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Young stars go west 2019 World Juniors preview U20/Challenge Cup recaps >





From the IIHF President

Building the future

By René Fasel

For ice hockey fans, this is the favourite time of the year. Snow is falling, the rinks are cold and it's time to hit the ice!

We begin our top division World Championship program as always with the IIHF World Junior Championship. This is a personal favourite for many international ice hockey fans, and for good reason. The World Juniors brings together ice hockey's best young stars and puts them in a fast-paced, frenzied tournametn that offers great action. For fans either at the arenas or watching at home during the holidays, the Juniors are a special treat.

This year we travel to the beautiful western Canadian cities of Vancouver and Victoria. The atmosphere in a World Juniros tournament hosted in Canada is always incredible, and I look forward to the games.

We are continually seeking to bring more opportunities for countries to experience international hockey at the juniors level. We

started the season as usual with the Under-20 lower division World Championships, congratulations to Germany which won at home in Fussen and will move up to play in the 2020 World Juniors!

We also kicked off the season with the U20 Challenge Cup of Asia, which is now a two-division format with ten teams featured.

Both the U20 and U20 Divison I Challenge Cups were hosted by Malaysia, an unlikely ice hockey nation that has grown into a regional leader for the game. The Malaysians were kind enough to host both tournaments over the span of two weeks, while also organizing an Officiating Seminar and hockey camp at the same time and in cooperation with the IIHF Office and the Japan Ice Hockey Federation.

This example of inter-association support has thankfully been repeated often in this early phase of the season, with cooperation agreemetns being signed by between Russia and Japan and China and Switzerland, to name a few. Germany was even gracious enough to host the second-annual Development Cup in Fussen earlier in the fall, which gave teams like FYR Macedonia the opportunity to compete in their first international tournament.

China meanwhile has taken its first major steps forward in its preparations for the 2022 Olympics in Beijing. The Chinese Ice Hockey Association recently opened its new offices, and will be working with the IIHF on player and coach development.

Investing in player development and coaching is so important, and I commend the various initiatives that have been spearheaded by the IIHF's membership, its committees, and also its partners such as Infront Sports and Media. The IIHF-Infront Growing the Game Fund received an increased number of applications this year, and we have selected several we-II-deserving candidates to receive funding for their ice hockey development projects. You can read more about each of these Growing the Game Fund projects starting on page 6.

We also look forward to the new year and plenty of exciting tournaments ahead, with the U18 Women's World Championship being hosted for the first time ever in Japan this January, followed later by the Womens' Worlds in Finland and culminating in a return to Slovakia for the 2019 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship.

And so, it's time to hit the ice! We wish you lots of enjoyment playing this great game also a very happy holidays!



News and Notes

IIHF

The Peace and Sport organization selected the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) as one of the winners at the Peace and Sport Awards ceremony that took place in October on the Greek island of Rhodes.

The awards were given to international and regional organizations for their contribution to positive social change through sport. The IIHF was awarded the Special Jury Prize for the achievement of the Unified Korean Women's Ice Hockey team participating at the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games.



Peace and Sport founder Joël Bouzou (pictured, on left) handed the award to Beate Grupp (middle) and Zsuzsanna Kolbenheyer (on right), who attended the ceremony on behalf of the IIHF. Former IIHF Council member Grupp was the liaison person between the IIHF and the Unified Korean Women's Ice Hockey Team during the 2018 Olympics and recently published a book on the experiences with the team and project. IIHF Council member and IIHF Women's Committee chair Kolbenheyer was the Chairwoman of the Olympic women's ice hockey tournament directorate in PyeongChang 2018.

The 2018 Olympic Winter Games brought athletes from north and south of the Korean Peninsula together at the Olympics within a few weeks and helped pave the way for a dialogue between the leadership of the two Koreas and other countries involved after meetings at the Olympics including the ice hockey venue where the Unified Korean Women's Ice Hockey Team played.

Athletes from north and south walked together at the opening ceremony under the unification flag but the highlight was that for the first time ever athletes from both parts of the Korean Peninsula were together on the same team in a Olympic competition thanks to the effort at the Olympic women's ice hockey tournament.

CLICK HERE TO READ MORE

This includes assignments of female and male **IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP** on-ice officials for all tournaments except the top-The 2023, 2024, and 2025 IIHF Ice Hockey two men's senior events. The assignments for World Championships are set to be chosen the 2019 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship during the next Annual Congress in Bratislava in Slovakia and the 2019 IIHF Ice Hockey World 2019. Championship Division I Group A in Kazakhstan will be made in February.

The joint proposal accepted during the IIHf Semi-Annual Congress was tabled by the Ice Hockey The 346 different game officials who will officiate Federation of Russia, the Czech Ice Hockey in five categories with men, women and junior Association, and the Swedish Ice Hockey teams at different levels come from 45 different Association, who so far are the only candidates countries. The United States (25), Canada (22), for 2023, 2024, and 2025 respectively. Other Finland (18), Germany (17), the Czech Republic nations wishing to submit competing bids will (16), Russia (16) and Switzerland (15) lead the have until the 15 January 2019 to notify the IIHF way but there are many more officials from of their plans. these continents as well as from other regions of the world such as Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Oceania.

"We are pleased that these three countries were able to come up with a proposal where each of the potential hosts are satisfied," said IIHF General Secretary Horst Lichtner. "However, we have to be fair to other nations that might want to host a tournament in these years, so we are extending the opportunity for other bids to be submitted.

OFFICIATING

The International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) has assigned the referees and linesmen for 28 of its 30 tournaments in the 2019 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship program.

CLICK HERE FOR ASSIGNMENTS

The IIHF also published the list of international game officials for the new ice hockey season with IIHF licences of different categories who will be able to officiate international games including IIHF-sanctioned tournaments but also other events. In total 1,094 game officials from 52 countries were licensed for the new season. This includes 76 female referees, 389 male referees, 148 female linesmen and 481 male linesmen.

CLICK HERE FOR LICENSEES

YOUTH OLYMPICS

For the first time the IIHF will organize 3-on-3 hockey with men's and women's tournaments at the 2020 Winter Youth Olympic Games.

CLICK HERE TO VIEW A VIDEO

The 3-on-3 tournament will be played cross-ice with two games running simultaneously, one in each end of the rink. The tournaments will consist of 8 teams per gender category.

The teams will be mixed-NOC and therefore consist of players from numerous countries all over the world, mixed into teams of 11 skaters and two goaltenders. These teams play a round-robin tournament followed by semi-finals and medal games. The players will be selected through national skills challenge competitions and the goaltenders will be selected on a youth ranking which is also used for the allocation of team quote for the 6-team tournaments.

CHINA

An IIHF delegation travelled to China in September to attend an opening ceremony held to inaugurate the new offices of the Chinese Ice Hockey Association.

Fasel – along with President Cao Weidong (pictured below) of the CIHA. IIHF Vice-President for



Asia Thomas Wu, IIHF Council Member Franz Reindl, and IIHF General Secretary Horst Lichtner - was in Beijing to inaugurate the new CIHA offices, which will serve as the primary center for ice hockey development in the world's most populous country.

"This is a landmark moment in the development of Chinese ice hockey," said Fasel. "Prior to the creation of the CIHA ice hockey was under the stewardship of a general ice sports association, but now ice hockey under the guidance of the CIHA has the potential to grow bigger than ever before."

While actively preparing for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, the Chinese Ice Hockey Association will aim to develop the sport of ice hockey in a sustainable and healthy way in China and in Asia, with assistance and cooperation with the IIHF office.

GERMANY

After the sudden departure of Marco Sturm, who became an assistant coach for the Los Angeles Kings last month, the German Ice Hockey Association has named Toni Soderholm as new head coach of the men's national team.



Soderholm has most recently been coaching SC Riessersee and was an assistant coach of the German U20 national team for two years earning promotion to the top-level World Juniors last weekend.

The 40-year-old Finn played college hockey in Long-time women's national team North America and most of his pro career with player Franziska Busch will serve as the new head coach of the IFK Helsinki. He also played in Switzerland for SC Bern and in Sweden with Frolunda Gothenburg. U18 women's national team. She In 2011 he won the Finnish championship and joined the coaching staff last year the Jari Kurri Award for the playoff MVP. For the as assistant coach and replaces Finnish national team he played 62 international Tommy Kettner, who coached games including three IIHF Ice Hockey World the team during the past three seasons. Championships, winning silver in Moscow 2007.

German Ice Hockey The Association also announced that Christian Kunast, currently head coach of the U20 national team. will serve as head coach of the German women's national team as of 1 January 2019.







Kunast finished his U20 coaching stint with a gold medal on home ice at the Divison I Group A World Championship. He will next be in charge of the women's national team with the long-term goal of preparing and gualifying for the 2022 Olympic Winter Games in Beijing.

Kunast was a professional goaltender in the German DEL for many years winning one championship with the Munich Barons in 2000 and was on the roster of the national team several times including at the 2002 Olympic Winter Games and the 2001 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship.





Busch represented Germany in eight IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship tournaments (six in the top division) and two Olympic Winter Games before becoming a youth coach. During the summer she took part in the Coach Development Program of the 2018 IIHF Women's High-Performance Camp in Finland.

GREAT BRITAIN

The International Ice Hockey Federation has selected Belfast as host of the 2019 IIHF Continental Cup Final.

The final tournament of the Continental Cup will take place from 11 to 13 January 2019 at the SSE Arena Belfast (pictured) in the capital of Northern Ireland. The arena has a capacity for 7,400 spectators for ice hockey and will offer excellent conditions to host the tournament with the final four teams in competition.



The final tournament is the last of four stages of this season's Continental Cup that involved 17 club teams. The final four are first-time Kazakh champion Arlan Kokshetau, host Belfast Giants representing the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, GKS Katowice from Poland and HK Gomel from Belarus.

It's the first time a Continental Cup Final will be hosted in the UK which has had one Continental Cup champion, the Nottingham Panthers in 2017.

LITHUANIA

seasons.

Lithuania, which was promoted to the second-tier IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division Group A last spring, will start the season with a new head coach for the men's national team after hiring former NHL player and coach **Daniel Lacroix.**

The 49-year-old Montreal native played

professional hockey for 12 years. While having

most games in the AHL, the winger also played

188 NHL regular-season games and during his

best days in the late '90s was Dainius Zubrus'

teammate at the Philadelphia Flyers for two

He moved into coaching in 2002. For four

seasons he was an assistant coach for the

QMJHL's Moncton Wildcats, temporarily also

the head coach. Between 2006 and 2018 he

has worked as an assistant coach in the NHL for

the New York Islanders, Tampa Bay Lightning,

New York Rangers and the last four seasons

with the Montreal Canadiens. He also spent one

year with the Hamilton Bulldogs in the AHL.

Lacroix follows after German coach Bernd Haake, who has led the team for the past six years winning four consecutive bronze medals in the Division I Group B followed by the tournament win on home ice in Kaunas last spring.

SWEDEN

The Swedish lce Hockey Association announced that Rikard Gronborg will leave the Swedish national team as head coach after the 2019 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship.



Gronborg wants to focus on moving his career to North America with the dream of becoming an NHL coach. He recently led Sweden to backto-back IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship aold.

During the upcoming season Gronborg will continue with Johan Garpenlov (pictured) and Peter **Popovic** as assistants.



Garpenlov, the head coach as of the 2019/2020 season, has worked

as Gronborg's assistant since 2016. Earlier he worked for the national team as a team leader (2010-2012) and as an assistant coach in the 2004 World Cup of Hockey. He earlier also was on the coaching staff of Diurgarden Stockholm.

Before ending his career as a player with Djurgarden in 2001, Garpenlov played 10 seasons in the NHL including 609 regularseason games (114 goals, 197 assists) and 44 post-season games (10 goals, 9 assists) as a forward. He also played for the Swedish national team at the Worlds, Olympics and World Cup and won back-to-back World Championships in 1991 and 1992.



the associate head coach of the University of Minnesota women's ice hockey team, and former NHL defenceman Brian Pothier. Corkum succeeds Robb Stauber, who led the

Former NHL player and assistant coach Bob

Corkum has been named head coach of the

U.S. women's national team for the 2018/2019

season. He will be assisted by Joel Johnson,

U.S. to Olympic gold in 2018 and Women's World Championship gold in 2017.

Corkum once played at the 1987 IIHF World Junior Championship that was followed by a 13-season NHL career. Most recently the 50-year-old was working as an assistant coach for the New York Islanders between 2013 and 2017. He had joined the Islanders after spending five seasons as an associate coach of the men's ice hockey team at his alma mater, the University of Maine.

Growing the game

New development projects approved

By Adam Steiss



The IIHF and Infront Sports & Media have announced the successful applicants for the 2018/19 Growing the Game Fund projects.

The development programme, initiated by the IIHF in conjunction with marketing partner Infront Sports & Media, allows member federations and IIHF committees to apply for funding to help the sport in their country.

This year, seven projects were selected:

AUSTRIA: The Austrian Ice Hockey Federation's Women's Department submitted an operational plan for a project entitled "EWHL -Amateur Goes Pro". The concept is to develop the Elite Women's Hockey League from amateur/volunteer league into a professional league organization, find marketing/sponsoring/media partners for the league, and create new development activities targeting women's hockey in developing ice hockey nations.



The Growing the Game Fund will support a joint Finnish-Swedish study to examine the use of small-ice training in development.

The first steps for the project include establishing a league office and launching a social media and website presence during the 2018/19 season. The following seasons will focus on growing spectators and attracting sponsorship and TV partners.

The ultimate objective of the EWHL revamp is to make the women's league an overall more competitive and professional league, capable of having games with leagues from Sweden, Finland, and Russia, for example, while driving up interest in the women's game in Europe.

BULGARIA: The Bulgarian Ice Hockey Fede-The Balkan hockey festival follows a series of ration secured funding for a Balkan ice hockey success international camps organised by the festival development concept to grow ice hoc-Bulgarian Ice Hockey Federation and the counkey in the Balkan Region. tries from the Balkan region. The festival is intended to improve the cooperation and the synergy between the countries in the region. The festival will consist of an ice hockey tourna-

ment for players in the U14-U16 category. The 4-day tournament will bring together teams from Bulgaria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, and Turkey.

The project is intended as a cross-border festival that focuses on the countries in the Balkan The project will serve as a resource hub for



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Sofia will host a hockey festival with countries such as Turkey.

region (Eastern and Western Balkans). The games will be held in Sofia, Bulgaria and they will be organised in a two-groups tournament where every team will have a chance to play against every other team in his group.

**GERMANY:** The German Ice Hockey Association will receive funds a new player recruitment and ice hockey awareness initative, dubbed "Hockey is Variety".

groups to use ice hockey as a form of integration for kids that come from migrant backgrounds. The federation will also develop an internal trainign concept for coaches and trainers to focu on cross-cultural sensitization.

The German federation will also launch a new program designed to aid professional and amateur ice hcokey players traansition to other education or work careers. A dual-career arrangements with players would set up in cooperation with partners from the business community. Dual-career guidelines and assistance would also be offered, not just to players but to coaches and game officials as well. Partnerships with other MNAs would be possible in order to retain and transfer athlete experiences.

HUNGARY: The Hungarian Ice Hockey Federation plans to introduce a Carpathian Hockey Development Program, aimed at youth hockey, officiating, coaching, mentorship.

The goal of the federation is to is build up a mentorship network in Hungary, with close cooperation with eight Romanian teams and one Serbian team. Each team will work with experienced coaches hired to provide operational mentorship and regional education seminars for the local coaches and trainers. They would also set up development camps for four select teams from their area.



Malaysia partnered up with Japan on a joint proposal to organize a Coach Education Program and Officiating Seminar.

These camps will be held in three times in a year. It is estimated that in total more than 500 players, 70 coaches will participate at these camps in a season.

**FINLAND/SWEDEN:** The Finnish and Swedish Ice Hockey Associations proposed to conduct a joint study, titled "Better Play - Better Players".

The purpose of the study is to examine the impact of small-area games, improved practice

plans, and educational material on youth ice hockey development.

This research project wil focus on defining what is the best way to play the game in youth hockey in terms of field of play size, number of players, rules etc. in order to maximize player development.

MALAYSIA/JAPAN: The Malaysia ice hockey Federation proposed a Domestic Coach Edu-

cation Program, which would be developed in cooperation and with support of the Japanese Ice Hockey Federation. The education program would be supplemented by a regional officiating seminar with the goal to grow the amount of game officials and to constantly develop and teach existing game officials within Asia.

### **IIHF YOUTH AND JUNIOR DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:**

The committee's Partnership for Progress Program introduced a concept called "Connecting the Hockey World".

One of the components is that a national association, league, or club coaches, players and management will visit other organizations to take part in everyday activities and thus gain practical information to enhance their own programs and operations.

- Both of the organizations involved in a partnership, will need to contribute financially in terms of travel, accommodation, food, insurances etc. to facilitate the transfer of knowledge.
- The aim of this project is to provide small subsidies towards these visits. Through this, the Growing the Game Fund can contribute to and be part of a new, innovative and international program providing global and sustainable development of the game.

### IIHF heads north

#### Joins UN for climate change awareness

By Adam Steiss



The International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) has joined **UN Environment and other** partners in organizing the 'Last ice hockey game at the North Pole'.

The "Last Game" – a symbolic ice hockey game with the objective to draw global attention to climate change and the rapidly disappearing ice in the Polar regions - will involve athletes from different disciplines and countries, Arctic indigenous peoples and youth. The hockey game is set to be played 24-25 April 2019 and will take place on an ice rink at the North Pole.

Beyond its institutional backing, the IIHF will provide support on the ground - or rather, on the ice - with its President, René Fasel, volunteering to be the referee of this unique undertaking.

"The IIHF is honoured to be involved with this initiative to combat one of the most serious challenges facing the modern world," said Fasel. "Climate change will impact everyone in the co-



The Last Ice Hockey Game at the North Pole will be played in April 2019 at the Barneo Ice Camp Arctic station (pictured).

ming years, we have to take a more responsible role as stewards of our environment and look for new and innovative ways to raise awareness on this pressing issue."

Fasel will oversee the game that will confront two teams including celebrities from different sports disciplines. The list of confirmed players so far includes former ice hockey stars Jari Kurri (Finland) and Mike Richter (United States), along with four-time Olympic gold medalist speed skater Johann Olaf Koss (Norway).

Also on the ice will be former Soviet and NHL

ice hockey star Vyacheslav ('Slava') Fetisov, who was the main driver behind this initiative in his role as UN Environment Patron for Polar Regions.

"It is great that the IIHF, as a part of the Olympic family, will be with us when we play ice hockey in the Arctic to use sport as a bridge between countries for cooperation on climate change, a topic that is crucial for our planet," said Fetisov.

In 2015, Fetisov was the first person in Russia to support the campaign to create the mari-

ne protected area in the Ross Sea, Antarctica. Throughout the years he has lent his support to several environmental initiatives in the region. including Lewis Pugh's (UN Environment Patron of the Oceans) cleanup on Lake Baikal, Russia and the Antarctica 2020 campaign for the creation of more arctic marine protected areas. In September 2017, he orchestrated the biggest beach cleanup in the Russian Arctic.

"I commend UN Environment and its patron Vvacheslav Fetisov for this admirable effort to draw attention to climate change. Sport is a great communicator across all people, and I hope that we can use ice hockey as a positive message for peace and respect for the environment." said Fasel.

The event aims at garner global attention and support for the rapidly disappearing ice in the Polar regions. The Arctic is one of Earth's most fragile ecosystems, disproportionally affected by climate change and warming at twice the average rate of the rest of the planet. It is aimed to boost climate action by individuals and organizations around the world, through the powerful voice of sports. The last ice hockey game on the North Pole' aims at bringing together sports and environment as agents of peace and has received the backing, among others, of UN Secretary General António Guterres, Pope Francis and Prince Albert II of Monaco.

### Ladies hit the ice

### World Girls' Ice Hockey weekend a hit

By Martin Merk



During the 2018 World Gir-Is' Ice Hockey Weekend, thousands of female players were on the ice at hundreds of events in 42 countries and six continents.

Here are some excerpts from the 8th edition:

#### **Argentina: Buenos Aires**

Argentina organized a World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend in the capital of Buenos Aires. The event took place at Polarcity, which calls itself the largest indoor ice rink complex in South America.

#### **Hungary: Budapest**

No less than 120 participants were on the ice when the Hungarian Ice Hockey Federation organized its World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend

in the capital of Budapest at the Tuskesator ice rink including 15 national team players, 15 women's hockey coaches and 10 volunteers who helped the newcomers.



Japan recruited members from it's women's national team to take part in the 2018 World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend.

#### Turkey: Ankara/Erzurum/Istanbul

Four World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend events were held in Turkey including three organized by the Turkish Ice Hockey Federation. About 50 participants from 8 to 18 years came to the three venues, the Umitkoy ice rink in Ankara, the 3000'Lik ice rink in Erzurum and the Silivrikapi ice rink in Istanbul.

#### Serbia: Novi Sad

This year's event took part in the north in Novi Sad and was a success. 53 girls from 6 to 18 years old were joined by 11 coaches for a 75-mitime compete in an IIHF event. nute ice session with a demo practice. After a break they had another 75 minutes of ice time Good timing to join the World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend for the first time. 70 female players for small-area games, relay races and other fun activities. between the age of 7 and 35 came to the Ice Skating Rink in Kuwait City. The current players **Mexico: Mexico City** showed an exhibition game to introduce the sport of ice hockey to the new ones and the Forty youngsters, mostly between the ages of six and 17, laced up their skates at the Ice Staspectators.

tion Buenavista in a Mexico City mall. They enjoyed learning from 10 women's national team members. Each girl got a name tag, and then



the ice was divvied up with five stations, featuring fun drills to instill the basics of hockey during an hour-long session.

### Japan: Yokohama

The Japan Ice Hockey Federation hosted a World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend session in Yokohama. 55 girls born 2003-2008 participated in the event. The future players were greeted by their coaches and joined a talk show with Japanese Olympians. Later they had skill lessons and played games. The girls enjoyed being on the ice with "Smile Japan" as the women's national team is called. "I enjoyed very much to play with Smile Japan," one participant said.

### **Kuwait: Kuwait City**

It will be a historic year for Kuwait. Last season the Gulf State started with a women's national team, which in the new season will for the first

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# Juniors go back to B.C.

Fast facts to prep for Vancouver/Victoria 2019

By Andrew Podnieks





If it's ho ho ho time! So it must also be time for the **IIHF World Junior Cham**pionship, that annual **Christmas and New Year's** tradition.

This year the tournament will be played in Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, so let's get ready for the action with some U20 talk.

This marks the 13th time Canada has hosted the event, by far the most of any nation. Sweden, Finland, and the United States have each hosted six times.

• If there is one virtual certainty, it is that Canada will win a medal. In 12 previous tournaments played on home ice, Canada has never finished off the podium, winning five times (1991, 1995, 2006, 2009, 2015), taking silver five times (1986, 1999, 2003, 2010, 2017), and finishing third twice (1978, 2012).

The last time the U20 was in British Columbia, the games were played at Vancouver, Kamloops, and Kelowna. Canada beat Russia, 5-0, in the gold-medal game and went a perfect 6-0-0 in the tournament, scoring 25 goals and allowing only 6. Despite the loss, it was Yevgeni Malkin who was named tournament MVP.



Canada, which won gold last year at the World Juniors in Buffalo, has medalled in the last 12 tournaments it has hosted.

Looking back at the rosters from 13 years ago, it's interesting to see who the best players from each nation have become in the vears since, Canada—Jonathan Toews, Czech Republic-David Krejci. Finland-Tuukka Rask. Latvia-Kaspars Daugavins. Norway-Jonas Holos, Russia-Malkin, Slovakia-Boris Valabik. Sweden-Nicklas Backstrom. Switzerland-Raphael Diaz. United States-Phil Kessel.

In the long and intense history of the Ca-nada-Russia rivalry, it has been a consistent fact that Russia plays their best in Canada. Incredibly, in the 12 previous U20's in enemy territory, Soviet Union/Russia has won eleven medals-four gold, five silver, and two bronze. So, it seems, these two nations have a lock on medals already!

When the U20 was in British Columbia in 2006, the event set an attendance record, at-







Russia's last medal came in Canada at the 2017 Juniors.

tracting 325,138 fans over 31 games, an average of 10,488 (both records). That number was bested by Ottawa in 2009 (453,282/14,622). This year, capacity at Rogers Arena is 18,910 for 19 games. Save-on-Foods Memorial Centre in Victoria will host 12 games, but with a full house of 7,400 that means total sell-outs for all 31 games will still see the total fall short of a record. Nonetheless, eight of the top 11 best attended World Juniors were played in Canada, so fan support will not be an issue.

Belarus was demoted last year and coming up for 2019 is Kazakhstan. The Kazakhs have played at the top level only six times since entering the U20 program in 1995, most recently in 2009. They will have a tough time staying



Austria managed to remain in the top division.

up. Historically it has proved to be a challenge, only once in the last five years has the promoted team managed to stay up, and that was Denmark. Impressively, the Danes moved up for 2015 and have been at the top level since.

In the 42 years of World Junior play since the IIHF started the event in 1977, some 126 medals have been awarded. The top six nations have won all but three. Slovakia won bronze in 1999 and 2015, and Switzerland won bronze in 1998. Besides that, it's been all Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, Russia, Sweden, and United States.

Some 28 players have won three medals in their U20 careers, but only one, Jason Botterill of Canada, has won three gold. His came in



Kazakhstan will play at the Juniors for the first since 2009.

1994, 1995, and 1996 during Canada's dominant run of five in a row (1993-97).

Sweden's Peter Forsberg holds the re-cord for most career points in U20 competition (42), but he also holds the record for most points in a game. He had ten (3 goals, 7 assists) in a 20-1 Sweden romp over Japan on December 30, 1992.

Several players from last year's U20 have already made an impact in the NHL this season. Sweden's Elias Pettersson is an early favourite for the Calder Trophy thanks to his phenomenal play in Vancouver. As well, Rasmus Dahlin, the first overall draft choice and a teammate of Pettersson last year, has settled in guite nicely with a resurgent Buffalo Sabres. Drake Bather-

son has made himself part of the Montreal Canadiens lineup, and Miro Heiskanen has become a star on defence in Dallas. Brady Tkachuk looks like a chip off the old block in Calgary on a team flying high, and Jordan Kyrou has made an impact in St. Louis.

All eyes will be on American forward Jack Hughes. Still only 17, he is considered by virtua-Ily every pundit to be the first overall draft selection next year. He was named MVP of last year's U18 championship and is the younger brother of Quinn, drafted last year by Vancouver. There is a third Quinn, Luke, who also has an eye on the NHL. Their mother, Ellen Weinberg, won a silver medal with the U.S. at the 1992 Women's World Championship. Jack has played the last two years in the USNTDP in Michigan and is expected to be a force with the U20 team over the coming holidays.

The most anticipated game of the preliminary round is always the New Year's Eve game with Canada. This year, it will play Russia because the U.S. is in the other group. The teams have played only twice before on December 31, each winning once.

The 2020 World Juniors will be in the Czech Republic (Ostrava & Trinec) before returning to Canada in 2021 (Edmonton & Red Deer).



### Next team up

#### "New Wave" leads Germany to Juniors

By Chapin Landvogt



Nothing is sweeter than convincingly winning a World Championship on home ice. Just ask the kids playing on this winter's edition of the German U20 national team.

Better yet, you probably wouldn't need to if you had seen how the German team stormed the ice when the final buzzer sounded to end Germany's last game of the tournament, a 6-1 outcome against geographical neighbour France. The team celebrated with an elation that had been building for days and the excitement will only continue to grow, as many of this year's squad's key players will still be eligible to play at next winter's World Juniors. Of the 22 players, 10 were born in 2000 or later.

Finishing first was no easy task, but to do so knowing you'll be able to take your key players with you to next year's tournament a level higher is about the best possible outcome for any national program looking to cement itself among the world's elite once and for all.



"This achievement is of incredible importance for German ice hockey," explained Franz Reindl, President of the German Ice Hockey Association. "I am so happy and proud of this team and our program. First our men's team was able to win the silver medal in PyeongChang, now our U20 team has won this tournament and gained promotion. This has been a very special year for ice hockey in Germany."

The Germans entered its final game against France in the driver's seat, as all they needed for advancement was to at least get the game to overtime. Things got off to a good start, but despite a 2-0 lead after one period of play, Germany swallowed a power-play goal against by Antonin Plagnat in the second period, cutting the lead to 2-1 and making things look a lot closer than they'd end up being.

A goal by Taro Jentzsch in the 34th minute once But Germany was able to take a commanding 3-0 lead within the first 12 minutes of the game again gave Germany the momentum, getting a team that had shown some dents in the armour en route to a 5-1 victory, which effectively set the back on track. It would be the first of a natural team on the road to next year's Juniors. Belarus hat trick by Jentzsch, as Germany added three would have to settle for silver followed by bronze more goals in the third period to overwhelmingly medallists Norway. Latvia and Austria finished in seal their promotion to the top division. fourth and fifth place respectively, while France was relegated.



"This team truly, truly earned its place in next year's WJC," explained an ecstatic Christian Kunast, head coach of the German entry. "Five games, five victories; all done on the back of incredible team spirit. The team is completely deserving of this promotion to the next level. I am so happy for the players for this achievement."

Germany finished the tournament with five victories in five games and 14 of 15 possible points. With that, the young team is heading to neighbouring Czech Republic for the 2020 IIHF World Junior Championship.

This promotion was largely made possible by a key game against tournametn favourites Belarus. Both teams having entered the game knowing that a regulation loss to the other team would all but end its chances of moving up to the world's elite group. Belarus had won its first three games in regulation while Germany had done the same, albeit the first one was a 3-2 shootout victory over arch rival Austria.

### Slovenia steps up

#### Junior team continues gold rush

By Andy Potts



Slovenia's juniors have won the 2019 IIHF Ice Hockey U20 World Championship **Division I Group B, two years** after the same group of plavers won the U18 Division IB.

A 4-1 victory over Ukraine on Friday afternoon secured top spot for Ales Burnik's team. Despite going behind midway through the second period, Slovenia rallied to claim a comfortable win thanks to goals from Aljaz Predan, Jaka Sturm, captain Jaka Sodja and Martin Bohinc. Defenceman Nejc Stojan collected three assists to finish with 2+5 for the tournament; Jan Drozg's helper on Predan's marker took him to 12 (4+8) points, finishing as the competition's top scorer, five points clear of a clutch of players.

Slovenia wrapped up top spot after the first game of the final day in Tychy, Poland, but the tournament was far from one-sided. Going into the last day, there was a three-way battle for top spot and five of the six nations had a theoretical chance of a medal. In the event, the host's 4-2 The Slovenian players that have claimed U18 and U20 gold in back to back years bode well for Slovenia's ice hockey future.

win over Hungary secured silver for Poland and left Hungary with bronze. Italy defeated winless Japan in overtime to take fourth place ahead of Ukraine. The Japanese drop to Division IIA for next season.

Slovenian head coach Burnik said: "It was a very interesting tournament. The competition was high quality because all the teams were fairly evenly-matched. Even going into the last day we had three teams going for promotion and five hoping for a medal.

"In the end we proved to be the best team but we faced tough games against good opponents. We managed to reach our goal thanks to our preparations, our excellent staff and some great energy among the players."

the cross-border Alps Hockey League. While most of the plaudits went to Slovenia. there were honourable mentions for two Hungarian forwards. Kristoff Papp's six goals The toughest battle for Slovenia came against made him the leading goalscorer of the tour-Hungary. Down 1-4 after 40 minutes, a big nament, one ahead of Hunor Csaszar, Slovefightback in the third period set up a shootout nia's Drozg earned the prize for top forward, win that gave the Slovenes a crucial advan-Poland's Olaf Bizacki was named top D-man tage going into the final day's play. Captain and Italy's Davide Fadani was the leading Sodja had an assist as Rok Kapel made it 2-3 qoalie.

then scored the tying goal himself. Slovenia won all five games at the tournament but only three of them came in regulation time.

"Every game was tough but I think Hungary was the hardest," Sodja said. "We came from a 1-4 deficit, got through overtime and won in a shoot-out. I think we deserved our first place here.

"We're especially happy because we've repeated our success at the U18s in Bled two seasons ago."

Slovenia's success has a strong Jesenice accent, reflecting the status of Anze Kopitar's hometown as the hockey hot spot of the country. Ten of the roster play their hockey there, including Stojan, Sodja and goalie Ziga Kogovsek, and many of them have been getting extensive experience of the adult game in

## Malaysia U20s win

### **Country triumphs again at Challenge Cup**

By Martin Merk



One year ago Malaysia hosted the IIHF Ice Hockey U20 Challenge Cup of Asia as the first IIHF-sanctioned event in the brand-new Malaysia National Ice Skating Stadium.

Located at the outskirts of the capital of Kuala Lumpur, the Malaysians finished the event in first place ahead of Kyrgyzstan.

Since men, women, adults and juniors can practice and play at the first full-size ice rink of the country, the national teams have improved in international play and won all three Challenge Cup of Asia tournaments they played in – a program aimed at the II-HF's smaller Asian members not competing in World Championship events.

The first two game days proved to be easy with a 14-3 victory against the United Arab Emirates and a 12-2 win in the neighbouring clash against the Philippines. Last year's runner-up Kyrgyzstan was equally success-



Malaysia defended its IIHF Ice Hockey U20 Challenge Cup of Asia title while playing on home ice in Kuala Lumpur.

ful beating the Philippines (13-2) and the United Arab Emirates (12-3) with clear margins.

Saturday night's deciding game was a nail-biter. The Kyrgyz outshot the hosts in each period but ill-discipline made their life difficult. Rafel Zichry Onn Mohammed Rhiza opened the scoring for Malaysia after already 22 seconds when Nikolai Magiev was assessed a match penalty for kicking an opponent. The Malaysians capitalized on the five-minute man advantage with the 2-0 goal from Ilhan Mahmood Haniff.

Kyrgyzstan didn't give up and cut the deficit in the first period with a Andrei Triskhin goal. And had the chance to tie it up early in the third period. Zhanbolot Tagayev missed out on a penalty shot at 1:13 when Vinodraj Sundram blocked the puck with his hands but 46 seconds later Ernazar Isamatov tied it up.

Malaysia got chances for the lead when Tagayev was assessed penalties first for interference and later for checking to the head and neck area, 74 seconds later Nurul Nizam Deen Versluis scored what would become the game-winning goal at 11:08. With five seconds left Chee Ming Bryan Lim scored the 4-2 goal into the empty net.

In a game for third place the Philippines avenged last year's loss against the United Arab Emirates and won the game 7-6. The Filipinos fought back from a 6-4 deficit in the second half of the third period. The game-winning goal from Benjamin Jorge Imperial came with 83 seconds left in regulation time.

Malaysia's Mohammad Hariz Mohammad Oryza Ananda (8+6=14) and Chee Ming Bryan Lim (7+5=12) led the tournament in scoring. Lim won the Most Valuable Player award and Emirati forward Mohamed Alkaabi (7+2=9) was named Best Forward. Ernazar Isamatov was selected as Best Defenceman while the Philippines' Jaiden Mackale Roxas won the vote for Best Goaltender.

The IIHF Ice Hockey Challenge Cup of Asia continues with the men's and women's senior categories in spring 2019.

# Thai score high

### Positive U20 results for growing program

By Martin Merk



Thailand won the IIHF U20 Challenge Cup of Asia's Division I tournament, outclassing the competition and pushing for a move to the top division next year.

The Division I U20s opened the Challenge Cup of Asia season, and were held along with the top division tournament at the Malaysia National Ice Skating Stadium outside of the country's capital of Kuala Lumpur.

The top division tournament, won by the host team Mallaysia, was preceded by a four-team tournament won by Thailand.

The Thai won all three games in their group with an impressive goal record of 54-1 to show they want to play at a higher level next year.

Their most narrow game was the first one, a 14-1 victory against Mongolia. After a 15-0 blanking of Indonesia the day after first pla-



Thailand celebrates after winning the 2019 IIHF Ice Hockey U20 Challenge Cup of Asia Division I and several individual awards.

ce was already locked for the Thai even before ending the tournament with a 25-0 win against Kuwait.

The top 12 scorers of the tournament were all Thai led by 17-year-old Nathaphat Luckanatinakorn with nine goals and five assists in three games, who was named Best Forward of the event.

Mongolia's Sumiyabazar Byambajav followed in 13th-place as best non-Thai scorer with four goals and one assist.

Thailand's Chayutapon Kulrat was voted Best Defenceman while Kuwait's Ahmad Alsaegh won the award for the Best Goaltender. He had three busy games facing 182 shots, almost the same number that all other goaltenders faced combined!



Mongolia recovered from the opening-day loss and moved up to second place. The Mongolians beat Kuwait 9-2 before winning 3-1 against Indonesia in a game for second place. The team dominated the game with 39-16 shots on goal and decided it early with a 3-0 first-period lead. Indonesia finished in third place thanks to a 10-3 opening-day victory against winless Kuwait.

### Malaysia hosts ice hockey events at U20s

The U20 Challenge Cup of Asia tournament took place during a two-week period that also included a regional Officiating Seminar and a camp, organized in cooperation with the IIHF office and the Japan Ice Hockey Federationas part of the Asia Support Program.

### 2018/2019 IIHF U20 Challenge Cup of Asia **Overall Ranking:**

1. Malaysia 2. Kyrgyzstan 3. Philippines 4. United Arab Emirates 5. Thailand 6. Mongolia 7. Indonesia 8. Kuwait

# Building blocks

### 2nd IIHF Development Cup held in Fussen

#### By Martin Merk

One year after the first edition in Andorra, the second IIHF Development Cup took place in Fussen at the base arena of the German national teams.

One year after the first edition in Andorra, the second IIHF Development Cup took place in Fussen at the base arena of the German national teams.

Playing in a bigger ice hockey country provided the teams behind the project with an opportunity to get organizational help, as most of the four countries don't have a full-size ice rink to practise and play.

The tournament included three of the countries from last year - Andorra, Ireland and Portugal as well as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which last season had its international ice hockey debut as an independent country in exhibition games against Bosnia & Herzegovina in Sarajevo. The four participating countries, as well as representatives from Jamaica and last year's tournament champion Morocco, also



FYR Macedonia played in its first international ice hockey event and won the 2018 IIHF Development Cup.

used the opportunity to talk with IIHF representatives on how to develop ice hockey in their countries.

What all four participating countries have in common is that their ice hockey programs are rather small. Either because their countries are small - Andorra has only 77,000 inhabitants or because playing the games according to the rules is difficult for infrastructural reasons.

Of these four countries, only Ireland has experience in the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship program – but then lost its only ice rink and is hoping to get a new one open soon.

While Andorra is the smallest country, it had most of its players from the nation's only club, Andorra Hoquei Gel in Canillo, or the surrounding clubs in France or Spain. Others also had some players with roots in the country from abroad or naturalized players who moved to the country and became difference makers on the ice. The eligibility rules for players with multiple citizenships from the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship program were not in place for this tournament.

Jure Stopar, who led the tournament in points (27) and goals (19), once played for the Slovenian U20 and U18 national teams and ended



his pro career in 2012 before moving further south. Beside playing in FYR Macedonia he also played for the Al Ain Theebs in the United Arab Emirates.

Portugal, which had mostly inline hockey players from the country in the first edition, improved compared to last year. Philip Sardinha, who scored 13 goals, once played two QMJHL games for Gatineau and plays amateur hockey in Quebec in the LHSAAAQ.

FYR Macedonia had a successful debut in the Bavarian city. During the last years an ice rink opened. It's not full size and just partly closed. thus having a shortened season. But just having it has already helped rebuilding ice hockey in the country that during Yugoslav times had a club in the top league and hosted a World Championship tournament in the capital of Skopje.

The first international tournament for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was a success for the team, which defeated Portugal in the final 9-3. But in the end it was less about the score and the standings, as every team went home with great memories and valuable experience playing on the international stage.

### **CLICK HERE TO READ MORE**

### Gallery











Taro Jentzsch with a scoring chance against Austria at the 2019 U20 Division I Group A.

Slovenia's U20s won a key overtime game against Poland to help the team earn promotion.



Poland playing Italy at the 2019 IIHF U20 World Championship Division I Group B. The Poles finished with a silver medal.



Ukraine with a scoring chance against Italy at the 2019 IIHF U20 World Championship Division I Group B.



Kyrgyzstan goaltender Temir Muktarbek gets the blocker save against Malaysia at the 2019 IIHF U20 Challenge Cup of Asia.





Players from Kuwait and Mongolia battle for the puck at the 2019 IIHF Ice Hockey U20 Challenge Cup of Asia Division I.









20

Ireland with a score against Andorra in the IIHF Development Cup bronze medal game.

Thailand and Indonesia competing at the 2019 IIHF U20 Challenge Cup of Asia Division I.

## A passion for sport

### Hofstetter eager to build hockey globally

#### By Lucas Aykroyd

In the 1990's, defenceman Christian Hofstetter captained the Swiss NLA's HC Fribourg-Gottéron, featuring Russian stars like Vyacheslav Bykov and Andrei Khomutov. On July 1, 2018, Hofstetter took on his latest assignment with the IIHF.

The former Marketing and Communications Director, who joined the IIHF in 2008, has taken over from the retiring Dave Fitzpatrick as Sport Director. Hofstetter, 51, is no stranger to big challenges, from representing Switzerland at the World Juniors in 1987 to carrying on the well-respected legacy of Fitzpatrick, who spent 23 years with the IIHF. We checked in with Hofstetter recently.

#### What are your main responsibilities as **Sport Director?**

Everything that revolves around the field of play, on the ice or close to the ice, is somehow related to our Sport Department. So it's a vast range of activities. Before I got the job, I spent time talking with Dave about the requirements. It encompasses things like women's hockey, of-



Christian Hofstetter has worked at the the IIHF for over eight years and assumed the role of Sport Director this past summer.

ficiating, development of players and coaches, and recruitment. It also touches on scheduling competitions, determining which teams wish to participate in our tournaments, and processing team entry form applications.

You have clear rules in place, and these rules also need to be reviewed and changed from time to time. It is the IIHF's responsibility to ensure that the game stays safe, attractive and fast - everything that makes ice hockey cool.

#### What did you learn from Dave?

Things happen guickly in hockey. You need to be prepared for everything that might happen

around the sport in a tournament or in the federations. You have to be ready to adapt, but also defend our sport's rules and values. Fair play and respect is always a big topic. Ultimately, it's all about the athletes, enabling them to perform in a safe environment in the sport they love.

### What is the vision for the IIHF Sport **Department in the next Olympic cycle?**

Availability of ice is key. We're always talking about getting more players into our sport. But first you need to have ice. It also has to be ice at hours that are fair, so nobody has to come to the arena at midnight or 5 a.m. The more ice we get, the easier it gets.

It's also a big challenge to attract people to our game. We're competing with many other sports, and also other forms of entertainment. We have to make sure people choose hockey. Nowadays, this is not easy, and it requires effort from all the stakeholders in hockey. It relates to active players, potential new players, and on-ice and off-ice officials, but also to the fans, who make our sport so exciting. Of course we use our flagship events to promote hockey and make it attractive. And we also need to stay on top of the latest training methods and technical possibilities.

### What are you working on right now?

We're updating our player development guide, which includes player recruitment, the Learn to Play program, and our coach development program. We want to make sure young players get the best possible coaches with new training methods and drills. Of course, we collaborate with our member national associations who run successful ice hockey programs. We need to share this information with the developing countries so that everybody progresses and everybody benefits.

#### How about women's hockey?

Women's hockey has developed tremendously in recent years. Since the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, the gap between the teams after the U.S. and Canada has narrowed tremendously. We've even seen teams beating Canada or competing on a high level with both North American countries in certain tournaments. That's promising. The IIHF likes to continue in that direction.

We'll see how the Women's Worlds develop now with 10 teams in April. We also achieved something amazing as a hockey family when the IOC approved 10 teams for the Beijing Olympics. Some other sports saw their numbers of athletes or competition reduced.

#### What are your thoughts on the proposed new 3-on-3 overtime format for the Worlds?

It's been an ongoing discussion for years. During the IIHF Council meeting in Malta in September, the Competition and Coordination Committee was tasked with creating a proposal on how to change the format for a gold-medal game, so we don't have to rely on a concluding penalty-shot shootout and can finish it with more or less a regular game.

Having the 3-on-3 format for preliminary and playoff games as well just makes things easier for the fans to follow. And you also have to respect that a gold medal game cannot go on all night. We needed to find a format that was both fair and reasonable. We should not go beyond three or four periods of overtime with the 3-on-3 format. Personally, I think it's good. We'll see how the 16 teams react in Slovakia in May and if they approve this format at the first Directorate meeting.

#### Which IIHF tournaments stand out in your memory?

At the 2010 World Juniors in Saskatchewan. I'd never experienced such cold temperatures before. It was incredible! My first Olympics in Vancouver was a really special experience as well as all the Olympics have been great. I'm for-

tunate to meet people from different countries who share the same passion for our sport.

#### What motivates you?

I started playing hockey when I was six years old. It's my passion. Coming back to my roots and being able to help shape our sport with my IIHF colleagues is special. Together with everybody involved in hockey we must want to ensure our sport stays safe and fun, and is something that people love to be involved with.

### Fact **File: Christian** Hofstetter, **SWITZERLAND**



- Born: 20 May 1967 in Zurich, Switzerland
- Former pro ice hockey defenceman
- Master's degree in Economics from the University of Fribourg
- Captained HC Fribourg-Gottéron in the Swiss National League
- Former Sports Marketing Manager at NIKE
- Former Marketing Director at IIHF



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Coming

2019 IIHF World Junior Championship CANADA, Vancouver & Victoria 26.12.-05.01.2019

2019 IIHF U18 Women's World Championship JAPAN, Obihiro 06.-13.01.2019

**2019 IIHF Continental Cup Final GREAT BRITAIN, Belfast** 11-13.01.2019

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