szemberg  
St. Petersburg, Russia



Very often the level of a country's club hockey corresponds with the accomplishments of the national team. Then again, sometimes, it does not. Russia is a perfect example of a hockey program where the club teams constantly overachieve - especially when compared with the national team. While one has to go back to 1993 to find Russia as a gold medal winning team at the IIHF World Championship, clubs from the Superleague are dominating emphatically, at least in Europe.

Not only did Russian champion Ak Bars Kazan defeat Finland's HPK Hämeenlinna 6-0 in the gold medal game of the 2007 IIHF European Champions Cup. It was the third straight year the Silver Stone Trophy, emblematic of European club supremacy, stayed in Russia, after Avangard Omsk's win in 2005 and Dynamo Moscow's in 2006.

Add the last two years of the defunct European Hockey League, where the champions were Metallurg Magnitogorsk (in 1999 and 2000) and you have a nice Russian five-in-a-row.

What the reason for this is, can be discussed in all eternity by hockey buffs. But that can be left for later. The fact is: Russian clubs rule Europe and no one has done it more emphatically than Ak Bars Kazan. They opened by defeating Sweden's Färjestads BK, 6-4, (which was the best game of the 2007 ECC), they then clinched the win in the Ivan Hlinka Division and a place in the gold medal game by blanking Swiss representative HC Lugano, 3-0. The anticipated Russian-Finnish final matchup was a one-way street in front of a packed house, 12,300 fans at the St. Petersburg Ice Palace.

As Ak Bars rocked and rolled towards the 6-0-win someone in the Ice Palace suggested that this was the most impressive showing by an European club champion since the heydays of Anatoli Tarasov's and Viktor Tikhonov's feared CSKA Moscow, the Soviet national team dressed up in club uniforms that won the old European Cup 20 times in 22 years.

That comparison is probably overstated at this point, but Ak Bars is arguably the most impressive of the three Russian winners during the ECC days. What all Russian and former Soviet teams have in common is a strong first unit. Both Avangard and Dynamo relied on that weapon and Ak Bars was no exception.

The top line of Alexei Morozov (2+8), Sergei Zinoviev (4+3) and Danis Zaripov (3+2) collected 22 points in three games and that against the best teams in Europe. As if that was not enough, the entire All Star Team as selected by media was from Ak Bars. (See sidebar)

As indicated earlier, Ak Bars' opening game against Jörgen Jönsson's Färjestad was the best of the tournament and in the same breathtaking category as the two previous ECC-finals. It was one of those games where a visit to the washroom had to be postponed to the next intermission because one wouldn't want to miss any action. It was the first time when a Russian team was under pressure during a preliminary game in the ECC. Fact is that, for Ak Bars, a fortunate displacement of the net prevented the Karlstad-team from taking a 4-2-lead early in the second period after the team rallied back after being 2-0 down in the first. With the game tied 4-4 in the third, Sergei Zaripov got the winner with less than seven minutes remaining and he also added an empty netter. Tournament MVP, Alexei Morozov, also missed a penalty shot.

While the Russian club teams perform over the level of their national team, it's the other way around with Sweden. Despite winning the World Championships and



**ECC Photos: VYACHESLAV YEVDOKIMOV**  
**CAPTAIN FANTASTIC:** Ak Bars Kazan captain Alexei Morozov hoists the Silver Stone Trophy after his team's defeat of Finnish HPK Hämeenlinna 6-0. Morozov was the dominant figure of the 2007 ECC with ten points in three games.



**Ak Bars Kazan**  
Founded: 1956  
Russian champion: 2006  
ECC champion: 2007

**CLOSE CALL:** Färjestad's Christian Soderstrom shoves the puck over the line as the net gets dislocated by Ak Bars' defenseman Ray Giroux. The call was 'no goal' in what can be considered as the best game of the 2007 ECC. Ak Bars went on to win the game 6-4.



Olympics and also being runaway leaders in the IIHF World Ranking, Swedish clubs are not able to reach the same standard. Despite Färjestad's superb effort against Ak Bars, they lost to HC Lugano 3-0 the next day dragging the Swedish club's record at the ECC down to 1W-5L and 10-28 in goals.

The comparison to Finland is especially intriguing. There is probably no hockey observer in Europe who would suggest that the Finnish league is stronger than the Swedish. Still, the Finnish teams' ECC-record is 6-3, with all three losses being absorbed in gold medal games. The Finnish clubs performance at the ECC becomes even more impressive when considering that just like any top league in Europe, the Finns have their share of players who make their living in the NHL. But Finland is the only hockey nation that has a substantial secondary migration to primarily the Swedish and also to the Swiss leagues.

But despite this significant talent drain, the Finnish clubs are still top class. Even though HPK Hämeenlinna lost 6-0 in the final, it must be remembered that Kärpät Oulu lost their two consecutive ECC-finals in overtime, in 2005 on Jaromir Jagr's sudden-death goal and in 2006 in a penalty shoot-out.

Jukka-Pekka Vuorinen, the Executive Director of the Finnish league has this explanation: "The Finnish clubs value European club competition very high which makes them very motivated when they get to the ECC. They are always prepared and all that probably makes up for other shortcomings."

#### Individual Awards

As selected the Tournament Directorate:

**Top Goaltender:** Mika Noronen, Ak Bars  
**Top Defenseman:** Dick Tärnström, Lugano  
**Top Forward:** Alexei Morozov, Ak Bars  
**MVP:** Alexei Morozov, Ak Bars

All Star Team as selected by the media

**Goaltender:** Mika Noronen, Ak Bars  
**Defenseman:** Vitali Proshkin, Ak Bars  
**Defenseman:** Ilya Nikulin, Ak Bars  
**Forward:** Danis Zaripov, Ak Bars  
**Forward:** Sergei Zinoviev, Ak Bars  
**Forward:** Alexei Morozov, Ak Bars

**2007 ECC Final Standing:** 1. Ak Bars Kazan (RUS), 2. HPK Hämeenlinna (FIN), 3. HC Lugano (SUI), 4. Zilina (SVK), 5. Sparta Prague (CZE), 6. Färjestads BK (SWE).

# AIK Solna: The unbeatable women's team



PHOTO: Magnus Neck

**ABSOLUTE AIK:** Sweden's AIK Solna won its third consecutive IIHF European Women's Champion's Cup on home ice in Stockholm. The team was impressive in its three-peat, scoring an average of five goals per game. Captain Emelie Berggren hoists the EWCC Cup.

■ They did it again. Winning the European Women's Champions Cup is becoming an annual routine for the ladies of AIK Solna. The defending champions once again showed that they are the top women's team in Europe after earning a perfect 3-0-0 record in the final round of the EWCC.

#### Just how dominant was AIK at this year's event?

■ Consider that the squad scored an impressive 20 goals in their four games, while giving up a mere four. AIK didn't miss a beat despite not having Olympic standout goaltender Kim Martin on its roster like in previous seasons.

Their answer to missing the star netminder: simply score more goals. Which they did in grand fashion with the four top scorers all wearing the gold and black of AIK. Pacing the tournament in scoring was Maria Rooth, yet another Swedish Olympic hero, who was responsible for the shootout-winning goal against the United States in the semi-final game in Torino. At the EWCC, Rooth's feats weren't quite as dramatic, but still impressive as she netted six goals and two assists in four games.

Backing up Rooth in the top scorers column were Danijella Rundqvist, Katarina Timglas and Nanna Jansson. The quartet was responsible for 15 of AIK's 20 goals and totaled 26 points.

But even more impressive than AIK Solna's gold medal performance this year is their consistency and dominance in the last three EWCC's.

#### And just how impressive is AIK's overall record at the EWCC?

■ Consider the team is undefeated since the advent of the event three year's ago. AIK's only blemish came on December 17, 2004, when it tied Skif Moscow, 2-2, in its first-ever EWCC game. Since the 'rocky' start, AIK has won every game, outscoring its opponents 39-12 in the three seasons.

The team has shown that it has the potential to blow out its opponents, as evidenced by this year's opening 8-1 victory against IF Segeltorps. But more importantly, AIK has proven that it can handle the pressure of close games, as shown at last year's EWCC when they won two, close one-goal games for the title.

■ But AIK won't be looking back at its past accomplishments as it celebrates its third straight EWCC win. Likely the team will be looking forward to going for the four-peat in 2008.

#### The Road to the EWCC

Here's how the team's made it to the final round of this year's EWCC in Stockholm.

**AIK Solna:** The 2007 Champions were automatically qualified to the final round after winning the 2006 edition.

**Segeltorps IF:** Won the qualification group played in Sweden going undefeated with a 3-0-0 record.

**Ilves Tampere** Went unbeaten in the B qualification group played in Latvia, giving up just one goal in three games.

**HC Lugano:** Won the C qualification group thanks to a one-goal victory over Denmark's Herlev.

## And the Continental Cup Crown goes to... Junost

■ Belarus club team Junost Minsk knew that a lot was on the line entering the final day of competition at the 2007 IIHF Continental Cup.

Sure, the title was up for grabs as the undefeated Belorussian squad squared off against also unbeaten Russian powerhouse Avangard Omsk. But more than a simple title was at stake for the underdogs. National history, more specifically the chance to become the first team from Belarus to win a major IIHF event, was on the line.

In the end, Junost Minsk put on a hockey performance of sheer will and determination that few will forget. With the score 0-0 following regulation, the teams skated in a scoreless overtime. During the final period, Minsk staved off several Avangard Omsk chances and also killed four third-period penalties.

The momentum carried over into the shootout where Igor Andryushchenko scored the game winning shot on Avangard's goaltender Alexander Fomichev. The shot propelled Junost Minsk into the both the Continental Cup record books and those in Belarus.

■ For Junost, the Super Final title game was just one of many dramatic moments the team had on the win-

ning road to the Continental Cup title.

Unlike Avangard Omsk, which was automatically qualified to the Super Final round, Junost Minsk had to go through the qualification process to earn a spot in the four-team final.

Playing on home ice in the third round qualification, Junost had its hands full, edging Kazakhmys Karaganda from Kazakhstan in the final game of the tournament with a 2-1 overtime win. The win gave Junost a one-point edge over Kazakhmys and a spot in the Super Final.

■ In fact, it might have been the struggle to get the Super Final that ultimately lifted Junost Minsk to the win. Of the four teams playing in Hungary, only Junost went through the qualification process. Alba Volan was automatically qualified as the host nation, while Ilves Tampere earned a berth as one of the top seeded teams along with Omsk.

Last year Riga 2000 almost pulled off a similar feat by becoming a qualifying team to win the title, but in the end fell short. So not only was Junost's win for their nation, but also for all the underdogs in the Continental Cup tournament.



PHOTO: Andras Wirth

**JUBILANT JUNOST:** For the first time in IIHF and Continental Cup history, a team from Belarus won a major club event. Andrei Kovalev proudly accepted the Continental Cup after a dramatic shootout win against Avangard Omsk.

# Canada's U20 streak extends

By **Szymon Szemberg**  
Leksand, Mora, SWEDEN

■ ■ ■ There is something about the Canadian U20 teams that the Russian counterparts cannot handle. Or to put it another way: the Canadian juniors have an excellent ability to wipe out any significant edge that the Russians seem to have prior to any gold medal game. Or how else can one explain this golden game triple:

- 2005: Canada - Russia 6-1
- 2006: Canada - Russia 5-0
- 2007: Canada - Russia 4-2



Whatever the reason, the IIHF World U20 Championship is an event where superiority comes in phases. For seven years, between 1998 and 2004, the Canadians simply couldn't win the gold, no matter how good the teams were and how impressive the runs were leading up to the big game. During that period, Canada lost three gold medal games to Russia and one to the United States.

The swing in momentum came in Grand Forks, USA in 2005 when Canada got rid of all frustrations by winning its first U20 title after a seven-year drought. Two years later Canada seems nearly invincible and carries the following streaks over to the 2008 IIHF World U20 Championship in Czech Republic (Pardubice & Liberec):

- Three consecutive gold medals.
- An impressive 18-0 record.
- A preliminary round winning streak that started at the 2002 event, a 4-1-loss to Finland.
- Since that loss, Canada has a 28-2-record, with the two losses coming in the 2003 and 2004 gold medal games, to Russia and the U.S. respectively.

This is the most impressive run since Canada won five consecutive "World Juniors" between 1993 and 1997. But history shows how fast U20 success can turn into misery. After the five golds, Canada finished 8th in 1998.

At least, for the Russians, the gold medal game in Leksand, Sweden didn't end with a run-away score like in the two previous years. The 4-2 final score is respectable, but Canada still ran up a 4-0-score early in the second period and their win was never in doubt -- but their final game participation certainly was.

■ ■ ■ Canada and USA were involved in one of the most thrilling games in World U20 history when the teams met in the semifinal. The game will forever be remembered for its game winning shot competition (shootout). After 1-1 in regulation, the teams went for seven rounds of shots where nine goals were scored while five were saved by superb goaltenders Cary Price (Canada) and Jeff Frazee (USA). Jonathan Toews became the shoot-out hero as he converted all of his three attempts, including the one that was the winner, the official 'game winning shot'.

The shootout - and particular Jonathan Toews - is already part of Canada's world junior hockey lore. Toews became the first player in IIHF history to score three goals in one shootout, but more importantly, this was probably the best shootout ever held in an international game. While there have been many experienced pros in the Olympics and in men's IIHF World Championships not being able to handle the pressure of the shootout, where they either lost the handle on the puck or shot wide, these North American teenagers were amazingly poised.

All nine goals were perfectly executed shots and the five efforts that didn't find the back of the net were goalie saves. None of the shots went wide.

■ ■ ■ The most encouraging signs of the championship came from an unexpected source as the two countries that were promoted from Division I, Germany and Belarus dazzled. Both nations made this a breakthrough at this U20 championship in terms of parity. They each opened the championship with surprise wins, the Germans defeated the U.S. in overtime while Belarus scored an upset win over medal-contender Finland, 4-3.

The two scores influenced the entire tournament. Every game thereafter carried significance and eventually resulted in a scenario where a team, that was one goal from getting to the playoff round, was later relegated. When Sweden and the United States



**THE CLINCHER:** Russia's goalie Semen Varlamov can't stop Canada's Brad Marchand 4-0-shot in the second back but only halfway. Canada won a third straight IIHF World U20 Championship gold in Leksand, Sweden Republic next year. The reigning World Junior champions have not lost a preliminary round game since 2002 a-row from 1993 to 1997.

played the last game of the preliminary round, a Swedish overtime goal would have sent the U.S. to the relegation round while Germany would have been in the quarter-final. As American Jack Johnson ended the deadlock in extra time, the teams went opposite ways. Instead of playing to avoid relegation, the Americans were eventually one shoot-out goal from being in the gold medal game. This is how close this championship was.

■ ■ ■ The drama continued until the last day of the relegation round, when finally Germany and Belarus were heading back to division I. Regardless of affinity, there is no question that many felt sorry for the vastly improved Germans who had five points in the preliminary round and were in a good position to stay in the elite division as their 4-2-win over Slovakia carried over to the relegation round. There, they needed only one point in any of the two other games, against Belarus or Switzerland.

They led 1-0 after the first period against Belarus, but lost 3-1. They had 2-2 after the first period against Switzerland but lost 5-3. Nevertheless, teams in a World U20 Championship have never been so evenly matched as in 2007. Add also Sweden to the improving countries. Much has been previously written about their sagging junior program, but this championship on home ice was a confirmation of a positive trend. Their fourth place was the best since 2001 and a consequence of steady improvement since the dismal 8th place in 2003. Since that year Sweden has improved by one place each year.

■ ■ ■ The Czechs and the Slovaks were the lone disappointments which has also been the trend for the last few years as both countries rely heavily on players who transfer early to the Canadian major junior leagues. The depleting of the Slovak junior system has gone so far that Slovakia is much closer to division I today than to a quarterfinal spot. Only thanks to a couple of results beyond their control did the Slovaks manage to stay in the elite division. The only game that Slovakia won in Sweden was 9-0 against a demoralized Belarus on the last day of the championship.

# s to three



period of the gold medal game. The Russians staged a comeback and they carry some serious streaks with them to the Czech and they two golds left to match their own record of five-in-

■ ■ Due to the influx of players from the Canadian junior ranks, the Czech team carries none of the characteristics that earlier defined their hockey teams. The Czech junior team is not Czech, it's not Canadian, it's just a non-cohesive blend of too many things that doesn't seem to lead anywhere. Out of the 22-man rosters, the Czechs had 15 players coming from the Canadian leagues, the Slovaks 13.

As the IIHF World U20 Championship goes to the Czech Republic in 2008, there are definitely some lessons to be learned and conclusions to be drawn by the hosting nation and their neighbors.



**SHOOT-OUT KING:**

Canada's Jonathan Toews wrote a piece on international hockey history when he became the first player to score three goals in one IIHF World Championship shootout. Here, Toews gets the winner past U.S. goalie Jeff Frazee as the puck just hits the back of the net to end the semifinal between Canada and the United States.

**U20 Photos:** Jukka Rautio, Jani Rajamaki, Mikael Fritzell, Craig Campbell.



**ANNUAL EVENT:** Fans who follow the IIHF World U20 Championship are used to seeing this photo: Canada is No. 1.

## North American players dominate Directorate and Media All-Star awards



Carey Price, CAN



Kris Letang, CAN



Eric Johnson, USA



Jonathan Toews, CAN



Patrick Kane, USA



Alexei Cherepanov, RUS

When the individual awards were handed out in Sweden, both the Directorate and Media All-Star teams had a decidedly North American flare.

Canada goaltender Carey Price took home the most hardware after being named to both the Media and Directorate teams and taking home the Tournament MVP honors. Joining Price on the Directorate team was USA defenseman Erik Johnson and Russian forward Alexei Cherepanov.

Cherepanov was the only non-North American to earn an individual honor. In fact in the last five years, the North Americans as a rule have dominated the individual awards at the U20 World Championship.

In that span, 18 of the 30 potential Media All-Star team awards have gone to North American players. An impressive statistic considering that there are only two teams earning more than half of all the awards. In that time there has also been at least one North American on every IIHF Directorate Team.

Of course, it helps that in the last five years, Canada and USA have won the gold medal four times. After all, to the victors goes the spoils.

Directorate Awards	Media All-Stars
G: Carey Price	G: Carey Price
D: Erik Johnson	D: Erik Johnson, Kris Letang
F: Alexei Cherepanov	F: Alexei Cherepanov, Pat Kane, Jonathan Toews



## HOCKEY IN ASIA: SPECIAL REPORT

## The year of the hockey player begins in China

■ It's no secret that China is a great sporting nation, but a great hockey nation?

Despite having more than one billion inhabitants, ice hockey does not enjoy great success or popularity in China. In fact the most populous nation in the world has just under 800 registered hockey players.

■ But China has plan to increase hockey's visibility and popularity within its borders. And the plan begins this season with the hosting of two major IIHF events.

From March 3-11, the Chinese will get their hosting feet wet when they welcome six teams for the IIHF World U18 Championship, Division III. The tournament will be held in the capital of Beijing, also the host city of the 2008 Olympic Summer Games.

■ But the real test for China comes on April 15, when the first game of IIHF Men's World Championship, Division I is played. The Men's Division I has long been considered a key event for the IIHF and the launching platform for teams to make it to hockey's biggest international stage: the IIHF World Championship.

For China, hosting the Men's Division I is especially impressive since the team just earned the promotion to from Division II last season. Were it not for a 4-1-0 record at last year's event, China would have earned either the promotion or the chance to host this major event. For the Division I Championship, the

Chinese have chosen the smaller city of Qiqihar (pronounced Chi-Chi-Har) to play host.

■ Also on the horizon for China is the 2008 World Women's Championship, which will provide China with both a great opportunity and a bit of redemption. Originally, the 2003 Women's World Championship was slotted to be played in China and boost interest in women's hockey in the nation. But due to an outbreak of the SARS virus, the event had to be cancelled. Now China is ready to welcome the world's best women's teams with open arms.

With three major events in three of the main IIHF categories, men's women's and juniors, hockey interest in the giant nation is sure to increase, and interest in China will intensify as the hockey world turns its eyes to the Asian giant.



**A FUTURE HOCKEY GIANT?** Hockey in China is popular primarily in the northeast region where Harbin, Qiqihar and Beijing are all located.

## North Korea ready to host

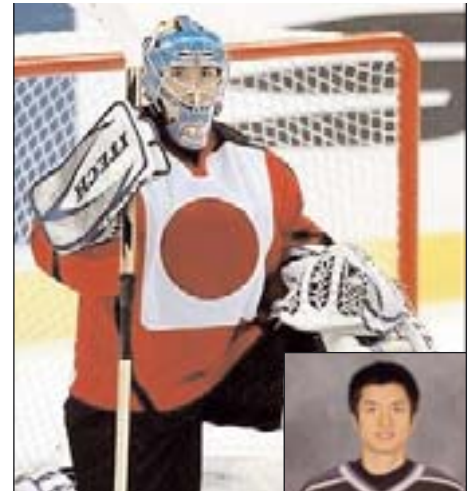


**HOCKEY HISTORY:** For the first time ever, a major international event will be played in North Korea. The country, which is famously hard to enter as a tourist will open its doors March 17-23 for the IIHF World Women's Championship, Division II. IIHF Deputy General Secretary Hannes Ederer took these photos of the arena, while on a site visit to host city Pyongyang.

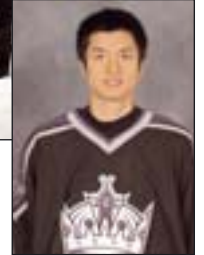
## ASIAN WINTER GAMES RESULTS SUMMARY

<b>Group A</b>			Japan - Kazakhstan	3 - 2	(2-1, 0-1, 1-0)
Japan - PRK	6 - 1	(0-0, 5-0, 1-1)	China - Korea	3 - 5	(2-0, 0-3, 1-2)
<b>Group B</b>			<b>Placement Round</b>		
Thailand - UAE	0 - 4	(0-1, 0-1, 0-2)	Thailand - Hong Kong	4 - 3	(0-0, 3-0, 1-3) 9th place
UAE - Kazakhstan	0-38	(0-14, 0-8, 0-16)	Malaysia - Kuwait	2-10	(1-2, 1-5, 0-3) 7th place
Kazakhstan - Thailand	52-1	(17-0, 20-0, 15-1)	UAE - PRK	2 - 9	(0-3,0-4, 2-2) 5th place
<b>Group C</b>			<b>Medal Round</b>		
Kuwait - Macau	15-2	(3-0, 7-0, 5-2)	Japan - China	3 - 1	(2-1, 1-0, 0-0)
Macau - China	0-26	(0-11, 0-8, 0-7)	Kazakhstan - Korea	8 - 1	(2-0, 3-0, 3-1)
China - Kuwait	11-1	(6-0, 4-0, 1-1)	<b>Top Four Placement:</b> 1. JPN; 2. KAZ; 3.KOR; 4. CHN		
<b>Group D</b>			<b>Women's Results</b>		
Malaysia - Hong Kong	7 - 3	(3-3, 1-0, 3-0)	PRK - Japan	2 - 3	(1-2, 0-0, 1-1)
Korea - Hong Kong	11-0	(3-0, 4-0, 4-0)	Korea - China	0-20	(0-6, 0-7, 0-7)
Malaysia - Korea	1-14	(0-3, 0-4, 1-7)	Kazakhstan - PRK	6 - 1	(1-0, 5-1, 0-0)
<b>Relegation Round</b>			Japan - Korea	29-0	(12-0, 6-0, 11-0)
Macau - Thailand	0 - 6	(0-2, 0-1, 0-3)	Kazakhstan - Korea	14-0	(5-0, 6-0, 3-0)
PRK - Malaysia	15-0	(8-0, 3-0, 4-0)	Japan China	4 - 2	(1-0, 1-2, 2-0)
Kuwait - UAE	2 - 6	(1-2, 0-2, 1-2)	PRK - Korea	5 - 0	(4-0, 1-0, 0-0)
<b>Qualification Round</b>			China - Kazakhstan	1 - 3	(1-1, 0-1, 0-1)
Japan - Korea	3 - 0	(0-0, 1-0, 2-0)	China - PRK	6 - 3	(1-0, 2-0, 3-3) bronze
China - Kazakhstan	1-17	(0-6, 0-5, 1-5)	Kazakhstan - Japan	2 - 1	(2-0, 0-1, 0-0) gold

## A First for Japan: Fukufuji plays in NHL



It may have just seemed like another normal NHL regular season game when the Los Angeles Kings and the St. Louis Blues met on January 13.



But for one player, and his home nation, the match-up was no ordinary affair as Yutaka Fukufuji became the first-ever Japanese born player to play in an NHL game.

Fukufuji entered the game at the start the third to replace Barry Brust. He faced five shots, but allowed game-winning goal 7:32 into the period in the King's 6-5 loss.

The 24-year-old Fukufuji had already made history earlier in the season when he became the first Japanese goaltender to dress for an NHL game on December 16. He went back down to the minor leagues after that game, but was recalled on an emergency basis after Mathieu Garon was placed on injured reserve with an injured finger.

For Los Angeles head coach Marc Crawford, Fukufuji is making a positive impression as an ambassador for Japanese hockey.

"He's got a great passion for the game and he's great for hockey back in Japan," Crawford said. "Hopefully they can point to him as a guy who's made the grade and can inspire other players.

Fukufuji, who played for Kokudo back in Japan, was the King's eighth-round pick in the 2004 NHL draft. He started his North American career in Bakersfield in the East Coast Hockey League before moving onto the American Hockey League with Reading and Manchester.

The budding star has been on a whirlwind tour this season, having started in the fifth place in the King's goaltender pecking order. But injuries pushed Fukufuji onto the King's game-day roster, and a lackluster performance by starter Barry Brust thrust Fukufuji into the spotlight.

Back home in Japan, news of Fukufuji's accomplishment is big news. In fact for a recent game in Atlanta, there were about a dozen Japanese reporters on hand.

But Fukufuji kept it all in perspective. "I was so nervous," he said. "But I was very excited, too."

- With files from AP





# The Great Outdoors: Switzerland and Russia are the latest to go beyond the walls

■ ■ They say that life comes full circle. And so it is with hockey. The sport that was once, decades ago, exclusively played in outdoor venues is going back to its roots as more and more nations embrace the spectacle of the outdoor hockey game. The trend started in 2001 when U.S. college rivals University of Michigan and Michigan State played in an American football stadium in front of 74,554 spectators. The NHL followed suit the next season with an outdoor game in Edmonton. This year, two more nations joined in the fun as Switzerland and Russia each hosted outdoor events.

The Swiss outdoor game between SC Bern and the SCL Tigers was played in a football arena in Bern in front of more than 30,000 people. But the prize for creativity must go to the Russians who dazzled the outdoor scene by setting up an arena in world-famous Red Square. Below is a collection of photos from this season's outdoor games in Russia and Switzerland.



Photos: VLADIMIR BEZZUBOV  
**RED JERSEYS IN RED SQUARE!** To mark its 60-year anniversary the Russian Association invited some of its illustrious former players to entertain the masses in famed Red Square. Left, the Kremlin is the backdrop during warm-ups, while above the famous 'First Five' unit from the 1980s of (from left) Vladimir Krutov, Vyacheslav Fetisov, Igor Larionov, Alexei Kasatonov and Sergei Makarov are reunited for the historic game.

Photos: EQ IMAGES

**LIONS & TIGERS & BEARS, OH MY!** *It was the Bears vs. the Tigers on the ice in Switzerland, but the spectacle of the outdoor game left Swiss fans in awe. Over 30,000 fans journeyed to Stade de Suisse football stadium on a perfect blue-skied evening to make Swiss hockey history. It was the largest-ever crowd to witness a European club hockey game*



## DUMP AND CHASE FROM THE WORLD OF HOCKEY

■ ■ It was familiar foes in the gold medal game of the 23rd Winter Universiade in Torino, as Canada and Russia faced-off for gold. After a 2-2 preliminary round meeting, the Canadians rebounded for the gold medal win with a 3-1 win.

The win ended all hopes for a Russian golden three-peat at the Universiade games. It was the third gold for Canada at the Winter Universiade. They captured gold in 1981 and in 1991. The Universiade is a cultural and sports event

which takes places every two years in varying countries. There is both a Summer and Winter Universiade Games.



Canada celebrates its gold medal win at the Winter Universiade Games.

■ ■ **Jörgen Jönsson** finally owns the Swedish record that declares that he is the 'Iron Man' of the Swedish National Team. At the LG Games during the international break, Jönsson played in his 273 game for the Tre Kronor. Jönsson broke the record in appropriate fashion against Finland in the final game of the tournament, with a 1-0 win. The previous Swedish record was held by **Jonas Bergqvist** who had 272 games in the yellow and blue.

■ ■ Not to be outdone by his northern neighbor, Swiss standout **Martin Steinegger** also broke the record for the most games played in the red and white of the Swiss National Team jersey. Steinegger played his 214th game in the opener of Skoda Cup, held in Basel, Switzerland during the February international break. Steinegger was recognized in a pre-game ceremony. The record was previously held by **Jakob Kölliker**, who is the current Swiss men's team assistant coach and the head coach of the Swiss U20 team. Kölliker will be inducted into the IIHF Hall of Fame this May in Moscow.

■ ■ **Karlis Strastins** broke Tim Hortons' NHL record for endurance for a defenseman when he played his 487th consecutive regular season game on February 8 in Denver. The record, which had stood since 1968, was honored by the Colorado Avalanche in a pre-game ceremony. Before the puck was dropped, Strastins was joined by two of Horton's four daughters on the ice. Strastins is a native of Riga, Latvia and has been a mainstay on Latvia's national team. Since he started his impressive streak on Feb. 21, 2000, Strastins has played in four IIHF World Championships and two Olympics for Latvia.

■ ■ **Walter L. Bush Jr.**, IIHF Vice President and chairman of the board for USA Hockey, was honored with the inaugural George M. Steinbrenner III Sport Leadership Award by the United States Olympic Foundation. The Steinbrenner Award is based on the qualities of leadership, ethical conduct and dedicated responsibility reflected in long-standing contributions to sport.

## RESULTS SUMMARY

## IIHF Women's U18 Invitational

Vierumaki, FINLAND February 9-11

Group A	
Netherlands - Switzerland	2 - 3 (1-2, 0-0, 1-0) ot
Finland - Japan	4 - 0 (1-0, 2-0, 1-0)
Switzerland - Japan	2 - 1 (1-0, 0-0, 0-1) ot
Finland - Netherlands	18-0 (5-0, 7-0, 6-0)
Finland - Switzerland	2 - 1 (1-0, 0-1, 1-0)
Japan - Netherlands	4 - 3 (0-0, 4-0, 0-3)

Finland	3	3	0	0	0	24-1	9
Switzerland	3	0	2	0	1	6-5	4
Japan	3	1	0	1	1	5-9	4
Netherlands	3	0	0	1	2	5-25	1

## IIHF Women's U18 Invitational

Nymburk, CZECH REPUBLIC February 9-11

Group B	
Kazakhstan - Sweden	1 - 4 (0-2, 0-1, 1-1)
Czech Republic - Austria	3 - 1 (0-1, 3-0, 0-0)
Sweden - Austria	5 - 1 (2-0, 1-0, 2-1)
Czech Republic - Kazakhstan	11-1 (4-1, 6-0, 1-0)
Austria - Kazakhstan	3 - 2 (0-1, 3-1, 0-0)
Czech Republic - Sweden	1 - 2 (0-0, 1-1, 0-1)

Sweden	3	3	0	0	0	11-3	9
Czech Republic	3	2	0	0	1	15-4	6
Austria	3	1	0	0	2	5-10	3
Kazakhstan	3	0	0	0	3	4-18	0

## Euro Hockey Challenge - LG Games

Stockholm, SWEDEN February 8-11

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

Sweden	3	3	0	0	0	13-3	9
Russia	3	0	2	0	1	9-11	4
Czech Republic	3	1	0	1	1	8-9	4
Finland	3	0	0	1	2	3-10	1

## Men's Four Nations - Skoda Cup

Basel, SWITZERLAND February 9-11

Slovakia - Austria	6 - 2 (1-1, 2-1, 3-0)
Switzerland - Germany	3 - 1 (2-0, 1-1, 0-0)
Germany - Austria	4 - 6 (1-2, 1-2, 2-2)
Switzerland - Slovakia	3 - 2 (1-1, 2-0, 0-1)
Slovakia - Germany	2 - 3 (0-0, 1-1, 1-1) gws
Austria - Switzerland	1 - 3 (0-1, 1-0, 0-2)

Switzerland	3	3	0	0	0	9-4	9
Slovakia	3	1	0	1	0	10-8	4
Austria	3	1	0	0	2	9-13	3
Germany	3	0	1	0	2	8-11	2

## U18 Four Nations

Piestany, SLOVAKIA February 9-11

Germany - USA U17	1 - 1 (1-0, 0-0, 0-1)
Slovakia - Switzerland	1 - 1 (1-0, 0-1, 0-0)
Slovakia - Germany	3 - 2 (0-0, 1-0, 2-2)
USA U17 - Switzerland	2 - 2 (0-0, 2-2, 0-0)
Slovakia - USA U17	1 - 5 (0-2, 1-1, 0-2)
Switzerland - Germany	4 - 0 (1-0, 2-0, 1-0)

USA U17	3	1	2	0	8-4	4
Switzerland	3	1	2	0	7-3	4
Slovakia	3	1	1	1	5-8	3
Germany	3	0	1	2	3-8	1

## U18 Five Nations Tournament

CZECH REPUBLIC February 7-11

Russia - Sweden	2 - 8 (2-1, 0-3, 0-4)
Czech Republic - USA	1 - 3 (0-0, 0-1, 1-2)
Finland - USA	2 - 3 (0-0, 1-1, 1-1) gws
Czech Republic - Sweden	0 - 1 (0-1, 0-0, 0-0)
Finland - Russia	1 - 3 (0-1, 0-0, 1-2)
Sweden - USA	2 - 3 (1-1, 1-1, 0-0) ot
Russia - USA	2 - 3 (1-1, 0-0, 1-1) gws
Czech Republic - Finland	1 - 4 (0-1, 1-1, 0-2)
Sweden - Finland	3 - 2 (2-1, 0-0, 0-1) ot
Czech Republic - Russia	2 - 6 (0-1, 0-4, 2-1)

USA	4	1	3	0	0	12-7	9
Sweden	4	2	1	1	0	14-7	9
Russia	4	2	0	1	1	13-14	7
Finland	4	1	0	2	1	9-10	5
Czech Republic	4	0	0	0	4	4-14	0

## A tale of old foes has a Grand Finale in Montreal

■ ■ They met for the first time 35 years ago, during the days of the Cold War. Vladislav Tretiak was a young 20 year-old, while Ken Dryden was the 'veteran' at 25 years old when the two were the goaltenders for the Soviet Union and Canada respectively in the historic and now legendary eight-game Summit Series that began on September 2, 1972 in Montreal.

The storied pair faced each other in the famous 1975 New Year's Eve game between the Montreal Canadiens and CSKA Moscow as well as in the prestigious Challenge Cup Series in New York in 1979. For players from those teams to communicate in those days was unheard of. To become friends was unthinkable.

■ ■ But as sports history shows, it is very often the athletes who are the biggest enemies and fiercest rivals who bestow each other with the greatest respect - and very often friendship - when the athletic careers are over.

So when Ken Dryden's famous No. 29 jersey was retired and raised to the rafters of the Bell Centre during an emotional ceremony in Montreal on January 29 (an appropriate date if there ever was one), the former Montreal Canadien invited his old foe and now friend Vladislav Tretiak to join him for the ceremony. And as the photos clearly indicate, the relationship was different from September 1972.

Interestingly enough, despite living on opposite ends of the world, both men have followed parallel paths since retiring from the game.

The pair have each gone on to remarkable careers in politics and public leadership. Dryden is one of the most prominent leaders of Canada's liberal party and a member of parliament, while Tretiak is chairman of the State Duma (lower house of the Russian parliament) Committee on Physical Culture, Sport, and



Photos: BOB FISHER and LADISLAV KADYSZEWSKI

**No 20 & 29 = TRUE!** Two of the best goaltenders of the 1970s were reunited in Montreal on January 29 when Ken Dryden (right) invited Vladislav Tretiak to the ceremony when Dryden's number 29 jersey was retired by the Montreal Canadiens. Maybe Tretiak's number 20 would have been there as well if not the Soviet authorities had stopped his transfer to Montreal, something that eventually prompted Tretiak's premature retirement. Both are today prominent politicians in their countries.

Youth. Tretiak was also recently named the president of the Russian Ice Hockey Federation.

■ ■ Dryden retired early, in 1979, at the age of 32, after winning six Stanley Cups in a career that only lasted eight years. And as the Montreal Canadiens were looking for an adequate replacement they draf-

ted Tretiak in 1983 and tried to negotiate his release with the Soviet authorities. In those days, it simply wasn't possible for the borders to be crossed so easily. East was east and west was west. Because Tretiak was not allowed to leave for the NHL and Montreal, he retired in 1984. Just as Dryden when he decided to hang 'em up, Tretiak was 32.

## RESULTS SUMMARY

## IIHF World U20 Championship

Mora &amp; Leksand, SWEDEN Dec. 26 - Jan. 5

## Preliminary Round - Group A

Germany - United States	2 - 1	(1-0, 0-0, 0-1) ot
Sweden - Canada	0 - 2	(0-1, 0-1, 0-0)
Slovakia - Germany	2 - 4	(1-2, 1-0, 0-2)
Canada - United States	6 - 3	(2-0, 1-2, 3-1)
Slovakia - Sweden	3 - 6	(2-2, 1-1, 0-3)
Germany - Canada	1 - 3	(0-1, 1-1, 0-1)
United States - Slovakia	6 - 1	(2-0, 2-0, 2-1)
Sweden - Germany	3 - 1	(1-0, 1-1, 1-0)
Canada - Slovakia	3 - 0	(2-0, 1-0, 0-0)
United States - Sweden	3 - 2	(0-0, 2-1, 0-1) ot

Canada*	4	4	0	0	0	14 - 4	10
Sweden	4	2	0	1	1	11 - 9	7
United States	4	1	1	1	1	13-11	6
Germany	4	1	1	0	2	8 - 9	5
Slovakia	4	0	0	0	4	6 - 19	0

\*Canada qualified directly to semi-final

## Preliminary Round - Group B

Belarus - Finland	4 - 3	(1-1, 0-1, 3-1)
Czech Republic - Russia	2 - 3	(1-0, 0-2, 1-1)
Switzerland - Belarus	4 - 1	(0-1, 2-0, 2-0)
Finland - Czech Republic	6 - 2	(0-1, 3-1, 3-0)
Russia - Switzerland	6 - 0	(0-0, 2-0, 4-0)
Belarus - Russia	1 - 6	(0-3, 1-2, 0-1)
Finland - Switzerland	4 - 0	(2-0, 1-0, 1-0)
Czech Republic - Belarus	2 - 1	(1-0, 0-1, 1-0)
Russia - Finland	5 - 0	(2-0, 2-0, 1-0)
Switzerland - Czech Republic	2 - 4	(1-3, 1-0, 0-1)

Russia*	4	4	0	0	0	20 - 3	10
Finland	4	2	0	0	2	13-11	6
Czech Republic	4	2	0	0	2	10-12	6
Switzerland	4	1	0	0	3	6 - 15	3
Belarus	4	1	0	0	3	7 - 15	3

\*Russia qualified directly to semi-final

## Relegation Round

Switzerland - Belarus	4 - 1	(0-1, 2-0, 2-0)
Slovakia - Germany	2 - 4	(1-2, 1-0, 0-2)
Switzerland - Slovakia	2 - 1	(1-0, 0-1, 1-0)
Germany - Belarus	1 - 3	(1-0, 0-1, 0-2)
Belarus - Slovakia	0 - 9	(0-3, 0-4, 0-2)
Germany - Switzerland	3 - 5	(2-2, 0-2, 1-1)

Switzerland	3	3	0	0	0	11 - 5	9
Slovakia	3	1	0	0	2	12 - 6	3
Germany	3	1	0	0	2	8 - 10	3
Belarus	3	1	0	0	2	4 - 14	3

Germany &amp; Belarus relegated to 2008 Division I U20 Championship

## Playoff Round

Sweden - Czech Republic	5 - 1	(2-1, 2-0, 1-0) QF
Finland - United States	3 - 6	(0-1, 2-1, 1-4) QF
United States - Canada	1 - 2	(0-0, 1-0, 0-1) gws SF
Russia - Sweden	4 - 2	(2-1, 1-0, 1-1) SF
Czech Republic - Finland	6 - 2	(2-1, 3-1, 1-0) 5th place
Sweden - United States	1 - 2	(0-1, 1-1, 0-0) bronze
Russia - Canada	2 - 4	(0-3, 2-1, 0-0) gold

## Final Ranking

1. CAN, 2. RUS, 3. USA, 4. SWE, 5. CZE, 6. FIN, 7. SUI, 8. SVK, 9. GER, 10. BLR

## Tournament Directorate

Best Goaltender: Carey Price (CAN)  
Best Defenseman: Erik Johnson (USA)  
Best Forward: Alexei Cherepanov (RUS)

## Tournament Media All-Star Team

Goaltender: Carey Price (CAN)  
Defenseman: Erik Johnson (USA); Kristopher Letang (CAN)  
Best Forwards: Alexei Cherepanov (RUS); Patrick Kane (USA); Jonathan Toews (CAN)  
Tournament MVP: Carey Price (CAN)

## Individual Scoring

1 JOHNSON Erik	USA	7	4	6	10
1 LEHTONEN Mikko	FIN	6	4	6	10
3 LINDGREN Perttu	FIN	6	2	8	10
4 KANE Pat	USA	7	5	4	9
5 CHEREPANOV Alexei	RUS	6	5	3	8
5 OSALA Oskar	FIN	6	5	3	8
5 SCHUTZ Felix	GER	6	5	3	8
8 SOBOTKA Vladimir	CZE	6	4	4	8
9 BUMAGIN Alexander	RUS	6	2	6	8
10. TOEWS Jonathan	CAN	6	4	3	7
11 BACKSTROM Nicklas	SWE	7	0	7	7

## IIHF World U20 Championship Div. I Gr. A

Odense, DENMARK December 11-17

Estonia - Latvia	0 - 6	(0-2, 0-3, 0-1)
Ukraine - Slovenia	2 - 1	(0-1, 1-0, 1-0)
Poland - Denmark	1 - 4	(1-1, 0-2, 0-1)
Slovenia - Estonia	4 - 1	(2-0, 1-0, 1-1)
Latvia - Poland	7 - 2	(3-1, 2-1, 2-0)
Denmark - Ukraine	4 - 2	(2-1, 1-0, 1-1)
Estonia - Poland	3 - 6	(0-1, 2-2, 1-3)
Latvia - Ukraine	4 - 5	(1-3, 1-2, 2-0)
Denmark - Slovenia	4 - 2	(1-0, 2-2, 1-0)
Poland - Ukraine	0 - 4	(0-1, 0-1, 0-2)
Slovenia - Latvia	2 - 7	(0-2, 0-3, 2-2)
Denmark - Estonia	7 - 1	(1-1, 6-0, 0-0)
Slovenia - Poland	3 - 5	(1-1, 2-1, 0-3)
Ukraine - Estonia	2 - 0	(1-0, 1-0, 0-0)
Latvia - Denmark	5 - 4	(2-0, 0-3, 3-1)

Denmark	5	4	0	0	1	23-11	12
Latvia	5	4	0	0	1	29-13	12
Ukraine	5	4	0	0	1	15 - 9	12
Poland	5	2	0	0	3	14-21	6
Slovenia	5	1	0	0	4	12-19	3
Estonia	5	0	0	0	5	5 - 25	0

Denmark promoted to 2008 IIHF World U20 Championship

Estonia relegated to 2008 IIHF World Championship, Division II

## IIHF World U20 Championship Div. I Gr. B

Torre Pellice, ITALY December 11-17

France - Kazakhstan	1 - 4	(0-1, 1-1, 0-2)
Great Britain - Norway	4 - 3	(1-1, 1-0, 2-2)
Austria - Italy	5 - 1	(3-1, 0-0, 2-0)
Norway - France	4 - 3	(0-0, 1-0, 2-3) ot
Kazakhstan - Austria	3 - 2	(0-0, 2-1, 0-1) ot
Italy - Great Britain	3 - 1	(1-1, 0-0, 2-0)
Norway - Austria	2 - 3	(0-1, 1-1, 1-1)
Great Britain - France	4 - 2	(0-0, 2-1, 2-1)
Kazakhstan - Italy	4 - 1	(1-0, 1-0, 2-1)
France - Austria	6 - 3	(3-0, 1-3, 2-0)
Kazakhstan - Great Britain	0 - 3	(0-2, 0-0, 0-1)
Italy - Norway	1 - 4	(0-1, 0-0, 1-1)
Austria - Great Britain	5 - 3	(1-2, 2-1, 2-0)
Norway - Kazakhstan	2 - 3	(2-2, 0-0, 0-1)
Italy - France	2 - 3	(0-1, 0-2, 2-0)

Kazakhstan	5	3	1	0	1	14 - 9	11
Austria	5	3	0	1	1	18-15	10
Great Britain	5	3	0	0	2	15-13	9
France	5	2	0	1	2	15-17	7
Norway	5	1	1	0	3	15-14	5
Italy	5	1	0	0	4	8 - 17	3

Kazakhstan promoted to 2008 IIHF World U20 Championship

Italy relegated to 2008 IIHF World Championship, Division II

## IIHF World U20 Championship Div. II Gr. A

Miercurea Ciuc, ROMANIA December 11-17

Croatia - Australia	6 - 1	(0-0, 3-0, 3-1)
Iceland - Spain	3 - 4	(1-0, 2-2, 0-2)
Romania - Hungary	2 - 8	(0-3, 1-4, 1-1)
Australia - Iceland	1 - 3	(0-0, 1-1, 0-2)
Hungary - Spain	12-4	(5-1, 3-1, 4-1)
Croatia - Romania	3 - 4	(0-0, 1-2, 2-1) gws
Hungary - Australia	11-5	(5-1, 1-1, 5-3)
Croatia - Iceland	8 - 6	(3-1, 3-3, 2-2)
Romania - Spain	6 - 1	(1-0, 2-1, 3-0)
Iceland - Hungary	1-17	(1-1, 0-8, 0-8)
Spain - Croatia	1 - 6	(1-0, 0-2, 0-4)
Australia - Romania	1 - 6	(0-2, 0-1, 1-3)
Spain - Australia	6 - 3	(3-1, 1-1, 2-1)
Hungary - Croatia	4 - 0	(2-0, 1-0, 1-0)
Romania - Iceland	5 - 0	(1-0, 2-0, 2-0)

Hungary	5	5	0	0	0	52-12	15
Romania	5	3	1	0	1	23-13	11
Croatia	5	3	0	1	1	23-16	10
Spain	5	2	0	0	3	16-30	6
Iceland	5	1	0	0	4	13-35	3
Australia	5	0	0	0	5	11-32	0

Hungary promoted to 2008 IIHF World U20 Championship, Division I

Australia relegated to 2008 IIHF World Championship, Division III

## IIHF World U20 Championship Div. II Gr. B

Elektrėnai, LITHUANIA December 10-16

Korea - Japan	3 - 4	(1-3, 1-0, 1-0, 0-0, 0-1)
Netherlands - Mexico	9 - 1	(3-0, 3-1, 3-0)
Lithuania - Serbia	8 - 1	(2-0, 4-0, 2-1)
Netherlands - Korea	5 - 2	(1-0, 2-1, 2-1)
Japan - Serbia	8 - 1	(2-1, 3-0, 3-0)

Mexico - Lithuania	0 - 9	(0-1, 0-4, 0-4)
Japan - Mexico	11-1	(5-1, 1-0, 5-0)
Korea - Serbia	4 - 5	(0-2, 3-1, 1-2)
Netherlands - Lithuania	3 - 4	(1-1, 1-2, 1-0) gws
Mexico - Korea	0 - 4	(0-1, 0-0, 0-3)
Serbia - Netherlands	1 - 9	(1-3, 0-2, 0-4)
Lithuania - Japan	5 - 3	(1-0, 2-1, 2-2)
Serbia - Mexico	4 - 5	(2-3, 0-0, 2-2)
Korea - Lithuania	0 - 4	(0-0, 0-3, 0-1)
Japan - Netherlands	5 - 4	(2-1, 0-0, 2-3) ot

Lithuania	5	4	1	0	0	30 - 7	14
Netherlands	3	0	2	0	1	30-13	11
Japan	5	2	2	0	1	31-14	10
Korea	5	1	0	1	3	13-18	4
Mexico	5	1	0	0	4	7 - 37	3
Serbia	5	1	0	0	4	12-34	3

Lithuania promoted to 2008 IIHF World U20 Championship, Division I

Serbia relegated to 2008 IIHF World Championship, Division III

## IIHF World U20 Championship Div. III

Ankara, TURKEY January 8-14

New Zealand - Armenia	6 - 5	(1-1, 2-4, 2-0) ot
Belgium - Bulgaria	9 - 1	(3-1, 1-0, 5-0)
Turkey - China	0 - 6	(0-2, 0-2, 0-2)
China - Bulgaria	15-3	(7-0, 6-0, 2-3)
Armenia - Belgium	4 - 7	(1-1, 3-2, 0-4)
New Zealand - Turkey	6 - 2	(0-2, 3-0, 3-0)
China - Armenia	7 - 4	(2-1, 3-2, 2-1)
New Zealand - Belgium	1 - 5	(0-3, 1-0, 0-2)
Turkey - Bulgaria	4 - 2	(2-1, 0-1, 2-0)
Belgium - China	4 - 5	(2-1, 0-2, 2-1) ot
Bulgaria - New Zealand	2 - 8	(1-3, 1-3, 0-2)
Armenia - Turkey	4 - 2	(1-0, 3-1, 0-1)
Bulgaria - Armenia	5 - 9	(0-2, 1-3, 4-4)
Turkey - Belgium	1-13	(0-1, 1-4, 0-8)
China - New Zealand	4 - 1	(1-0, 1-1, 2-0)

China	5	4	1	0	0	37-12	14
Belgium	5	4	0	1	0	38-12	13
New Zealand	5	2	1	0	2	22-18	8
Armenia	5	2	0	1	2	26-27	7
Turkey	5	1	0	0	4	9 - 31	3
Bulgaria	5	0	0	0	5	13-45	0

China &amp; Belgium promoted to 2008 IIHF World U20 Championship, Div. II

## IIHF European Champions Cup

St. Petersburg, RUSSIA January 11-14

## Ivan Hlinka Division

HPK - Zilina	7 - 0	(2-0, 3-0, 2-0)
Zilina - Sparta Prague	4 - 2	(0-1, 2-1, 2-0)
Sparta Prague - HPK	2 - 3	(1-1, 1-2, 0-0)

HPK (FIN)	2	2	0	0	0	10-2	6
Zilina (SVK)	2	1	0	0	1	4-9	3
Sparta Prague (CZE)	2	0	0	0	2	4 - 7	0

## Alexander Ragulin Division

Ak Bars Kazan - Farjestad	6 - 4	(2-2, 2-1, 2-1)
Farjestad - Lugano	0 - 3	(0-1, 0-1, 0-1)
Lugano - Ak Bars Kazan	0 - 3	(0-1, 0-1, 0-1)

Ak Bars Kazan (RUS)	2	2	0	0	0	9 - 4	6
Lugano (SUI)	2	1	0	0	1	3 - 3	3
Farjestad (SWE)	2	0	0	0	2	4 - 9	0

## Final Game

HPK - Ak Bars Kazan	0 - 6	(0-3, 0-0, 0-3)
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## IIHF Continental Cup Super Final

Szekesfehervar, HUNGARY January 5-7

Ilves Tampere - Junost Minsk	2 - 3	(0-0, 2-2, 0-1)
Alba Volan - Avangard Omsk	2 - 6	(0-3, 1-3, 1-0)
Ilves Tampere - Avangard Omsk	1 - 4	(0-2, 0-1, 1-1)
Junost Minsk - Alba Volan	5 - 2	(2-1, 1-0, 2-1)
Avangard Omsk - Junost Minsk	0 - 1	(0-0, 0-0, 0-0) gws

Junost Minsk (BLR)	3	2	1	0	0	9 - 4	8
Avangard Omsk (RUS)	3	2	0	1	0	10-4	7
Ilves Tampere (FIN)	3	1	0	0	2	8 - 8	3
Alba Volan (HUN)	3	0	0	0	3	5-16	0

**RED FISHER**

**Born:** August 22, 1926 in Montreal, Canada.

■ Started to write for the Montreal Star on March 15, 1954.

■ Covered his first hockey game on March 17, 1955 at the Montreal Forum.

■ Joined the Montreal Gazette when the Star went out of business in 1979.

■ Won Canada's National Newspaper Award in 1971, 1991.

■ Will keep on covering hockey until "I get it right."

**AN OFFICE WITH A VIEW:** Red Fisher has had this take on the game for over five decades. Between 1955 and 1996 he had a seat in the pressbox of the fabled Montreal Forum and in 1996 he moved to the new Bell Centre. Despite closing in on 81, Red has no imminent plans to retire. "I have to keep busy, I like being busy," he says. Covering a team that plays 82 games a season surely does that.



Photo: CHRISTINE MUSCH, The Gazette

# They shoot, he writes - for 52 years ... and counting!

By Szymon Szemberg

There are some records in hockey that will probably never be broken:

- USSR's nine consecutive world championship titles.
- NHL-goaltender Glenn Hall's 502 consecutive games.
- Red Fisher's 52 consecutive years as a hockey reporter.

It's not very often that people that deliver news, make the news. In the 35 previous IHTF *Ice Times* back-page interviews we have never featured a journalist. Red Fisher is an exception. The 80-year old has covered hockey, the NHL and the Montreal Canadiens virtually on a daily basis for 52 straight seasons.

■ When Fisher turned 80 on August 26 last year, he received a birthday card from Vladislav Tretiak, the former Soviet goaltending great who today is the president of the Russian ice hockey federation. The card came almost to day 35 years after Fisher covered Tretiak for the first time, a few days prior to the opening of the historic 1972 Summit Series between Team Canada and the Soviet Union.

In 1972, Red Fisher was already in his 17th year covering the game. He'll never forget his first hockey assignment, on March 17th 1955. His editor asked him to cover a presumably heated battle between the home town Montreal Canadiens and the Detroit Red Wings. That day will in hockey history always be remembered as the Rocket Richard Riot, a night when the arena turned into an ugly mob scene that spread to the streets where stores were looted, fires set and cars vandalized. A 29-year old hockey reporter found himself in the middle of what looked like a civil war.

■ The 52 years that followed were mostly about hockey. After having filed 15,000 newspaper stories and covered

17 Stanley Cup winning campaigns of the NHL's most storied club, Red Fisher is still doing what he does best, watching games from his seat in the press box, beating deadlines with game reports, writing features and columns.

■ Fisher prides himself never to get emotionally involved. He is a reporter, not a cheerleader. But on some of the stories he has covered, it wasn't humanly possible not to involve feelings. In 1991, he received his second Canadian National Newspaper Award for sportswriting after a series where he featured former Canadiens coach Toe Blake's Alzheimer disease and the inevitable and undignified end.

In 2002 he followed the Canadiens Finnish captain Saku Koivu's fight with stomach cancer. This December he had to write about the Montreal general manager Bob Gainey who, after losing his wife to brain cancer some years ago and being left with alone with four children, lost one of his daughters at sea when she was swept overboard by a massive wave.

■ Compared to things like that, sport and whether a puck crossed the goal line or not, is not all that important. But Red admits that - once - did hockey get the best of him.

"You can't do your job properly if you're a fan. However, the 1972 Summit Series was different. This wasn't merely an eight-game series. It was, in our minds at least, one form of society against another. It was different from anything else I ever covered."

Another international event that Red will never forget was the 1969 IHTF World Championship in Stockholm. "It was six months or so after the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia and I was fortunate to there for one of the greatest games I've ever seen, Czechoslovakia

against Soviet Union. Hoo boy, I can still see Vaclav Nedomansky chopping down trees wearing Soviet sweaters with his stick."

**Who was the greatest player you have seen?**

Bobby Orr. He pulled me out of my seat more often than anyone. Why? Some players skate at top speed, hit at top speed, pass at top speed. Orr did all of these things at top speed.

**The best player to interview?**

Most of the players in the six-team NHL always had something interesting to say, but down the line Ken Dryden, who had - and still does have - a massive intellect, was the best.

**Best advice for a young reporter just starting on the beat?**

Criticize, but be fair. Write about the game and the players, but don't write merely to bring attention to yourself. My favourite four-letter word in this business has always been "fair". Players respect a guy for that because they know I respect them.

**What is the optimal reward for a reporter?**

In my case, it's doing the job the best way I can and gaining the respect of the people I interview and, hopefully, from the people I'm competing against. Being the one who gets the story first has always been a joy.

**In general, people retire when they are 65. Honestly Red, what keeps you in this highly competitive and stressful business at 81?**

"I have to keep busy, I like being busy. When people ask me why I don't retire I tell them I want to keep on doing this until I get it right."

**Finally, let's kill a myth. They say that Red Fisher never talks to rookies. Surely you must have made some exceptions?**

"I talked to Guy Lafleur during his rookie season, also to Patrick Roy and maybe a few others, but not many. Why? I didn't feel I could learn anything from rookies. Why waste my time and theirs?"

