Co-hosting of an IIHF World Ice Hockey Championship – for the first time since 1930!

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Bitter on-ice rivals to join forces for historic 2012/2013 World Championships

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As usual, this will be determined by the IIHF World Rankings which will be calculated immediately following the respective gold medal games, in Burlington, USA on April 14 and in Helsinki on May 20.

As shown on page 9, the men’s Pre-Championship Rankings show that there are only 50 ranking points separating 7th placed Switzerland and 10th placed Slovakia, with Germany (8th) and Norway (9th) in between. The fight for the ninth spot – which guarantees Sochi 2014 participation – could be furious.

As most of the hockey family knows, the 2012 men’s World Championship will be played under a new format, the first radical playing system change since 1998. Thanks to the 2 x 8 team system (as opposed to the previous 4 x 4) all preliminary round games, up until the playoffs, are known as who-is-playing-who, which of course is a substantial advantage. There will also be more hockey. The total number of games has been increased to 64 from 56.

I wish all hockey fans a great season finale.

Renen Fasel
IIHF President
Hockey Forum in Barcelona

Stakeholders to discuss future of European ice hockey

ZURICH – The IIHF will organize a Hockey Forum in Barcelona on June 14-12, 2014. The event aims to involve all stakeholders in an open discussion on the current challenges facing European ice hockey.

“We felt that it is time to organize this unique event with all partners who have a stake in a stable hockey,” said IIHF President René Fasel. “We want to have an open discussion around some key issues, especially focused on Europe, and to find a common plan about how to go forward.”

After hearing the top 8 European leagues at the end of February; the decision was taken to seize the moment and plan a forum in the summer.

First glimpse inside Olympic arena

SOCHI – Sochi 2014 will be the first time that Russia will host the Winter Olympic Games, and preparations are well underway to get this Black Sea port ready to welcome the world.

Members of the IIHF Facility Committee, led by chairman and IIHF Vice President Karl-Heinz Kurosawa, recently attended a meeting in Sochi that included a tour of the Olympic sites. Of particular interest was the Bolshoi Ice Dome, the main hockey venue for the Games.

“It was amazing,” said IIHF Facility Committee secretary Karl-Heinz Kurosawa. “It was half-done, there’s still work to do on the inside, but on the outside it looks quite ready, and the green in front is impressive.”

The 12,000-seat arena will be ready for the first test events that have been announced for the arena will be the Eurohockey tour (December, 2012) and the IIHF Ice Hockey U18 World Championship (April, 2013).

“This was a very encouraging visit as we are very confident that the Games will be ready for the Olympics, but the Bolshoi Ice Dome will be ready for hockey one year prior to the Olympic opening,” said General Secretary of the Bolshoi Ice Dome Roman Bochkov.

“For the first time, the IIHF can publish photos of the arena’s interior where the rink and tribunes can be clearly identified,” he added.

Hockey development Camp ramps up program for 2012

The IIHF has expanded the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) Hockey Development Camps to include a two-week event in the United States.

The IIHF has organized an American Elite Development Camp for 2012.

The camps will also help to address the IIHF U18 High Performance Camp and the Women’s Coaching Symposium, which will be held at the Vermunt Sports Institute in Vimeool, Finland from 15-22 July, 2012.

For the first time, two camps will be held in the same place and at the same time during the summer of 2012, the IIHF Women’s Hockey Development Camp will be held in conjunction with the USA’s U18 High Performance Camp.

Entering into the second phase of the road “To Sochi and Beyond” – the strategic plan for the improvement of women’s hockey in the world, the first IIHF Women’s Hockey Development Camp will be held in conjunction with the USA’s U18 High Performance Camp.

The camp will be held at the University of Vermont from 15-22 July, 2012.

“The decision which we were hoping for,” said René Fasel. “We are absolutely satisfied, but not in means of a triumphal way. We never wanted this to end up in any court. We always felt that bodies within the sports family were the ones who could play the game. But the Soviets showed that time erodes bitterness and the 1972 series was about something which was so much bigger and meant so much more for an entire nation.”

The IIHF Council has decided to honour both generations of the 1972 Summit Series with a new award which will be presented as part of the IIHF Hall of Fame induction Ceremony in Helsinki on May 20. The award will officially recognize both 1972 Summit Series participant countries, and Soviet Union as “Teams of Distinction” for creating an defining moments which now are part of hockey history and for the eight games which started the era of modern ice hockey, Vladimir Tarasov will receive the trophy on behalf of the Soviet team, while Phil Esposito will be his Canadian counterpart.

Hockey Development Camp

This season’s camp will be the fourth Women’s Hockey Development Camp. This season players will be girls born in 1996, 1997 and 1998.

More than 250 participants from five continents representing 30 nations will be taking part. This unique development and educational event for players, coaches, instructors, managers, administrators and directors.

High Performance Camp

In its first season, the IIHF’s Women’s Hockey Program focused its efforts on the women’s national teams in Europe. For the second season, the IIHF High Performance Program (AHP) will expand its efforts, focusing on development projects for the high performance level of women’s hockey, both in Europe and Asia. The IIHF AHP will be available to any eligible IIHF member nations wishing to participate.

Development Camp ramps up program for 2012

The IIHF has announced the details for this season’s Camp Program, which will be held at the Vermunt Sports Institute in Ver- umo, Finland from 15-22 July, 2012.

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Sweden troika eyes more hardware

By Martin Merk and Henrik Manninen

Once Europe’s leading women’s hockey nation, the Swedish women’s national team hasn’t medalled in Women’s World Championships and Olympics since astonishingly claiming the silver medal in Turin 2006 after ousting the U.S. from the Olympic semi-finals, and since winning world bronze one year later in Win- nipeg.

Since then Finland has covered the spot of the North Americans, coming away from the North Americans, coming

Women’s World Championship All systems go for Burlington 2012

With the 2012 IIHF Ice Hockey Women’s World Championship set to take place in Burlington, Vermont, the three time defending champions Team USA will get to battle for a fourth straight gold medal on home ice.

As it can be expected in such an event, the competition will be highly competitive with 10 teams vying for the title. The USA will be looking to defend their title and perhaps hoist a second consecutive gold medal.

The tournament will take place from April 14-22, 2012 with the final being held at the Gutterson Fieldhouse on April 22.

The USA will be seeking their 4th straight gold medal and 10th overall. They have won the title four times in a row, the last being in 2009.

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Granlund leading the charge for Finns in Helsinki

20 year old’s airhook one of the biggest moments of 2011 tournament, what will he do for an encore?

By Riisto Pakkarinen

Carpe Diem. Of all the skills that Mikael Granlund has, and off of all the gifts he has, the ability to be in the moment, to live in the now, may just be his biggest, and the most important one.

As a kid that’s why he was able to hone his stickhandling skills for hours on end. That’s why he’d help his dad keep his feet on the ground during the media frenzy around him the last few years, and that’s why it’s easy to believe him when he says that he hasn’t thought about playing in front of his home fans at the World Championship in May.

After all, Mikael Granlund says that when he’s in the zone, he doesn’t even remember his last shift, and that’s why it’s easy to believe him when he says that he hasn’t thought about playing in front of his home fans at the World Championship in May.

At that moment, the rest of the world becomes a simple backdrop of his life. That may also be when Granlund is at his happiest. Out on the ice, playing the game he loves, away from reporters, and cameramen.

But with the World Championship on home ice just weeks away, the spotlight is turning increasingly on the kid who scored That Goal in the semifinal against Russia in last year’s tournament, who won one Finnish title, and who is, without a doubt, the biggest when it comes to Finnish hockey.

“It wasn’t really the tournament a lot of thought, it was just right to be there. I try to live in the moment, and I try to play without any worry.”

When asked, Granlund dismissed any ideas of a home-ice curse, and doesn’t consider Finland’s home tournament record anything to worry about. Finland’s finished seventh, fourth, fifth, fifth, fifth, and fifth in the six previous tournaments it has hosted.

“I think the home ice curse is just superstition. So many teams have a good chance to win the World Championship, even the home team,” he said.

While Granlund is great at seizing the moment, he has laid out a career plan which has included playing in the Finnish league for two seasons after the Minnesota Wild picked him ninth in the 2011 NHL draft.

“It was important for me to stay here and develop further as a player. I didn’t think I was ready to take the step two years ago. At least I’m more ready now,” said Granlund who finished 28th in the league scoring in 2010 as a rookie, despite missing 15 games. He was 28th last season, despite missing 21 games, and sixth this season – despite missing 15 games.

When he joined IFK three years ago, he was a small, but highly-talented, 17-year-old forward. Now, he’s made both, physically and mentally.

“In that age, some of the melting takes place naturally, but my skating’s a lot better than it was three years ago, I’m stronger, and probably even more mature and better decisions on the ice. I’m a completely different player now, even if I did in the beginning, too,” he said.

He just plays.

“Naturally, I want to be as strong and fast as possible, but I’ll never be the strongest or fastest player on the ice, so I’ll have to compensate that with something,” he added.

There were a couple of other reasons for Granlund to bide his time in Finland, instead of Minnesota.

“I also wanted to graduate from high school, and fulfill the military service before leaving for the NHL,” he added.

Now he can focus on his play. His military service is complete, and he’s going to graduate from high school this spring. There will be no loose ends in Finland – after the tournament.

Granlund loves to play. He says he’s played “pretty much everything that involves a puck.” It was his father who first taught him the game. His younger brother Markus is also his IFK teammate – the sticks, and the nets to the yard, and the way they work with the puck, was the gift their parents gave them, according to Granlund.

“People always talk about natural born talents, and I’m sure genes do play a role, maybe somebody has better coordination or something, but to me it comes down to repetitions. All good players have played a lot since they were children,” he said.

“For kids, playing hockey isn’t practicing. It’s just having fun with your friends, and it’s not thinking, just doing what he does best. It was also a great example of why Granlund has always been able to elicit his game when he’s gone to the next level, even if doubters have called him too small, or too slow.

First he won a puck battle against Dmitri Kulikov in the corner, then skated around Dmitri Kulikov, scooped up the puck on his blade and then lifted it over Konstantin Basargin’s shoulder from behind the net, to give Finland a 1-0 lead in the game (that Finland ended up winning 3-0).

“It was just one goal. Sometimes that goes in, other times not. It was an important goal, for sure, and not, but I scored it wasn’t important to me, and I don’t think it mattered to the other players, either,” said Granlund.

“If a player just practices that more for a week, he can do it. It’s not that hard. Any player can do that if they just keep on trying,” he added.

That’s the point. Not many dare to try it.

“Having said that, I’d be hard pressed to try something like that again, this, considering the situation it caused. I don’t think I’ll try scoring a goal like that anymore soon,” he said.

Then again, on the ice, when he’s in his moment, he doesn’t think about stamps or the President’s reception or medals. He just plays.

Despite plenty of success for Sweden and Finland, it is not achieved on home ice. Sweden has never won gold at home. Finns have never medalled within their “friendly” confines.

1949 Stockholm, SWE

Home team comes fourth in the first IIHF World Championship held in Sweden. Tre Kronor misses out a gold medal by losing 3-0 on last day to eventual champion Czechoslovakia.

1954 Stockholm, SWE

The Swedes only get only bronze despite being the only team which takes a point from eventual champion Soviet Union. Losing early to Canada 8-0 is a good run.

1963 Stockholm, SWE

Hockey – and another anticlimax. Fifth place – again – is not what Finns were hoping for. Cana da beats Sweden in a classic best-of-three final.

1969 Stockholm, SWE

For Sweden and Finland, home is no advantage
Not so Fasth-but Viktorious

Swiss scoring sensation

Agless Nedved may return

Not so Fasth-but Viktorious

Swiss scoring sensation

Agless Nedved may return

Olympic spots at stake in Helsinki, Burlington

As home pressure not enough, Finns top pre-event ranking

The rules were good. So good that national team coach Per Mårts could not keep Fasth away from the Tre Kronor squad for the 2011 Worlds. After starter Erik Sara lost Sweden’s only star goalie to Fasth, who never looked back. In his first Four World Championship games, he posted these shut-out feats. Fasth was not only the best goalie, but the best player of the championship – until the last 20 minutes of the final against Canada.

With all the votes already in – Fasth was named 2011 European Champion – until the last minutes of the final against Canada, he was the best goalie of the championship. He made 37 saves against Finland, 26 against Russia, 22 against Canada, 19 against Germany and 16 against Slovakia. In his first game against Russia, he did not allow any goals on a total of 26 shots. In the second game against Germany, he allowed only one goal on 35 shots. In the third game against Slovakia, he allowed only two goals on 25 shots. In the fourth game against Canada, he allowed only four goals on 40 shots. In the final against Russia, he allowed only six goals on 44 shots.

The awards were given to Fasth as a tribute to his outstanding performance in the Swiss World Championship. He was awarded the tournament’s Best Goalie. He also won the tournament’s Best Player Award, the tournament’s Most Valuable Player Award, and the tournament’s Best Young Player Award.

Fasth was also named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament, becoming the first Swiss player to win this prestigious award. He was also named the Best Goalie of the tournament, becoming the second Swiss player to win this prestigious award.

Fasth’s outstanding performance in the tournament earned him the nickname “the Ice King” by his teammates and fans. He was also named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament, becoming the third Swiss player to win this prestigious award.

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Fasth’s outstanding performance in the tournament earned him the nickname “the Ice King” by his teammates and fans. He was also named the Best Rookie of the tournament, becoming the ninth Swiss player to win this prestigious award.
### European Club Attendance Average

<table>
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<th>League</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Avg.</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
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<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>SC Bern SUI</td>
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<td>Dynamo Minsk BLR</td>
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<td>HC Davos CHE</td>
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### European Clubs

- **SC Bern**: Credited for a 14,018 attendance figure, the club that plays in the Austrian EBEL league improved its capacity (84%) and attendance (83.3%) to break last year’s record for impressive for a country with only 435,000 registered ice hockey players. Thanks to its success the club is being courted by the Russian KHL.
- **Dynamo Minsk**: Became the club that gained the most places in the ranking, improving from 35th to 14th. The club from the Soviet capital averaged 5,907 fans after moving back to their rink. The arena was torn down and reconstructed prior to the 2011 IIHF World Championship. With this number Minsk will rival two other sports capitals in the world and possibly even HC Košice. Another big jump was done by the Vikšíj Lájiš (1712 to 4035) that played in the Swedish top league for the first time.
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### Other notable facts:
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From Olympian to organizer

Tuula's competitive spirit becomes an asset in key championship role

By Szymon Szemberg

Tuula Puputti has gone from stopping pucks to setting up the 76th IIHF World Ice Hockey Championship.

As the start of the Championship approaches, she is thoroughly enjoying her new role. “As a former player you have a pretty good idea of what teams need to feel that they are well taken care of,” says Puputti.

In her official role as Service Coordinator, Tuula Puputti does a lot. The former Finnish national team player, one of the top goaltenders of the first era of women’s international ice hockey, coordinates issues between the Finnish Organizing Committee and the IIHF; assists the event’s Finnish general secretary Mika Sulin and the competition director Jarmo Jalava, deals with team hotels and preparations, travel planning, as well as the volunteer program (recruiting and training) and the coaching symposium.

As a former goaltender she is used to handle things being thrown her way. Puputti won three IIHF World Women’s bronze medals between 1997 and 2001 and played in the first two Olympics with women’s hockey participation, 1998 in Nagano (bronze) and 2002 in Salt Lake City (4th). In 2001, she also backstopped the University of Minnesota at Duluth to the national collegiate championship.

“A career as a player at the international level helps you when you one day find yourself in an office,” says Puputti. “You know that you must perform to the best of your ability in every situation. Understanding the competitive setting, the mentality and tournament mode of the players and coaches becomes easier if you have been on the other side.”

Ice Times asked Puputti a few questions in the lead up to the championship.

There is huge interest for the championship in Finland. Is there additional pressure on the organizing committee due to the fact that Finland is the reigning world champion and the expectations are enormous?

“We who organize the event have a commitment to create the best possible conditions for all participants and all fans regardless of where they are coming from. So purely from the OC’s perspective we don’t think like that. But as a Finn, you of course get caught up the excitement and you want the team to succeed. But this is secondary.”

This is the first World Championship in modern times which is co-hosted by two countries. How has the experience been?

“I must say that I feel very privileged to be part of this event just because of this reason,” says Puputti. “To be able to not only work with the IIHF, but also with so many great people on the Swedish side brings even more joy to this job.”

Are you confident that come May 4 everything will be ready for teams and fans?

“Yes, it will. I am very confident.”

In Puputti’s current job few things can go wrong as a result of coincidence or bad luck – as opposed to sports. Puputti had to quit her career at 25 after the Salt Lake City Olympics because of a bad back and an ailing hip.

“In the end I played on pain killers and I had to have a hip surgery. The doctor told me that if I don’t want to have another surgery, I’d better quit.”

Puputti was one the very best goaltenders in the world around the turn of the millennium. In the Nagano Olympics 1998, she played second most minutes of all goalies and had the third best goals against average (1.55), helping Finland winning the historic bronze.

Four years later in Salt Lake City, as she was already preparing her retirement, Puputti and her teammates were on their way to stage what would have been the first major upset in women’s hockey. Finland was leading the semi-final against Canada 3-2 after two periods.

On the other hand, she may not even remember. Tuula Puputti has left all this behind and her focus is entirely on making sure that all things are in place for the opening faceoff of the 2012 IIHF World Ice Hockey Championship.

Tuula Puputti Fact File

- Born: 5 November 1977 in Kuopio, Finland
- Clubs: KalPa, JYP Jyväskylä, Jyväskylän Hockey Cats, University of Minnesota, Duluth
- European Championship gold medal 1993, 1995
- Currently Service Coordinator for the WM2012 Organizing Committee