IIHF Centennial will be one for the ages

But 100 years of international ice hockey is already in the book

RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL

The IIHF is entering its most exciting season to date. We will be 100 years old and the fans of international ice hockey will remember the 2008-2009 centennial for many years to come.

It is not an easy task to promise events in sports. After all, it’s far from being an exact science and the eternal truth is true that ‘you win some and you lose some’. But I still take the liberty to give my word that this will be an unforgettable milestone season in the history of the IIHF.

(See pages 6-7 for an overview of the IIHF’s 100 Year Anniversary events.)

Everything will, of course, culminate with the 2008 IIHF World Championship in Halifax and Quebec City, Canada as this will be the first time that our banner event will be played in the country where the best game in the world originated in the mid to late 1800s. One can naturally ask what took us so long, but that issue is another editorial in itself. The most important thing is: we will finally be there.

The IIHF World Championship originated from the European Championship that was first played in the tiny Swiss village of Les Avants, near Montreux in 1910. After 13 European Championships (1910-1932) and 71 World Championships our journey from Les Avants to Quebec City will be completed on May 18, the day of the gold medal game at the 15,399-seat Le Colisée.

It has been an amazing century and this voyage between the two francophone sites on each side of the Atlantic ocean is chronicled in our centennial publication: World of Hockey - Celebrating a Century of the IIHF. We are proud to announce that the book will be released on November 13 in Toronto, coinciding with the Hockey Hall of Fame induction ceremony and the opening of the IIHF 100 Year Anniversary Exhibition at the Hockey Hall of Fame.

This event will also mark the start of the official countdown to May 2, the opening day of the 2008 World Championship. Although the release date is November 13, the delegates at the Semi-Annual Congress in Vancouver in September were treated to a limited sneak-preview edition of the first 100 copies.

Apart from Sweden being awarded with the 2013 IIHF World Championship, the biggest news from the congress was the announcement from the IIHF Sports Committee that it working on a proposal to change the format of the IIHF World Championship (see page 2 for details).

As the President of the IIHF I welcome all suggestions that have the goal to improve our game. But it must be pointed out, especially in direction to some media that jumped to premature conclusions, that for a any proposal to become a reality, it must be approved by the council, our executive body, and finally by the congress, our legislative body. This is not a process that is taken lightly.

During this process we will have time to weigh the positives and negatives of changing the number of teams and the format of our main event.

René Fasel
IIHF President


■■ VANCOUVER, CANADA: The IIHF Semi-Annual Congress was in North America, an unique location for the yearly event, for a special season that lies ahead.

The highlight of the Congress was the selection of Sweden as the host the 2013 IIHF World Championship. The nation beat out Belarus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Latvia, receiving an overwhelming majority of 70 out of a possible 96 votes. Belarusb had 15 votes, Hungary 8, and the Czech Republic 3. Latvia withdrew before the voting began.

The championship sites will be Stockholm (Globe Arena, 13,850) and the southern city of Malmo, where a 12,500-seat arena is currently being built.

"I want to thank everyone who supported us in our ambition to hold the championship in Stockholm and Malmo in 2013," said Swedish Ice Hockey Association President Christer Englund. "We will do our best to fulfill all expectations to hold a great hockey tournament."

It was Sweden’s fourth consecutive bid for the tournament, which last hosted the IIHF World Championship in 2002. It will be the tenth time the Swedes have hosted.

Five Swedish members of the Vancouver Canucks -- Markus Naslund, Daniel Sedin, Henrik Sedin, Mattias Ohlund, and Thomas Gradin -- came to the Westin Bayshore Hotel, the Congress venue, to offer their support for the Swedish bid on September 20, and may have helped to sway the votes.

In other congress news:

❑❑ The biggest buzz was around discussion to reduce the number of teams at the IIHF World Championship from 16 to 14.

"We are looking at the possibility of going to 14 teams, divided into two groups of seven," Sports Committee Chairman and IIHF Vice President Kalervo Kummola confirmed. No timeline for the potential change was specified. But if the the next congress approves the Sports Committee proposal, the new format could be in place as early as 2010 (Germany).

For this to happen, the Sports Committee must submit a concrete proposal to the IIHF Council for approval by the executive body. When this is finished, the Council must pass on the proposal to the Congress. If accepted by the Congress, the proposal can be implemented.

❑❑ As of the 2008 IIHF World Championship, playing time will count down on the clock instead of up (as in the NHL) to make it easier to keep track of time keeping issues, especially with penalties.

❑❑ Further details emerged about the inaugural World Women’s U18 Championship. It will be held January 7-12, 2008 in Calgary. It was agreed that all nations that participate in this tournament will return for the 2009 edition. Then, a relegation system and Division I will be established for this category.

❑❑ It was suggested that all nations under the IIHF need to immediately accept World Anti-Doping Code compliancy, including applying code sanctions for all doping infractions. In the past there has been a discrepancy between the sanctions imposed by the national federations and the WADA Code.

❑❑ The IIHF will publish a new book on how to build a high-end hockey arena capable of hosting Olympic or World Championship competitions.

❑❑ After a review, Armenia and Greece retained their status within the IIHF, and will take part in a qualification tournament with Bosnia-Herzegovina prior to the 2008 Division III championship in Luxembourg.

❑❑ A limited advance edition of 100 copies of the 100th anniversary commemorative book, World of Hockey: Celebrating a Century of the IIHF, was printed for Congress delegates and guests in Vancouver. The book’s official release date is November 13th in conjunction with the Hockey Hall of Fame’s Induction ceremony.

❑❑ A special conference, in conjunction with the Canadian Association for Sports Medicine, will be held in Vancouver in June 2009. It will feature leading information from international experts, with a special focus on team sports and at least 1-1.5 days on hockey.

❑❑ IIHF referee camps have included full medical assessments for on-ice officials, and everyone has passed.

The next IIHF congress will be the General Congress, which is held once every four years. The General Congress will take place in Montreal following the 2008 IIHF World Championship and will feature several 100-year anniversary activities.

Last season at a glance

❑❑ Did you get your copy of the IIHF Annual Report? Published every autumn, the full-color, 100-page report is a complete recap of the 2006-2007 season. With everything from championship results, to congress minutes, to unique photos, this is the one-stop book for international hockey fans.

❑❑ If you are currently not on the IIHF mailing list, you may request a copy of the Report by e-mailing media@iihf.com.

Obituaries

❑❑ Former Soviet national team forward Yevgeni Mishakov passed away on May 30 at the age of 66. Mishakov was a member of the Soviet national team that won the IIHF World Championship four times from 1968 to 1971 and he also won two Olympic gold medals, in 1968 and 1972. Mishakov represented CSKA Moscow club from 1963-1974.

❑❑ Belarus national team player Alexei Savin, 21, died in a traffic accident in the Russian city of Chelyabinsk on June 18. Savin, who was a native Russian but later acquired Belarus citizenship, represented Team Belarus in the 2005 and 2006 IIHF World Championship and in the 2005 IIHF World U20 Championship in Grand Forks, USA.

❑❑ Former international referee Quido Adamec passed away on July 22, at the age of 82. Adamec officiated in seven IIHF World Championships, including on home ice in Prague in 1959. He was chairman of the Czech Referee Committee since 1973 and a member of the IIHF Referee’s Committee for 25 years. Adamec was inducted to the IIHF Hall of Fame in 2005.

❑❑ Sam Pollock, who built a dynasty as general manager of the Montreal Canadiens in the 1960s and 70s passed away on August 15. He was 81. Pollock was the General Manager of Team Canada at the Canada Cup in 1976. The Montreal native won nine Stanley Cup titles as general manager from 1964-1978.

❑❑ Hans Bänninger, the best Swiss goalie of the post-war era, passed away on August 22 in Zurich. He was 83. Bänninger led Switzerland to Olympic bronze 1948 in St. Moritz and to European Championship gold in 1950.

❑❑ One of the toughest hockey players passed away on July 14 at the age of 68. John Ferguson retired at the age of 33 after winning his fifth Stanley Cup in seven years Montreal. The Vancouver-native was the assistant coach of Canada at the 1972 Summit Series. Ferguson fought cancer for three years before passing away.

❑❑ Darryl Sly, a legendary defenseman with the 1961 IIHF World Champion Trail Smoke Eaters, passed away in Collingwood, Ontario on August 31 after a lengthy battle with cancer. He was 68. Sly won the silver medal at the 1960 Olympics in Squaw Valley and played briefly with the Toronto Maple Leafs in the NHL in the late 1960s.

Association News

❑❑ AUSTRIA: The Austrian Ice Hockey Association named Swede Lars Bergström the head coach of the Austrian national team. Bergström, signed for two years and has two Austrian national championships with Klagenfurt. He earlier served as assistant coach for Team Austria. Bergström’s first job is to win the 2008 IIHF World Championship, Division I and gain promotion to the 2009 World Championship in Switzerland.

❑❑ SWEDEN: The Swedish Ice Hockey Association named Anders Edelbrink as assistant coach to Bengt-Ake Gustafsson for the 2008 IIHF World Championship in Canada. Edelbrink, who is the head coach of Swedish league’s Koten Flyers, was part of the coaching staff that led Sweden to the Olympic gold in Turin 2006. Edelbrink returned to Quebec City after 25 years. He played for the NHL Quebec Nordiques during the 1982-83 season.

❑❑ BELGIUM: Christian Pierre was named General Secretary of the Royal Belgian Ice Hockey Federation.
The following list records players who have signed contracts with NHL clubs prior to the 2007-08 season. Russia is not a part of the Player Transfer Agreement. If a player’s signing date is other than for this season, it is noted by his NHL team. In total, 61 players from Europe were signed by NHL teams. In addition five North Americans that had been playing in Europe are included at the end of the list. The list is tentative.

**SWEDEEN (16)**

Name | 06-07 Club | NHL Club
--- | --- | ---
Brynäs | 86-07 Club | NHL Club
Tom Wandell | Port (FIN) | Dallas
Anton Stralman | Timra | Toronto
Patrck Hersley | Malmö | Los Angeles
Patrice Hörqvist | Djurgarden | Nashvile (08)
Alexander Hellström | Björklöven(2) | St. Louis
Niklas Hjalmarsson | HV71 | Chicago
Mattias Karlsson | Almtuna(2) | Ottawa (08)
Tobias Enström | MODO | Atlanta
Erik Engberg | HV71 | Los Angeles
Mattias Ritola | Leksand(2) | Detroit
Patric Berglund | Västerås(2) | St. Louis
Jonas Lundin | Linköping | St. Louis
Magnus Johansson | Linköping | Chicago
Johan Ryd | Fröunda | Detroit
Andreas Thuresson | Malmö | Nashville

**FINLAND (13)**

Name | Ilves Tampere | NHL Club
--- | --- | ---
Tuiu Rask | Ilves Tampere | Edmonton
Teemu Laakkos | IFK Helsinki | Nashvile
Riku Riikman | Jokertoi Helsinki | St. Louis
Petri Kontiola | Tappara Tampere | Chicago
Mikko Lehtonen | Espoo | Boston
Riku Helius | Ilves Tampere | Tampa Bay
Samuli Lehtonen | Jokertoi Helsinki | Washington
Miikka Rankinen | Hämeeenlinna | Columbus
Antti Pihlström | Hämeeenlinna | Nashvile
Jari Viuhkola | Kärpät Oulu | New Jersey
Perttu Lindgren | Ilves Tampere | (Signed 07)

**CZECH REPUBLIC (9)**

Name | Sparta Prague | NHL Club
--- | --- | ---
Jan Havlaci | Sparta Prague | Tampa Bay
Jaroslav Hlinsk | Sparta Prague | Colorado
Vladimir Sobotka | Slavia Prague | Boston
Tomas Kana | Viktovice | St. Louis
Ondrej Pavelc | Cape Breton (QMJHL) | Atlanta
Martin Hanals | Red Deer (WHL) | Phoenix

**RUSSIA (8)**

Name | Lada Togliatti | NHL Club
--- | --- | ---
Igor Grigorienko | Nikolski Kulemin | M. Magnitogorsk
Alexander Nikulin | M. Magnitogorsk | Ottawa
Pavel Valenkon | CSKA Moskva | Toronto (08)
Nikolai Lelynov | N. Zhizhnevski | Montreal
Semion Varlamov | S. Cherepovets | St. Louis
Artem Anisimov | Lokomotiv Yaroslav | Washington
Anton Khudobin | Lokomotiv Yaroslav | NY Rangers

**SLOVAKIA (3)**

Name | Kosice | NHL Club
--- | --- | ---
Vladimir Dravecky | Zvolen | Los Angeles
Mario Bliznak | Zvolen | Vancouver
Richard Stehlik | Sparta Prague | Nashville

**SWITZERLAND (3)**

Name | Davos | NHL Club
--- | --- | ---
Jonas Hiller | Davos | Anaheim
Daniel Manzato | Basel | Carolina
Juraj Simek | Kloten | Vancouver

**GERMANY (2)**

Name | Düsseldorff | NHL Club
--- | --- | ---
Alexander Sulzer | Düsseldorff | Nashville
Philipp Goppulla | Köln | Buffalo

**DENMARK (2)**

Name | Victoriaville (QMJHL) | NHL Club
--- | --- | ---
Morten Madsen | Victoriaville (QMJHL) | Minnesota
Kiril Starkov | Red Deer (WHL) | Columbus

**AUSTRIA (2)**

Name | Vienna C. | NHL Club
--- | --- | ---
Oliver Setzinger | Vienna C. | Nashville
Andre Lakos | Sauburg | Minnesota

**BELARUS (2)**

Name | London (OHL) | NHL Club
--- | --- | ---
Sergei Kostishyn | London (OHL) | Minnesota
Vladimir Denisov | L. Togliatti (RUS) | Colorado

**LATVIA (1)**

Name | Tokyo (OHL) | NHL Club
--- | --- | ---
Kaspars Daugavins | Toronto (OHL) | Ottawa

**NORTH AMERICANS (5)**

Name | IFK Helsinki | NHL Club
--- | --- | ---
Cory Murphy | IFK Helsinki | Florida
Brady Murray | Rapperswil-Jona | Los Angeles
Martin Kariya | Espoo Blues | St. Louis
Simon Garmache | SC Bern | Toronto
Jean-Guy Trudel | Ambri-Piotta | St. Louis

**CANADA (117)**

Name | 2008-09 NHL Club
--- | ---
Ondrej Pavelec | Atlanta
Tomas Popesil | Sarnia (OHL)
Michal Neuvirth | Plymouth (OHL)
Michal Repik | WHL-Sparta P.
Igor Grigorienko | Lada Togliatti
Nikolai Kulemin | M. Magnitogorsk
Alexander Nikulin | CSKA Moskva
Pavel Valenkon | N. Zhizhnevski
Nikolai Lelynov | S. Cherepovets
Semion Varlamov | Lokomotiv Yaroslav
Artem Anisimov | Lokomotiv Yaroslav
Anton Khudobin | Metallurg M.
Igor Grigorienko | Lada Togliatti
Nikolai Kulemin | M. Magnitogorsk
Pavel Valenkon | N. Zhizhnevski
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**UPDATE CANADA 2008**

Canadian and Quebec hockey heroes Jean Béliveau, 76, and Patrick Roy, 42, will be the honorary co-presidents for the 2008 IIHF World Championship in Canada.

Jean Béliveau is one of the most distinguished players in the history of the game. All his goals, points and team records don’t even come close to comparing with the contribution he made to the sport. With 10 Stanley Cups as a player and seven more as an executive, Béliveau, the longest-serving captain in the history of the Montreal Canadiens, continues to act as a leader in the only way he knows, that is by example.

Throughout a dazzling 18-year career in the NHL with the Montreal Canadiens and the Colorado Avalanche, Patrick Roy won four Stanley Cups as was also named as the NHL’s Best Goaltender three times and he won the Conn Smyth Trophy (given to the playoff MVP) three times. Roy also represented Canada in the 1998 Olympics in Nagano, finishing fourth.

“Being honorary co-president with Jean Béliveau represents for me a great honour and I am very pleased to be involved with this event,” Roy said. “As part of the 400th anniversary of the City of Quebec, the hockey fans in the greater Quebec area will have a wonderful opportunity to attend this tournament which, for the first time will be held in Canada and at the same time, will have a chance to discover this championship.”

The IIHF conducted its first major site visit in Halifax and Quebec City in late September, meeting with the host organizing committee and checking out the two venues, the Halifax Metro Centre (10,595) and the Pepsi Colisee (15,399).

“For the first time in quite some years we didn’t have to inspect building sites as both arenas are in place,” said IIHF’s Deputy General Secretary Hannes Ederer. “Both the Halifax and Quebec City venues are typical Canadian arenas, very intimate with a great atmosphere. We won’t have the space and in some cases the comfort that modern arenas provide, but that will be compensated with the ambiance.”

Go to hockey2008.ca for ticket, accommodation and site information for the 72nd IIHF World Championship.
Vinnerborg: The exchange program makes you grow

By Szymon Szemberg

Marcus Vinnerborg, 35, refereed the gold medal game of the 2007 IIHF World Championship between Canada and Finland and he will start his third season as part of the IIHF’s Referee Exchange Program. Ice Times talked to the Swedish referee about the exchange program.

Tell us about your experience with the Referee Exchange Program and if it has been good for your development.

A: You get to learn about other cultures and this enables you to adapt to different situations. You grow as a person and it is good for your confidence. To arrive in Magnitogorsk from Stockholm on a cold Tuesday evening in January is a challenge and a character builder. It has so far been a very good learning experience and my career has benefited greatly from the exchange program. It has also led to a very constructive dialogue between the leagues.

Q: How does officiating in different countries and leagues improve your refereeing?

A: The leagues all over Europe have different styles. In some leagues the game is very physical, in others more based on skill. In some leagues the emphasis is on speed. This means that also your refereeing becomes different. You have to adapt your style and your skating pattern.

Q: Give us some examples.

A: The Russian league is very fast. You really need to skate hard in order to always have good positioning. The Swiss league is also fast, very much end-to-end action. The Slovak league is more finesse, but also with a lot of hooking going on. As a referee you need to adapt to all those league-specific profiles.

Q: Do you have any memorable episodes from your two years in the exchange program?

A: I was fortunate to be assigned to Bern vs. Geneva-Servette in the Swiss league. To be on the ice in the Bern arena in front of 16,000 fans was really something else, an unforgettable atmosphere. A slightly different experience was a game in the old barn in Augsburg, Germany. It was very cold as the stadium is not entirely covered and there was a video replay after a disputed goal. The person in charge of the replay device couldn’t find the frame that showed the situation, so after a lengthy break I simply had to make the decision myself without being able to correctly review the play.

Q: There has been some criticism in media towards the exchange program, especially in your country. What is your comment?

A: I feel that there is no reason to be negative. I am not sure that those who wrote that fully understood the purpose of the program. One must see all the good things that the exchange program has brought in terms of referee development and increased consistency between countries and leagues. You simply cannot focus on one game where a referee may not have had his best day.

Q: The IIHF and leagues are moving towards full implementation of the four-man officiating system. How do you feel being one of two referees as opposed to calling the game alone?

A: With two referees you feel physically and mentally fresh for a full 60 minutes. That’s not the case when you are alone. If you miss an infraction, there is always a good chance that the other referee can see it. I find the two-ref system very good.

Q: What do you see as the biggest obstacle to implementing the four-man system?

I think gaining acceptance of having two referees on the ice will be a challenge. Sometimes people are not always eager for change. It is also important to establish consistency between the two referees on the ice. Coming from leagues with different skill emphasis, this will be critical. It is one reason our Referee Exchange Program is especially important this year, it will help to standardize the officiating across borders.

Q: But obviously there must be benefits to using four-officials, what are they?

Four eyes see much more than two. Ideally, the referee will be closer to the action and will be better able to make a proper judgment.

Q: With more officials being used, will some have to work two championships in one season?

This year will be a special transition season. Because the four-man system will be evaluated at the World U20 Championship, we will have many of our top officials there. This increases the chance that these same officials will be at a second championship later in the season. So right now yes, we will have some officials at two events but our goal is to have a deep enough base to go back to one international event per referee each season.

Are the officials prepared for the four-man system? The camp over the summer went very well. And more games are using the four-man system, giving officials the experience they need. Of course, there will be growing pains and in the first event it might take a little bit for the system to run smoothly, but after seeing what our top officials are capable of, I think the learning curve will be fast.

When will the decision be made whether or not to use the system at the World Championship in Canada? The decision will be made in January, 2008 after U20s.

All about the new four-man system

This year, the IIHF will implement one of its biggest changes in officiating when it adopts the four-man system at the 2008 IIHF World U20 Championship. The system, which uses two referees and two linesmen, will be used at only the top IIHF World Championship events. To learn more about what to expect, Ice Times sat down with the IIHF’s Manager of Officiating, Konstantin Kommisarov.

Q: What made the IIHF decide to go with the four-man officiating system now?

We have had an eye on using the system for awhile. With the new rule enforcement, the game became much faster and it was becoming difficult for just one referee to cover the borders. Four eyes see much more than two. Ideally, the referee will be closer to the action and will be better able to make a proper judgment.

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Who are the Club Champions of the World?

ALL NATIONAL (MEN’S) CHAMPIONS FROM IIHF MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS:

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Champion</th>
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<td>Andorra</td>
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<td>Armenia</td>
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<td>Azerbaijan</td>
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<td>Belarus</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
<td>White Caps Turnhout</td>
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<td>Bosnia &amp; Herz.</td>
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<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Akademika Sofia</td>
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<td>Canadá (Allan Cup)</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
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<td>Hong Kong</td>
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<td>Latvia</td>
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<td>Liechtenstein</td>
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<td>Lithuania</td>
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<td>Luxembourg</td>
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<td>Macao</td>
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<td>Macedonia</td>
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<td>Malaysia</td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Ulaanbaatar</td>
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<td>Mongolia</td>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>no championship</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
<td>Podhale Nowy Targ</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>MODO Örnsköldsvik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>HC Davos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>no championship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Kocaeli Spor Külbü</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>ATEK Kiev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA (NCAA)</td>
<td>Michigan State Univ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International leagues:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian Hockey League</td>
<td>Nippon Paper Cranes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intl. Hockey League</td>
<td>Alba Volan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Hockey League</td>
<td>Anahein Ducks</td>
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</table>

Say goodbye to the IIHF Club Championship program as you know it and prepare for the new era of European club hockey. The 2007-08 season will mark the final edition of the European Champions Cup. While the ECC was deemed a success, it was decided to expand the European club competition to include more teams in a league format. But not all is lost for ECC fans, as this year’s group of six ECC teams will be the bridge between the old and new. Read on to see what’s in store for club teams in the 2007-08 season.

European Women’s Champions Cup (EWCC) - Final Round Jan. 29-Feb. 3: As with the men, the European women’s club teams are also out to discover which will have bragging rights as Europe’s best team. For the last three seasons, the EWCC trophy has felt right at home in Sweden with the women’s AIK Solna team. AIK has earned three straight titles and has an automatic berth in the final round, while the other four teams will be determined through a preliminary round process. Overall, there will be four preliminary groups played in October with the winner moving onto the finals for the five-team, round robin final.

Continental Cup (CC) - Final Round Jan. 4-6: With so many changes to the European club competition on the horizon, there is one tournament that will remain unchanged. The Continental Cup continues to be the biggest of all the Club events with a six rounds and dozens of teams. In recent years the Continental Cup has also been the most unpredictable. The CC remains a key event in club hockey. In 2008-09, the Continental Cup will be connected to the new Champion’s Hockey League.
15 ways to celebrate 100 years

The secret is out: This season the International Ice Hockey Federation is celebrating its 100-year anniversary and is planning a celebration that will be remembered for at least the next 100 years. Just what can you expect in the next year? Read on to find out...

Sport Activities
Of course the bread and butter of any sports federation is, what else, but the sport itself, which is why the primary focus of the IIHF 100-year celebrations will focus around the game and its athletes. The several planned activities include:

International Youth Hockey Skills Challenge:
Each participating nation will hold on-ice skill tests to determine the most skilled male and female youth hockey player. A Skills Challenge will also be held for goaltenders. The 20 best goalies worldwide, determined by the overall global ranking will travel to Canada for a final Skills Challenge during the World Championship. The participants will get to attend a championship game, and of course, see how they stack up against the world's elite.

Global Charity Game:
The Global Charity Game will raise money for a charitable cause. The goal is to dedicate Friday, February 29th (Leap Day) to international ice hockey. Participating nations will determine a playing roster of their top club games which will be dedicated to the IIHF Global Charity Game. For every goal scored in the designated games, a sponsor will donate a sum to an international charity organization.

IIHF World Youth Hockey Festival:
Hockey Canada will host an international youth ice hockey festival from May 2-4 for players aged 12 to 15. Teams from all over the world and Canada, will travel to Quebec City or Halifax to compete against local teams as well as teams of other nations, while experiencing a World Championship game.

IIHF World Oldtimer’s Tournament:
On the other end of the spectrum from the Youth Hockey Festival will be the World Oldtimer’s Tournament which will be held in both host cities of the 2008 World Championship, May 5-10. With over 140 adult recreation teams across the world and four divisions by age (19-35, 35-45, 45-55, 55 plus), these two adult tournaments will be a life time experience for players and families from around the globe.

Two New IIHF Events:
While the 100-year anniversary is good time to reflect on hockey’s past, it is also the perfect opportunity to establish new traditions. The IIHF is using the centennial to introduce two new events. The first is a World Women’s U18 Championship which will be held in January 2008. Six of the participating eight nations qualified for the tournament in February 2007 at three IIHF Women’s U18 Invitational Tournaments, while the other two, Canada and the United States were automatically offered a spot.

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IIHF Ice Rink Project:
A temporary ice rink will be constructed in the garden of the IIHF headquarters in November. It will be open for three months and will host various events. The major goal is to involve, all age groups, all skill levels. Everybody is encouraged to come and play ice hockey at the IIHF Ice Rink. The official face-off will be November 29.

International Fan Appreciation Day:
The IIHF wants to honour the people that have supported and contributed so much to the development and success of the game over the last decade. The International Fan Appreciation Day will be the first week of May in Halifax and Quebec. Fan villages downtown and at game venues will turn into places that will create memorable life-time experiences for all fans.

Historical Activities
The Top 100 International Hockey Stories
Based on their impact on the ice hockey world, stories will be ranked from 100 to 1, culminating with the event in international ice hockey that created the biggest stir. Throughout the season, starting on October 1, 2007, the stories will be released one by one according to a regular publishing schedule on www.IIHF.com. The final Top 10 countdown will take place at a Centennial Gala evening in Quebec City on May 17.

Centennial All-Star Team
Picking an all-star team for any given World Championship is always a tough task, so imagine how daunting it is to pick the All-Star team for the last 100 years. To complete this important job, the IIHF has enlisted the help of a panel consisting of 50 ice hockey experts from 17 countries with a balance between North American and European countries and includes people whose opinions are universally respected. The names of the voters will be made public following the announcement of the team. The announcement of the team, which will have one goaltender, two defensemen, a center and two wingers, will take place in combination with the countdown of the Top 10 International Ice Hockey stories.

Anniversary Book
The IIHF is producing a lavish coffee-table book to mark its 100th anniversary. It provides a complete history of the game, 1908-2008. The first section will focus on 12 distinct periods or

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There's more to this parking lot than meets the eye

Thousands of people in Montreal drive by it every day. Hundreds more walk past it. What just a few know is that they are passing is more than just another city block, it is the site where organized ice hockey got its beginning.

On March 3, 1875, the first true hockey game took place at a rink in Montreal. It was an indoor game featuring two teams, a referee, and a puck. The score was recorded, and the game was reported in the Montreal Gazette the day of the game to attract the interest of fans. A report was published in the Gazette the next day detailing the events of the game. While the first game was on March 3, 1875, the rink was opened on December 24, 1862.

The IIHF would not have the chance to celebrate 100 years of ice hockey, had there not been the Victoria Skating Rink in Montreal. Students of McGill University held the first organized ice hockey game and placed the cornerstone for modern ice hockey, while clearing the path for foundation of the IIHF in 1908.

Instead of allowing those in Montreal to walk by without a second thought, the IIHF wants to recognize this important site of hockey history, which is currently a car rental agency. Despite the change of ownership, one can still see how just where the hockey rink fit before the area was urbanized. In fact, the ice hockey rink's current North American dimensions of 200’ x 85’ were established by the perimeter set by the surrounding street of the Victoria Rink (see photo above).

In recognition of this historic event and unique site, the IIHF will place a tangible, commemorative marker at the former location of the Victoria Skating Rink, which was closed and torn down in 1937.

In addition, the IIHF hopes to join forces in with the NHL, as several of the first Stanley Cups were played at the Victoria Skating Rink and also with the Montreal Canadiens, celebrating their centennial in 2009.
Nothing is imposibile in the

When people think about Australia, it evokes images of white sand beaches blue skies and crystal clear water. It’s not a place too many people would associate with ice hockey.

But in the land down under, there is indeed an eight-team league and over 3,000 registered players that would argue, that while the nation is not home to 16,000-seat arenas and multi-million dollar players, Australia is indeed a country that knows and loves its ice hockey.

Never mind the fact the nation has appeared in only one Winter Olympic Games in the sport (1960) and has only cracked the top 20 once in its 67-year history (1962). It’s the small victories that make for great stories around the ‘barbie’. Like the tale of this year’s national champions, the Penrith Bears.

Teetering on the brink of financial ruin at the start of the season, the Bears were able to turn their potential horror story into a fairy tale finish, winning the Goodall Cup before a home crowd at their new rink, the Penrith Ice Palace, in overtime.

This was a team that had much to overcome. It is one of the few squads in the western part of the nation, and is located in a rugby-crazed town. “Penrith is a critical growth area for our sport, as it is home to the biggest junior rugby league competition in Australia,” said IHA Marketing Director Williams. “Folks out here love their rugby and they are the people that we believe would enjoy our ‘Rugby on Ice’,” Williams said.

So while the rest of the hockey world was out on a golf course -- the Australian season takes place from June through September, the winter months for the Southern Hemisphere country -- The Penrith Bears began their mission to win the hearts of their town, save the team from financial ruin, oh and win a championship, too.

Thanks to the support of the local media and a well-timed 25th anniversary, the Bears were able to solicit a new home at Penrith and get financial backing.

The race to the play-offs was gut-wrenching for the Bears, who looked like they would miss out on the playoffs, until an unexpected loss by the Brisbane Blue Tongues in the final, round rocketed the Bears into fourth place and into the playoffs.

The team gained further momentum when it was announced that the championship would be held on home ice in Penrith.

The Bears showed their intent in their semifinal, defeating the first-placed Adelaide Avalanche, 4-1, and found themselves matched up against the Newcastle North Stars.

For those unfamiliar with the finer points of Australian hockey, meeting Newcastle in the final game would be the equivalent of taking on Montreal in the height of their NHL heyday, not exactly the match-up of choice. In fact, Newcastle was aiming for their third straight Goodall Cup and had the league’s top scorer on the roster, Brad Wanchulak.

From the first whistle, Newcastle took control, and a sequence of thrilling end-to-end rushes began. But early penalties stifled Newcastle’s momentum and gave the Bears hope. The game was scoreless for much of the second period, but the Penrith struck taking a 1-0 lead. Soon the lead doubled as the home fans rejoiced at the unlikely lead. But like any good defending champion, Newcastle took control and scored two third-period goals to send the game into overtime.

The overtime was the first-ever for the Goodall Cup, which has a history that dates back only to 2002. The historic overtime didn’t last long. After an initial exchange of chances, the Bears were awarded a power-play and Czech-born defenceman Rob Pasminka, hammered home a one-timer from inside the blue line. The bulging of the netting and blowing of the whistle signified a magic end to the season for the Bears, their first Goodall Cup since is was designated to be the AIHL prize in 2002.

Sure it didn’t make any national news reels, or even garner a second glance from most of the hockey world. And yet, the thrill of the victory was never-the-less just as sweet as for any NHL champion.

A fairytale ending for a team who had it all to lose.

-- with files, Ice Hockey Australia.com

In action: Adrian Esposito and Warren Jayawardene stop the North Stars attack.
Bears in control

Third-Danwell

With another year has come another title for the Penrith Bears, who claimed the Australian Ice Hockey League premiership at the Australian Ice Hockey League grand final last October. The Bears wrapped up a successful season with a triumphant 4-1 victory over the powerhouse Adelaide Avalanche at the Adelaide Ice Arena. Following their victory, the Bears received the championship trophy and the Most Valuable Player (MVP) plaque from the committee. The win was a fitting end to their successful campaign, which had seen them triumph over rival teams to secure the top spot in their league.

Photos: COURTESY OF ICE HOCKEY AUSTRALIA

Factfile: Australia

- Population: 20,264,082
- Coastline: 25,760 km
- Religions: Catholic 26.4%, Anglican 20.5%, other Christian 20.5%, Buddhist 1.9%, Muslim 1.5%, other 1.2%, unspecified 12.7%, none 15.3%
- Languages: English 79.1%, Chinese 2.1%, Italian 1.9%, other 11.1%
- Registered ice hockey players: 3258
- Male: 1723; Junior: 1287; Female: 248
- Rinks: 21
- Association: Ice Hockey Australia was founded in 1950.
- National champions since 2002:
  2002   Adelaide Avalanche
  2003   Sydney Bears
  2004   Newcastle Northstars
  2005   West Sydney IceDogs
  2006   Newcastle Northstars
  2007   Penrith Bears

Journey Men:

Australia will host the 2008 IIHF World Championship, Division III in Newcastle this April. Normally, it is the Australians and New Zealanders that have a lengthy journey to get to events, but this year the tables are turned as the Kiwis will have the shortest trip — although one that still registers over 1,000 miles. Just how long of a journey awaits the participating teams in April? Look below to find out:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>Distance to Capital City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>8,691 km (5,400 miles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>15,654 km (9,728 miles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>14,187 km (8,815 miles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>12,819 km (7,966 miles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>2,137 km (1,328 miles)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HOPPING ALONG: Team Australia fields teams in every IIHF category. Most recently the women's team earned a promotion from Division III up to the second division after edging Great Britain for the promotion. At the junior level, the squad has traditionally competed in Division II, where the men's team also normally competes. The men's team is currently ranked 33rd in the IIHF World Ranking and moved up one place last season. The women's team is ranked 23rd. In Australia, Rugby is considered the most popular team sport.

A CONTINENT AND A COUNTRY: Not too many countries can claim that they are their own continent, but the Land Down Under is just that. It takes around four hours to fly from coast to coast as the nation is just slightly smaller than the continental United States. While Sydney is the nation's best-known city, it is actually Canberra that is the capital of the country. Overall, Australia has just over 20 million inhabitants.
### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

#### IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS</td>
<td>Canada, Quebec City &amp; Halifax</td>
<td>01.05-18.05.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS</td>
<td>Switzerland, Zurich &amp; Bern</td>
<td>24.04-10.05.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS</td>
<td>Germany, Cologne &amp; Mannheim</td>
<td>07-23.05.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS</td>
<td>Slovakia, Bratislava &amp; Kosice</td>
<td>30.04-15.05.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS</td>
<td>Finland, Helsinki &amp; Turku</td>
<td>28.04-13.05.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS</td>
<td>Sweden, Stockholm &amp; Malmö</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS</td>
<td>Applications: HUN, BLR</td>
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<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
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<td>13-19.04.08</td>
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<td>Japan, Sapporo</td>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td>Romania, Brasov</td>
<td>07-13.04.08</td>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td>Australia, Newcastle</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS</td>
<td>Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina, Sarajevo</td>
<td>15-17.02.08</td>
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<td>Finland, Ventspils</td>
<td>25-30.03.08</td>
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<td>06-12.04.08</td>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td>Romania, Miercurea Ciuc</td>
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<td>26-12.07-05.01.08</td>
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<td>Canada, Ottawa</td>
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<td>2010</td>
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<td>Canada, TBA</td>
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<tbody>
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<td>Germany, Bad Tolz</td>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td>Italy, Canazei</td>
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<td>Serbia, Belgrade</td>
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<tbody>
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<td>Russia, Kazan</td>
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<td>IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP</td>
<td>USA, TBA</td>
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<td>Poland, Torun</td>
<td>02-08.04.08</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP</td>
<td>Latvia, Riga</td>
<td>02-08.04.08</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP</td>
<td>France, Menil &amp; Courchevel</td>
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### OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Olympic Winter Games</td>
<td>Canada, Vancouver</td>
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### IIHF IN-LINE CHAMPIONSHIPS

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<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
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### IIHF CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>IIHF EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS CUP (ECC)</td>
<td>Russia, St Petersburg</td>
<td>10-13.01.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>IIHF EUROPEAN WOMEN CHAMPIONS CUP</td>
<td>First Round</td>
<td>05-07.10.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>IIHF EUROPEAN WOMEN CHAMPIONS CUP</td>
<td>Second Round</td>
<td>30.11-02.12.07</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>IIHF EUROPEAN WOMEN CHAMPIONS CUP</td>
<td>Final: Sweden, Stockholm</td>
<td>29.01-03.02.08</td>
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<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>IIHF CONTINENTAL CUP</td>
<td>First Round, ROU</td>
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<td>2008-2009</td>
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### NATIONAL TEAM BREAKS

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<td>1st International Break</td>
<td>Aug. 27 - Sept. 2</td>
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<td>2007-2008</td>
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<td>2007-2008</td>
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<td>2008-2009</td>
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<td>2009-2010</td>
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<td>2010-2011</td>
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<td>Feb. 7 - 13</td>
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### OTHER INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

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### CONGRESSES

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### ONE SIDED: Early autumn was the perfect time for Canada and Russia's U20 teams to replay the famous 1972 Summit Series. Unfortunately the series wasn’t nearly as competitive as in '72 as Canada romped 7-0-1.
Border Crossing: Teams & players making the leap

Hockey has entered a new and exciting era where clubs, leagues and federations are constantly looking for new structures and establishing new frontiers. These new frontiers are more often than not crossing borders that have long established hockey's boundaries. By Szymon Szemberg

The NHL has been an international league since 1924 when the Boston Bruins became the first U.S.-based franchise to team up with Canadian teams. While, with very few exceptions, leagues in Europe have always been strictly national. But this is not the case anymore.

- Searching for increased quality of competition, clubs in Europe are more and more thinking regionally, rather than being confined by national boundaries. The Austrian league is the current frontrunner in this mentality, having opened its doors to top teams from Slovenia and Hungary. Acroni Jesenice and Olimpija Ljubljana are the Slovenian entries in the ‘Erste Bank’ Liga, while Alba Volan Szekesfehervar is the Hungarian representative.

The Slovenians and Hungarians are attracted by the higher level of play in the Austrian league, where Red Bulls Salzburg are the leading club boosted by resources from energy-drink billionaire Dietrich Mateschitz. No sooner did the Slovenians and Hungarians join the Austrian league, than Salzburg’s Swedish General Manager, Hardy Nilsson, announced that his Red Bulls are thinking about leaving the Austrian league to join the German DEL.

- North of Austria, three Baltic nations not only share common history, but they are now also shareholders in the newly formed ‘Samsung Premjerliga’. Latvia, the dominating hockey country in the Baltic region, has five teams in the league but it is for the 2007-08-season joined by Big Diamonds (Narva, Estonia) and Energija Elektrenai (Lithuania).

“The reason for the movement is obviously to increase the level of competition,” said Maris Baldonieks, General Secretary of the Latvian Ice Hockey Association. “We are all small countries and it is not only our common history but we have so much in common it makes sense to co-operate.”

- Regional thinking and co-operation over the borders is the foundation of the Asian Hockey League (AL) which has operated since 2004. Heading into its fourth season the seven-league team will have five franchises in Japan, two in South Korea and one in China. The most interesting club will be Beijing-based China Sharks, a merger between Hosa and Changchun Fuao and supported by the NHL’s San José Sharks.

It is the first time an NHL-team has actively engaged in an Asian team as San José will be sending three coaches and five players to the China Sharks.

“We want to see ice hockey grow in China, to be as popular as basketball, soccer and help the country make it to the Olympics some day,” said San José Sharks President & CEO Greg Jamison.

- The NHL has earlier showed interest in the Asian market by opening the regular season in Tokyo in 1997, 1998 and 2000. Now the focus has switched to Europe, where for the first time the NHL opened its regular season in London, England September 29-30. The Los Angeles Kings and defending Stanley Cup champion Anaheim Ducks sold out both games in the new 02 Arena.

- Other decisions marked by ‘thinking outside the box’ have seen leagues include their junior national teams in the national league system. Finland and Switzerland have for some years now included their U20 team in their respective second division, but Slovak Ice Hockey Association went one step further prior to this season.

The Slovaks selected 22 juniors to form a club team which will be on a 35-game schedule in Slovakia’s top professional league, the ‘Extraliga’. This is a unique experiment on this level and the program is set for three seasons.

“We made this decision to help stop the migration of Slovak players to the Canadian junior leagues,” says Igor Nemecek of the Slovak Ice Hockey Association. “We think that by giving the juniors this option to play against the best in our country, they realize that they can develop more by competing against Slovak professionals than by playing against Canadian juniors. Our goal is to have at least 14 out of the 22 players to go to the 2008 World U20 Championship in the Czech Republic.”

Super series one sided

- Canada’s U20 team made it clear that the Cold War era is over as they completely dominated Russia’s U20 squad in a revival of the 1972 Super Series.

It was clear from the first puck drop that this would be a Canadian-dominated affair, after sweeping the Russian leg of the tour, winning all four games and out-scoring their rivals 17-6.

Once back on home soil, the Canadians clinched the series with an emphatic 8-1 win in Winnipeg. Canada’s only blemish came in Game 7, when the squad skated to a 4-4 tie. Overall the series ended with a Canadianled 7-0-1 record.

- The series was staged to mark the 35th anniversary of the 1972 Summit Series with the then Soviet Union. That series, which featured the men’s national teams went down to the wire with Canada winning the final three games in Moscow to capture the series, 4-3, with one tie.

Photo: SKODA/Sergei Kivrin, “FIS”, Moscow

MIRROR MIRROR ON THE WALL:
During the 2007 IIHF World Championship in Russia, official sponsor Skoda Auto held its first-ever photo contest for all accredited photographers at the event. Skoda received several entries, but it was this photo, captured by Sergei Kivrin, that captured the jury’s eye.

As Slovakia’s Peter Podhradsky left the ice, Kivrin snapped the optical illusion. Anatoly Maltsev and Vladimir Vyatkin claimed second and third place, respectively.

On the jury were: Vladislav Tretyak, Head of the Organising Committee; Kimmo Leinonen, IIHF Director of Marketing; Bruno Marty, Executive Director Infront; Franz Reindl, Managing Director German Eishockey Federation; Kirils Smelkovs, Foto-Journalist, SIA ‘Presses Tilts’ Latvia; and Martin Lauer, Head of Corporate Communication Škoda.
From Football to Ice Hockey: Craig Thompson looks to duplicate his success

By Szymon Szemberg

Craig Thompson was one of the men behind the success story with the UEFA Champions League in the early 90s. Now, as the CEO of the newly formed Ovation Sports marketing company, he will be the IIHF’s closest ally with the Champions Hockey League, due to start in the 2008-2009-season.

What are the things that you are most proud of with your legacy of the UEFA Champions league?
A: When we started the UEFA Champions League it was in the early nineties and there was a lot of trouble with fan violence and the European Club championship was not as well exposed as it should have been. We wanted to upgrade the image of football, reduce the violence and attract a broader and higher-level audience. So we focused on the ‘higher image of football’ as our key theme. We brought this to life with the logo - eight stars representing the eight star clubs of Europe and the star players on those teams. We produced an opening sequence for TV for all the games where the star players were shown as Greek Gods in marble that then came to life in front of your eyes. All of this was set to classical music to uplift the image. As a result we built the Champions League into one of Europe’s top sport properties, achieved very high TV audiences, and brought in over 1 billion Swiss Francs annually - most of which went back to the participating clubs.

Why ice hockey now?
A: It’s one of the fastest, most exciting and most spectator friendly sports that exist. It has some unique elements that no other sports have. The combination of speed and skill that the players exhibit is unique. Considering all that, I feel that the sport is hugely underexposed, especially on the European club level.

This is the IIHF’s third attempt to launch a top European club competition after the old European Cup (1965-97) and the European Hockey League (1997-2000). Why will the Champions Hockey League succeed?
A: We have analyzed the previous attempts and we think that we have identified four major things that will make the CHL attractive for the clubs, fans and media.
A) The format will pit only the truly best teams against each other, with clubs from lower ranked leagues being able to qualify to be among the best.
B) The financial incentives for the clubs will be attractive
C) The CHL-champion will be guaranteed a game against an NHL-challenger playing for the Victoria Cup every Fall.
D) We will use our Champions League experience to organize the games at a level not seen before in Europe.

Before the IIHF and Ovation decided to work together with this project, your group did a feasibility study. What did it show?
A: We approached potential sponsors and broadcasters and showed them our CHL concept. The response was very encouraging. What we basically were told is that if we launch the CHL and the Victoria Cup as envisioned, we will create something that sponsors and broadcasters will be willling to be associated with. We found out that ice hockey is one of the few major European sports that does not have a strong club championship and the fans want the chance to follow their teams to become European Champion.

What is the vision you have for the CHL?
A: The CHL will be the ultimate stage for an European ice hockey club championship, presented as a modern, fast, sport entertainment, while respecting the sport and honoring its traditions. We want the CHL to become Europe’s second biggest club competition after soccer.

So you don’t envision any revolutionary rule changes, like awarding two goals for a shot from centre ice?
A: No, as I said we want to honor the traditions of the sport. The sports side will be governed by the IIHF while our group will do the branding and marketing of the league. But basically we like ice hockey as it is.

Your former project, the UEFA Champions League, has a very specific brand concept that makes the broadcasts and the games easily recognizable. Are there similar plans for the CHL?
A: Yes. Branding of the CHL is a key element in this whole project. Everything from the ice and the arena to the TV graphics, fan merchandise, match programs, team jerseys, website and TV studios will be part of the branding concept. There should never be a doubt that the game a fan watches either on TV or in the arena is a Champions Hockey League game. And yes, the club jerseys will be clean from advertising. That’s very important.

Why?
A: One of the most important things is to make the top European hockey clubs recognizable among sports fans. Everyone in Europe knows Real Madrid and Manchester United, but how many know AK Bars Kazan or Farjestad outside of their home countries? One way to achieve that is to increase the recognition and value of the club brand, the logo and the colors. This is what the club jersey should display and this shouldn’t get lost in endless patches of advertisement.

What do you think that the CHL can do for the clubs?
A: It can strengthen their fan base in Europe and further increase their financial stability. With new economic conditions the clubs may be able to compete for some of the players who now leave for the NHL.

Photo: THOMAS FREYER

Name: Craig Thompson,
Born: California, USA in 1949
Background: Moved to Europe in 1986 to work with the International Volleyball Federation and later with the International Equestrian Federation (1987).
In 1988 joined ISL Marketing as Vice President. Joined TEAM and was a Managing Director of the marketing agency when it became the commercial partner of the UEFA Champions League in 1992. Founded Ovation Sports AG in 2007 that will be the IIHF’s commercial partner for the Champions Hockey League and the Victoria Cup.

NO YELLOW CARDS HERE: Ovation Sports founder Craig Thompson poses in front of the International Ice Hockey Federation headquarters with a hockey stick. Thomson has traded in the cleats of football for the skates of hockey as he takes on the challenge of getting the Champions Hockey League off the ground.