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The world's elite are coming to Russia



– and Coach Bykov tries to end Russia's 13-year gold medal drought



After 1957, 1973, 1979 and 1986 the IIHF World Championship is returning to Moscow for the 71st edition. It's hard to believe that in the 21 years since the last event in this city, no home team has managed to win gold. Will Vyacheslav Bykov's Team Russia finally break the curse?

RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL

■ ■ It's strange how destiny sometimes is at work. The last time a hosting nation won the IIHF World Championship was in Moscow 1986, when Vyacheslav Bykov was a dominant figure on the Soviet team that swept through the event undefeated and won their 20th out of a total of 22 world championship gold medals for the Soviet Union. Despite eventually winning all ten games, it was thanks to Bykov's winning goal in the last minutes of the last game against Sweden that the USSR secured first place (see page 7).

Today, 21 years later, Bykov is the new head coach of Team Russia and an entire nation is hoping that he will end the home-team curse which now lasts over two decades. While Bykov would like to end this jinx, the Russian coach would love to keep another home-streak going. In the four previous IIHF World Championships in Moscow, the "Big Red Machine" did not lose one single game. How is that for pressure?

■ ■ The position of President of the IIHF doesn't allow me to have favorite national teams, but it should be legitimate to reveal personal favorites.

Vyacheslav Bykov was one of the most exciting, most skillful and most entertaining players I saw during the 80s. Together with Andrei Khomutov, they were a fabulous one-two punch for both the national team and CSKA Moscow.

■ ■ Since we are in the process of revealing secrets, let me make one more public. After the 1990 IIHF World Championship in Switzerland, I contributed to the transfer that saw both Bykov and Khomutov relocate from CSKA to Fribourg-Gotteron of the Swiss league, a move that boosted fan-interest in Switzerland considerably. No, I did not use my IIHF Presidency to manage that deal. It happened four years before I became President of the IIHF.

Between April 27 and May 13, Vyacheslav Bykov will not be able get outside assistance from anywhere. He will experience that coaching under pressure from an entire nation is the loneliest assignment in the world. It can be pleasant if things go well, it can be unbearable if the team doesn't live up to expectations.

■ ■ Whoever wins, going back to Moscow will be an unforgettable experience. Lot's has changed since 1986. It's a new world. The ancient Luzhniki Arena, the venue of the four previous championships in Moscow, is history as we move in to the state-of-the art 14,000-seat Khodynka Arena. 19 kilometers north of Khodynka, two groups will play at the basically brand new Mytishi Arena.

And the home fans expect that Russia will win its first gold medal in 13 years. The pressure on Bykov just seems to mount all the time

René Fasel
IIHF President

IIHF approves new men's format for Vancouver 2010

■ The IIHF council approved on March 30 the new format for the men's tournament of the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver. The format of the women's Olympic tournament will remain as it was in Turin 2006.

The men's tournament will stay as a 12-team event like in Turin 2006, but the teams will be seeded into three groups of four teams. The Turin Olympics featured two groups of six.

In the 30-game Olympic men's tournament, a first-phase round-robin that will begin on February 16 will send the four teams with the best round-robin records directly to the quarterfinals. The remaining eight teams will move on to play a Qualifying Playoff round to decide the other four quarter-final spots. The winners of each quarter-final will then go on to the semi-finals, with the winners playing for the gold medal, and the losers playing for bronze. The bronze medal game will be February 27, while gold medal game is scheduled for February 28.



■ The council also decided that the 2008 IIHF World Championship in Canada (Quebec City & Halifax, May 1 - 18) will serve as the last qualifying tournament for the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. The top nine teams in the IIHF World Ranking following Canada 2008 will earn direct qualification to the 12-team Olympic tournament. The remaining three teams will be determined through Olympic qualifying tournaments, played in the autumn of 2008 and early 2009.

The only change to the women's Olympic tournament from 2006 is that the six top teams in the IIHF Women's World Ranking following the 2008 World Women's Championship (in China) will earn direct qualification to the 8-team Olympic tournament in Vancouver. For Turin 2006, only the top four ranked teams earned direct entry.

2010 MEN'S TOURNAMENT FORMAT: The 12 teams will be divided into three groups of four.

- Group A will be the 1st, 6th, 7th and 12th seed.
- Group B will be the 2nd, 5th, 8th and 11th seed.
- Group C will be the 3rd, 4th, 9th and 10th seed.

The Preliminary Round of the tournament will be a single Round-Robin competition.

■ Following the preliminary round, the top four teams – the three Group winners plus the best second-place team – will get a bye into the quarter-finals. The remaining eight teams will play sudden-death playoff games (Team No. 5 vs. No. 12; No. 6 vs. No. 11; No. 7 vs. No. 10; and, No. 8 vs. No. 9). The IIHF's three-point system will be in effect.

The four winners from these Playoff games will advance to meet the four 'bye' teams in the quarter final games. The four quarter final winners will advance to the semi-

finals with the two semi-final winners going into the gold medal game on Sunday, Feb. 28.

□ Four-man officiating in Canada 2008

The IIHF Council also approved the proposal that would see the 2008 IIHF World Championship in Canada to be the first major IIHF championship that would use the four-man officiating system with two referees and two linesmen.

The IIHF initially planned to introduce the four-man system at the men's senior World Championship for the 2009 event in Switzerland, but the council voted in favour of speeding up the plans.

"As we earlier decided to make the change to the four-man system already for the 2008 European Champions Cup, the World Junior (U20) Championship and the World U18 Championship, we agreed in principle to go with four on-ice officials in Canada 2008," said IIHF President René Fasel. "So if the implementation at the mentioned test tournaments, including the World Juniors in Czech Republic will be successful, we will definitely go with the four-man system in Quebec City and Halifax. This obviously opens the door to the men's tournament in Vancouver 2010 being officiated with the four-man system," concludes Fasel.

■ **BERNE NAMED MAIN 2009 VENUE:** The organizing committee of the 2009 IIHF World Championship in Switzerland announced that the capital Berne and its 16,700-capacity will be the main venue of the 2009 event. The committee will announce the second venue in June 2007.

Go to hockeycanada.ca for ticket information regarding the 2008 IIHF World Championship in Canada, Quebec City and Halifax, May 1-18, 2008.



Association News

SWEDEN: The Swedish Ice Hockey Association announced on March 13 that the head coach of the national women's team, **Peter Elander**, has extended his contract to 2010. It means that Elander, who led Sweden to a silver medal at the Turin Olympics in 2006, will also be in charge for Vancouver 2010.

The Swedish association announced on March 1 that **Par Marts** will be the new head coach of the national U20 team. Marts, who has been coaching the elite club team HV71 for four years, is replacing Torgny Bendelin who was in charge of the U20 program since 2004.

UNITED STATES: USA Hockey announced on March 26 that **Mike Sullivan** has been named head coach of the American team for the 2007 IIHF World Championship in Russia. He will be assisted by **Barry Smith** and **David Quinn**. Sullivan is a former head coach of the NHL Boston Bruins and an 11-year NHL veteran. Barry Smith was in the mid-90s involved with the Swedish national team program.

Obituaries

■ Ice Hockey UK's vice-chairman **Stuart Robertson** passed away on March 22 after a short illness. Robertson was a driving force within ice hockey in Great Britain and he served as IHUK's second chairman after its inception in 2000. He has been a regular at IIHF Congresses over the last six years. Stuart Robertson is survived by his wife Eileen and their two sons.



Photo: CITY PRESS BERLIN

MAX THE POSTER BOY:

The photo that led to the logo.



Sorry, Mats. It was Maxim

■ So, going to Moscow for the 71nd IIHF World Championship it's time to reveal a secret. The player silhouette on the IIHF logo is - *pom, pom, pom, drum, drum, drum* - Moscow-born Maxim Afinogenov!

When the new IIHF logo was introduced during the 2005 IIHF World Championship in Austria, unintentionally wrong information was delivered to the media who attended the "release party". We said that the player outline in the logo was Sweden's Mats Sundin.

"It is correct that the image we and our creative agency worked with initially was one of Mats Sundin," says IIHF Marketing Manager Thomas Freyer. "And this is what we communicated at the press conference in Innsbruck. It was simply an oversight. We weren't prepared for this question from a Canadian reporter and when the question came, Mats Sundin was more of a reflex answer since this was the photo we first outlined. Only after the press conference did we realize that our designers liked Maxim Afinogenov better. We felt at that time that it wouldn't look good to call a new conference just to tell about our oversight."

■ Needless to say, especially the Toronto-based writers who covered the 2005 event (remember, it was during the NHL lockout) filed stories that the IIHF chose the *Tre Kronor*-star and Toronto Maple Leaf captain to grace the new IIHF-logo. It would, by all means, have been a good choice. Few players have contributed so much and on such consistent level to international hockey since the early 90s as Sundin. Sadly for Mats, the designers liked Maxim better.

Afinogenov, of course, doesn't know about this, unless he is an avid reader of the IIHF *Ice Times*. But something happened to the former Dynamo Moscow and current Buffalo Sabre since his silhouette started to appear on the IIHF-logo. Since that moment, at the age of 26, the speedy winger has played the best hockey of his career, making Buffalo one of the best and most exciting teams in the NHL. The 2005-2006-season was Maxim's career best when he scored 22 goals and 51 assists for 73 points in 77 games.

This season was even better as Afinogenov collected 23 goals and 34 assists (57 points) in his first 53 games before he suffered a broken wrist on February 15, an injury that kept Maxim out of the lineup for almost two months. But thanks to Afinogenov's display, the Sabres basically secured a playoff spot by the time he was placed on the injury list.

■ Will the exciting Russian be able to suit up for his national team when the World Championship is staged in his home town? Not unless the Sabres suffer an unexpected early playoff exit. In any case, the IIHF takes great pride in kickstarting Maxim Afinogenov's hockey career.

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KLM was the perfect hockey line

Last time the Worlds were in Moscow 1986 Fetisov & friends collected 64 points in 10 games

By Szymon Szemberg

■ They were the best five-man unit that the hockey world has ever seen.

Vyacheslav Fetisov, D

He could do it all, pass, punish, score.

Alexei Kasatonov, D

When everyone went forward, he stayed back.

Sergei Makarov, RW

He combined figure skating with puckhandling.

Igor Larionov, C

Could find Makarov and Krutov - blindfolded.

Vladimir Krutov, LW

The tank, the workhorse, the bulldozer.

The quintet dominated international hockey for exactly one decade, the 80s. The 1986 IIHF World Championship -- the last one in Moscow before the disintegration of the Soviet Union -- was one of the last tournaments where they together mesmerized the hockey world.

They would lose the next World Championship to Sweden and the unforgettable 1987 Canada Cup finals to the host nation, but the KLM-line with Fetisov and Kasatonov as robust defensemen would rebound to claim the gold medals at the 1988 Olympics in Calgary and the gold at the 1989 IIHF World Championship in Sweden was their grand finale. Following their 5-1 drubbing of Sweden on the last day of the championship on May 1, 1989, they never played together again.

■ But first rewind to 1986. Terms "Perestroika" and "Glasnost" were just introduced to the world by Mikhail Gorbachov, major political changes were underway, but it would still take some years before "transparency" and "reconstruction" would make their marks on the Soviet ice hockey national team.

Coach Viktor Tikhonov was very much in charge of both the eternal club champion CSKA Moscow and the national team and everyone in the program followed a set of two straight forward rules:

Number one: The coach is always right.

Number two: If you think you are right, refer to rule number one.

The 1986 world event was very important for Tikhonov and the Soviet hockey authorities. After almost five years without a single game loss in IIHF competitions between 1981 and 1985 the streak of five consecutive world titles came to an end in Prague on April 29, 1985.

■ Prior to the 2-1 playoff loss against Czechoslovakia at the 1985 World Championship in Prague, the Soviets -- led by the KLM-unit -- had accumulated a streak of 43 World Championship and Olympic games without a loss (39 wins, 4 ties). Two days later the "Big Red Machine" also lost 3-1 to Canada (their first loss against the Canadians in 24 years in the World Championship) and the world title stayed in Czechoslovakia.



Photo: VLADIMIR BEZZUBOV

VERY SUPERIOR OLD PLAYERS: *The quintet that dominated international hockey in the 80s was re-united briefly last December on Moscow's Red Square. From left: Vladimir Krutov, Vyacheslav Fetisov, Igor Larionov, Alexei Kasatonov and Sergei Makarov. Insert: This is how they looked like when the "Big Red Machine" was basically invincible.*

The 54th IIHF World Championship in 1986, the fourth championship staged in Moscow, was to be a thunderous revenge for the hiccup in Prague. The Soviets cruised through the tournament with a 10-0-0 record and 50-15 in goals difference.

The KLM-unit ran amok from Day one. The stats for the quintet produced in Moscow 21 years ago:

Fetisov	- 10 GP - 6 G - 8 A -	14 Pts
Kasatonov	- 10 GP - 3 G - 4 A -	7 Pts
Makarov	- 10 GP - 4 G - 14 A -	18 Pts
Larionov	- 10 GP - 7 G - 1 A -	8 Pts
Krutov	- 10 GP - 7 G - 10 A -	17 Pts

They accumulated 64 points in 10 games, despite an obvious oversight by the tournament statisticians. It is absolutely impossible that Larionov, who delivered passes with the same accurateness as a waiter who serves fancy dishes at an upscale restaurant, would only have one assist.

Three years later, the saga of the super-quintet was over. They dispersed following their last World Championships in 1989 and went their separate ways.

□ Fetisov signed with the New Jersey Devils in 1989, but he came back for both the 1990 and the 1991 World Championships.

□ Kasatonov also signed with Devils, but one season later than his blueline partner. The 1991 Worlds were his last for the USSR.

□ Larionov, the original rebel, left for the Vancouver Canucks immediately following Sweden 1989 and he never played another World Championship.

□ Makarov signed with Calgary in 1989, but he returned for the 1990 and 1991 World Championships.

□ Krutov never played on the national team again after joining Larionov in Vancouver in 1989.



Their international resumé 1977-1990:

□ **Fetisov:** Two Olympic golds, seven World titles, one Canada Cup, named Best Defenseman in five World Championships.

□ **Kasatonov:** Two Olympic golds, five World titles, one Canada Cup, named Best Defenseman once in a World Championship.

□ **Makarov:** Two Olympic golds, eight World titles, one Canada Cup, named Best Forward in two World Championships.

□ **Larionov:** Two Olympic golds, four World titles, one Canada Cup.

□ **Krutov:** Two Olympic golds, five World titles, one Canada Cup, named Best Forward in two World Championships.

Where are they now:

□ Fetisov is the Minister of Sports in Russia. Resides in Moscow.

□ Kasatonov lives in New Jersey, USA where he is coaching youth hockey.

□ Makarov works organizing competitions under Fetisov in the Ministry of Sports.

□ Larionov lives in California, USA where he is in wine business and also organizes youth hockey tournaments.

□ Krutov works with youth development in schools under Fetisov in the Ministry of Sports.

They reunited briefly on December 9 last year for an old-timers game on Moscow's Red Square to celebrate the 60-year anniversary of Soviet/Russian hockey.

2007 IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW

Meet the Sweet Sixteen of the 2007 World Championship

GROUP A



SWEDEN

2006 IIHF World Ranking: 1st
 Gold: 8 Silver: 18 Bronze: 14
 Consecutive years in top pool: 58
 Head Coach: Bengt-Ake Gustafsson
 Rinks/No. of Players: 307 / 25,214
 Website: www.swehockey.se
 Last 10 Finishes: 1,4,2,2,3,3,7,3,1,2

GROUP B



CZECH REPUBLIC

2006 IIHF World Ranking: 2nd
 Gold: 5 (6) Silver: 1 (12) Bronze: 3 (16)*
 Consecutive years in top pool: 14 (27)
 Head Coach: Alois Hadamczik
 Rinks/No. of Players: 152 / 87,130
 Website: www.hokej.cz
 Last 10 Finishes: 2,1,5,4,5,1,1,1,3,3

GROUP C



CANADA

2006 IIHF World Ranking: 3rd
 Gold: 23 Silver: 10 Bronze: 9
 Consecutive years in top pool: 28
 Head Coach: Andy Murray
 Rinks/No. of Players: 3,000 / 552,040
 Website: www.hockeycanada.ca
 Last 10 Finishes: 4,2,1,1,6,5,4,4,6,1

GROUP D



FINLAND

2006 IIHF World Ranking: 4th
 Gold: 1 Silver: 5 Bronze: 2
 Consecutive years in top pool: 48
 Head Coach: Erkka Westerlund
 Rinks/No. of Players: 220 / 60,811
 Website: www.finhockey.fi
 Last 10 Finishes: 3,7,6,5,4,2,3,2,2,5



SWITZERLAND

2006 IIHF World Ranking: 8th
 Gold: 0 Silver: 1 Bronze: 8
 Consecutive years in top pool: 10
 Head Coach: Ralph Krueger
 Rinks/No. of Players: 70 / 25,214
 Website: www.swiss-icehockey.ch
 Last 10 Finishes: 9,8,8,8,10,9,6,8,4,15



UNITED STATES

2006 IIHF World Ranking: 7th
 Gold: 2 Silver: 9 Bronze: 5
 Consecutive years in top pool: 22
 Head Coach: Mike Sullivan
 Rinks/No. of Players: 1,800 / 453,299
 Website: www.usahockey.com
 Last 10 Finishes: 7,6,3,13,7,4,5,6,12,6



SLOVAKIA

2006 IIHF World Ranking: 6th
 Gold: 1 Silver: 1 Bronze: 1
 Consecutive years in top pool: 12
 Head Coach: Julius Supler
 Rinks/No. of Players: 40 / 9,209
 Website: www.szlh.sk
 Last 10 Finishes: 8,5,4,3,1,7,2,7,7,9



RUSSIA

2006 IIHF World Ranking: 5th
 Gold: 1 (22) Silver: 1 (7) Bronze: 1 (5)*
 Consecutive years in top pool: 15 (26)
 Head Coach: Vyacheslav Bykov
 Rinks/No. of Players: 142 / 77,202
 Website: www.fhr.ru
 Last 10 Finishes: 5,3,10,7,2,6,11,5,5,4



LATVIA

2006 IIHF World Ranking: 9th
 Highest Finish: 7th (1997, 2004)
 Consecutive years in top pool: 11
 Head Coach: Olegs Znaroks
 Rinks/No. of Players: 16 / 4,348
 Website: www.lhf.lv
 Last 10 Finishes: 10,9,7,9,11,13,8,11,9,7



BELARUS

2006 IIHF World Ranking: 10th
 Highest Finish: 6th (2006)
 Consecutive years in top pool: 3
 Head Coach: Curt Fraser
 Rinks/No. of Players: 12 / 3,020
 Website: www.hockey.by
 Last 10 Finishes: 6,10,18,14,17,14,9,9,8,13



GERMANY

2006 IIHF World Ranking: 12th
 Gold: 0 Silver: 1 (1)* Bronze: 2
 Consecutive years in top pool: 1
 Head Coach: Uwe Krupp
 Rinks/No. of Players: 158 / 28,047
 Website: www.deb-online.de
 Last 10 Finishes: 17,15,9,6,8,8,17,20,11,11



UKRAINE

2006 IIHF World Ranking: 13th
 Highest Finish: 9th (2002)
 Consecutive years in top pool: 9
 Head Coach: Oleksandr Sevkan
 Rinks/No. of Players: 9 / 3,615
 Website: www.hockey.org.ua
 Last 10 Finishes: 12,11,14,12,9,10,14,14,17,21



ITALY

2006 IIHF World Ranking: 17th
 Highest Finish: 6th (1994)
 Consecutive years in top pool: 2
 Head Coach: Michel Goulet
 Rinks/No. of Players: 55 / 7,251
 Website: www.figis.it
 Last 10 Finishes: 14,18,19,23,15,12,12,13,10,8



AUSTRIA

2006 IIHF World Ranking: 16th
 Gold: 0 Silver: 0 Bronze: 2
 Consecutive years in top pool: 1
 Head Coach: Jim Boni
 Rinks/No. of Players: 15 / 31,508
 Website: www.eishockey.at
 Last 10 Finishes: 18,16,11,10,12,11,13,10,15,16



NORWAY

2006 IIHF World Ranking: 15th
 Highest Finish: 4th (1951)
 Consecutive years in top pool: 2
 Head Coach: Roy Johansen
 Rinks/No. of Players: 30 / 6,768
 Website: www.hockey.no
 Last 10 Finishes: 11,17,20,20,22,15,10,12,21,12



DENMARK

2006 IIHF World Ranking: 14th
 Highest Finish: 10th (1949)
 Consecutive years in top pool: 5
 Head Coach: Mike Sirant
 Rinks/No. of Players: 19 / 4,154
 Website: www.ishockey.dk
 Last 10 Finishes: 13,14,12,11,18,22,21,17,20,20

*Denotes medal and top pool participation totals - shown in brackets - of Czechoslovakia, Soviet Union and West Germany listed along with current nations

2007 IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW

Germany and Austria ready for redemption

By Jenny Wiedeke

In Austria 2005, the unthinkable happened. Not only was the host nation relegated, but after losing in the last 10 minutes of its relegation round game against Denmark, Germany was also sent down to Division I.

■ The relegation sent shockwaves through the hockey world. After all, major nations had come close to relegation before, but never before had not one, but two of European teams, seemingly on their way up, been sent down in the same season. Now, both teams are back and ready to face what lies ahead in Moscow:

Germany:

As quickly as furor over the Germany's relegation started, they were all but forgotten in their native land as they were left to find their way back to top division.

"In Germany, when you are not in the top 16, then you are not a hockey nation," said German Hockey Association general secretary Franz Reindl. "There's no news, no T.V., and no mention by the sports press. It is like you are dead."

Out of the public eye, the Germans went to work rebuilding their once-proud national team under relative rookie coach Uwe Krupp. The team spent the 2006 season preparing for the must-win event at the Division I World Championship in Amiens, France. With the six-team round robin format, even one loss at the event could have doomed the Germans to another year in Division I, and another year of exile from the German media.

"It's a totally different story to be in Division I," says Reindl. "It's an event where your opponents get tougher the further you go along. You have to have a good team spirit, which I think we had in Amiens. Without that spirit, you can't win."

The German team and its spirit prevailed in France, going undefeated and ultimately beating France in the must-win game of the championship to earn the promotion. Suddenly, the Germans were back among the world's elite and once again in the public eye.

But now that they're back on top, Reindl and German team aren't taking anything for granted. Despite the fact the Germans enter the championship as the third-seeded team in their group, thanks to their position in the IIHF World Ranking, the German's aren't ready to play the role of mainstay nation just yet.

"I know that Russia will be tough for us," Reindl said. "The game against Norway is our big preliminary round game. Ultimately, there's only three games in the first round and if you lose just one of them, you can be in trouble. For me it will not be a surprise if we are playing in the relegation round again this year."

In fact, it wouldn't be surprise if the Germans found themselves in the relegation round because that is the path that so many newly promoted teams tend to follow (see box below). As the top 16 becomes increasingly competitive, the newly promoted Division I teams find it more difficult to avoid immediate relegation. In fact, it has only been in the last two seasons that both of the promoted teams have been able to stay up at the top level.

"Right now, in our position, our first goal is to be in Canada (the host of the 2008 World Championship) next year," says Reindl. "If we stay up this year, I think people in the media will say that the 2005 relegation was just a hiccup and it will not have a long-term effect on German hockey."

Austria:

Men's national team coach Jim Boni can sum up in one word what the Austrian squad gained from its Division I appearance, "confidence."

"At the Division I tournament, all of the games are must-win," Boni expands. "We couldn't afford to lose any games. With each victory, our squad gained confidence that they could beat any given squad on any given day."

Of course, Boni, much like his German counterparts, knows that confidence will only go so far in Moscow.

"We're not going into Russia thinking that we're the team to beat," Boni says. "We don't have a squad stacked with NHL players and our group with Czech Republic, USA and Belarus is extremely tough. For us the key game will be against Belarus."

Unlike the Germans, Austria faces an even tougher road to avoid re-relegation. While Germany has a whole tiered system in its professional league, Austria has only seven professional teams and has never played in a quarterfinal at an IIHF Championship. By the timing of their duel relegations, the neighboring teams have essentially been lumped together by the media.

"Of course, our goal is to stay up and to finish higher," Boni says. "But psychologically, we as a team have to be prepared for coming out of the preliminary round or playing in the relegation round. I think the last time around the guys were so disappointed to be in the relegation round that they didn't perform. We have to be prepared for both."

For both Germany and Austria, the top division is familiar turf, but both squads will be on uneven ground through their first four games. But ultimately, while the pair might not have a medal in their sights, an equally impressive goal is on their radar.

"We've earned the right to go back to the top level," Boni says. "Now we have to earn the right to stay there."



The tale of relegation and promotion since 2001

2001

Relegated: Norway & Belarus
Promoted: Poland & Slovenia

In the first year of the two-pool Division I format, it was Poland and Slovenia moving up, while Norway and Belarus were each shipped down. For the Norwegians, it would be a long wait before they returned to the top pool, while Belarus would become the bouncing ball squad for the next several seasons.

2002

Relegated: Italy & Poland
Promoted: Belarus & Denmark

Poland was sent quickly back to Division I and Italy joined them. The Poles have yet to return to the top level, while Italy had to wait three seasons to return to the top level. Meanwhile Denmark wins its Division I group and becomes the first promoted team with staying power--the Danes have never returned to Division I since earning the '02 promotion.

2003

Relegated: Slovenia & Belarus
Promoted: Kazakhstan & France

Belarus and Slovenia both head back to Division I, becoming the first teams that were truly stuck in the relegation/promotion cycle. Meanwhile, two newcomers, France and Kazakhstan move up. Kazakhstan surprises many by staying among the elite 16 teams for the next three seasons, while France lasts only one season in the top division.

2004

Relegated: Japan & France
Promoted: Belarus & Slovenia

It was elevator time for Belarus and Slovenia again, this time, going up. Meanwhile, Japan's 'no relegation' pass for the last three seasons expired and they head back to Division I. Japan has yet to return to the top level (the team finished in last place all three of its 'free' seasons). France was also relegated and has ended in second place in D-I the last two years.

2005

Relegated: Austria & Germany
Promoted: Norway & Italy

The year of the relegation stunner as two headline teams - Germany and Austria are both relegated. For the first time, no team feels safe from relegation. For the Germans, the loss is costly, kicking them out of the ECC with the sink in the rankings. After three years of frustration, Norway earns its way back to the top 16, while the Italians score a minor upset against France for the '05 promotion.

2006

Relegated: Kazakhstan & Slovenia
Promoted: Austria & Germany

As expected, Germany and Austria came back strong and won their Division I tournaments, allowing both nations to breath a big sigh of relief. In Riga, Kazakhstan and Slovenia are upset in the relegation round as Italy and Denmark each hold on for another season in the top division. It ended Kazakhstan's three-year and Slovenia's two-year runs in the top 16.

The home ice curse – will it

By Szymon Szemberg

■ ■ *Home ice advantage? Not in the IIHF World Championship for the last 21 years anyway. Since the "Big Red Machine" of the Soviet Union swept through the 1986 IIHF World Championship undefeated in nine straight games while outscoring the opposition 50-15, the tournament has not been kind to hosting nations with gold medal ambitions.*

In fact, no host has won it since that year. Follow us through this medley of crushed expectations for the home teams of the World Championship:

1989 The brand new Globe Arena in Stockholm welcomed the 53rd IIHF World Championship with the Tre Kronor as one of the heavy favourites, but the pressure became too much. The Swedes lost all games in the four-team playoff series and finished a disappointing fourth. Soviet Union won ten straight games and of course the gold medal.

1991 Finland was hosting the hockey world in the newly built Elysee Arena in Turku and the Finns had a great team. On paper. The team led by Teemu Selanne, Jari Kurri, Christian Ruutu and Esa Keskinen didn't even make to the playoff-round. The fifth place finish was a very unsatisfactory outcome. That the Mats Sundin-led Swedes won gold made this even more difficult to digest for the Finnish fan.

1992 Prague and pressure was big on the Czechoslovak players to repeat home-ice victory from 1985. And things looked good until the semi-final against Finland, as the home team managed only a 2-2 tie and the Finns won the game on a penalty-shootout. Czechoslovakia, for the last time before becoming the Czech Republic, regrouped for the bronze game and defeated Switzerland for third place. Sweden won its second consecutive gold.

1995 Back to the Globe Arena in Stockholm where Sweden were odds-on favourites to finally win their first hockey gold on home ice. But it was Finland that walked away with their first ever gold medals after defeating the arch-rival 4-1 in the final game.

1997 Helsinki again and the Finns were determined to break their home ice jinx in the new and beautiful Hartwall Arena with another star studded team that included Saku Koivu, Ville Peltonen, Olli Jokinen, Raimo Helminen and Petteri Nummelin. Once again it ended with a poor fifth place finish, while Canada defeated Sweden in the best-of-three final.

2000 A monumental crash by Russia in St. Petersburg. The best Russian team assembled in the post-Soviet era lost to USA, Switzerland, Latvia and

Belarus and finished 11th, the worst finish ever by a favourite team in the IIHF World Championship. Czechs beat Slovaks in the gold medal game.

2002 Just a couple of months after the incredible Olympic quarter-final loss to Belarus, the Swedes had a great opportunity to redeem themselves on home ice Gothenburg in a championship labelled as "The Revenge of the Nation". It wasn't to be. Slovaks spoiled the party by beating Sweden in a penalty shoot-out in the semi-final. The young nation went on to beat Russia in the gold medal game.

2003 This will forever be remembered as The Meltdown in Helsinki. Finns were up 5-1 midway through the quarter-final against rivals Sweden, only to lose 6-5 in one of the most memorable World Championship games ever. Finland finished fifth again on home ice. Canada defeated Sweden in the gold medal game.

2004 The new 18.000-seat Sazka Arena in Prague welcomed the Czech team that basically had all the best players on hand. They waltzed through the



continue in Russia?



THE STORY OF HOME ICE: It's been a sad tale through the years for the IIHF World Championship home teams. Most recently, the Austrian's had relegation angst in Vienna in 2005 (large photo).

But Austria is not the only nation to meltdown on home ice as other teams have fell short of their goals at home.

(From far left) the entire Russian team was forced to answer to the media in St. Petersburg 2000.

In 2002 and 2003, it was the semi-final game that provided the drama for the hosts as the Swedes were taught a lesson by underdog Slovakia in 2002. But Sweden rebounded in 2003, coming from four goals down to top the Finns in the quarterfinal game in Helsinki.

In 2004 it was the unlikely Americans spoiling the Czech's party in Prague with an upset quarterfinal win.




preliminaries but the home favourites were ousted in the quarterfinal against Team USA in a shootout where the little heralded defenseman Andy Roach was the American hero.

2005 Nobody expected host Austria to win its first-ever World Championship in Vienna, but there were positive signs that the team could advance to the second round. Instead the Austrians not only dropped down to the relegation round, but they finished 16th and last and were relegated to division I.

2006 Most recently, the Latvians much like the Austrians, weren't expected to take home any hardware from Riga, however losses like the 11-0 against Canada hit a flat note with the Latvian fans who had higher hopes than the 10th place finish in Riga.

The home teams also failed to go all the way in the Olympic Winter Games in 1998 and 2002. Canada failed in Calgary (1988) while the U.S. could not keep their perfect Olympic home record intact in Salt Lake City, 2002. In Turin 2006, Italy finished 11th out of 12 teams.

The record shows, if you want success in international ice hockey, you better make it on someone else's rink. 

The new leader of the Russian Pack



THE GUIDING LIGHT: Is Vyacheslav Bykov the one to end the Russian gold drought?

■ When the Soviet Union won its last IIHF World Championship in Moscow in 1986, the gold medal hero was Vyacheslav Bykov. With the score tied 2-2 against Sweden in the deciding round-robin playoff game, Bykov scored the game and tournament winner with less than five minutes left. It was a fitting end to Bykov's championship as he scored six goals and added as many assists in 10 games.

The Soviet Union's 1986 gold medal was the last time an IIHF men's championship was won by the home nation. 21 years later, Bykov is the latest on the seemingly never ending list of Russian coaches who try to restore old glory to a once invincible national team.

In August 2006, Bykov, accepted the challenge to become Team Russia's 15th national team head coach since 1992, and was very much aware of the enormous challenge that came with the appointment: To finally win gold. Russia has not won the World Championship since 1993. The streak of 13 winless championships is the longest in the history of Soviet/Russian hockey.

■ To break the jinx of the host: no organizing nation has won the IIHF World Championship gold medal since Bykov clinched the 1986 gold medal with his unassisted goal at 15:16 of the third period against Sweden. This is a streak of 20 years and counting.

■ If the pressure is not enough from the above points, Bykov would like to keep the national team's perfect Moscow home record intact: In the four IIHF World Championships played in the capital (1957, 1973, 1979 and 1986) the hosts did not lose one single game.

The Soviet Union's Moscow record reads:

1957: 7 GP - 5 W - 2 T - 0 L. Goals: 77-9. Silver
1973: 10 GP - 10 W - 0 T - 0 L. Goals: 100-18. Gold.
1979: 8 GP - 8 W - 0 T - 0 L. Goals: 61-14. Gold
1986: 10 GP - 10 W - 0 T - 0 L. Goals: 50-15. Gold
Total: 35 GP - 33 W - 2 T - 0 L. Goals: 288-56

The only blemishes in the record were two ties in 1957, when the Soviet national team program was barely four years old. The Soviet Union tied Czechoslovakia 2-2 and Sweden, 4-4, in that championship, the latter score gave the Swedes the gold medal in a game that holds the sinattendance record at an IIHF World Championship: plus-50,000 at Lenin Stadium.

TEAM RUSSIA HEAD COACHES

1978-1992	Viktor Tikhonov
1992-1994	Boris Mikhailov
1994 (Olympics)	Viktor Tikhonov
1994-1995	Boris Mikhailov
1995-1996	Vladimir Vasiliev
1996-1997	Igor Dimitriev
1997-1998	Vladimir Yurzinov
1998-2000	Alexander Yakushev
2000-2002	Boris Mikhailov
2002 (Olympics)	Vyacheslav Fetisov
2002-2003	Vladimir Plyushev
2003-2004	Viktor Tikhonov
2004-2005	Zinetula Bilyaletdinov
2005-2006	Vladimir Krikunov
2006-present	Vyacheslav Bykov

2007 IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW

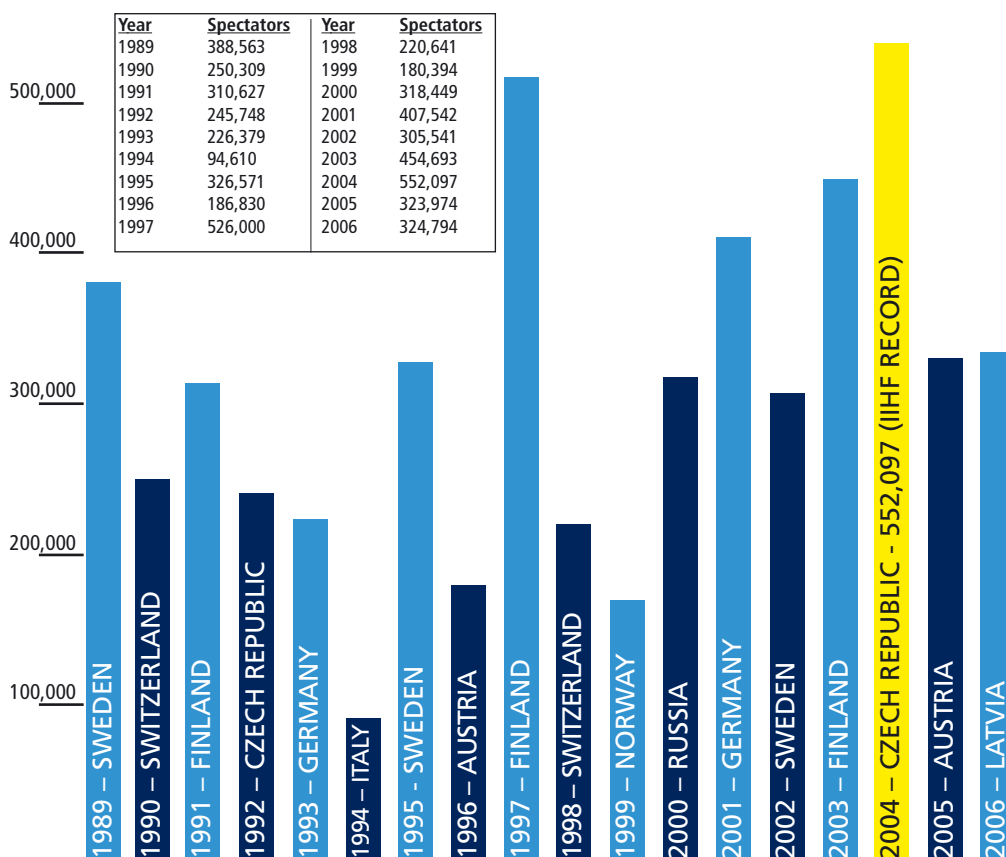
The best of the best: IIHF World Championship record book

ALL-TIME IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

Top Division Sorted by Points

Country	Years	Games	Wins	Ties	Losses	Points	Goals for	Goals against	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
TCH/CZE	66	528	343	47	138	733	2424	1201	11	13	19	43
CAN	60	459	321	31	107	673	2497	973	23	11	9	43
SWE	65	524	306	55	165	666	2227	1394	9	18	14	40
URS/RUS	49	403	312	31	60	655	2363	775	23	8	6	37
USA	58	440	200	39	201	439	1710	1657	2	9	5	16
FIN	53	438	179	52	207	410	1487	1676	1	5	2	9
FRG/GER	52	394	117	42	235	276	1013	1732	0	1	2	3
SUI	41	272	96	24	152	214	890	1165	0	1	8	9
POL	30	218	45	16	157	106	495	1226	0	0	0	0
AUT	28	165	45	16	104	106	399	716	0	0	0	2
ITA	24	144	38	22	85	98	338	706	0	0	0	0
GBR	15	91	44	4	43	92	298	360	1	2	2	5
SVK	11	82	43	11	28	97	276	191	1	1	1	3
NOR	25	154	34	10	110	78	367	769	0	0	0	0
LAT	15	86	31	9	46	71	217	279	0	0	0	0
GDR	14	119	27	10	82	64	277	653	0	0	0	0
FRA	21	103	24	3	76	51	189	472	0	0	0	0
HUN	11	62	16	7	39	39	113	176	0	0	0	0
BLR	7	43	20	2	21	42	105	111	0	0	0	0
ROM	10	60	13	1	46	27	125	372	0	0	0	0
JPN	13	65	10	7	48	27	176	419	0	0	0	0
UKR	8	45	10	4	31	24	82	174	0	0	0	0
YUG	3	19	8	2	9	18	68	131	0	0	0	0
BEL	12	43	6	1	36	13	83	418	0	0	0	0
SLO	4	18	5	3	16	13	53	121	0	0	0	0
DEN	5	27	6	2	19	14	56	182	0	0	0	0
KAZ	4	21	4	1	16	9	37	79	0	0	0	0
NED	4	22	2	0	20	4	34	156	0	0	0	0
LIT	1	4	1	0	3	0	3	33	0	0	0	0
AUS	1	6	0	0	6	0	10	87	0	0	0	0

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ATTENDANCE (since 1989)



IIHF World Championship

All-time Record Book

Most World Championships (top pool)

1. Jiri Holik	14	TCH	1964-77
1. Sven Tumba	14	SWE	1952-77
3. Lasse Oksanen	13	FIN	1964-77
3. Dieter Hegen	13	FRG	1982-98
3. Ronald Pettersson	13	SWE	1955-67
3. Vladislav Tretiak	13	URS	1970-83
3. Udo Kiessling	13	FRG	1973-91
4. Petteri Nummelin	12	FIN	1995-06

Most World Championship Games

1. Jiri Holik	CZE	123 games
2. Lasse Oksanen	FIN	117 games
2. Vladislav Tretiak	URS	117 games
4. Oldrich Machac	TCH	113 games
5. Udo Kiessling	FRG	109 games

Most World Championship Points

1. Boris Mikhailov	URS	169 points
2. Valeri Kharlamov	URS	159 points
3. Alexander Maltsev	URS	156 points
4. Vladimir Petrov	URS	154 points
5. Sven Tumba	SWE	127 points

Most World Championship Medals

1. Vladislav Tretiak	URS	13	10G, 2S, 1B
2. Alexander Ragulin	URS	12	10G, 1S, 1B
3. Alexander Maltsev	URS	12	9G, 2S, 1B
3. Vladimir Petrov	URS	12	9G, 2S, 1B
5. Vitaly Davydov	URS	10	9G, 1S
5. Vyacheslav Starshinov	URS	10	9G, 1B

2007 IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW

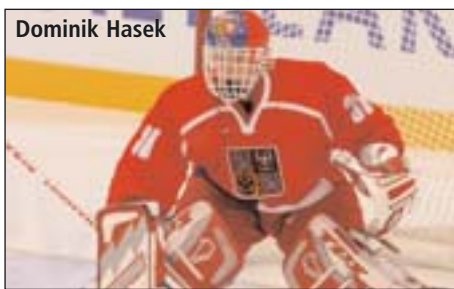
How's Your Moscow knowledge? Take our quiz

Some facts about the previous IIHF World Championships held in Moscow are common knowledge, while others prove to be deep-rooted hockey knowledge. IHWC.net writer Lucas Aykroyd scoured the history books and found the following trivia. How does your knowledge stack up? Test your memory with the IIHF quiz below.

1 Who is the only active NHL player to participate in the last Moscow-based World Championship?

At age 42, Detroit goalie Dominik Hasek is the only active NHLer who played in the last Moscow-based IIHF World Championship in 1986. (Although Hasek posted a 2.12 GAA in nine games, Czechoslovakia placed fifth.) Sweden's Fredrik Olausson was the last active player from '86 in a European elite league this season, playing 12 games for Farjestad, but the 41-year-old defenseman retired in December due to illness.

GO TO QUESTION 2 →



2 Which player participated in the 1973, 1979 and 1986 Moscow World Championships?

West Germany's Udo Kiessling was the only player who suited up for his national team in Moscow in 1973, 1979, and 1986. While this tough defenseman barely made an impression in the NHL (one game with Minnesota in 1982), the three-time German Player of the Year appeared in 13 World Championships overall.

GO TO QUESTION 3 →

3 What nation saw all three of its 1986 goaltenders win the Stanley Cup?

All three American goalies in 1986 would go on to earn Stanley Cup rings, a feat never matched by any other World Championship team's trio: Tom Barrasso (Pittsburgh, 1991 and 1992) Mike Richter (New York Rangers, 1994), and Chris Terreri (New Jersey, 1995).

GO TO QUESTION 4 ↓



Mike Richter

6 Who blocked a shot deliberately with his face in 1957?

Another Swedish defenseman from the '57 team showed his ability to use his head in a crucial 2-0 win over Czechoslovakia on February 27, 1957. Though helmetless like his peers at the time, Leksand's Vilgot Larsson deliberately blocked a shot with his face. Saving a goal was worth a few stitches.

GO TO QUESTION 7 ↓

5 Which nation celebrated its gold medal win with a bar room song instead of national anthem?

When Sweden won gold in 1957, captain Lasse Bjorn was asked to lead his team in a rendition of the national anthem, "Du Gamla, Du Fria." However, the big blueliner's mind went blank in front of the huge crowd. The only song he could remember was "Helan Gar" ("Let's Drink It All"), a popular barroom ditty, so that's what he sang instead.

GO TO QUESTION 6 →

4 What country will miss a Moscow-based championship for the first-ever time?

2007 marks the first time ever that Poland will not take part in a Moscow-based World Championship. The Poles missed their chance to be in Moscow after finishing a disappointing third place in Estonia at last year's Division I World Championship.

GO TO QUESTION 5 ←

7 Which coach said his team lost the gold medal because "the other team scored one more goal than we did.?"

Perhaps no coach has ever been as emotional about losing a bronze medal as Finland's Rauno Korpi in 1986. After falling 4-3 to Canada and failing to secure what would have been his nation's first-ever IIHF medal, Korpi could only say, "We lost because Canada scored one more goal than we did," before bursting into tears. He wept again upon returning to Finland and being confronted by reporters at Helsinki Airport.

GO TO QUESTION 8 →

8 Which team gave the then-powerful Soviet Union its closest contest in 1979?

The team that gave the champion Soviets the most difficulty in 1979 was unquestionably West Germany. Beating Czechoslovakia 11-1, Sweden 11-3, and Canada 9-2 (among other lopsided scores) came naturally. But it was only 3-2 in round-robin action versus the Germans, who poured off the bench to celebrate their two second-period goals. If Russian forward Yuri Lebedev hadn't gotten 12 minutes for spearing, the score might not have been so close. German coach Hans Rampf didn't pull his goalie in search of a late equalizer, however. According to Canadian-born defenseman Bob Murray, Rampf said "it was nice enough to lose 3-2" to such a powerful opponent.

GO TO QUESTION 9 ←



10 What did Marcel Dionne (pictured above) blame for Canada's poor performance in 1979?

The superstar center, in a foul mood after Canada finished fourth in 1979, vented to the Toronto Globe and Mail's Allen Abel: "Only the media can change things at home. Tell them how the European teams play with so much skill. Tell them how they play without fighting. Make them realize that if a boy cannot skate and shoot, if he can only fight, then he cannot be allowed to be a hockey player. There are so many dumb people running hockey, so dumb, so dumb. Tell them."

CHECK YOUR SCORE

9 What was considered one of the biggest novelties from the 1973 event?

In the days of Communism, capitalist advertising was a novelty for Soviet youths. In 1973, some were quite taken by the rinkboard ads for Jockey shorts, Turtle Wax, Gillette razor blades, and other products not sold in the USSR. A group decided to put up imitation ads on the boards of a neighborhood rink in Moscow's Lomonosovsky district, but the authorities quickly took them down.

GO TO QUESTION 10 →

SCORING:

0-2 CORRECT: Entry Visa denied.

3-5 CORRECT: You're in game, but the relegation round is looming.

7-8 CORRECT: Medal contender

9-10 CORRECT: You could skate with the Soviet teams from the 1970s.

Facts compiled by Lucas Aykroyd

2007 IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW

World Ranking already has Olympic implications

■ It may seem hard to believe, but teams at the 2007 IIHF World Championship will already have the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver in the back of their heads as they take to the ice in Moscow.

Coming into Russia, the teams have only this tournament and the 2008 IIHF World Championship in Canada as their opportunities to secure automatic qualification for Vancouver 2010.

These are two key factors to observe leading up to the next men's Olympic ice hockey tournament in 2010:

The last IIHF World Championship where teams can boost their ranking points to gain the best possible seeding for Vancouver 2010 will be the 2008 IIHF World Championship in Quebec City and Halifax, Canada.

■ The top nine teams in the IIHF World Ranking that will be established immediately following Canada 2008 will earn automatic entry to Vancouver 2010. The teams ranked ten and below will have to go through Olympic qualification tournaments (in autumn 2008 and/or February 2009) to secure any of the three remaining spots in the men's Olympic tournament. The men's Olympic tournament in Vancouver will have 12 teams.



For clarity: teams that right now are around the magical ninth spot, cannot afford to have poor showings in Russia 2007 and in Canada 2008 if their ambition is to secure automatic qualification for the Vancouver Olympics.

The eighth spot is of continuous importance for the seeding for any upcoming World Championship as the first eight teams are placed in the top two baskets in the group seeding for the upcoming championship. The team placed ninth falls down to the third basket.

For European fans, the ranking also has implications for participation in the IIHF European Champions Cup (January 2008 in St. Petersburg, Russia), the tournament that features the club champions from the top-six ranked European nations.

■ A drama could unfold between Latvia and Switzerland, which are currently ranked eighth and ninth respectively. With its eighth-place slot, the Swiss are the sixth-best European team in the IIHF World Ranking and this qualifies the Swiss club champion to the European Champions Cup. The Latvians trail the Swiss by 135 points in the ranking.

It is a significant lead, but not impossible to overcome. For example: If Latvia has a very good tournament by their standard and finishes sixth (with 1040 points being added to their current 2115 for a total of 3155) while the Swiss under-perform and end up 12th (with 900 points being added to their current 2250 for a total of 3150), Latvia will overtake the Swiss by the smallest of margins, five points.

What does it take for the Czechs, who trail the Swedes by 65 points, to beat the Tre Kronor for first place? There must be a difference of at least two positions. If the Czechs win gold and the Swedes claim bronze, the Czechs will be the new number 1 ranked team in the world.

Ultimately, the Championship Report to the right is the best gauge of what exactly the 16 teams in Moscow must do to climb, or hold onto their current spot, in the ranking. The 2007 Championship Report has already had the points for the 2003 World Championship dropped from its total, while the points from 2006 (both World Championships and Olympics), 2005 and 2004 have been devalued by 25 percent. The points in the right column represent what the ranking looked like at the end of the 2006 season, following Latvia 2006.

To tally a team's final ranking after the 2007 IIHF World Championship, add the points they receive for their finish in Russia to the 2007 Championship report.

Example: Value of the gold medal

Year 1: 100% value -- 1200 points
 Year 2: 75% value -- 900 points
 Year 3: 50% value -- 600 points
 Year 4: 25% value -- 300 points
 Year 5: 0% value -- 0 points

2007 IIHF CHAMPIONSHIP REPORT

Rank	Country	Pre Russia '07	After Riga '06
1	SWE	2640	4095
2	CZE	2575	3895
3	FIN	2480	3830
4	CAN	2470	3890
5	RUS	2415	3725
6	SVK	2350	3685
7	USA	2315	3580
8	SUI	2250	3500
9	LAT	2115	3310
-----OLYMPIC CUT-----			
10	BLR	2105	3230
11	KAZ	2020	3115
12	GER	1965	3110
13	NOR	1920	2935
14	UKR	1920	3005
15	DEN	1915	3005
16	ITA	1915	2915
17	AUT	1855	2930
18	SLO	1840	2870
19	FRA	1745	2720
20	POL	1655	2580
21	JPN	1605	2540
22	HUN	1560	2430
23	NED	1515	2360
24	EST	1485	2325
25	LTU	1485	2270
26	ROU*	1370	2135
27	CRO	1290	2000
28	CHN	1280	1970
29	BUL	1120	1715
30	SRB*	1115	1745
31	GBR	945	1580
32	ISR	800	1275
33	KOR	780	1320
34	AUS	740	1215
35	BEL	700	1200
36	PRK	660	1320
37	ESP	610	1040
38	NZL	560	925
39	MEX	515	845
40	ISL	500	840
41	RSA	490	830
42	TUR	470	775
43	LUX	410	705
44	ARM	390	580
45	IRL	390	585
46	MON	0	0

In the '07 Championship Report the values of the 2006, 2005 and 2004 championships are already reduced by 25% and the 2003 Championship has been dropped. The right column, shows the values the teams had after Riga 2006 before all the values were adjusted for the Championship Report. To get the 2007 final ranking, simply add the points from the Moscow finish to the value in the team's '07 Championship Report.

POINTS EARNED

Top Division	
1	1200
2	1160
3	1120
4	1100
5	1060
6	1040
7	1020
8	1000
9	960
10	940
11	920
12	900
13	880
14	860
15	840
16	820
Division I	
17	800
18	780
19	760
20	740
21	720
22	700
23	680
24	660
25	640
26	620
27	600
28	580
Division II	
29	560
30	540
31	520
32	500
33	480
34	460
35	440
36	420
37	400
38	380
39	360
40	340
Division III	
41	320
42	300
43	280
44	260
45	240
46	220

RESULTS SUMMARY

IIHF World U18 Championship Div. III

Beijing, CHINA March 5-11

South Africa - Spain	1-18	(0-9, 1-4, 0-5)
China - New Zealand	11-2	(2-1, 5-0, 4-1)
Iceland - Turkey	16-1	(5-1, 4-0, 7-0)
Spain - New Zealand	5-1	(0-0, 2-1, 3-0)
Turkey - China	0-15	(0-5, 0-5, 0-5)
Iceland - South Africa	14-2	(4-0, 7-1, 3-1)
South Africa - New Zealand	1-9	(0-2, 1-4, 0-3)
Iceland - China	3-6	(0-5, 1-0, 2-1)
Spain - Turkey	16-0	(5-0, 6-0, 5-0)
Turkey - South Africa	2-5	(1-1, 0-1, 1-3)
New Zealand - Iceland	2-5	(0-3, 0-1, 2-1)
China - Spain	4-9	(2-2, 1-4, 1-3)
New Zealand - Turkey	16-3	(2-0, 4-1, 10-2)
South Africa - China	2-10	(0-5, 0-4, 2-1)
Spain - Iceland	6-3	(0-1, 2-2, 4-0)

Spain	5	5	0	0	0	59-9	15
China	5	4	0	0	1	46-16	12
Iceland	5	3	0	0	2	41-17	9
New Zealand	5	2	0	0	3	30-25	6
South Africa	5	1	0	0	4	11-53	3
Turkey	5	0	0	0	5	6-68	0

Spain & China are promoted to 2008 World U18 Championship, Div. II

IIHF World U18 Championship Div. II, Group B

Miercurea Ciuc, ROMANIA, March 12-18

Australia - Korea	2-6	(0-1, 1-1, 1-4)
Lithuania - Serbia	6-2	(1-1, 0-1, 5-0)
Romania - Croatia	0-10	(0-3, 0-4, 0-3)
Lithuania - Australia	8-2	(3-1, 3-0, 2-1)
Korea - Croatia	5-4	(1-2, 1-1, 2-1) gws
Serbia - Romania	4-6	(1-3, 2-0, 1-3)
Korea - Serbia	8-0	(2-0, 4-0, 2-0)
Australia - Croatia	5-4	(2-1 1-2, 1-1) gws
Lithuania - Romania	5-2	(1-2, 1-0, 3-0)
Serbia - Australia	3-4	(1-0, 1-1, 1-2) gws
Croatia - Lithuania	1-8	(0-0, 1-3, 0-5)
Romania - Korea	3-6	(1-1, 1-4, 1-1)
Croatia - Serbia	5-1	(2-0, 3-0, 0-1)
Korea - Lithuania	2-5	(1-1, 1-0, 0-4)
Australia - Romania	0-4	(0-4, 0-0, 0-0)

Lithuania	5	5	0	0	0	32-9	15
Korea	5	3	1	0	1	27-14	11
Croatia	5	2	0	2	1	24-19	8
Romania	5	2	0	0	3	15-25	6
Australia	5	0	2	0	3	13-25	4
Serbia	5	0	0	1	4	10-29	1

*Lithuania is promoted to 2008 World U18 Championship, Div. I
Serbia is relegated to 2008 World U18 Championship Div. III*

IIHF World Women Championship Div. II,

Pyeongyang City, DPR KOREA, March 17-23

DPR Korea - Italy	2-3	(1-0, 0-1, 1-1) gws
Netherlands - Austria	0-6	(0-0, 0-4, 0-2)
Slovakia - Slovenia	8-0	(3-0, 2-0, 3-0)
Italy - Austria	2-1	(1-0, 1-0, 0-1)
Slovenia - Netherlands	2-3	(2-1, 0-0, 0-1) ot
Slovakia - DPR Korea	4-1	(1-0, 0-0, 3-1)
Slovakia - Netherlands	4-0	(0-0, 2-0, 2-0)
Italy - Slovenia	5-3	(1-0, 1-2, 3-1)
DPR Korea - Austria	6-0	(1-0, 1-0, 4-0)
Netherlands - Italy	3-4	(1-2, 2-0, 0-1) ot
Austria - Slovenia	2-3	(0-1, 2-0, 0-2)
Slovenia - DPR Korea	0-6	(0-4, 0-2, 0-0)
Austria - Slovenia	8-0	(2-0, 2-0, 4-0)
Italy - Slovakia	0-6	(0-2, 0-2, 0-2)
DPR Korea - Netherlands	7-0	(2-0, 2-0, 3-0)

Slovakia	5	5	0	0	0	25-3	15
Italy	5	2	2	0	1	14-15	10
DPR Korea	5	3	0	1	1	22-7	10
Austria	5	2	0	0	3	17-11	6
Netherlands	5	0	1	1	3	6-23	3
Slovenia	5	0	0	1	4	5-30	1

*Slovakia is promoted to 2008 World Women Championship Div. I
Slovenia is relegated to 2008 World Women Championship Div. III*

IIHF World Women Championship Div. IV

Miercurea Ciuc, ROMANIA, March 26-April 1

Iceland - New Zealand	0-10	(0-4, 0-2, 0-4)
Estonia - Croatia	0-12	(0-3, 0-6, 0-3)
Romania - Turkey	27-0	(7-0, 9-0, 11-0)
New Zealand - Croatia	3-4	(1-4, 1-0, 1-0)
Turkey - Estonia	1-14	(0-6, 0-5, 1-3)
Romania - Iceland	5-2	(0-1, 4-0, 1-1)
New Zealand - Turkey	19-0	(9-0, 6-0, 4-0)
Iceland - Croatia	0-3	(0-1, 0-2, 0-0)
Romania - Estonia	5-3	(4-2, 1-0, 0-1)
Turkey - Iceland	1-12	(0-3, 0-3, 1-6)
Croatia - Romania	3-2	(1-0, 1-1, 1-1)
Estonia - New Zealand	0-9	(0-4, 0-5, 0-0)
Croatia - Turkey	19-1	(7-0, 4-0, 8-1)
Iceland - Estonia	3-4	(1-2, 0-1, 2-0) gws
New Zealand - Romania	4-5	(1-2, 2-2, 1-1)

Croatia	5	5	0	0	0	41-6	15
Romania	5	4	0	0	1	44-12	12
New Zealand	5	3	0	0	2	45-9	9
Estonia	5	1	1	0	3	21-30	5
Iceland	5	1	0	1	3	17-23	4
Turkey	5	0	0	0	5	3-91	0

Croatia is promoted to 2008 World Women Championship Div. III

DUMP & CHASE

■ It was an unforgettable national team debut for 16-year-old Croatian defenseman **Diana Kruseljposavec** who scored 11 of her team's 12 goals in a 12-0 win over Estonia at the IIHF World Women's Championship, Division IV. It was the first-ever game for the Croatian women's national team in an IIHF Championship, which the squad ended up winning after finishing undefeated.

■ The National Hockey League, in cooperation with the Anschutz Entertainment Group, announced that the Anaheim Ducks and Los Angeles Kings will open the 2007-08 NHL regular season in London, England at the O2 Arena. The home-and-home series will be played on



ANZE KOPITAR September 29 and 30. It marks the third trip to London by the NHL. In 1993, the New York Rangers and Toronto Maple Leafs played a two-game, pre-season series at Wembley Arena, as did the Chicago Blackhawks and Montreal Canadiens in 1992.

Prior to the London game, the L.A. Kings will play in a four-team tournament in Salzburg, Austria, featuring Swiss HC Davos, Sweden's Farjestad BK and the Salzburg Red Bulls. It's easy to assume that the Salzburg arena will be filled with Slovenian fans who will make the trip to see their fellow countryman **Anze Kopitar** performing for Los Angeles. It's a smooth 200 km trip from the Slovenian border to Salzburg, the applicant city for the 2014 Olympic Winter Games.

■ As part of its Referee Exchange Program, the IIHF ran four test games in the Czech top league with a four-referee system. The system, which is in place in the NHL, uses two linesmen and two referees and will be implemented next season by the IIHF (see page 2). The first game with four officials was on Feb. 14 between Czech teams Znojmo and Vitkovice with Peter Jonak and Milan Minar whistling the historic game. The four man-system was also used on Feb. 16 between Zlin and Trinec and on Feb. 18 (Slavia Prague vs. Kladno). The test came to a close on Feb. 20 when Martin Homola and Jari Levnonen called the game between Karlovy Vary and Znojmo.

SC Bern tops European hockey attendance... again

■ SC Bern of the Swiss Nationalliga A is again the undisputed leader in European league attendance, for the sixth consecutive year. The club that plays out of the 16,789 BernArena averaged 15,815 fans during the 44-game 2006-2007 regular season. This is a slight decrease from the 2005-2006-season when the club set an all-time European record with an average of 15,994. The 15,000-barrier has been surpassed only three times in European hockey, on all occasions by SC Bern.

German DEL-leagues Kölner Haie is the perennial number two, finishing in that position for the sixth consecutive year, this time with an average of 12,711 fans in the 18,502 KölnArena. Another German club, Adler Mannheim, set a new club record with 12,688 fans in the brand new 13,600 SAP Arena. The DEL plays a 52-game season. KölnArena and SAP Arena are the venues for the 2010 IIHF World Championship in Germany.

Sweden's Frölunda Indians (Gothenburg) and Germany's Hamburg Freezers are the only other European club who draw plus-10,000 crowds to their home games.



ON FIRE!: Bern, the king of Euro attendance again!

Rank	Club	Country	Average	%Capacity
1 (1)	SC Bern	SUI	15'815	94.2
2 (2)	Kölner Haie	GER	12'711	68.7
3 (4)	Adler Mannheim	GER	12'688	93.3
4 (3)	Frölunda	SWE	11'469	95.2
5 (5)	Hamburg	GER	10'293	80.4
6 (7)	Jokerit, Helsinki	FIN	8'928	65.3
7 (9)	Moeller-Pardubice	CZE	8'596	92.9
8 (6)	Lokomotiv Yaroslavl	RUS	8'391	96.3
9 (16)	DEG Metro Stars	GER	7'727	57.7
10 (10)	Färjestads BK	SWE	7'529	91.3
11 (14)	Sibir Novosibirsk	RUS	7'455	99.4
12 (11)	Linköpings HC	SWE	7'266	85.5
13 (x)	Amur Khabarovsk	RUS	7'100	100.0
14 (12)	HV71 Jönköping	SWE	6'970	99.0
15 (13)	Djurgårdens IF	SWE	6'865	48.8
16 (x)	MoDo	SWE	6'759	--
17 (x)	Brynäs IF, Gävle	SWE	6'664	--
18 (15)	HIFK Helsinki	FIN	6'629	--
19 (8)	ZSC Lions, Zurich	SUI	6'591	--
20 (18)	TPS Turku	FIN	6'441	--
21 (x)	Sparta Prague	CZE	6'207	--
22 (20)	Hannover Scorpions	GER	6'186	--
23 (x)	HC Kosice	SVK	6'163	--
24 (19)	Frankfurt Lions	GER	6'060	--
25 (x)	Khimik Moscow	RUS	5'797	--

(Numbers in brackets indicate position from 2005-06.)

BENGT-AKE GUSTAFSSON

Born: March 23, 1958 in Karlskoga, Sweden.

■ **World Champion as a player:** 1987 and 1991

■ **World & Olympic champion as a coach:** 2006 (Turin & Riga)

■ **EHL Champion:** 1998 with Feldkirch, Austria

■ Played in the 1984 and 1987 Canada Cup and in the 1992 Olympics in Albertville. Played in 629 games for the NHL Washington Capitals. Inducted to the IIHF Hall of Fame in 2003.

CAN HE HANDLE ALL THAT GLITTER?

Only after 15 months as head coach of the Swedish national team Bengt-Ake Gustafsson won everything there was on the international hockey agenda in 2006. On February 26, he led Team Sweden to Olympic gold in Turin and on May 21 it was time to collect the World Championship gold medal and the trophy in Riga. Here, Bengt-Ake shows off the hardware in the Riga locker room following the gold medal game win against the Czech Republic. "It's all history now. You can't live in the past," says the Swedish head coach.



Riga & Turin photos: JANI PALAMÄKI

He's back – "Gus" goes for a three-peat

By Szymon Szemberg

■ From being a chaser in 2006, Bengt-Ake Gustafsson will be the chased man at the helm of a chased team at the 2007 IIHF World Championship in Russia. This is something that comes naturally if you coach a national team to an unprecedented Olympic gold and an IIHF World Championship gold in the same year. What even the so superior Soviet teams of the old days failed to do, Gustafsson and his Tre Kronor managed by stunning everyone in Turin and then repeating the feat in Riga only three months later.

It wasn't only a great success for Swedish hockey, it was also a personal triumph for Gustafsson. In Turin, he showed he could deal with all superstar egos and make them play for the team. In Riga, with only eight Olympic returnees, "Gus" assembled a squad of hard workers who had no other choice than playing as a team.

In the process he joined an exclusive group* of hockey nobility that have won the IIHF World Championship both as players and head coaches.

□ How do you motivate yourself and the team after a year like 2006?

"Although it truly was a fantastic year and 2006 is something that I will cherish for the rest of my life, it's history now. It's a new year, with new pre-conditions, new players and new championship. You can't live on old merits. Whatever we do now to succeed in Russia, it's not related to what happened last year. We simply have one thing in mind: To win.

□ But what difference will it make to be the favorite rather than being in the pack like last season?

"As far as we are concerned there will be no difference at all. Any time you play for Tre Kronor in any tournament, you play to win. But media wise it can be a difference as there may be more focus on our team and I am also sure that our opponents will try to use that as a



SUPPORTING CAST: Gustafsson (second from left) celebrates the Olympic gold in the Turin locker room together with his assistants. From left: Jan Karlsson, GM Mats Naslund and Anders Eldebrink.

motivational tool. We are the champions and the team to beat. But we will be able to handle that."

□ Are you worried about a backlash, that the team will underperform and fail miserably?

"I don't even think in those terms."

□ Who will be your key men in Moscow?

"At this point (early April) we don't know much about our goaltending situation as the goalies who did the job in Turin and Riga are playing in the NHL. That position is always the key to any success. It's too early to speculate anything about any NHL players joining the team. As far as Swedish league players, it's obvious that Jörgen Jönsson and Kenny Jönsson will play major roles, just as they did in 2006."

□ You played at the 1979 IIHF World Championship in Moscow as a 21-year old, just after signing with the WHA Edmonton Oilers. What do you recall?

"It was my first world championship and also the first for other young players like Mats Näslund, Tomas Jonsson and goaltender Pelle Lindbergh. We got the bronze medal and were pretty happy with that. The Soviets and the Czechs were too strong but we managed to beat

Canada for the bronze. I remember the Ukraina hotel we stayed at. I've never stayed at a bigger hotel."

□ Is there anything special about a World Championship in Moscow?

"Things are different today than they were back then. Today it's like any other city, except for the traffic. I am a little bit worried about it, everybody knows it can be chaotic but on the other hand this is something outside of our control."

□ Do you have any theory why no hosting nation has won the World Championship for 21 years?

"I think that being away from home is more relaxing for a team. The home team always has to deal with lots of pressure and media requests, both from national and local media. The players are being chased everywhere and are seldom left alone. The fans want to be close to the team and the pressure from them to perform well is also big. When you are in another country, only a limited group of journalists and fans follow the team. Although you appreciate the support from fans, sometimes it can be too much."

□ You recently signed a contract extension that will see you coach the national team over Vancouver 2010. When you select the team for Russia, are you already thinking ahead to the next Olympics?

"No, it's far too early. There are still so many championships in between and so many things can happen. Maybe after the next tournament in Canada in 2008."

*Footnote: Vsevolod Bobrov (Soviet Union), Boris Mikhailov (Soviet Union/Russia), Ivan Hlinka, Josef Augusta and Vladimir Ruzicka (all Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic) are the other coaches who have won the IIHF World Championships both as players and as head coaches. Gustafsson won the 1987 (Vienna) and the 1991 (Turku) championships as player.

