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Time to drop the puck Semi-Annual Congress recap World Girl's Ice Hockey Weekend >

HHF





From the IIHF President

By the numbers

By René Fasel

The weather is turning and the leaves have fallen, which means we have begun a new ice hockey season!

There is already plenty to report in the world of international hockey. Here are some key numbers ahead of the 2019/2020 season:

81-The size of our IIHF membership, after we have added 5 new countries to our ice hockey family (read all about our new members here). It is an incredible milestone for the IIHF to reach over 80 members, and a testament to the hard work we do to grow the game beyond the traditional borders in Europe and North America. Among our new members are countries from three continents, including two from the Middle East (Iran and Lebanon), one from South America (Colombia), and one from Central Asia (Uzbekistan). Together with the our new Greek member, I welcome you all to the IIHF and wish each of them good luck in their efforts to grow the game that we love so much.

527-The total number of events that were held across the globe during October's World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend.

Consider that the first weekend we had back in 2011 saw 165 events in 21 countries. Eight years later: over 500 events, hosted in 42 countries and six continents! Most of our members that have been involved in this great initiative from the beginning now have their own Girls' Hockey Days centered around the weekend. Even professional clubs, including two this year from the NHL, are taking part and hosting recruitment and Learn to Play events.

This IIHF-led initiative is a great example of a joint cooperation between the IIHF Office and our members to exchange resources and knowledge aimed at effectively executing WGIHW events and growing the women's game.

51-The total number of IIHF ice hockey tournaments that will take place this year, a record number. In addition to 32 tournaments in our World Championship program, we have five Challenge Cup of Asia tournaments, seven Continetal Cup stages, four Youth Olympic Games events -- including the new 3X3 tournments--and the first men's Olympic Qualification events. It will be a busy season, and a great opportunity for our member nations to get playing experience for their teams in an international environment. I also encourage all our participating countries to take a moment during these events to talk to each other, share ideas, and potentially create opportunities to work togetther and host their own joint tournaments.

1 900 000-The approximate total value in US dollars in hockey equipment that has been delivered to 47 member national associations via the IIHF Equipment Support Program.

This program has been around now for 25 vears, and through the work of the IIHF Marketing Department in close cooperation with our Partners and Suppliers, we have done great work to make hockey more accessible to our developing members by providing gear. By enabling families new to ice hockey see the positive benefits of the sport and get started for little or no cost, we are making an impact on the game's growth at the grassroot level.

1-Incredible visit by the IIHF membership with his Holiness Pope Francis I at the Vatican in Rome! To be accorded this exceptional honour and memorable experience was indeed wonderful, and I repeat the IIIHF's pledge to the Pope to work to make our sport better and more accessible to young men and women around the world.



News and Notes

2021 IIHF ICE HOCKEY WORLD **CHAMPIONSHIP**



The IIHF and the Organizing Committee for the 2021 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship jointly announced the approval of a new ice hockey arena in Riga.

The arena will be constructed on the Daugava Stadium sporting grounds, a site that holds special meaning in Latvian hockey as the location of the country's first-ever ice hockey arena.

Dinamo Riga played its first home games at Daugava stadium, which used to house a natural ice rink. Since then, the stadium has mostly played host to football and track and field events. A new investment effort of over €10 million by the city government will incorporate a new arena that will be up to IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship standards and will also house figure skating, shorttrack speed skating, and curling. The new Daugava Ice Hall will form part of a major redevelopment of the old stadium site, which will be developed into a wider sport and cultural center that will cover nearly 11 hectares.

2022 IIHF ICE HOCKEY WORLD **CHAMPIONSHIP**

Hartwall Arena in Helsinki has been chosen as the second venue for the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in Finland to host the tournament together with Tampere **New Tampere Deck Arena.**

One preliminary round group and two guarter-final games will be played at Hartwall Arena, a venue that has already hosted the men's World Championship four times in the past. The Tampere Deck Arena is under construction and estimated to open in the later part of 2021.

In other news, the Finnish Ice Hockey Association (FIHA), Infront, a Wanda Sports Group company, and TMG Sports, the



Finnish sports marketing specialists have agreed a partnership to jointly develop and offer exclusive marketing and hospitality opportunities in Finland for the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship. FULL STORY

2026 OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES

The 134th IOC Session in Lausanne, Switzerland, awarded the hosting of the 2026 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games to Milan-Cortina, Italy.

The final race had two bids remaining with the Italian Milan-Cortina bid getting 47 votes and the Swedish bid of Stockholm-Are getting 34 votes. The Olympics will take place from 6 to 22 February 2026 while the Paralympic Winter Games are scheduled for 6-15 March 2026.

Italy previously hosted the Olympic Winter Games two times in Cortina 1956 and Turin 2006. The country previously hosted the IIHF





Ice Hockey World Championship twice with Milan as the main venue in 1934 and 1994.

Milan will host ice hockey, figure skating and short track events, while other sports will be held in the north-east of the country in Cortina, Val di Fiemme, Livigno, Bormio and Antholz.

The 15.000-seat Palaltalia in the southeast of the city (pictured below) will be used as the primary ice hockey venue for the 2026 Olympic Winter Games and will leave a legacy as the city doesn't have an indoor venue of this size right now.

The second ice hockey venue in the bid is a disused arena recently known as PalaSharp (but will be named Milan Hockey Arena) that was built 1986. After renovation works it would serve as second venue for ice hockey as well as for ice sledge hockey at the Paralympics and offer a capacity for 7,000 fans.



IIHF OFFICIATING ASSIGNMENTS & LICENSES

The International Ice Hockey Federation has now assigned the referees and linesmen for most of the tournaments of the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship program, the IIHF Continental Cup and the first Olympic Qualification events.

In total 502 female and male on-ice officials were assigned to 44 events at different categories and levels. The officials come from 48 different countries with the United States (35), Finland (32) and Canada (31) leading the way while at the other end the list of officials also includes referees and linesmen from members such as Indonesia. Ireland or Macau.

Click here for the full list of assignments

The only tournaments not finally assigned are two at the end of season. For the 2020 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in Switzerland as well as the Division I Group A in Slovenia only long lists have been published. The performances of the candidates will be followed by the IIHF Officiating Committee in international and domestic competitions before the final selection will be made in March.

The IIHF also published the licences for international on-ice officials. Referees and linesmen with IIHF licences can, depending

on the licence categories, officiate games at different levels of IIHF tournaments and other international games involving national teams and clubs.

The referees and linesmen come from 52 different countries around the world.

Click here to view all licensed on-ice officials

BELARUS

Hockey The Belarusian lce Mikhail Association selected Zakharov to be the new head coach of the men's national team. replacing Alexander Sidorenko.

Zakharov's merits at domestic level are second to none. Since joining Yunost Minsk as a head coach in the late '90s he has led the club to eight Belarusian championships, six Belarusian Cup titles and won the IIHF Continental Cup three times, most recently in 2018.

At the international level he has been coaching the U18, U20 and men's national team, the latter during the 2003/2004 and part of the 2004/2005 seasons as well as during the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. He was also head coach of the Ukrainian national team and an assistant coach at the 2018 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship.

GREAT BRITAIN

Martin Grubb has been appointed as the new head coach of Great Britain Under-20s.



Grubb steps up from his position as coach of GB U18s, while Richard Hartmann will continue as under-20s assistant and Dayle Keen has been named as a new assistant coach.

LITHUANIA

Bernd Haake (pictured, on left) comes back to Lithuania one year after he had led the men's national team to Division IB gold. Haake



was coaching the men's national team for six seasons.

Doug Boulanger will return behind the bench of the Lithuanian national team program. After having coached the U18 national team last year, he will be the head coach for both the U20 and U18 national team in the upcoming season.

PHILLIPINES

The Philippines will soon host the 30th Southeast Asia Games – a traditional multi-sports event in the region that takes place every two years.





It will be the second time after 2017 in Malaysia that ice sports will be included. Ice hockey debuted two years ago with the inauguration of the Malaysia National Ice Skating Stadium outside of the capital of Kuala Lumpur. The Philippines surprised pre-tournament favourite Thailand in the deciding game to win the first SEA Games ice hockey tournament.



This year's SEA Games are split into several clusters including ice sports in Manila's metropolitan region. The ice hockey tournament will be held at the SM Mall of Asia Ice Skating Rink in Pasay south of Manila (pictured below). The rink located in a mall has a full-size ice sheet and hosted the 2018 IIHF Ice Hockey Challenge Cup of Asia.

The tournament will include the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. They will play a five-team round-robin competition followed by semi-finals and medal games. The tournament dates are 1-8 December 2019.



DENMARK

The Danish Ice Hockey Union named **Peter Elander** as the next head coach of the women's national team.



59-year-old Peter Elander was the head coach of the Swedish women's national team for nine years until the 2010 Olympics. During this period Sweden won a historic Olympic silver medal in Turin 2006 as well as bronze medals at the Women's Worlds in 2005 and 2007. Later he moved to the United States where he was coaching at the University of North Dakota and the Ohio State University.

Denmark together with Hungary are the two promoted teams replacing Sweden and France at the 2020 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship in Halifax and Truro.

SLOVAKIA

The Slovak Ice Hockey Federation (SZLH) has chosen Miroslav Satan as the new President for the next three years.



Satan worked as General Manager of Slovak national team for last two years. Before he agreed to be a GM of the Team Europe during the 2016 World Cup of Hockey. Satan played for the Edmonton Oilers. Buffalo Sabres. New York Islanders, Pittsburgh Penguins and Boston Bruins. He also played in KHL for Dinamo Moscow and HC Slovan Bratislava.

He is the only player to hold all Slovak medals from IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship play - one gold (2002), two silver medals (2000 and 2012) and one bronze (2003).

Satan also confirmed that Craig Ramsay will stay on as head coach of the Slovak men's national team for the new season. Ramsay took over the Slovak national team in 2017 and led the Slovaks in two IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships so far where they finished twice in 9th place. During this two-year stint he also coached them at the Olympic men's ice hockey tournament in PyeongChang 2018 where they finished in 11th place.

SWITZERLAND

Swiss men's national team head coach Patrick Fischer had his contract extended until the end of the 2024 IIHF Ice Hockey World

Championship. He will be behind the bench for the next five World Championships and the 2022 Olympic Winter Games.

Fischer's assistants Tommy Albelin, Christian Wohlwend and goaltending coach Peter



RUSSIA

Yevgeni Bobariko who was coaching the U18 women's national team during the past three years, will take over the Russian senior



women's national team from Alexei Chistyakov.

The 45-year-old Bobariko was a professional player for his hometown team Torpedo Nizhni Novgorod and other clubs, represented Russia at the 1994 IIHF World Junior Championship and was a seventh-round draft pick of the Vancouver Canucks in 1993.

After his playing career he became involved in vet to come. the Russian women's national team program After two years as head coach of SKA St. Petersburg in the Kontinental Hockey League he returned to Finland and led the U20 national team to gold at the 2016 IIHF World Junior Championship on home ice in Helsinki. He then coached Finnish KHL team Jokerit Helsinki for two seasons before returning as head coach of the men's national team for the 2018/2019 season and leading the team to gold at the recent 2019 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship.

as an assistant coach in 2008 and with one of the top women's hockey teams, SKIF Nizhni Novgorod. During the past three years he finished third, fourth and fourth at the IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship and led Russia to two U16 Women's European Cups (2017, 2019). The U18 women's national team will get a new head coach with Alexander Syrtsov, who has been an assistant coach of the team during the past three years. He will be joined by assis-



tant coach Yevgeni Sherbakov and goaltending coach Oleg Lavretski. The same coaches will also lead the U16 women's national team.

FINLAND

Jukka Jalonen and the Finnish Ice Hockey Association extended the contract until May 2022 when Finland will host the Worlds on home ice.



Jalonen first joined the coaching staff as assistant coach for the 2007/2008 season and then became head coach for the following five years leading Finland to the 2011 world title. His success as a coach made him a Finnish Hall of Fame member already in 2012 when he was 50 years old – but more success was

Obituaries

GINO PASQUALOTTO

Italian defenceman Gino Pasqualotto passed away on 20 June at the age of 63.

Pasqualotto spent almost his entire hockey life in his hometown of Bolzano where his

jersey number 33 was retired in a touching ceremony in February. He was the captain in the last years of his career and won no less than 10 Italian championships in Bolzano.

During 11 seasons Pasqualotto was part of the Italian national team. Between 1975 and 1985 Pasqualotto was on the ice when the team managed to move up from the C-Pool to the top-division IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in 1982. He also played for the Azzurri at the 1984 Olympic Winter Games in Sarajevo.

HARTMUT NICKEL

For nearly 51 years Harmut Nickel was part of Eisbaren Berlin (before 1992 known as Dynamo Berlin), first as a player, then as a coach and later as an advisor. On 25 June, Nickel passed away at the age of 74 after short illness.

Nickel was born in 1944 in Weisswasser and went through the youth system of Dynamo Weisswasser before transferring within East Germany to archrival Dynamo Berlin when he was 19. The forward would play for the club between 1963 and 1974 before moving to coaching.

Nickel also represented East Germany as a player in 45 international games including the 1968 Olympics and the 1970 and 1974 World Championships.

After 1988 he was the head coach of Dynamo Berlin / Eisbaren Berlin for five years. He then coached Hanover for three years before returning to Berlin in 1996. After winning East German championships with the old Dynamo outfit as a player, he was part of a successful era of the rebranded Eisbaren Berlin club and of seven German championships between 2005 and 2013.

GREG JOHNSON

Former Canadian centre Greg Johnson passed away on 8 July near Detroit. He was only 48.

The native of Thunder Bay, Ontario played his junior

hockey in Canada before moving to the United States where he graduated at the University

of North Dakota and became the team's alllowed the Czechoslovaks to finish in second time scoring leader. Before launching his NHL place. career he played the 1993 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship as well as the 1991 World Hrbaty was born in Strazisko u Prostejova. He Juniors and joined the Detroit Red Wings He was moved to one of the country's top clubs, played four seasons in Detroit before moving Dukla Jihlava, when he was 19. Jihlava became to the Pittsburgh Penguins and Chicago Blackhis home where he won seven Czechoslovak hawks.Johnson played seven years for the championships in his 18 seasons before retiring Nashville Predators and was captain between in 1980. He stayed in the city until his death and 2001 and 2006 before retiring. also worked for the team until the mid-'90s in the top Czech league.

He played 785 NHL games (145 goals, 369 points) and appeared in 37 playoff games (7 goals, 13 points). With Canada he won World Juniors gold in 1991 and took home an Olympic silver medal in 1994.

JAN HRBATY

Czech ice hockey mourns the death of former national team forward Jan Hrbaty, who passed away on 23 July after serious illness at the age of 77.



Hrbaty represented the Czechoslovak men's national team in 57 international games, won Olympic silver in Grenoble 1968 and IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship bronze medals in 1969 and 1970. The most important of his 15 goals was the game-tying goal in a 2-2 tie against Sweden at the 1968 Olympics that al-





TON TEE TEH

The Malaysian ice hockey family mourns the death of forward Ton Tee Teh, a former national team player who recently had his comeback and practised with the national team to help it for the upcoming season.



The forward was only 43 when he and a colleague driving the car died in a car accident in Kuala Lumpur on 6 October. Teh represented Malaysia at the Asian Winter Games in 2007 and several IIHF Ice Hockey Challenge Cup of Asia events between 2008 and 2013. He recently had his comeback in the national team camp and played last season in the Malaysian league for the Kuala Lumpur Club.

SAC wrapup

Statutes, Regulations changes approved

By Adam Steiss



The IIHF Semi-Annual Congress concluded in Rome in September. The following amendments to the 2018-2022 IIHF Rule Book were confirmed by Congress.

• IIHF Rule #96 Goals with Skate:

A goal with the skate will be permitted in cases where the puck is deflected or directed off of a player's skate. The rule of a goal being called off due to a player using a distinctive kicking action to direct the puck into the net remains in place.

• IIHF Rule #150 Interference on a Goaltender:

Incidental contact by an attacking player with a goaltender will permitted outside of crease in certain situations.

Goals will only be disallowed only if:

an attacking player, either by his positioning or by contact, impairs the goaltender's ability to move freely within his crease or defend his goal; or an attacking player initiates intentional or de-



The Annual Congress confirmed a new set of amendments designed to meet modern standards for good governance.

liberate contact with a goaltender, inside or outside of his goal crease.

Incidental contact with a goaltender will be permitted, and any resulting goals allowed, when such contact is initiated outside of the goal crease, provided the attacking player has made a reasonable effort to avoid such contact.

•IIHF Rule #120 & 165 Throwing a Stick or Object:

A player will be allowed to slide a dropped/ lost

stick to his team mate as long the moved stick doesn't become involved in the game or distract opponent players. A player can slide or direct any stick or any part of it, or any object, away from his immediate area on ice so long as his actions do not interfere with an opponent.

However, a player on the ice who throws or directs a broken stick or any part of it, or any other object, at the puck or puck carrier in the neutral or attacking zone, will be assessed a minor penalty.



TOURNAMENTS SET FOR 2019/2020

All tournament hosts and dates were confirmed for the upcoming 2019/2020 season during Congress. You can view all the tournaments below:

- IIHF Championship program
- Beijing 2022 Olympic Qualification
- 2020 Winter Youth Olympic Games
- Challenge Cup of Asia
- IIHF Continental Cup

SWEDEN, DENMARK CONFIRMED FOR 2025

The IIHF Semi-Annual Congress also confirmed Sweden and Denmark's proposal to co-hosts the 2025 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship. Sweden was initially confirmed as the tournament hosts, but after discussions with Demark the two neighbouring Scandinavian countries made a co-hosting proposal to the IIHF Congress last May.

The host cities in Sweden and Denmark will be confirmed at the later date. The Swedes' last World Championship on home ice came in 2012 and 2013 in a two-year co-hosting bid between Stockholm and Helsinki, Finland. Denmark successfully hosted its first-ever IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in Copenhagen and Herning in 2018.

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New Infront deal

Partnership with IIHF extended

By Adam Steiss

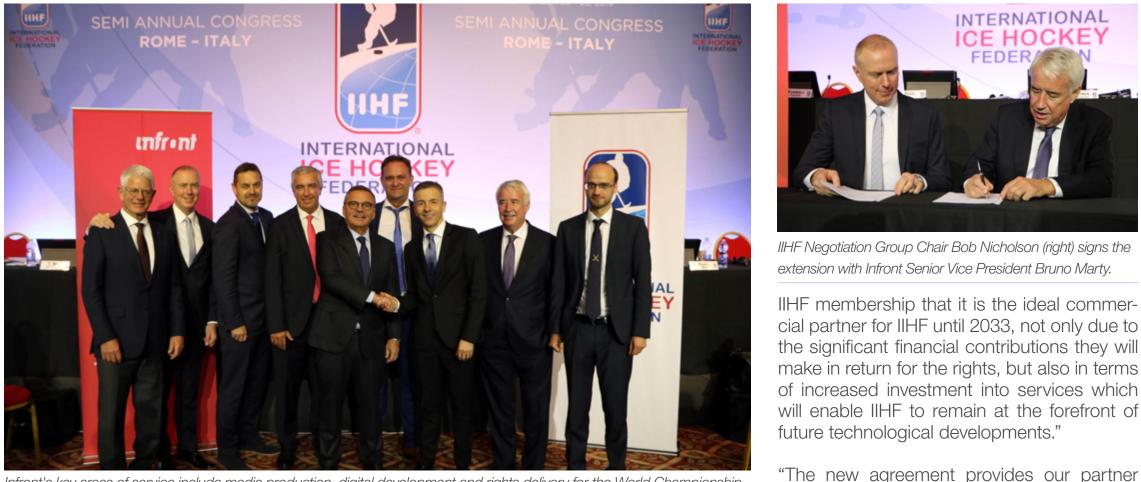


The International Ice Hockey Federation has extended its media and marketing partnership with Infront Sports & Media until 2033.

The appointment of Infront as the IIHF's marketing partner for the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship, as well as the two Division I tournaments (Group A and B) from 2024 to 2033, has been unanimously ratified by the delegates of the IIHF Congress in Rome on Thursday.

The new agreement with Infront has been structured in order to allow the IIHF and Infront to mutually adapt to ongoing changes in the industry, where digital will continue to blur the traditional boundaries of the broadcast and sponsorship landscape in the coming years.

Over the 10-year period it foresees guaranteed payments and the provision of comprehensive media, marketing and digital services



Infront's key areas of service include media production, digital development and rights delivery for the World Championship.

by Infront in the value of more than CHF 500 million. On top of this the parties will have equal share in the exploitation of new and innovative sources of revenues, such as sport and fan data.

Extensive, transparent negotiation

The terms of the new agreement were deter-

mined by an IIHF Negotiation Group, chaired by IIHF Vice President Bob Nicholson and comprised five additional members of the IIHF Council.

"We thank Infront for the very fair and always transparent negotiation process," said Nicholson. "During this process Infront has convinced both the IIHF negotiation group and the



IIHF membership that it is the ideal commerthe significant financial contributions they will make in return for the rights, but also in terms

"The new agreement provides our partner IIHF long-term financial security, continuous investment into multiple services and a triedand-tested team of seasoned commercial experts in the field of ice hockey," said Infront Senior Vice President Bruno Marty. "This combination will significantly increase the potential of IIHF to further develop and grow the sport of ice hockey globally in the future and Infront is very proud to remain IIHF's trusted partner on this mission."

IIHF meets the Pope

Congress capped off with Vatican visit

By Adam Steiss

The IIHF membership was accorded an exceptional honour by the Vatican today, following the conclusion of the 2019 IIHF Semi-Annual Congress in Rome, Italy.

The Pope warmly welcomed the attendees to the Vatican. In his address to the delegates, he acknowledged the role of ice hockey in social development and community-building.

"Hockey is a good example of how sport can express a sense of community. It is a team game in which each team member has an important role to play. Whenever you take part in the World Championships, you can see how people from many different countries enjoy coming together to experience the beauty of sport."

"As you support the development of this sport worldwide, you are encouraging young and old, men and women, to bring out the best of themselves and to promote friendly relationships on the ice."



"As you support the development of this sport worldwide, you are encouraging young and old, men and women, to bring out the best of themselves and to promote friendly relationships on the ice" - Pope Francis in his address to the IIHF

The Papal audience also included an opening speech from IIHF President René Fasel. On behalf of the attendees, Fasel expressed his sincere thanks to Pope Francis for grantingthis honour to the IIHF.

"Ice hockey is a game of fair play and respect," said Fasel. "At the end of every hockey game, no matter what level, the teams get together and shake hands, as is our tradition."

"It is also a sport that brings people togece policies, programs and initiatives that grow ther. We just had our IIHF Congress in Rome, ice hockey, while at the same time inspiring which each year brings over 75 countries tofans, players and communities to create the gether with one shared passion for hockey. Here Russians and Ukrainians talk to each community. other about ice hockey development, despite "We at the IIHF pledge to uphold these vathe current political situation. Balkan nations lues, and I hope that we will be worthy of this work together in friendship and organize tournaments between countries that were at war incredible honour you have shown us today," not a long time ago." said Fasel.



President Fasel also spoke about the Unified Korea women's team, as an example of ice hockey crossing borders.

"It took several years of discussions and preparations, but in the end the players from North and South Korea were together on the same team, in the same dressing room, wearing the same jersey, playing together on the ice for each other and the Korean people."

"It is this spirit that we share across the world of sport. We work hard for each other, and this is why I refer to our Congress members as the ice hockey family."

Fasel also thanked the Pope for last year's public recognition of the Declaration of Principles, an initiative spearheaded by the NHL and NHLPA along with 14 other ice hockey stakeholders - including the IIHF - to advanbest possible experience for the entire hockey

The IIHF President then presented Pope Francis with a set of gifts: a bronze sculpture of an ice hockey player together with a specially made jersey. Produced by IIHF partner Nike, the white jersey featured the Vatican coat of arms on the front, along with a No.1 and "Francescus" written on the back.

The idea for the Vatican meeting was initially conceived by the Italian Ice Sports Federation, which worked with the Italian National Olympic Committee in order to receive the proper clearances and pave the way for the Papal audience to happen following the end of the 2019 Semi-Annual Congress.

"We started two years ago, with an idea to bring the IIHF to the Vatican," said Italian Ice Sports Federation President Andrea Gios. "I asked (Italian Olympic Committee President) Giovanni Malago to help us connect with them. We thought this was a very good thing to have the hockey family here, and all the people that work with me at our federation put in a 100% effort for it to work."

"René was enthusiastic about the idea, and once we had the Semi-Annual Congress confirmed in Rome we knew we had to make it happen."

Members of the various IIHF delegations in



IIHF President René Fasel presented His Holiness Pope Francis with a special customized IIHF ice hockey jersey.

attendance were thrilled by the experience of meeting the Pope.

"It unites our family, this person is very close to God and we get to visit him," said IIHF Council member Vladislav Tretiak. "It unites us and million of people just dream to be here, so it's very important for us."

Considering the size of the Semi-Annual Congress, nearly all of the delegates that were in attendance from around the ice hockey world jumped at the chance to have an audience with the head of the Catholic Church.

"This is really a special feeling for all of us," said Anders Larsson. President of the Swedish Ice "With all this in mind I encourage you and your Hockey Association. Federation to go forth and continue your spe-"I think it's a day that I and everyone that was ensure a safe community to all who take part."

cial mission to make this sport inclusive and to here will remember for the rest of our lives. It really shows that ice hockey, our fantastic "May the Lord bless you and always give you sport, can bring people together and be so the joy of sport being played together. Thank much more than just a game." vou."

"A once in a lifetime experience," said IIHF Vice-President Bob Nicholson. "I mean you work in hockey and never think that you'd have the opportunity to meet and shake hands with the Pope. His words were very well-spoken, he certainly values sport and sport development."

During Pope Francis's address to the audience, he also pointed out the IIHF's recent approval last May for a series of updates to the IIHF Statutes and Bylaws, designed specifically to encourage good governance and transparency. He also commended the decision to appoint a new Ethics board within the federation.

"Todays' culture may sometimes steer sporting activities down the wrong path, but we must keep in mind that rules are there to serve a specific purpose and to avoid a descent into chaos. Athlete honour fair play when they not only obey the formal rules but also observe justice with respect to their opponents so that all competitors can freely engage in the game."

IIHF grows to 81

Five new members approved at SAC

By Martin Merk



The 2019 IIHF Semi-Annual Congress admitted five new members nations - Algeria, Colombia, Iran, Lebanon and Uzbekistan - as new associate members.

In addition a new member was approved to represent Greece. This is the biggest number of countries joining the IIHF since 1992 when the IIHF grew by ten countries following the breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

ALGERIA



Ice hockey is a new sport in Algeria and inspired by the Algerian diaspora in other

countries, in particular in France. Players of Algerian descent have formed a team that played at tournaments such as the Arab Cup and African Club Championships (under the name Alger Corsaires) with the Algerian flag as well as in exhibition games against French club teams.

One of the hockey enthusiasts is Karim Kerbouche, who has played ice hockey in Great Britain. He and other players based abroad helped bring the sport to the country of their heritage and use the currently limited possibilities for ice to teach the sport to the locals.

"After years of hard work it is a great honour for Algeria to become members of the IIHF. We are dedicated to developing the sport in Algeria and providing physical activity for the Algerian public, and we look forward to guidance from the experienced IIHF staff and member nations, who will no doubt help take our project to the next level," Kerbouche said.

"The Algerian government are supporting the creation of our first hockey school in the city of Setif where our current only indoor permanent ice rink is based, from there we have started to create our new generation of hockey players



and national team players of the future. Thank you to all members who voted in our favour."

The hockey school took place recently at Pati-"Ice hockey in Colombia is a sport that has acnoire Dream Games, a new ice rink located at the Park Mall in Setif, a city located 270 kilomequired significant results without having the adequate infrastructure to develop players, referees ters east of the capital of Algiers. Synthetic ice rinks have also been used for hockey training and coaches. However, Colombian hockey has in Algiers and Oran where real ice rinks are run shown great talent and a potential growth that temporarily during winters. A permanent ice rink motivates us to work for the sport in our counis planned in a new shopping mall in Baraki clotry," said Daniel Fierro Torres, the President of se to Algiers, which will become the largest mall the Colombian Ice Hockey Federation. in Africa.

Click here for Algeria's country profile

COLOMBIA

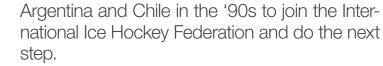
The South American country of Colombia has a long history in inline hockey and has in the last few years made first steps to

COLOMBI

convert the skill to the ice. It had its debut at the Pan-American Ice Hockey Tournament that Mexico hosted annually between 2014 and 2017 and managed to win the men's tournament in 2015 and 2016 – despite not having an ice rink to play the game within the country. Recently it competed at another tournament in Florida.

Now Colombia has become the fifth Latin American country after Mexico in 1986 and Brazil,







young human beings with good sportsmanship and human values."

"Because of this, being members of the IIHF

means a big step towards our goals of offering

the hockey community in Colombia the best

atmosphere to play, and in this way develop



Click here for Colombia's country profile

IRAN

Similar like in Colombia, Iran gets the taste of ice hockey with players who honed



their skill in inline hockey, which started in 1985 and where Iran is the current Asian champion. Currently 230 players are registered with 23 ice hockey teams.

There have been several small ice rinks in Tehran, Mashhad and on Kish Island but the recent construction of new rinks gives tota-Ily new perspective with full-size ice rinks in the capital of Tehran such as the recently opened IceBox at Iran Mall. Another full-size ice rink will be constructed at Mica Mall on Kish Island while Iran could for events also build an ice rink into the large indoor arena Azadi Sport Complex in Tehran.



Iran joins the IIHF with the Iran Skating Federation chaired by Bahman Mohammad Rezaei that has a specific hockey department chaired by Kaveh Sedghi.

"In Iran with a population of 85 million people we have many sports enthusiast who are love hockey and for sure the new opportunity that the IIHF is providing us as a new member of the great ice hockey family gives big hope for the young generation to be more involved in this amazing sport," said Rezaei.

"Hockey is a unique sport in the sense that you need each and every person helping each other and pulling in the same direction to be successful. So, we are working together with our team in the Iran Skating Federation to develop ice hockey in the best way."

Click here for Iran's country profile

LEBANON

A dedicated group of Lebanese expats led by Montreal-based Charles El-Mir brings ice hockey

to Lebanon with the founding of the Lebanese Ice Hockey Federation and last year's recognition by the Ministry of Youth & Sports.

The LIHF has started convening men and women of Lebanese descent to play exhibition games not only in the Middle East but also in tournaments in Africa, Asia, Europe and North America, and has a development strategy for the youth in Beirut with the Panthers team.



The goal is to create an ice hockey program and league in Lebanon where currently the biggest piece for this puzzle is missing: an ice rink. The only recreational rink that was mostly used by expats in Lebanon closed ten years ago and has become a TV production facility.

A temporary rink of 20 on 20 metres in a tent was used for the Panthers last season "In Kazakhstan we have winter, in Tashkent it's with ten players including one girl between like in Florida. But they built an arena for 18,000





the age of 9 and 15, otherwise they play ball hockey.

El-Mir is happy that a next step was taken by joining the IIHF.

"We are a statement of love and unity expressed by today's Lebanese generation. Our mission is to offer an opportunity for our federation to spread internationally while encouraging their values such as the spirit of unity, sharing and love for our country," he said.

Click here for Lebanon's country profile

UZBEKISTAN

Ice hockey has celebrated a comeback in Uzbekistan during the last few years. During the Soviet times the capital of Tashkent had a hockey team, Binokor, in the Soviet system that made it up to the second-highest league of the Soviet Union.

Recently IIHF.com spoke with one of its former players, Vladimir Kapulovski, who is now a coach in Kazakhstan and led Arlan Kokshetau to the Continental Cup triumph.

spectators, maybe there will be some serious hockey there with a team in the KHL or VHL [Russia's second league] in the future," he said eight months ago. And he was right.

30 years after Binokor disappeared, Humo Tashkent joined Russia's second-tier league VHL and with a farm team the top league of neighbouring Kazakhstan. They play in the state-of-the-art Humo Arena in the capital city and thousands of fans have already visited the arena to enjoy the comeback of professional ice hockey in Uzbekistan. But it's not just about having a professional team that obviously consists mostly of foreign plavers.

With the opening of the first ice rinks in the newer era. Uzbekistan has launched a championship that recently included four clubs -Binokor, Humo, Tashkent and Semurg - and the Uzbekistan Ice Hockey Federation was established on 28 March 2018.

Each club has its hockey school with now 200 kids involved. A team Tashkent Select with juniors born in 2008 and 2009 joined the Kazakh championship. There are currently four ice rinks in Tashkent and another one is planned in the city of Samarkand.

"I would like to thank all IIHE members who

supported us and voted for the UIHF. For us it is a great honour to be accepted into the big ice hockey family of the IIHF. I share this feeling of pride with all hockey fans in my country and strongly believe that our new status will open more opportunities for the development of the game in Uzbekistan," said UIHF President Bakhtiyor Fazilov.

"Getting access to the development and educational programs as well as to the variety of events and tournaments guided by IIHF, new contacts and relations with other member associations definitely will be a significant support for our plans of hockey expansion throughout the country."

Click here for Uzbekistan's country profile



GREECE

After a restructuring by the sport authorities ice hockey is now governed by the Hellenic Winter Sports Federation (EOX), formally becoming the new IIHF member representing Greece.

Ice hockey started in Greece in the '80s and the country gained IIHF membership in 1987. During two periods with ice in Greece, the men's national team participated in the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship program between 1992 and 1999, and between 2008 to 2013.

But in the country that invented the drama and players and two coaches. tragedy, it hasn't been easy for the sport. In 2010 when Greece was supposed to hold its first IIHF "It is very important for our federation to become IIHF member," said HWSF President Dimosthenis Gyrousis. "We strongly believe that the sport will have great development in our country. With the participation of our athletes in development camps and our coaches in training seminars and clinics, with the education and emerging of referees, with the IIHF's technical support in issues regarding ice hockey and ice rinks, and the cooperation with other countries through participation in international tournaments and events, we are certain that ice hockey will have a vertical rise in Greece. We love the sport and we are eager and willing to take it higher."

event, the World Championship Division III at an ice rink that was installed into a disused arena of the 2004 Summer Olympics, the only full-size rink was shut down after just one season. The Hellenic Winter Sports Federation has now nine ice hockey clubs registered that play championships in different categories and use two small-size ice rinks in Athens and one in Thessaloniki. Despite the unclear membership situation during the last few years, Greece was able to join

development programs of the IIHF during the last years. Players, coaches and a technical de-**Click here for Greece's country profile**





legate went to the IIHF Hockey Development Camp in Finland and participated in the recent Balkan Ice Hockey Festival in Bulgaria with nine

NHL-Europe study

Europeans represent half of NHL rookies

By Andrew Podnieks

The new NHL season is underway, but already 34 players have appeared in a game for the first time in their (mostly) young lives. And, impressively, 17 of those 34 are European.

Some of these inaugural forays into the league have been expected, and others not so much. What is a surprise, though, is that of those 34, only four come from the first round of the 2019 Entry Draft. In an era when the league is getting younger and first-rounders are considered mostly instant stars, teams have opted for caution so far. Of course, the first overall pick, Jack Hughes, is playing with the New Jersey Devi-Is, but after four games he has yet to register a point and is a -3.

The second overall selection, Finland's Kaapo Kakko, hasn't fared much better. The 18-yearold has set the international stage on fire the last 18 months, winning gold at the U18, U20, and senior World Championship. But he has no points through two games with the New York Rangers and is a -1.



The only other two first-rounders currently in the NHL are Ville Heinola with Winnipeg (20th overall) and Tobias Bjornfot with Los Angeles (22nd overall). Neither have made an immediate impact in what is still a young season.

Of the 34 newcomers, 13 are Canadian and four from the U.S. Among the 17 from Europe, Sweden leads the way with five, followed by Russia (four). Finland has two and five countries have a single newcomer (Czech Republic, Germany, Latvia, Slovakia, Switzerland).

Russia's Ilya Mikheyev scored a goal and added an assist for Toronto in the team's home opener. Mikheyev is a feel-good story in that the 24-year-old was never drafted. The Leafs signed him as a free agent after their 2018/19 The likeable Merzlikins, though, who has plaseason was over, and the only other top-level yed in the last four World Championships for experience he had came at the 2018 IIHF Ice his country, was shelled by Sidney Crosby Hockey World Championship. and the Pittsburgh Penguins to the tune of 7-2. Still, given that he was drafted 76th overall by the Blue Jackets five years ago, making Perhaps the biggest story so far is Joel Persit to the NHL is a huge deal for the 25-year-old Latvian.

son of Sweden. The Edmonton Oilers signed him a year ago, but he never made the team at the time. He was never drafted, never pla-Statistically, there will be 125-150 newcomers to the NHL over the coming season, so these trends and stories are part only of the first week. Yet they are interesting all the same and suggest Europeans are making even more of an impact on the NHL than ever before.

yed in an IIHF event for Tre Kronor, but made the Oil at camp this year and has been important in the team's strong start. Equally interesting, though, is Gaetan Haas, the Swiss forward who left his country after

many years with Biel in the Swiss A league to play with Edmonton. Haas also was never drafted, but at 27 he is the oldest newcomer so far. He has played in four World Championships and the 2018 Olympics but until this year never got much of a look by NHL teams.

Only two of the 34 pure rookies are goaltenders, and both are European: Ilya Samsonov of Russia (Washington) and Elvis Merzlikins of Latvia (Columbus). The two had very different first games, though. Samsonov was excellent in stopping 25 of 26 shots and leading his Capitals to a 2-1 win over the New York Islanders. Only 22, he played for Russia at the 2015 U18 and the 2016 and 2017 World Juniors.

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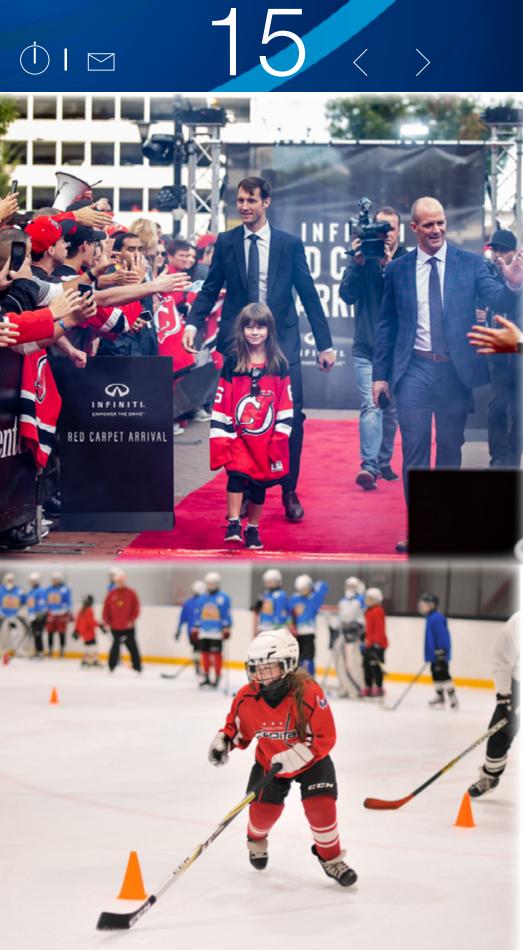
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Girls hit the ice around the world

Catching up on the 2019 World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend

me

By Martin Merk





Over 42 countries took part in the 2019 World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend on 5-6 October, aiming to bring more women and girls into ice hockey.

In total 526 events with tens of thousands of participants were organized on all continents.

ACCESS THE WGIHW TRACKER

AUSTRALIA

Several states in Australia hosted World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend events. The one by Ice Hockey Victoria was held at the O'Brien Icehouse in the Melbourne region with 44 female participants from 6 to 40 years of age.

They were coached by no one else than Georgia Moore, captain of the Australian women's national team, while others from the local clubs and league helped as volunteers. Other events



were held in Brisbane and Townsville as well as in other towns across the country.

BELARUS: MINSK

Belarus aims at bringing women's hockey back, starting with the World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend events held in the capital Minsk.

During the weekend young women had the chance to go behind the scenes of KHL club Dynamo Minsk and get a coaching session with two players of the team.



On Sunday female junior players from different club played an exhibition game during the intermission in front of a big audience. **FULL STORY**

BULGARIA: SOFIA

Bulgarian women's national team player Vanesa

Georgieva organized an event in the capital of team volunteered en masse to help out during Sofia also this year and 42 female players came this year's World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend in from local teams and the national team for a day Fredericton. **FULL STORY** dedicated to girls' hockey. The participants were between 4 and 40 years of age.

Competitions were organized in each of the groups with hockey gear as prize as a gift from the Bulgarian Ice Hockey Federation.



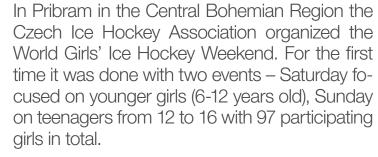
CANADA

Canada led all countries in WGIHW events, hosting over 200 across the country. At the Killarney Rink in Vancouver, some 30 new skaters, aged four to 13, tried out the sport on Saturday morning. Thirteen of them were six years old or under. The girls got great support with 50 on-ice player helpers, 10 on-ice coaches, and 50 office volunteers.

On the other side of the country, The University of New Brunswick Reds women's hockey



CZECH REPUBLIC: PRIBRAM





ESTONIA: TALLINN

Estonia has relaunched women's hockey in the recent years also thanks to the World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend. Meanwhile the country has a five-team women's hockey league won by HC Everest from Kohtla-Jarve and hopes with con-

tinued growth the country can return to the IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship program in a year. **FULL STORY**



FINLAND

It was a busy weekend in Finland with an incredible 26 rinks hosting the World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend including KJT Hockey in Kerava. 30 participants between the ages 4 and 14 years came to the rink.

IFK Helsinki hosted another event in the capital city. The event was held at teh Helsinki Ice Hall and was open for all female players, which included 53 participants from 4 to 51 years of age. In Vantaa, the two local clubs Etela-Vantaan Urheilijat and Kiekko-Vantaa hosted a Girls' Hockey Day together with Ringette Walapais.

FRANCE: ANGLET

The hockey club Anglet Hormadi in the south-west Atlantic coast of France welcomed 35 participants from 4 to 47 years of age at the La Barre ice rink for their girls' day.

After the reception and getting equipped, they had first three stations during one hour on the ice as they were split into three different groups depending on their abilities. During a second session they had the chance to play 3-on-3 cross-ice hockey.



ICELAND: REYKJAVIK

Laugardalur Ice Rink in the capital of Reykjavik hosted Iceland's World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend organized by the two local clubs SR and Bjorninn with a record-breaking number: between 80 and 100 girls and women from 4 to 50 years of age were on the ice! Most of them tried ice hockey for the first time.



JAPAN: HACHINOHE

The Japan Ice Hockey Federation hosted its World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend event in Hachinohe in the Aomori Prefecture in the northeast of the main island Honshu. 70 female players were on the ice and helped by some Olympians and national team staff. **FULL STORY**







MEXICO: MEXICO CITY

The Ice Station Buenavista hosted World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend on Saturday night in the nation's capital.

Altogether, there were about 60 participants, counting both girls aged mostly 6-17 and plavers from the U18 Mexican women's national team.

NETHERLANDS: HEERENVEEN

126 participants and 16 coaches from different teams and 30 volunteers came together for the annual celebration of girls' hockey by IJshockey Nederland in Heerenveen. The girls and women where between 9 and 45 years old.

Eight teams were formed to play a tournament and among the participants were also 12 girls from Belgium and 10 from Cologne, Germany, who loved to join the event as well.



NEW ZEALAND: AUCKLAND

Sports have brought Canada-born Rachel Park to New Zealand where she has become the head coach of the women's national team. After organizing the World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend in Auckland we had a chat with her about growing the game Down Under. **FULL STORY**

SOUTH AFRICA

The Gauteng Ice Hockey Association with the Sabres Ice Hockey Club and the Vipers Ice Hockey Club organized one of the World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend events in South Africa in the city of Kempton Park. There are 39 girls that participated from the age of 4 to 40 years old.

The KwaZulu-Natal Ice Hockey Association (KZNIHA) once again participated in this annual event. Although a small province with the fewest number of members in South Africa, the event attracted 14 girls between the ages of 7 years and 24 years old.

Although small, the event was a huge success and the girls (and parents alike) had a lot of fun with most being committed to returning. Subsequent new queries at the conclusion of the event yielded more interest from non-participants and it is hoped that more girls would be drawn to playing ice hockey.



The Eastern Province Ice Hockey Association hosted a World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend event in Port Elizabeth. 41 participants between 4 and 46 years of came to the ice rink at Baywest Mall. They performed various hockey drills and had 4-on-4 cross-ice games to showcase their newly learned skills.

SWITZERLAND

Switzerland is among the top-ranked countries in women's hockey, currently in fifth place in the 2019 IIHF Women's World Ranking. However, when it comes to the size of the player pool, the Swiss are further behind and can't keep up with the top nations.

Recruitment of female players has been a struggle in Switzerland and initiatives like the World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend haven't been used as much as in other countries. Former worldclass goalie Florence Schelling wants to change



this and does not only host an event this weekend but plans a series of girls' days across Switzerland (Kloten event pictured above). **FULL STORY**

TURKEY: ISTANBUL

One of the largest World Girls' Ice Hockey Wee-While the Irish Ice Hockey Association hopes to kend events in terms of participation took plasoon be able to play at an ice rink in the Republic ce in one of the largest cities. The Turkish Ice of Ireland, they again headed north to Belfast for Hockey Federation welcomed about 150 parthe World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend with 26 ticipants at the Silivrikapi ice rink (photo on top participants at the Dundonald International Ice right). They were between 2 and 45 years of age Bowl. The youngest participant was nine years although most were girls between 5 and 10. old while the oldest were in their 30s.

First the newcomers were able to follow an exhibition game before they were invited to the ice. The Eagles South Tyrol organized the World Gir-The group of players under 8 played fun games Is' Ice Hockey Weekend in Bolzano for the first while they older group worked on different hoctime with the theme "Play like a girl". key skills. Hockey certificates were in the end ready for all participants. 19 girls between the ages of 5 and 13 from South Tyrol and the neighbouring province of Trento









For many players and parents it was a surprise that so many young girls play ice hockey and many wanted to join an ice hockey program. **>FULL STORY**

IRELAND: BELFAST (UK)

ITALY: BOLZANO

followed the invitation. After watching a game of the women's league and a lunch with the local players, the junior players became active themselves under the guidance of eight players of the Eagles women's hockey team, many of them national team players.

"The best we all can do for women's hockey is to create opportunities to talk about. The Eagles team is the all-time Italian league champion and two times EWHL winner. This means that our organization is already well known in Italy for being a forerunner in women's ice hockey but the World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend was a great opportunity to boost our fame and to show how many girls are passionate about the best team sport in the world," said club president Manfred Klotz.

Some of the girls will now be invited to practices of the women's team and the parents were that happy that there's demand for more such sessions throughout the season.

UKRAINE: KYIV

Almost 70 children from the age of 6 to 12 years came to the World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend organized by the Ice Hockey Federation of Ukraine in the capital of Kyiv.

The ice was split into six zones with three coaches and volunteers helping in each area. There was also a photo area, sweets for the kids and a lot of balloons in Ukraine's yellow and blue colours as well as in pink.

"The children really liked the photo zone and sweets on ice. We also invited the mascot of the IIHF Ice Hockey U20 World Championship Division I Group B, everyone liked these big birds," said Maria Hromova, manager at the Ice Hockey Federation of Ukraine. "All visitors and participants were very pleased. We heard a lot of good comments and thanks from parents."



USA

The NHL's New Jersey Devils, New York Rangers and Detroit Red Wings were also part of the World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend this year.

Manon Rheaume, the pioneering Canadian national team goalie of the 1990's who played an NHL exhibition game, added a touch of star power to the Detroit Red Wings Girls Hockey Jamboree for WGIHW. She welcomed more than 50 girls to the Belfor Training Center at Little Caesars Arena.

FULL STORY

On Friday 20 girls from the Learn to Play Program were invited to be a part of the Devils Red







Carpet Arrival and Opening Night Ceremony. Each girl was paired with one of the NHL players and together they walked the Red Carpet interacting with Devils fans prior to the game vs Winnipeg. Following the Red Carpet Arrival, the girls then joined the Devils at center ice as the team was introduced to a sold-out Prudential Center crowd.

On Sunday over 60 girls between the ages of 5-12 participated in an station based on-ice clinic at the RWJBarnabas Health Hockey House at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey featuring special guests Nikki Zajac (University of New Hampshire Women's Ice Hockey Alum & wife of Devils forward Travis Zajac), United States Olympian Shelly Picard, New Jersey Devils Alumni Bruce Driver & Grant Marshall), New Jersey Devils mascot NJ DEVIL along with local girls high school ice hockey coaches.



Continental Cup

Donbass, Ferencyaros reach Round 3

By Andy Potts & Henrik Manninen



The last rounds before the **IIHF** Continental Cup final are set following Round 2 wins by Hungarian and Ukrainian clubs.

In Group C, Ukrainian champions HC Donbass topped a Continental Cup group for the first time since it lifted the trophy in 2013.

It wasn't exactly home ice advantage for the Ukrainian Champion; rather than play the tournament amid the political tensions of the Donbass Region, the action took place at Brovary, a small town in the Kyiv district.

However, the host was well supported, with sell-out crowds for each of its three games, and Donbass secured its place in the next round after edging Latvian champion HC Mogo in Sunday's decisive showdown.

After a dramatic finish to regulation, the penalty-shot shootout brought even greater tension.



Donbass (on left) and Ferencvaros will move on to play in Round 3 of the IIHF Continental Cup in November.

After seven failed attempts between the two teams, Rudolfs Maslovskis stepped up for Mogo and saw his shot drop down off the bar and bounce goalwards off the back of Stepan Goryachevshikh. The goalie, who lifted the Continental Cup with Yunost in 2007 and was part of Donbass' winning roster in 2013, reacted quickly enough to catch the puck before it slithered around the line.

The Latvians protested, believing they had a goal, but the delay did little to help their own goalie, Kazanovs. He was beaten by Vasiliev on the next attempt and that proved enough to win the game and the group for Donbass.

In 2017 and 2018, Kurbads Riga beat Donbass to top spot at this stage of the com-Following wins against Txuri-Urdin and Olimpetition. The Ukrainians now advance to the pija Ljubljana, Ferencvaros entered the final third round of the tournament and will face game of Group D against Ritten knowing that a win in overtime or penalty-shot shoo-Beibarys Atyrau (Kazakhstan), Neman Grodno (Belarus) and host Cracovia Krakow (Potout would see them finish top of Group D. land).

The reward for Ferencvaros coached by Sza-Southern Scandinavia awaits for Ferencyaros bolcs Fodor will be a trip to Vojens in Den-Budapest as the reigning Hungarian chammark. During the third round of the Continental Cup, Group E played between 15 and 17 pions swept the field to finish top of Group D in the Continental Cup's second round pla-November 2019, Ferencyaros will face the yed in Ritten, Italy. Nottingham Panthers of Great Britain, France's Amiens Gothigues and hosts SonderjyskE Vojens.



The Budapest-based club sealed their progress through to the next round thanks to a fine 3-1 victory against Ritten in front of 1,278 inside Ritten Arena. Earlier in Group D. Ferencvaros had blanked Txuri-Urdin from Donostia-San Sebastian 6-0 in their opener, before squeezing past Olimpija Ljubljana 3-2 during the second day.

Despite fighting on two fronts in the space of one week, Ferencyaros showed little sign of fatigue in Italy. Having returned from an arduous road trip in the Erste Liga in Romania's Eastern Transylvania, Ferencvaros only had a few days to regroup before heading to South Tyrol in northern Italy for three games in the Continental Cup.

CHL playoffs set

Clubs from six countries advance

By Derek O'Brien



The Group Stage of the 2019/20 Champions Hockey League season is finished and 32 teams have been reduced to 16.

Six different countries are represented among the remaining teams, including five from Sweden, four from Switzerland, three from Germany, two from the Czech Republic, surprisingly just one from Finland and for the first time one team from Belarus reached the round of the last 16.

Belarus has had teams come close, with both Yunost Minsk and Neman Grodno often playing well on home ice but having a difficult time on the road. This time, in a very competitive Group D where all four teams were still mathematically alive with one game to play, Minsk managed to win a game on the road, in Finland over the Lahti Pelicans. That set the team up for a chance to advance at home. They lost 3-2 in a shootout, which meant they needed Trinec to lose in regulation time and they did, 5-3 to Lausanne HC, who are also going on for the first time.



Swiss club Lausane HC will advance to the Champions Hockey League playoffs for the first time ever.

In addition to Group D, another group that went right down to the end was Group E, which featured three strong teams - Skelleftea AIK, Karpat Oulu and SC Bern – fighting for two spots. In the last game for both teams, Karpat beat Skelleftea in a shootout and later in the day, Bern beat French champion Grenoble Bruleurs de Loups 3-1 to force a three-way tie in points.

Heading into the deciding day, 15 of the 16 playoff spots had been decided with Bili Tygri Liberec hosting the Augsburger Panther.

With the score tied 2-2 and needing a regulation win to advance, Liberec pulled its goalie in the

The eight group winners are: EHC Biel (SUI) EV Zug (SUI) Lulea Hockey (SWE) late going and conceded an empty-net goal, re-Lausanne HC (SUI) sulting in an Augsburg victory. Skelleftea AIK (SWE) Adler Mannheim (GER) Surprisingly, only Tappara Tampere is going for-Red Bull Munich (GER) th from Finland, with HPK Hameenlinna, Karpat Frolunda Gothenburg (SWE) and Lahti all bowing out. The bad season for Finland means that the Finnish Liiga, which al-The eight group runners-up are: ready lost a place in the CHL League Ranking Tappara Tampere (FIN) and a spot in the CHL to Switzerland for this HC Plzen (CZE) season, may drop further down in favour of the Augsburger Panther (GER) German DEL and the Czech Extraliga. Yunost Minsk (BLR) SC Bern (SUI) Individually, Frolunda Gothenburg's Ryan Lasch Djurgarden Stockholm (SWE) led all scorers with 15 points in the group stage, Farjestad Karlstad (SWE) including 14 assists, thanks to a five-assist night Mountfield Hradec Kralove (CZE)



in a 9-2 win over the Cardiff Devils. The 32-yearold American forward is the competition's all-time scoring leader by a wide margin with 84 points in 53 career CHL games, and has already won two scoring titles and one MVP.

In goal, a couple of internationally-known names topped the stats - Jonas Hiller of EHC Biel and Danny aus den Birken of Red Bull Munich. Hiller led with a 98.48 save percentage and 0.50 average while aus den Birken posted 97.12 and 0.97.

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Gallery



Brett Switzer scores a goal for Ferencvarosi TC against Ritten Sport in the deciding game of the IIHF Continental Cup Group D.



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A player from Spanish club Txuri Urdin with a scoring chance at the IIHF Continental Cup.





Members of the New Jersey Devils alumni and players with WGIHW participants.

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Gallery



A pond hockey tournament - jointly organized by the Governor of the Chilean Antarctic Province and the Aonikenk Magallanes ice hockey club from Punta Arenas - was held during the weekend of 6 and 7 July on the frozen Zanartu Lagoon, located just outside Puerto Williams, Chile.







Two players collide in the Continental Cup Group D game between Ritten and Ferencvaros

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WGIHW participants celebrate after concluding the weekend in Netherlands.

IIHF gears up the hockey world

Inside the Equipment Support Program

By Derek O'Brien

The hockey world is growing, but one of the biggest challenges to the sport's growth is the lack of accessibility to equipment in non-traditional hockey countries. That's where the IIHF Equipment Support Program comes in.

The Program was established in 1994, at a time when the IIHF's membership was rapidly expanding. Its main objective was, and still is, working together with suppliers to distribute equipment to Member National Associations (MNAs) in need.

"The IIHF Equipment Support Program is a collaboration between the IIHF, its Member National Associations and the contractual suppliers," said Kira Rieder, the IIHF's Marketing and Communications Manager who acts as a liaison between all involved parties. "We have a pool of eight ice hockey equipment suppliers, which split their contract fee in cash fee and value in



Children in Bulgaria show off their starter ice hockey kits, provided by True Hockey via the IIHF Equipment Support Program.

kind. This value in kind equipment will be provided to MNAs which are in need of equipment to support their national development programs."

For many IIHF members, this program is crucial to development.

"The IIHF has given unparalleled support to the Malaysian Ice Hockey Federation since our establishment in 2006," said Susan Loh, the association's president. "The IIHF has been working alongside the MIHF to develop ice hockey in Malaysia. Other than providing guidance in organizing ice hockey programs, the MIHF has received equipment support from the IIHF for many years."

"Ice hockey gear is not commonly sold in Malaysia, and often players have to purchase their equipment from other countries and online "We are very lucky to receive IIHF Equipment which are a challenge, especially for beginners who are just starting to learn the sport. With the Support," said Andy Mills, President of the New Zealand Ice Hockey Federation. "In 2018, 120 Equipment Support Program, it has opened up full sets of equipment arrived. This has enabled a lot of opportunities for aspiring players, espeus not only to get kids on ice safely, but it gives cially youth, to start training and, over time, has us the opportunity to retain kids with gear to use improved the overall quality of the players." over the season."





New Zealand has been an IIHF Member since 1977, but being geographically isolated from most of the hockey-playing world, acquiring equipment has always been difficult. With fewer than 1,500 registered ice hockey players, few sporting goods retailers in the country are willing to order enough stock to make a shipment cost-effective.

"We have one shop and New Zealand called Centre Ice," said Mills. "They have supported New Zealand ice hockey as best they can for some 25 years, as well as sourcing gear for our existing players. However, with online purchases and limited numbers it's impossible to sit on endless amounts of stock let alone a huge range of sizes."

"Being a non-winter country, IIHF Equipment Support plays a vital part in the development of ice hockey in Malaysia," said Loh.

Malaysia and New Zealand are just two of 43 MNAs currently receiving equipment support, and with the recent announcement of five new members in Algeria, Colombia, Iran, Lebanon and Uzbekistan, that number could soon grow.

To qualify for the Equipment Support Program, an MNA must meet the following requirements:

- It must be an IIHF member 1.
- 2. It must have pre-approved development plans – only youth and children projects will be supported
- The equipment's usage must fall within З. those development plans

Petr Briza is a former professional hockey goaltender and executive from the Czech Republic and is now an IIHF Council Member and Chairman of the Youth & Junior Development Committee. While CEO and general manger of Sparta Prague, Briza established a hockey school for young players from Balkan countries as part of the IIHF's Partnership for Progress Program, so he's well familiar with the challenges of growing the sport in non-traditional markets.

"Usually, the associations make their requests through our Committee, which is connected together with the IIHF office in cooperation with the Partnership for Progress Program," said Briza. "We're working now with South Africa and



IIHF Member National Associations typically receive a delivery of equipment within a year of a successful application.

others because smaller associations are dealing with much smaller human resources and financial resources. Of course, they need equipment. Without equipment, you can't play."

And that's no small matter. As any hockey parent from any country can tell you, equipment isn't cheap.

"If you take the example of the Czech Ice Hockey Association, this is one of the biggest in the world and even it needs equipment, so you can imagine the smaller ones."

"It was a breeze to apply for the program," said Loh. "We were given full guidance on how many quantities and type of equipment we may need for our association. The equipment we have received is of top quality that can last for years. We managed to conduct 'Learn to Skate' and 'Learn to Play' activities for youth, where the children are able to learn how to skate and experience using full ice hockey equipment for the first time. This is important to nurture their love

for the sport, preparing them to be comfortable in gear at an early stage, and allowing them to gain confidence in the sport before moving on to purchasing their own personal gear.

"From this initiative, as of today we have age groups of U15 Boys and Girls, U18 Boys and Girls, U20 Men's, Men's and Women's," Loh continued. "Our local ice hockey clubs are most appreciative of the IIHF Equipment Support program."

Muhd Fadzli Amin from the Rimau Ice Hockey Club in Malaysia commented: "The most recent support the MIHF received was the provision of much-needed goalie equipment, which arrived in 2018 and has since benefited five of our very young club members who are now training as goalies every week. We look forward to more support from the IIHF to assist us in producing quality ice hockey players for our club and country."

However, with all that's involved, there are bound to be some difficulties. One of the most frequently told stories involved a shipment of adult equipment to Mongolia that was meant for children.

"As there are so many people involved in the process, it is hard to keep track," said Rieder, who emphasized that communication is the key



Member National Associations that have benefited from the Equipment Support Program include Austria, Bulgaria, India, Morroco, New Zealand, Oman, Romania, and Singapore.

to keeping the program running smoothly. In recent years, the program has become a lot more streamlined and incidents such as the one in Mongolia are much less frequent.

"We found out that it is best when one person from the IIHF keeps track of all shipments," she explained. "The direct communication between supplier and MNA usually doesn't work very well. There are too many misunderstandings and a lack of experience with handling shipments. A lot of the federations have never received such a huge shipment before and a lot of suppliers have never shipped equipment to Mongolia, Macau or the Philippines before."

"Being so isolated, [the shipment of equipment] took over four months to arrive by sea with many stops," said Mills. "But we were very excited to receive it and quickly went to work distributing it around the country. It's been a huge success and our 2019 first shift program is well underway, attracting more kiwi kids to hang up their footy boots and don a pair of ice skates."

The program has increased in scope in the last three years. Between 2016-29, typically 7 - 10 MNAs were supported each season by equipment worth of 190'000 - 240'000 USD. To date. 43 MNAs of 76 IIHF Member National Associations have received equipment support

"We hope that the IIHF Equipment Support will always continue," said Amin. "It is crucial and important, especially for tropical countries like us where winter sports are uncommon and the supply of good, affordable ice hockey equipment is not available. It has helped our sports to grow so much as we can connect with many untapped talent that may remain undiscovered due to a simple reason of not having the right equipment to start with."

"It's a fantastic program and supports many countries like ourselves," said Mills. "It's a true credit to those companies that assist the IIHF in growing the game globally and appreciated worldwide. Without this support, growing New Zealand ice hockey gets even harder. So on behalf of the New Zealand Ice Hockey Federation, its volunteers and most importantly it hundreds of smiling kids safely wear your equipment, I thank the IIHF and all its sponsors for making this program a success and reaching our goal of arowing our game."

To inquire about the Equipment Support Program contact office@iihf.com







2019 IIHF WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP 2019 IIHF U18 WOMEN'S WORLD CZECH REPUBLIC, Ostrava & Trinec 26.12.2019-05.01.2020

Coming

2019 IIHF U20 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP **Division I Group A** BELARUS, Minsk 9-15.12.2019

2019 IIHF U20 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP **Division I Group B** UKRAINE, Kyiv 12-18.12.2019

CHAMPIONSHIP SLOVAKIA, Bratislava 26.12.2019-02.01.2020

2019 IIHF CONTINENTAL CUP Group E 15.11.2019-17.11.2019 DENMARK, Vojens

2019 IIHF CONTINENTAL CUP Group F POLAND, Krakow 15.11.2019-17.11.2019

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