



# IceTimes

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**From the IIHF President**

## Back in the game

By Luc Tardif

**Our IIHF Member National Associations have been nothing short of spectacular this year in their efforts to get club and national team ice hockey operations back up to 100% following COVID-19.**

On the IIHF side, we faced a bumpy restart at the outset of the 2021/22 season, with cancellations affecting the 2022 IIHF World Junior Championship, the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship, and several other events in various male and female categories.

But at press time, I am thrilled to say that we are close to the completion of the 2022 IIHF World Championship program. Following the end of the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in Finland, we moved right away to the United States and less than a week later dropped the puck at the U18 Women's Worlds.

After playing all games and awarding medals to the champions (congratulations to Canada's U18 womens team on a well-played event), we

set out to complete all of the other events that were cancelled in January.

Now, we are about to drop the puck and restart the 2022 IIHF World Junior Championship. We are glad to be able to give participating teams that had their event cut short earlier this year the chance to compete once again in the world's best junior ice hockey competition. Following this event, we will also play the Women's World Championship for the first time ever in Denmark, and also for the first time ever in an Olympic year.

It was not just the top division events that took place either. 95% of all tournaments in our lower divisions were successfully rescheduled, with just one more left in September. We were also able to see the return of the IIHF Development Cup, the Women's High Performance Camp, and the U20 Asia & Oceania Championship.

Coming back to the World Championship, I would like to congratulate Finland on winning gold on home ice in Tampere. I would also like to congratulate the Local Organizing Committee for an exceptionally well-organised event in Tampere and Helsinki. We look forward to returning in 2023 when Finland co-hosts the next IIHF Worlds with Riga, Latvia.

With COVID-19 hopefully behind us, we can turn our full attention to what will be a new and

exciting era in IIHF history. During the Annual Congress, the IIHF Council introduced "ICE26", the IIHF's **Strategic Plan** for the 2022-2026 term.

This is something new for the IIHF: a comprehensive strategy that will guide our decisions and drive our initiatives and projects. We have sought input from many stakeholders in the ice hockey world, in particular from you our members. The full Strategic Plan will be presented during the 2023 IIHF Semi-Annual Congress in September, and in the meantime I strongly encourage all our members to reach out to the IIHF if you want to know more about ICE26.

That said, a strategic plan is much easier to develop than it is to execute, and for this we will be relying on the support and cooperation from all our stakeholders, in particular our Member National Associations and marketing partners.

Again, If you want to know more about how ICE26 can help you, or if you feel that there is something missing in ICE26 that does not cover your needs as an IIHF member, speak up!

We thank you for your dedication to bringing our sport back into action, keep working together!

**Luc Tardif**  
IIHF President



## News and Notes

### IIHF

The IIHF has announced that it has hired **Kalle Valiaho** for the newly-created position of Development Director.



As of 1 August, Kalle will work within the IIHF Sport Department, and will be responsible for providing sport development support to the IIHF's Member National Associations.

Kalle has been a prominent figure in junior ice hockey development, first in his native country of Finland as a Youth Hockey Manager for the Finnish Ice Hockey Association.

He has worked extensively with the IIHF's various IIHF development programs, most recently as a Coach Developer managing coaching programs at IIHF Development Camps, and for several years as a mentor coach in IIHF development camps in Europe and Asia. He also worked as an IIHF Coach and Instructor at three Winter Youth Olympic Games from 2012-2022. He has also been a regular participant at IIHF and other major ice hockey coaching symposiums and seminars.

### IIHF RULE BOOK

The International Ice Hockey Federation has published the 2022/2023 IIHF Rule Book for the upcoming season.

One year ago an entirely new unified rule book was created with the goal of harmonizing the rules across the world and for different levels and categories of play and ensure consistency. For 2022/2023 there are no major changes but some housekeeping adjustments were made in the new version released on 22 July 2022.

The 2022/2023 IIHF Rule Book will be valid for all IIHF tournaments for the new season.

Download the newest edition of the IIHF Rule Book in the [RULES & REGULATIONS section](#).

### 2022 IIHF eWORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Finland has won the 2022 IIHF eWorld Championship. The duo of Erik 'ENCEKI' Tammenpaa and Valtteri 'Vattuyy' Virtanen dramatically beat the United States 8-7 in overtime.

The 8-7 result meant the Nordic nation claims the first IIHF eWorld Championship and the second straight #IIHFGaming competition, along with a thrilling conclusion to the 2022 IIHF eWorld Championship.



The tournament saw hundreds of challengers competing from 18 different countries, first in a qualification phase to determine the national champions followed by a playoff phase.

All games were shown live on the

- [IIHF TWITCH CHANNEL](#)
- [TOURNAMENT WEBSITE](#)

### 2023 IIHF CONTINENTAL CUP

The teams, groups, dates and hosts of the 2023 IIHF Continental Cup have been confirmed.



20 clubs from 20 countries will compete in the four-stage Continental Cup next season that will be held in seven tournaments between September 2022 and January 2023. As in recent years the IIHF Continental Cup winner will have the chance to qualify for the

Champions Hockey League of the following season pending formal approval by the CHL Board.

Last season Cracovia Krakow wrote history by becoming the first Continental Cup champion from Poland and will compete in the CHL this season.

The upcoming season will be the 25th season of the IIHF Continental Cup. In the previous 24 seasons teams from 13 different countries won the European club competition.

The anniversary season will begin with the first-round tournaments during the weekend of 23-25 September. The final tournament will take place from 13 to 15 January 2023 at the venue of one of the finalists to be determined.

### 2022 IIHF WOMEN'S HIGH PERFORMANCE CAMP

It has been a few years since buses carrying IIHF staff members, coaches, and campers from all corners of the world rolled into the Vierumaki Olympic Sports Institute in Finland, but this July saw a welcome return as the 2022 IIHF Women's High Performance camp returned after a two-year pause.

The week-long camp, part of the IIHF's annual sport development program, brings together





athletes and coaches from various IIHF Member National Associations to play, teach, and learn from each other in a friendly and inclusive environment.

In all, the 2022 Women's High Performance Camp features 150 participants representing 19 different countries. This includes 79 U18 female athletes coached by 36 team staff and supported by 35 including administrators, equipment managers, athletic trainers, strength and conditioning coaches, and even a mental skills coach. The camp also included current



women's senior team players from Czechia, Switzerland, Germany, and Great Britain.

### CHAMPIONS HOCKEY LEAGUE

**Peter Zahner** has announced his retirement as the President of the Champions Hockey League. The CHL Board elected **Jörgen Lindgren** as his successor during its summer board meeting in Prague.

The Swiss native, who served as a Board member since the very start of the CHL project and was elected as President of the CHL in 2018.

Following Zahner's announcement, the CHL Board elected Jörgen Lindgren as the new President. The Swede, who is president of Hockey Europe, has served as a CHL Board member since 2015 and was elected CHL Vice-President in 2018.

The CHL Board also elected two new Vice-Presidents at its meeting: **Henrik Bach Nielsen** (pictured, on right), IIHF Regional Vice-President Europe & Africa and **Timo Everi**, chairman of IFK Helsinki & representative of the Finnish clubs on the CHL Board.

During the off day between the group stage and the quarter-finals of the 2022

IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship, the Champions Hockey League held its **Group Stage Draw** for the 2022/23 hockey season.

### CHINA

The Chinese Ice Hockey Association has withdrawn its men's U20 and women's U18 teams from the upcoming IIHF tournaments due to the current COVID-19 countermeasures and quarantine rules in the country.

China expects to have its national teams back for the next season.

The 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey U20 World Championship Division II Group B in Belgrade will now be played from 12 to 17 September with five teams: host Serbia, the Netherlands, Croatia, Belgium and Iceland.



The 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship Division I Group B in Radenthein will also be played with five teams from 6 to 11 September: Denmark, host Austria, Korea, Poland and Chinese Taipei.

### CZECHIA

**Alois Hadamczik** was elected as new President of the Czech Ice Hockey Association and succeeds Tomas Kral, who leaves after having headed the organization for 14 years.



Hadamczik is best known as a hockey coach in Czechia. In the '80s and '90s he worked his way up from the lower leagues before making it to the Extraliga as head coach of Vitkovice Ostrava, Ocelari Trinec and Sparta Prague.

Between 2003 and 2014 he had several stints with the men's senior and men's U20 national teams.

He won silver at the 2006 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship and bronze medals at the Worlds (2011, 2012), World Juniors (2005) and Olympics (2006).



## FINLAND

Finland will get a new head coach for the 2023 IIHF World Junior Championship.

The Finnish Ice Hockey Association signed a two-year contract with **Tomi Lamsa** as head coach of the Finnish U20 national team until spring 2024.



Lamsa was coaching in Finland's top league before being hired by KHL club Salavat Yulayev Ufa where he was the head coach for the past two seasons.

He replaces Kari Jalonen, who was originally announced as head coach for the upcoming season but has become the head coach of the Czech men's national team instead.

Antti Pennanen will remain head coach of the current U20 national team that will compete in August at the postponed 2022 IIHF World Junior Championship.

## GEORGIA

IIHF President Luc Tardif traveled to Tbilisi to meet with the Georgian Ice Hockey Federation and with the Minister of Culture, Sport and Youth of Georgia, Thea Tsulukiani (pictured, top right).



The country joined the IIHF as a member in 2009 and had its debut with the men's national team in 2013. In 2018 the Georgians gained promotion to the Division IIB and will play next year for the first time at the Division IIA level.

All parties agreed to contribute to the participation of Georgian players, coaches and officials in international competitions and other events and to the development of the general ice hockey infrastructure in Georgia.

## HUNGARY

**Kevin Constantine** will lead the Hungarian men's national team and signed a two-year contract with an option for a third year.



Two months after promotion to the top-level 2023 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship the Hungarian Ice Hockey Federation set the course for its men's national team by hiring a new head coach. Constantine will succeed Sean Simpson, who was coaching the team for the past two seasons and led it to the top division with a second-place finish at the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division I Group A in neighbouring Slovenia.

Constantine, 63, started working in Hungary one year ago as head coach of Fehervar AV19, the Hungarian club that plays in the Austria-based cross-border league ICEHL. In his first year he wrote history with the club leading it to the playoff final it eventually lost to Red Bull Salzburg following a third-place finish in the regular season. It was the first time since joining the league in 2007 (then called EBEL) the club had made it further than the quarter-finals.

For the former NHL head coach of the San Jose Sharks, Pittsburgh Penguins and New Jersey Devils it will be the first international stint since the native of International Falls, Minnesota was coaching the United States at the 1991 IIHF World Junior Championship. However, during the past 12 years he collected a lot of experience abroad coaching club teams in France, Switzerland, Korea, Poland and since 2021 in Hungary.

## USA

**John Wroblewski** has been named head coach of the U.S. Women's National Team that will compete in August at the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship it was announced by USA Hockey.



Wroblewski joins the U.S. Women's National Team following two years (2020-2022) as the head coach of the Ontario (Calif.) Reign of the AHL and four seasons (2016-2020) as a head coach with USA Hockey's National Team Development Program.

In his first season with the Reign, Wroblewski led the team to its first Calder Cup Playoff appearance in three seasons. Over his four years with the NTDP, the program reached its first USHL playoff berth since 2012, its first-ever USHL Eastern Conference Finals appearance (2018) and a top-three finish in all 12 international tournaments entered.

At the International Ice Hockey Federation level, Wroblewski served as head coach for the U.S. Under-18 Men's National Team twice, guiding the U.S. to one gold-medal (2017) and one bronze-medal finish (2019).



## Obituaries

### MINHO CHO

Korean national team player Minho Cho died on 15 June at the age of 35, following an eight-month battle with lung cancer.



The forward competed for the men's national team between 2008 and 2021 including 11 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship tournaments and one Olympic Winter Games.

After graduating at Korea University, Cho spent his career in the Asia League with Anyang Halla and Sangmu and was considered one of the best centres in Korean hockey history, winning five Asia League championships.

Cho was part of the historic team that earned promotion to the top level at the 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division I Group A. The year after he was part of the first Korean men's ice hockey team at the Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang and at the 2018 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in Denmark.

On 15 February 2018 he wrote history in his team's first game at the Olympics. At 7:34 of the

first period he became the first Korean player to score a goal in Olympic men's hockey history. His last international games came as team captain in the Final Olympic Qualification for Beijing 2022, where he played despite health issues.

### ESA ISAKSSON

Esa Isaksson, who played in three World Championships (1966, 1969, 1971) passed away on 21 May.



Isaksson died at Tampere University Hospital at age 75 after suffering a heart attack a week prior. Considered one of the finest centremen in Finland during the 1960s and early '70s, he was the first Finn to ever receive an NHL contract offer, though he opted to stay in his home country.

Isaksson played in the top Finnish league for eleven years, first and last with Lukko, and then four years in the middle with HIFK, including the memorable championship season of 1969/70.

In IIHF play, Isaksson didn't win a medal with Suomi at the World Championship, but he played in 23 games at the top level and was part of a core of players for the national team. He retired in 1974 when he was just 27 to pursue a career in the printing business.

### SERGEI KARABONOV

Former international referee Sergei Karabonov passed away at the age of 57.



Karabonov started officiating games as a linesman first in minor leagues in 1985 before working his way up. In 1992 he officiated at the U18 European Championship and in 1993 and 1994 he had his first top-level IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships and was a linesman in 1994's gold medal game.

He switched to the referee position and would officiate in three more IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships and four World Junior Championships as well as two Euro Hockey League tournaments and three European Champions Cup finals until 2004.

In 19 seasons at the top level in Russia he officiated 682 games including 76 in the playoffs. He won the Andrei Starovoitov Golden Whistle Award as best referee in 2000.

After retiring as a referee he continued to work within the Russian Ice Hockey Federation as a referee supervisor. He also played an important role in the IIHF / National Associations Referee Exchange Program when it was launched in the early 2000s.

### LALLI PARTINEN

Passed away in Lappeenranta, Finland of COVID-19 on 4 May at age 80. He had been in ill health for some time, succumbing to the illness just two days after contracting it.



Partinen played at the 1968 Olympics as well as five World Championships (1965, '66, '69, '70, and '73). He was inducted into the Finnish Hall of Fame in 1987 (Lion #52) and was a teammate of Isaksson with HIFK in 1969/70 as well as at the 1966 World Championship in Ljubljana.

Partinen earned a reputation as a tough defenceman and played for Finland on 120 occasions. In Finnish league play he was known for his years with SaiPa, where the team retired his number 3 sweater. In all, he played 18 years of pro hockey, the first ten with SaiPa and then eight with HIFK, before retiring in 1977. In addition to the league championship in 1970 with Isaksson, Partinen won the title again with HIFK in 1974.

One of the highlights of his career was playing at the 1968 Olympics in Grenoble. Finland finished a respectable fifth and beat Canada, 5-2, during the round robin, the first ever win against the Canadians in the nation's history.



# Annual Congress

## IIHF Members gather in Tampere

By Martin Merk

**The IIHF Annual Congress took place on the final week of the 2022 IIHF World Championship.**

Aside from the usual tournament assignments, the IIHF Council unveiled to the membership the latest development stage of the IIHF's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan.

### IIHF INTRODUCES "ICE26"

The IIHF Council revealed the new 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, charting a new course for the IIHF for the next four years.

Developing a strategy was a key first objective for the new IIHF Council after it was elected last autumn for a five-year term.

The presentation to the membership was a next step in the strategy development process after surveys had been conducted with different stakeholder groups including an online survey on IIHF.com with thousands of fans, member national associations, media, sponsors, and



IIHF President Luc Tardif opening the 2022 IIHF Annual Congress in Tampere, the first Annual Congress to take place with the new IIHF Council.

partners having the opportunity to express their opinions on the IIHF's new direction. The Strategic Plan buildup was supplemented with in-depth interviews with IIHF Council members, key staff people, a selection of member national associations and other important stakeholders.

The framework of what will be a new Strategic Plan was presented to the IIHF membership under the brand "ICE26". It will operate with three goals: Innovate, Collaborate, Expand.

The survey showed highly engaged stakeholders in ice hockey and a lot of ambition but also that the responsibilities of the IIHF are perceived differently. There's a wish for more innovation in our sport and to source commercial opportunities in women's hockey and grassroots development.

"Our mission remains unchanged being to promote ice hockey throughout the world and to lead the ice hockey movement as recognized by the IOC. But we will update our vision and

our values," said IIHF Regional Vice-President Henrik Bach Nielsen.

The IIHF should be the driving force behind the continued global growth of ice hockey at all levels, always challenge the status quo and work to find win-win solutions.

ICE26 focuses on the main goals to innovate, to collaborate and to expand with 12 key initiatives presented by the IIHF Council.

For the innovations part Raeto Raffainer talked about a comprehensive digital transformation program to best deliver results internally and with other stakeholders. The sports environmental footprint shall be reduced and initiatives to do so will be vital.

"The appeal of our top events should be maximized. We offer more than 40 tournaments a year, more than other team sports. We must explore ways to maximize our resources for the benefit of the sport. We have listened over the last few months and must continue to do so," said Raffainer, who added that a more regional presence rather than a fully centralized approach is needed.

In the collaboration segment Henrik Bach Nielsen announced the ambitions for an annual global hockey forum to be established to

Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images



bring key stakeholders together for meaningful discussions. The exposure of ice hockey during the Olympic Winter Games and Winter Youth Olympic Games is planned to be brought forward for further discussion with the IOC.

Additional discussions on the international calendar form another key initiative and the work relationship with commercial partners shall be strengthened to maximize exposure.

Expansion is another main goal. “We must grow the game but how do we do it? We need to reach more players and fans through stronger member national associations and more offerings by building a targeted development program for the member’s growth and success,” said Anders Larsson. “The path looks different for each of you.”

He mentions a member national association mentorship program and as of July a new Development Director will work at the IIHF Office, promotion campaigns shall be established and a new women’s hockey concept including new brand and competition structure be discussed to bring more opportunities to the women’s game. “Don’t do the same that was done in the men’s game but do it differently and maybe even better.”

3-on-3 ice hockey as played at the 2020 Youth Olympic Winter Games should be established as a new ice hockey discipline and brand. “With countries competing 3-on-3 at the international level and maybe even at the Olympics one day,” Larsson added.

The session was not just a presentation of the outcome of the survey and the plans. It was as much about interaction and to engage the membership before moving forward with an action plan. Most of the 82 member national associations were represented with delegates either on-site in Tampere or in some cases through video conferencing and had the chance to discuss about the findings and the strategy development in various round-table groups with the IIHF Council members (pictured, above).

“We could survive continuing as we did. But we will be a stronger sport and organization if we tackle these initiatives that are the right priorities right now,” Henrik Bach Nielsen said. “This is just the beginning. There’s a lot of work to do, let’s hit the ice!”

### **WORLDS RETURN TO TAMPERE & RIGA**

The Congress approved a joint bid of Finland and Latvia to host the 2023 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship replacing St. Petersburg after the hosting rights had been withdrawn from Russia.

The next Worlds will take place at the biggest venues of two of the world’s most passionate hockey countries in Tampere and Riga from 12 to 28 May 2023.

Finland and Latvia are ready to fill in at short notice and will use the organizational experiences and staff from the 2021 and 2022 editions. “It is a privilege and we are grateful to jointly host the 2023 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship,” Finnish Ice Hockey Association President Harri Nummela said about the bid of the two Baltic Sea nations.

“We are happy for your trust and are ready to host the World Championship with the best conditions for the teams and the best atmosphere for the fans,” said Latvian Ice Hockey Federation President Aigars Kalvitis.

The newly opened Nokia Arena in Tampere will serve as the main venue as per the ongoing 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship and will host one preliminary-round group, two quarter-finals, all semi-final and medal games. Up to 11,695 fans have filled the arena during the current tournament and in total 219,124 have come to the 30 games in Tampere.

For co-host Latvia it will be the chance to host the World Championship with fans since last year’s event had to be played in mostly emp-

ty arenas due to COVID-19 restrictions. Arena Riga with a capacity of up to 9,550 spectators will serve as the Latvian venue same as in 2006 and 2021 and will host one preliminary-round group and two quarter-final games. Fan zones are planned next to both arenas. Latvia is well-known for its passionate fans travelling to the World Championship and thanks to them also had the second-highest average attendance at the current World Championship only behind host Finland.

Riga and Tampere are 501 kilometres apart and connected with a 70-minute direct scheduled flight between the two cities. Teams who have to move to the cross-over quarter-finals or to the semi-finals will be transported with charter flights.

### **SWITZERLAND TO HOST IN 2026**

The Congress approved Switzerland as host country of the 2026 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship, which will take place in Zurich and Fribourg from 15 to 31 May 2026.

The Swiss were originally slated to host in 2020 but the tournament got cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions. No vote was needed as the only other applicant, Kazakhstan, had earlier withdrawn its bid.



The Swiss Life Arena in Zurich, which will open later this year in the Altstetten district of the city, will serve as main venue for the event. The arena will offer a seating capacity for 11,200 fans for ice hockey and have the largest video cube of an ice arena in Europe. Zurich is the country's most populous city with 400,000 inhabitants in the city and 1.5 million in the canton.

About a 90-minute car or train ride away, Fribourg will serve as secondary venue. The city of 40,000 (320,000 in the canton) is at the German-Swiss language border and well known as a hockey town in Switzerland. The BCF Arena that was renovated and extended in recent years offers a capacity for 7,100 fans and was sold out for all games in the past season.

The IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships of the upcoming years:

**2023:** Tampere (Finland) & Riga (Latvia),  
12-28 May 2023

**2024:** Prague & Ostrava (Czechia),  
10-26 May 2024

**2025:** Stockholm (Sweden) & Herning (Denmark),  
9-25 May 2025

**2026:** Zurich & Fribourg (Switzerland),  
15-31 May 2026



The IIHF Council presented the initial plans for ICE26, the IIHF's new overall strategy that will be initiated for the Council term 2022-2026.

### WOMEN'S WORLDS, U18S ASSIGNED

In late August the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship will become the first top-level Women's Worlds in an Olympic year. During Olympic years the event will be held in August while in other years it will be organized in spring. The preparations for the upcoming edition in Herning and Frederikshavn, Denmark from 25 August to 4 September are going on with news on the game schedule and ticket sale expected in the upcoming weeks.

For the following two years the event will go to the two most successful countries in women's hockey. The 2023 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship next spring will be hosted in Canada with venues and dates to be announced later. The 2024 edition was allocated to the United States.

The 2023 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 World Championship in Switzerland will be hosted in the northwest part of the country in Basel and Porrentruy from 20 to 30 April 2023.

Following the recent allocation to Switzerland by the 2022 IIHF Annual Congress, the Swiss Ice Hockey Federation chose Basel and Porrentruy as host cities. It will be the third U18 Worlds in the country after Kloten/Weinfelden in 2000 and Zug/Lucerne in 2015.

### CHINESE PROPOSAL FOR WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I

As part of the legacy program of the 2022 Olympic Winter Games, the IIHF is in discussions with the Chinese Ice Hockey Association and the Chinese Winter Sports Administrative Center on a potential marketing contract to host the IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship Division I in China for the next three years. The partnership would generate an income of \$9 million that will go towards the IIHF and its membership in particular for the development of women's ice hockey and ice hockey in the Asia and Oceania region.

"We will go further with this proposal and involve the women's, marketing and coordination committees as well as the participants involved and we hope to soon have good news for the benefit of everybody and of women's hockey in particular," said IIHF President Luc Tardif.

The proposed venue in China for 2023 is the 18,000-seat Shenzhen Universiade Centre that hosted the 2011 Universiade, an NHL game

Andrie Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images



and games of the KRS Vanke Rays in the Canadian Women's Hockey League and Russia's Women's Hockey League. With negotiations ongoing, the venue allocation has been postponed to the next congress with Dordrecht, Netherlands and Linz, Austria as other applicants.

### **MEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: ADJUSTMENTS MADE TO SEEDINGS**

With Russia and Belarus not able to play in the 2023 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship program, it was decided to fill up tournaments to the regular number of teams, which is usually six in the groups below the top division.

For the men's categories that means that teams will move up in the following order to reach the number of teams beside the teams regularly promoted: 1) last-ranked team that was originally relegated, 2) runner-up of the lower division. In the women's categories the move usually involves one team being the last-ranked team originally relegated that will stay up.

The 2023 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division I Group A will thus be played with Italy, Great Britain, Lithuania, Korea, Poland and Romania; Group B with Japan, Ukraine, Estonia, China, Serbia and the Netherlands.



*Following the IIHF Congress and the presentation of the Strategic Plan, the IIHF Council hosted open-forum roundtable discussions with IIHF Members.*

Teams that were not able to participate in the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship program due to COVID-19 remain their seeding position in the program. However, for 2023 it is planned that member national associations who do not fulfil their participation commitment will be dealt with according to the regular procedure as by the IIHF Statutes & Bylaws.

For the 2023 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division I Group A the only two applicants to host the events were the two teams relegated from the top division that submitted last-minute bids. Congress voted in favour of Great Britain.

The venue is the 6,700-seat National Ice Centre and the tournament in Nottingham will be at

the highest level hosted in Great Britain since the top-level Worlds in 1937 and 1950 in London.

The Division I Group B will take place at the 5,840-seat Tondiraba Ice Hall in the Estonian capital of Tallinn, which opened in 2014 and has since hosted several IIHF tournaments.

For the future a presidential task force group presented an initial proposal to merge the groups and play the Division I in one 10-team tournament with two groups of five teams with the groups played at two venues and potentially two countries, which will be further analyzed by committees, Council and the IIHF Office.

All venues, dates and participants are published in the [Tournament List](#).

**INTERNATIONAL  
ICE HOCKEY  
FEDERATION**







## World Juniors 2.0

Rivalries resume as restarted 2022 tournament kicks off

By Lucas Aykroyd





**One thing is certain: the 2022 IIHF World Junior Championship in Edmonton will take place under extraordinary circumstances.**

Due to the pandemic-related stoppage and rescheduling of the original tournament slated for last Christmas in the northern Alberta capital, it's the first time the World Juniors will be played in August.

With the same age group (players born 2002 or later) ruled eligible, we'll see more 20-year-olds than at any previous tournament. Also, no defending champions have enjoyed a longer gap between World Juniors than the U.S., which won the last gold medal – also in Edmonton – on 5 January 2021.

This American roster isn't as star-studded as head coach Nate Leaman's 2021 team, which included MVP Trevor Zegras and blue-chip goalie Spencer Knight. Yet winning a second straight title is within reach for the Group B powerhouse.

Picture a blue line with 2022 Olympic veteran Brock Faber and Luke Hughes, the #4 overall NHL draft pick (New Jersey) this year. From the dazzling hands of #3 pick Logan Cooley



*The 2022 IIHF World Junior Championship will feature ten teams playing within one venue: Rogers Place in Edmonton, Canada.*

(Arizona) to the 2022 Olympian Matthew Knies, there's lots to love about America's forwards too.

Like the U.S., Finland boasts five all-time World Junior gold medals. It will vie for first place in Group A.

Antti Pennanen, entering his last tournament as Finland's U20 coach, is eager to improve on 2021's bronze finish.

Super-skilled forward prospects like Brad Lambert and Aatu Raty hope to post World Junior breakout performances after previously underperforming.



Sniper Joakim Kemell, who had six goals in five games at the 2022 U18 Worlds, aims to stay hot in his WJC debut. Topi Niemela, whose eight points led all defencemen at the 2021 World Juniors, headlines a solid blueline corps.

Sweden, Finland's traditional Nordic rival, resumes its quest for just its third gold medal in history (1981, 2012). For coach Tomas Montén, this is his swan song after leading the team since 2016.

If goalie Jesper Wallstedt picks up where he left off at December's truncated WJC, which included his 48-save shutout over Slovakia, it greatly boosts the talented Juniorkronorna's hopes. Towering defenceman Simon Edvinsson, who's been compared to Victor Hedman, will play big minutes. Offensively, William Eklund's absence is a blow, but it's an opportunity for gunners like Fabian Lysell and Jonathan Lekkerimäki to shine in their WJC debuts.

Andrea Cardin / IIHF-IIHF Images



How about that Czechia-Slovakia rivalry? The Central European brothers open these World Juniors against each other on 9 August. Both sides have much to prove. At the last three tournaments, the Czechs have finished seventh and the Slovaks eighth.

Slovakia made history at the 2022 NHL Draft when Juraj Slafkovsky (Montreal) and Simon Nemec (New Jersey) went first and second overall respectively. However, NHL commitments and assorted injuries may limit how far coach Ivan Fenes' team can go, unless U18 sensations like Dalibor Dvorsky and Adam Sykora overachieve.

Meanwhile, Czechia's hopes hinge on strong production from veteran leader Jan Mysak and Jiri Kulich, who dazzled with a tournament-high nine goals at the 2022 U18 Worlds. Star defencemen David Jiricek and Stanislav Svozil must also deliver in big moments.

There is no relegation at this year's tournament, and that's good news for lower-tier foes. Germany has set the bar higher in recent years, including a gutsy sixth-place finish in 2021.

However coach Tobias Abstreiter has a workmanlike group that will need the likes



of goalie Florian Bugl and forward Alexander Blank to step up again, as they did in December, if the Germans aspire to make noise in the quarter-finals.

Cross-border rival Switzerland is also a long shot to go deep. They'll need captain Simon Knak and fellow NHL hopeful Brian Zanetti to shine if they want to improve on 2021's ninth-place finish.

Including both the 2021 WJC and two games at the abbreviated December tournament, Austria has been outscored 47-4 in its last six World Junior games. Lacking top 2022 draft picks like Marco Kasper (#8 overall, Detroit) or Vinzenz Rohrer (#75 overall, Montreal) will hamper the Austrian offence even further. They're truly underdogs.

Latvia, meanwhile, returns to the top division for the first time since 2017 due to Russia's non-participation. On the bright side, three Latvians were taken in the NHL Draft for the first time since 2015: forwards Dans Locmelis, Sandis Vilmanis, and Klas Veinbergs. However, Locmelis (#119 overall, Boston) was the highest pick in the fourth round. Without strong team play, the Latvians will likely finish ninth or tenth.

And of course, there is Canada. Off the ice, the host nation enters the tournament under a cloud of serious allegations related to previous World Junior teams.

On the ice, the Canadians, whose 18 gold medals are tops all-time, will look to prevail on home ice after settling for silver here versus the archrival U.S. in 2021.

Canada last won gold in 2020 under coach Dale Hunter in Czechia. Headlined by superstar Connor Bedard, the likely #1 pick in 2023, the Canadians – deep at every position – have multiple paths to top the podium again.

The World Juniors are as unpredictable as IIHF tournaments come. It'll be an August to remember in Edmonton as these global U20 rivalries resume.







# Denmark hosts Women's Worlds

World's best gather in first major senior women's event since Beijing

By Andrew Podnieks





**For the first time in history, women will play a separate IIHF World Championship tournament in an Olympic year.**

And for the first time as well, Denmark will be the host country for the best women's players. Here is a look at the participating teams and what to expect.

**GROUP A CANADA**



Gold medallists at both last year's Women's Worlds and the Beijing Olympics, Canada is definitely the favourites heading to Denmark.

They are led by coach Troy Ryan as well as "captain clutch," Marie-Philip Poulin, and goalie Ann-Renee Desbiens. This event will give Sarah Fillier another opportunity to establish herself as the "Next One," and veterans Rebecca Johnston, Sarah Nurse, and Jocelyne Larocque will likely continue to be major factors.

**USA**



Favourites for nearly a decade, the Americans are on the outside looking in after finishing second in the last two events. USA Hockey has started a shakeup by introducing coach John Wroblewski, who takes over for Joel Johnson.



Team Canada are the hands-on tournament favourites, after dominating the competition in Beijing en route to Olympic gold last February.

On ice, changes will also be coming, for a lot of reasons: recent results; the start of a new Olympic cycle; a new coach wanting to instill a new philosophy; the retirement of Dani Cameranesi. It will all make for an exciting pre-tournament camp, and fans can expect to see a different roster in Denmark.

**FINLAND**



Bronze medallists in 2021 and Beijing, Finland will have its usual optimism and challenges, starting with finding a way to beat the North Americans.

Key to that will be defender and longtime captain, Jenni Hiirikoski, and goalie Anni Keisala, who has taken over for Noora Raty and done exceptionally well. The Finns are the class of Europe but still looking for ways to make their 2019 win over Canada a regular feature rather than the exception to the rule.

**SWITZERLAND**



One level below Finland but always a threat, the Swiss also are looking for ways to overcome a rival, in their case Suomi, having lost both the

Olympic and Women's World Championship bronze-medal games to them.

In Alina Muller and captain Lara Stalder, they have two of the finest forwards in the game, and goalie Andrea Brandli is trying to give the team Florence Schelling-like stability in goal. But the team needs scoring from other players, and the defence has to be just that little bit better in their own end if they are to unseat Finland.

**JAPAN**



The Japanese couldn't get past the quarter-finals in the 2021 Women's Worlds or the Olympics, finishing sixth at both events.

They are a dynamic and skilled team led by 33-year-old goalie Nana Fujimoto, who has been the team's number-one in the crease since 2014.

The team has several key veterans, namely Moeko Fujimoto and Sena Suzuki, but it also has an impressive group of younger players that will lead the team in the future—23-year-old defender Aoi Shiga, 25-year-old Haruka Toko, and 23-year-old Chika Otaki. The tricky part for the Japanese this time round is that they will be in Group A for the first time since the groups were made vertical, so their first four games will be a mighty challenge.

Ryan McCulloch / HHOF-IIHF Images





**GROUP B  
CZECHIA**



Although Czechia finished 7th at both the WW and OG-W, take them lightly at your peril.

This is a young team with tons of U18 experience that is just starting to develop a top-level personality. The 25-year-old Klara Peslarova was outstanding in goal in Beijing and had a 1.60 GAA in five games.

At 26, Tereza Vanisova and Denisa Krizova, 27, are in their prime and key to the team's offence, while Klara Hymlarova, 23, and 19-year-old Daniela Pejsova represent the new guard.

**GERMANY**



The Germans finished 8th at the 2021 Women's



Worlds and didn't qualify for the 2022 Olympics, and they have a ways to go before being a threat in Group B.

Their fortunes took another hit with the recent retirements of veteran goalie Jennifer Harss and forward Julia Zorn, both of whom were lynchpins on the team. Nevertheless, the show must go on, and that means more will be needed from the likes of Kerstin Spielberger, Nina Christoff, and Bernadette Karpf. Their main goal will be to qualify for the playoffs.

**HUNGARY**



A "lucky loser," the Hungarians played in their first top-level WW in 2021 and finished ninth, but they avoided relegation because of covid.

This year provides the players with another



chance to gain some valuable experience against the best. They will do so without the Pinter sisters, Lili and Hanna, who retired prior to the team's unsuccessful bid to qualify for the Olympics last year.

**DENMARK**



Like the men, the Danish women made their first ever appearance at the Olympics this past February. The women finished last of ten teams, after a 9th-place finish at the 2021 WW, but they, like Hungary, are back in the top pool for a bonus year.

Fortunately, their best player is their goalie, Cassandra Repstock-Romme, who will turn 21 on 26 August. She was nothing short of sensational in Beijing, posting a 2.82 GAA and playing in all four games. Their biggest difficul-



ty is scoring, and after Josefine Jakobsen and Nicoline Jensen, the offense dries up.

**SWEDEN**



The Swedes finished 8th in Beijing and last competed at the Women's Worlds in 2019, when they were demoted.

They are back now because of the suspension of Russia, and hope to make the most of their chance. Goalie Emma Soderberg is just the kind of player who can give her team a chance to win every night.

Up front, the talent is there with the likes of Sofie Lundin, Felizia Wikner-Zienkiewicz, and Josefin Bouveng. Although the Swedes are ranked last coming in to the tournament, it isn't likely that's where they'll finish in Denmark.





# Finland wins it at home

Gold at Worlds caps off exceptional year for men's national team

By Andrew Podnieks







**The 85th IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship is in the books, after 64 games in 17 days capping off an incredible season for the Finnish Lions.**

Finland emerged victorious after defeating Canada, 4-3, in overtime of the gold-medal game.

It was a thrilling ride, so here are ten things we learned from the most recent marquee IIHF tournament.

### 1—The dynasty is real

When Finland won WM gold in 2019, it was with a roster of little-known players. When they lost to Canada in 2021, it looked like the party was over.

But then they won Olympic gold for the first time and followed that up with an OT win for World Championship gold against Canada, again.

Coach Jukka Jalonen is the real deal. Big man Markko Anttila is real. The Finns are in a dynasty like the Czechs were two decades ago, and Jalonen has implemented a style which can accommodate pretty much any player.



*The Year of the Lions: Finland has been on fire on and off the ice, taking gold in Beijing and Tampere, the latter off a successfully hosted World Championship.*

Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

### 2—Slafkovsky makes a splash

Soon after turning 18, the Olympic MVP from Slovakia had his second IIHF Worlds appearance.

In 2021, he didn't register a point. This year, he led the team in scoring with nine points. In doing so, Slafkovsky solidified his place as the number-one selection in the NHL draft, becoming the highest-drafted Slovak player ever. Dynamic and energetic, he lifts his teammates by his play and enthusiasm.

### 3—Fans make the Worlds go 'round

COVID-19 has played havoc with the sports world for more than two years now. The 2020 World Championship was cancelled altogether, and in 2021, in Riga, the games were played before empty stands.

The pandemic was under control by the time May 2022 came around, and that meant fans could return. And return they did! The arenas in Helsinki and Tampere were loud and full,

and the players rose to the occasion, playing with a passion that just can't be replicated in an empty building.

### 4—Canada in 7th heaven

The Canadians continue their nice little roll of excellent results. They have now played for a medal in each of the last seven years, winning three gold and three silver and missing out only in 2018 when they lost the bronze-medal game to the U.S., 4-1.

Before that, they had gone five years without a medal, but what's always impressive about Team Canada is that they arrive to the World Championship every year with a radically different roster, and still manage to gel in time to reach the podium consistently.

### 5—Farewell, Britannia

It was fun while it lasted! The Brits qualified for the top pool of the Worlds in 2019 for the first time since 1994 and managed to stay up another year thanks to a key overtime win over France in their last game of the round robin.

In 2021, they again managed to avoid last place, this time by finishing ahead of Belarus by winning that head-to-head game, 4-3. But their fortune ran out in Finland. They managed only one point on a shootout loss to Norway, and that kept them in last place. They'll be





back in Division I-A for 2023, but now that they've had a taste of life at the top, they'll be more determined than ever to return sooner rather than later.

### 6—Benjamin (Ambuhl?) Button

Swiss forward Andres Ambuhl grabbed many a headline by setting the World Championship record for most career games, finishing the tournament with 123.

But what was less celebrated about the 38-year-old was the fact that he had three goals and five points in his 17th WM event. He has had five or more points on six occasions, but four of those have been in the last five years. He's not getting older; he's getting better.



### 7—Campbell's case

Jessica Campbell was hired by Germany coach Toni Soderholm as one of his assistants, making her the first woman to assume a role behind the bench at the men's Worlds.

Away from games, she worked on special teams and player development, going one-on-one to help with individual skills. This was not a promotional hire or headline-grabbing tactic by the Germans. Campbell has long been respected for her skating ability and her ability to communicate.

"I don't see my role as any different from the other assistant coaches," she explained, "but I think maybe I have a unique perspective because of how I've studied the game and understand the game and approaches to development."



### 8—Ramsay's influence

At first, Slovakia's hiring of Craig Ramsay as coach in 2018 might have seemed like another attempt by a smaller European country simply to put a Canadian behind the bench and hope for the best.

But Ramsay has been with the team four years now, during which time the nation has slowly recouped some of its swagger from 20 years ago. Slovakia won bronze at the Olympics, their first medal in that event, and the program earned another star when Juraj Slafkovsky became the first Slovak chosen first overall in the NHL draft.

More significant, NHL teams drafted three Slovaks in the first round for the first time, and six overall, most since 2005. Slovakia is back.

### 9—Never count Canada out

Canada won the silver medal but how they got to overtime of the final game is something of a minor miracle. Twice in the playoffs they escaped certain defeat. In the quarter-finals against Sweden, Tre Kronor led 3-0 after 40 minutes. Canada scored early in the third, but the Swedes continued to lead by two with under two minutes to play. But Pierre-Luc Dubois made it 3-2 with 1:53 remaining, and just 30 seconds later Matt Barzal tied the game. Drake Batherson scored early in OT and the stunned Swedes were eliminated. In the gold-medal game, a similar scenario played out. Finland also led 3-1 with under two minutes left, but again Canada fought back to tie and send the game to OT. Finland regrouped, though, and won in the fourth period on a power play.

### 10—Cervenka's Roman spring

The Czechs won bronze in Tampere, their first World Championship medal in, shockingly, ten years. And they did so backed by their 36-year-old star forward Roman Cervenka. Playing in his ninth WM, Cervenka had a career tournament, leading all scorers with 17 points. Only once before had he ever hit double digits in scoring (10 in 2011), and surely no one could have foreseen such a strong contribution to the offence from the veteran. In all, Czechia scored 32 goals in ten games, and Cervenka was in on more than half. Incredible.



# Slovenia, Hungary heading up

## Earn promotion to 2023 IIHF Worlds

By Martin Merk



**Slovenia beat Korea 4-1 in its last game of the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division I Group A.**

The Slovenes won the game on home ice for a perfect finish in Ljubljana that ended with the gold medals for the Slovenes.

Slovenia ends the tournament with a 4-0 record. The Slovenes won all games with a clear margin of three or more goals except the first one, a 4-2 win against Lithuania where they also held a four-goal lead until five minutes before the final buzzer.

With a 5-1 victory against neighbouring rival Hungary host Slovenia won the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division I Group A on home ice in Ljubljana two days before the end of the tournament and ear-



Slovenia (top) and Hungary (bottom) are headed to the 2023 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship after winning promotion in Division I Group A.

ns promotion to the top-level 2023 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship.

For Slovenia it will be the first top-level participation since the 2017 Worlds and the 2018 Olympics. Third time was the charm as the Slovenes reach promotion in their third attempt after placing fifth and fourth respectively at the last two Division IA tournaments. Lithuania was awarded the bronze medals.

Slovenia forward Ziga Jeglic led the tournament in scoring with seven points (3+4). He was selected as best forward by the tournament directorate and as MVP in the media vote.

Slovenia and Korea entered the game knowing in advance that they would finish the tournament in first and fourth place respectively. Despite that 4,000 fans came

to almost fill the arena for a farewell of the tournament and to see the medal ceremony with gold for Slovenia.

For the Slovenes it was also a chance to avenge the 5-3 loss in the teams' last Division I encounter three years ago. For Korea the game and the tournament didn't go as well as hoped. With little game experience at home due to tougher COVID-19 rules in the Far East than in Europe and the integration of new and younger players the tournament was a learning experience for the team. Thanks to a 4-1 win against Romania the Koreans avoided relegation and stayed in the group.

For Hungary it will be the 11th participation at the top-level IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship. The Hungarians regularly played among the top nations between 1930 and 1939 and then after a long break got promoted to play in 2009, 2016 and 2023. The Hungarian men's national team also played at Olympic Winter Games three times.

Slovenia played at the top-level Worlds nine times between 2002 and 2017 and at two Olympic Winter Games. The Slovenes also played in the top division as part of Yugoslavia in 1939 and in five Olympic Winter Games.

Matt Zamborini / IIHF Images



# Sweden juniors win

## Defeat USA in men's U18s in Germany

By Derek O'Brien



**Before a packed house at Fanatec Arena in Landshut, Germany, Sweden defeated the USA 6-4 to win the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 World Championship.**

The Americans outshot Sweden 51-15 but Hugo Havelid, the goaltender on the tournament all-star team, came up with a monster game just 24 hours after stymying Finland in the semi-finals.

Sweden was able to counter the USA depth – the country had scored more than double the number of goals of any other team and had 5 players among the top 10 in scoring – with a combination of great defence and goaltending.

The Swedes were also efficient on their scoring chances. They got two goals each from Noah Ostlund and Liam Ohgren, defenceman Mattias Havelid had three assists and Jonathan Lekkerimaki had four points in the game.



Sweden's national U18 team has seen a lot of success in recent years, earning its first-ever gold medal in 2019 and following it up with another in 2022.

For the Americans, captain Rutger McGroarty scored twice. Late in the game, Sweden was up 5-3 and the USA went back to the power play with 3:30 left, Adam Nightingale pulled Augustine for a sixth attacker and a two-man numerical advantage and it paid off. McGroarty had one goal already but he had also been robbed by Havelid a couple of times. This time, Jimmy Snuggerud found him for the one-timer from right in front that went through the Swedish goalie.

But they came no closer. Lekkerimaki iced it with 31.9 seconds left into the empty U.S. net. The goal gave the Djurgarden forward five scores to go along with 10 assists, his 15 points la tournament-best for the 2022 U18 Worlds.

For Sweden, the gold medal is the country's second at the U18s. They captured the gold medal for the first time in 2019 and earned bronze in 2018 and 2021. The USA has

been the most successful team in U18 World Championship history, winning 10 gold medals, four silvers and three bronzes. This will be their 18th medal in 23 tournaments.

Fresh off a heartbreaking semi-final loss to rival Sweden, Finland regrouped and beat Czechia 4-1 to win the bronze medal at the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 World Championship in Landshut, Germany.

It was a closer game than the score indicated, however. The score was 1-1 after one period and remained 2-1 until the last six minutes.

For the Finns, it is their first medal at the U18 Worlds since winning gold in 2018. It is their fifth bronze and 12th medal overall.

Things did not go as smoothly for the host team. Winless and pointless, the German national team finish in last place (eighth). The Germans also settled for last place (tenth) in 2021. Fortunately for them, for the second straight year, there was no relegation.

Rounding out the tournament awards, the Most Valuable Player award went to Czechia forward Jiri Kulich, who led all players with nine goals in six games. Logan Cooley and Lane Hutson took home the Best Forward and Best Defender awards respectively.

Matt Zamboni / HHOf-IIHF Images



# Canada gets back

## Beat USA in Madison for women's U18 gold

By Lucas Aykroyd



**Canada hung on to beat the U.S. 3-2 to win the gold medal in a wild affair at the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship.**

The finale epitomized the passionate rivalry between the North American superpowers at all levels of women's hockey. In a back-and-forth second period, Canada grabbed a 3-0 lead, including two goals in 58 seconds, only to see the U.S. claw back with two late-period goals in a record-tying seven seconds. Jocelyn Amos's second-period goal, her first of the tournament, proved to be the winner.

This dethroning marked Canada's first title since 2019 and sixth of all time. The U.S. edged Canada 2-1 in the 2020 gold medal game – the last time this tournament was played prior to COVID-19 – in Bratislava on Kiara Zanon's sudden-death goal.



Canada's women's program has amassed gold medals at the Women's Worlds (2021), the Olympics (2022), and now the U18 World Championship.

This year's tournament, originally scheduled for Sweden in January, was postponed till June, but the exhilarating spectacle of this gold medal game certainly made it worth the wait.

"I think we faced a whole different Canadian team, which caught us on our heels a little bit," said leading U.S. scorer Laila Edwards (4+4=8), who was named tournament MVP. "We battled back. Missed by a goal. Defi-

nately upset with the ending, but I'm so super-proud of this group, the best team I played for."

Canada was eager for revenge after getting demolished 7-0 by coach Katie Lachapelle's Americans in the preliminary round. That was the most goals Canada has ever allowed versus the U.S., the largest margin of Canadian defeat, and the only time Canada has been shut out by the U.S. at this tournament.

This was the 13th gold-medal meeting in 14 tournaments between Canada and the Americans. The lone exception was 2018, when the U.S. trounced upstart Sweden 9-3.

The U.S.'s U18 Women's Worlds record in gold medal games against Canada fell to seven wins and six losses. Seven of the previous head-to-head finals went to overtime, with the U.S. winning four times and losing three times.

In terms of the overall Canada-U.S. rivalry in women's hockey, this outcome will only add fuel to the fire. The Canadians recently regained their titles as Women's Worlds (2021) and Olympic (2022) champions after droughts that dated back to 2012 and 2014 respectively.

16-year-old Sanni Vanhanen provided all the goals in Finland's 3-0 victory over Sweden in the bronze-medal game.

For Vanhanen, who also plays on Finland's senior women's national team, it was the third bronze in her young career. She also earned medals at the 2021 World Championship and 2022 Olympics.

Emilia Kyrkko recorded 35 saves for her second shutout of the tournament.

Chris Tanouye / HHOF-IIHF Images



# Tournament recaps

## IIHF Championship program results



Arkadiusz Kostek was Poland's unlikely gamewinner as the host nation took gold at the 2022 IIHF World Championship Division I Group B.

The 27-year-old defenceman grabbed his first ever World Championship goal, breaking the deadlock and setting Poland on course for a hard-fought 2-0 victory over Japan. The result secures a return Division IA for the Poles, who were relegated in 2018. Japan finished with a silver medal, while Ukraine's national team overcame difficult conditions in their home country that forced them on the road for weeks prior to the event to claim the bronze medal.



Hung-Li Chou scored the overtime winner as Chinese Taipei's U20 men topped host Mexico 5-4 to win the gold medal at the U20 World Championship Division III.

On a 2-on-1 break, Mo Peng passed over to the 18-year-old sniper and he slammed a one-timer home at 2:19, throwing away his gloves and helmet in ecstasy. It was Chou's tournament-leading tenth goal.

Chinese Taipei, which debuted in IIHF U20 competition in 2010, has never advanced out of Division III before. Tournament hosts MEXico finished in second place. In the bronze medal game, Australia edged Israel 1-0 on a second-period power play goal by captain Ethan Hawes, who was named Best Defender.



Hungary earned promotion to the Division I Group A for next year's IIHF Ice Hockey U18 World Championship program after defeating Italy 5-0 to complete a perfect round robin in Asiago, Italy.

The winners of the Division I Group B had a spotless 5-0 record and outscored their opponents 19-3. This marks the team's first return to the Division IA since 2017 when coach Glen Williamson was behind the bench.

Key to their success was goaltender Levente Hegedus. He played in four of the five games and recorded three shutouts, allowing only one goal against Ukraine. The Ukrainians finished a respectable 2nd place after playing with the distractions of war back home that forced them to flee the country with their families. Hosts Italy finished with bronze.



Team France defeated Norway 4-1 to win the 2022 IIHF Women's World Championship Division I Group A on home ice and get promoted back to the top division.

The 3,586 fans at the rink set a new attendance record for women's hockey in France and saw a tight game in which France outshot the Norwegians 40-37. Four different players scored for France with Estelle Duvin having three points (1+2).

Both France and Norway entered the last game with two wins against the Netherlands and Slovakia, and an overtime loss to Austria, with seven points and a +6 goal difference. It was a winner-take-all game, that turned in favour of the host team.





Iceland kept a cool head to win gold by the tiniest of margins at the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship Division II Group B in Zagreb, Croatia.

Team captain Silvia Bjorgvinsdottir led by example by scoring the shootout winner to give Iceland a 2-1 victory over Australia. Her coolly dispatched backhand high past Australia's netminder Olivia Last seals top spot for the Scandinavians. The Icelandic team captain was the sole skater to convert in a nail-biter of a shootout contest lasting six rounds.

A vital cog in the Icelanders' promotion was also netminder Birta Helgudottir, who kept all of Australia's half-a-dozen penalty shots out of her net. Helgudottir and Silvia Bjorgvinsdottir were selected as the tournament's best goalkeeper and forward respectively.



Spain defeated Great Britain 3-1 in the final of the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship Division II in Istanbul, Türkiye.

As a result, Spain will be promoted to Division I Group B in 2023 in Katowice, Poland. The Division II event featured a nine-team tournament format.

Maria Sierra, who stopped 59 of 61 shots throughout the tournament, for a 96.72 save percentage and 0.45 goals-against average, was named Top Goaltender by the Tournament Directorate. Bridget O'Hare, who was third in tournament scoring with 10 points and led all players with seven assists, was Top Defender. The Top Forward was Linda Rulle of Latvia, who finished with 10 goals and 13 points.



A short-benched Thailand team battled to gold in the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey U20 Asia and Oceania Championship.

Despite missing five players in the gold-medal game against a Singapore team that upset the seedings, the host nation edged a 4-3 verdict on home ice in Bangkok. Defender Ramin Chan-Urai grabbed Thailand's winning goal with 5:38 left in regulation time.

Hong Kong, China beat the United Arab Emirates 6-5 to secure the bronze medal.

The competition in Bangkok represents a re-activation of hockey among Asia's emerging nations. For most countries, this was a return to international junior play for the first time since 2019.



The IIHF Development Cup celebrated its third edition in May 2022 the biggest and most successful since its inauguration in 2017 with a record six nations participating.

Colombia emerged victorious out of a field that included Algeria, Andorra, Ireland, Liechtenstein and Portugal. The Development Cup was established to provide an international tournament for IIHF members that are not able to compete in the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship program. It has become increasingly important for these countries, and their players, to be able to play competitive games to further their development.

IIHF President Luc Tardif dropped the puck at the ceremonial face-off and met with the Associate Members Working Group to talk about future development opportunities.



## League roundup

### Club results from around the world

**ALPS HOCKEY LEAGUE** – It took several years of losing out in the final, but Asiago Hockey is back on top again in the Alps Hockey League.

Playing in front of over 1,600 spectators, Asiago successfully completed a thriller for the ages, pulling out a 2-1 Game 5 victory in the league that includes the second-tier teams from Austria as well as teams from Italy and Slovenia.

Making it to the finals has been a force of habit for the club from the hockey-crazy Italian town not too far away from Venice. It won the title in the 2017/18 season and has continued to make the finals every season with the exception of the 2018/19 season.



Serena Fantini



Lukas Filippec, HC Ocelari Trinec

**BELARUS** – Metallurg Zlobin is the Belarusian champion, ending a 10-year wait for industrial city on the banks of the Dnieper. The Steelmen prevailed in game seven of the President’s Cup final against perennial favourite Yunost Minsk.

It was the first time in 12 years that the Extraliga final had gone to a game seven decider and more than 15,000 fans came to Minsk Arena to see it. Two goals from Sergei Kuznetsov, 19, in put Metallurg in control while goaltender Alexander Samoilov had 31 saves to record the first shut-out of the final series.

Kuznetsov’s achievement crowned a record-breaking play-off for him. He finished with 19 (9+10) points, more goals than any U21 player in a Belarusian play-off campaign.

**CZECHIA** – Ocelari Trinec won its third straight Czech Extraliga title, defeating Sparta Prague 2-1



SVEND CHRISTENSEN / AALBORG PIRATES

in Game 6 of the finals before a sell-out crowd of 17,220 at O2 Arena in the nation’s capital.

Three times in the finals, Trinec took the series lead and twice Sparta answered, but the eventual champion bucked that trend in the last game, thanks to two goals 95 seconds apart by Vladimir Dravecky and Vladimir Svacina – the latter on a penalty shot – and 26 saves from surprise starting netminder Marek Mazanec. It’s the fourth title overall for Trinec.

**DENMARK** – The Aalborg Pirates are the 2022 Danish champions, after beating Rungsted 5-1 in Game 5 of the final. The team’s big hero was 29-year-old Thomas Spelling, who scored a hat trick in the game and led the league in playoff scoring with 18 points in 13 games.

In the last five years, the Danish Metal Ligan has been a story of two teams, Aalborg and



Reija Poutanen

Rungsted. Those two have won the title twice since 2018 – the pandemic wiped away the playoffs in 2020 – bookended by the two won by Aalborg Pirates, who returned to the throne in 2022. Aalborg also won the Danish mid-season Final Four tournament, played between the top four teams after 16 games, on home ice in February.

**FINLAND** – Tappara Tampere’s Finnish title seemed an inevitability. The regular season champions beat TPS Turku in the final games and dropped only three games in the post-season en route to the team’s 18th Finnish championship, and the third since 2016.

Joona Luoto scored the championship winning goal after just 35 seconds in Game 5 and goaltender Christian Heljanko recorded a shutout leading to a 1-0 win. Luoto was named the winner of the Jari Kurri Trophy as the playoffs





Fabien Baldino

MVP. He finished second in playoffs scoring with eight goals and 17 points in 14 games, two points behind TPS forward Markus Nurmi who played two more games in the post-season.

FRANCE – Grenoble Bruleurs de Loup won a record eighth French title, completing a 4-1 win over Angers Ducs in the Ligue Magnus final series.

The team's success was built on free-scoring offence. A 5-1 victory in the decisive game kept up an awesome home record, with Grenoble beaten just three times in 30 games on home ice. And the team blasted 261 goals in 58 games (regular season and play-off), averaging 4.5 goals per game and recording 31 victories by a margin of three or more goals. Grenoble led the regular season standings by 13 points, with Angers in second place.



Penny Dell / City-Press GmbH

Veteran forward Damien Fleury led the way. His 88 points won the Ligue Magnus scoring race, and his 40 goals set a new personal best – at the age of 36.

GERMANY – The playoffs in the German DEL were a sign for back to normality. And for Eisbaren Berlin a back-to-back championship to top it all off.

Captain Frank Hordler, who can now call himself a nine-time DEL champion, all of which have come with Berlin, was also this year's DEL Playoff MVP.

Top scorer Matt White led the team in regular and post-season scoring, while also wrapping up the day with a hat trick in the decisive 5-0 victory over Red Bull Munich.



Dean Woolley

GREAT BRITAIN – It was a celebration three years in the making as the Belfast Giants made it back-to-back Elite League wins.

A shootout success at the Sheffield Steelers on Sunday saw Adam Keefe's team secure top spot in the United Kingdom's championship, defending the trophy it lifted back in 2019.

Since then, the pandemic curtailed the 2020 campaign and wiped out the 2021 season, making this success an unusually extended title defence.

The Giants' triumph, which also earns them a place in next season's Champions Hockey League, is their fifth British title. The first came in 2002 in the British Superleague; 2022's trophy is the team's fourth Elite League win.



GEPA pictures/ Edgar Eisner

ICEHL – In its second official year of existence, the Austrian-based ICE Hockey League has now crowned its second champion. A long-time powerhouse in the league formerly known as the EBEL, Red Bull Salzburg is the league's 2021/22 champion, its first championship since the league changed its name in the summer of 2020.

After having bowed out to KAC Klagenfurt in last spring's final, the team put in a dominant season right from the beginning (finishing first overall with a 33-16 record) in gaining its first championship in six years. It did so in convincing fashion, sweeping all its playoff opponents without a single loss in three rounds.

KAZAKHSTAN – Saryarka Karaganda successfully defended its Kazakh championship. But the team from Kazakhstan's mining district had to dig deep to get through the Pro Hokei Ligasy play-offs.





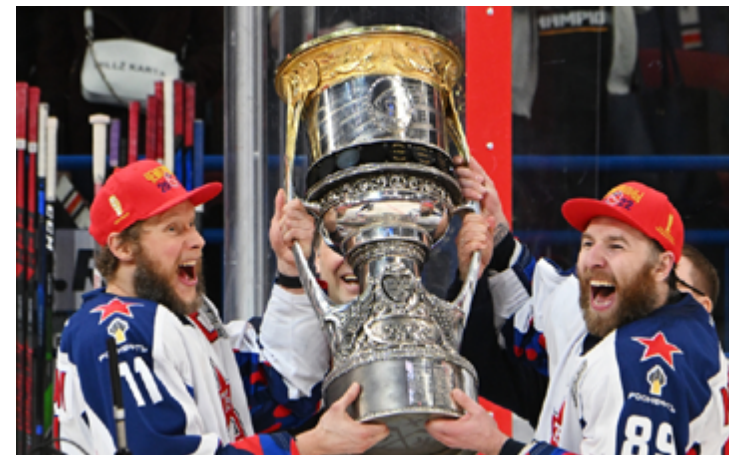
AKHMETZHAN, K.Z.

The final against Arlan Kokshetau went all the way to a seventh game. In that final series, there were several tight games. Twice, the teams went to overtime, with Saryarka getting the verdict both times. Two other encounters ended with narrow 2-1 victories for Arlan. But in the decisive clash, Saryarka finished the job with a convincing 5-2 scoreline.

**KONTINENTAL HOCKEY LEAGUE** – Hockey legend Sergei Fyodorov completed his first season as a head coach by winning the Gagarin Cup in a dramatic final series.

The three-time Stanley Cup winner and IIHF Hall of Famer led CSKA Moscow to a 4-1 Game-Seven victory over Metallurg Magnitogorsk despite trailing 1-3 in the final series.

The golden goal in this year's final went to Alexander Popov. The CSKA forward potted



Grigori Sisyoyev / RIA Novosti

the Game 7 winner, giving his team an early 2-0 lead. Popov finished post season with 9 (5+4) points, scoring key goals all the way through that earned him the MVP award.

**LATVIA** – Zemgale/LLU from Jelgava is celebrating its first ever Latvian title after completing a sweep of Olimp/Venta 2002 from Riga in the play-off final of the country's top league, OHL. The decisive games was played in front of a capacity crowd at the ice arena in Pinki, on the outskirts of Riga, where Zemgale's 3-1 victory on Monday secured that debut crown.

It represented revenge for the Jelgava-based team, which suffered a defeat against Olimp in last year's final. The victory also makes a bit of Latvian hockey history. Ninety years after the first national championship, the title has gone to a team from outside of Riga or Liepaja for the first time.



Phelan Ebenhack / NHL/Getty Images

**NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE** – Artturi Lehkonen's go-ahead goal lifted the visiting Colorado Avalanche to a 2-1 victory over the Tampa Bay Lightning in Game Six of the finals at Amalie Arena. It's the third Cup in franchise history (1996, 2001), ending Tampa Bay's reign as back-to-back champions.

This was the only time a Finnish player has scored the Stanley Cup winner since Jari Kurri achieved that feat for Edmonton, who beat the Philadelphia Flyers 3-1 in Game Seven in 1987. And it was an ideal ending to this dream year for Finnish hockey.

2022 is now the only year in which players from one nation (Finland) have scored the Olympic gold medal-winner (Hannes Bjorninen, 2-1 vs. ROC), the World Championship gold medal-winner (Sakari Manninen, 4-3 vs. Canada in OT), and the



Michelle Jay / PHF

Stanley Cup winner. (Sweden also won the Olympics and Worlds in 2006, but Czech D-man Frantisek Kaberle had the Cup winner for the Carolina Hurricanes.)

**PREMIER HOCKEY FEDERATION** – Swiss forward Evelina Raselli ignited a third-period rally that saw the Boston Pride overcome a 2-1 deficit and surge to a 4-2 win over the favoured Connecticut Whale to win the Isobel Cup.

Raselli's goal early in the third period tied the game, 2-2, and just 18 seconds later Taylor Wenczkowski scored the go-ahead goal. She also scored the Cup-winner last year when Boston beat Minnesota, 4-3, to win the Isobel.

It was the second straight championship for the Pride and third overall since the PHF/





Sergey Babunov



Philipp Heggin



HCSLOVAN.SK



Fredrik Sundvall / FotolNorr

NWHL started in 2015 (the league was re-named Premier Hockey Federation at the start of this season). They were also inaugural winners six years ago. This year's team was captained by Jillian Dempsey, who won a gold medal with Team USA at the 2009 Women's U18 World Championship and a silver medal at the senior Women's Worlds three years later.

**RUSSIA WOMEN'S HOCKEY LEAGUE** – Chinese women's hockey has enjoyed a big year – and the KRS Vanke Rays crowned a successful season by winning Russia's Women's Hockey League for the second time.

The club, based in Shenzhen but currently playing out of Mytishi, just north of Moscow, due to Covid restrictions back home, helped to nurture the players who represented China at the Beijing Olympics and then won promotion to the IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World

Championship Division IA. And many of those players did double duty, combining international duty in Poland earlier this month with the play-off campaign in Russia. That culminated in double gold: victory for China and a 3-0 sweep of SKIF Nizhni Novgorod in the final series in the league.

**SWITZERLAND** – EV Zug defended its title in Switzerland in historic fashion, becoming the first team in history to come back from being 0-3 behind in a final series by beating the ZSC Lions Zurich in Game 7.

It was the ending of a strong season for the "bulls" from Central Switzerland. Zug won the regular season ahead of Fribourg-Gotteron and the ZSC Lions Zurich. Against Zurich, Zug fell into a 0-3 hole with three one-goal losses, before winning Game 4 and Game 5 by a score of 4-1 and then a 2-0 shutout to force a deciding Game 7.

Leonardo Genoni made 27 saves en route to his seventh gold medal he won either with Davos, Bern or Zug, as the Bulls rolled to a 3-1 victory and a second straight Swiss league title.

**SLOVAKIA** – Slovan Bratislava won the Slovak Extraliga during their 100-year anniversary season after an incredible performance in the final series against HK Nitra, which Slovan won 4-2 after a deciding 5-2 victory in the sixth game.

The club had to wait for this chance for ten years. After winning the title in 2011/12, they decided to move to the Russian-based Kontinental Hockey League (KHL) where they spent seven seasons. In 2019/2020 the club came back to the domestic league, which was cancelled due to the pandemic. The following season Slovan Bratislava lost in the semi-finals against the later champion from Zvolen. But this year everything went the right way for Slovan.

**SWEDEN** – At the end of an up-and-down season, in the third period of an up-and-down Game 7, Farjestad Karlstad found a way to break through Lulea's defence to hoist the championship trophy.

In Game 7, with ten minutes to go in the third period, Jese Virtanen scored his third in the playoffs. Goaltender Dominik Furch recorded three shutouts among his twelve wins en route to the championship. Farjestad's Per Aslund was named winner of the Stefan Liv Memorial Award, given to the playoffs MVP.

Aslund led the league in playoff scoring with five goals and 18 points in 19 games. It was the Karlstad team's tenth Swedish title, and the first since 2011 – an eternity for a team that won four titles in the first decade of the century.



# Gallery



Finland's Valtteri Filppula hoisting the Championship Trophy after a 4-3 overtime win against Canada following the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship gold medal game.



Teemu Hartikainen celebrates Sakari Manninen's golden goal at the 2022 Worlds at Nokia Arena.



Switzerland's Andres Ambuhl broke Udo Kiessling's record for most World Championship games played.

Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

Andrea Cardin / HHOF-IIHF Images





Chris Tanouye / HHOF-IIHF Images

Canada's Brooke Disher celebrating with the trophy after a 3-2 gold medal game win against USA at the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship



Andre Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images

Sweden's Rasmus Asplund scores a second period goal against Czech Republic's Karel Vejmelka during the preliminary round of the 2022 IIHF Worlds.



Micheline Veluvolu / HHOF-IIHF Images

Canada's Reichen Kirchmair is stopped by USA's Annelies Bergmann during the gold medal game at the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship





Sweden's Jonathan Lekkerimaki holds the championship trophy with teammates behind him at the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 World Championship at Fanatec Arena in Landshut, Germany.



Slovakia's Emma Donovalova skates up ice with the puck at the 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship.



Latvia's Rainers Darzins helped his team upset Sweden for the first time ever at the U18s.

Micheline Veluvolu / HHOF-IIHF Images

Matt Zambonin / HHOF-IIHF Images

Matt Zambonin / HHOF-IIHF Images



## Lehtinen leads way

### Finnish GM reflects on magical 2022 season

By Lucas Aykroyd

**Jere Lehtinen was inducted into the IIHF Hall of Fame in 2018, but his legend continues to grow.**

Under Lehtinen's leadership as GM, Finland became the first nation to complete its IIHF "double gold" quest on home ice, winning its first Olympic title in Beijing in February and earning gold at the Worlds in Tampere in May.

We recently caught up with this five-time Olympian, three-time Selke Trophy winner, and 1999 Stanley Cup champion with Dallas.

### **Congratulations on the most successful year in Finnish hockey history. How proud are you of the team?**

It's awesome. I don't think most of us actually realized what we did! After the Olympics, we started to do pre-camps for the Worlds. We didn't have that much time to savour the Olympic win.



*One of the most decorated and highly-respected Finnish ice hockey legends, Jere Lehtinen has brought more medals to the program in his short time as GM.*

In Tampere, we had a lot of the same guys. Getting spectators back in the building there was great. As the home team, it created a real atmosphere in the arena and the city. Now in the summer, you start to realize more how other people felt outside the team.

### **What's turned Finland into a perennial favourite for gold?**

Over the last 20 or 30 years, the first step was to start believing we can beat anyone we play against. Of course, the main next step is to win, and it took a while between the 1995 and 2011 World Championship gold medals.

I think it really started in 2019. In Slovakia, nobody expected our team to do anything at that tournament. But internally, we saw that if we have the right pieces, we don't need all the best players. If we do our stuff right, play our team game, and believe in the guys next to us – including the coaches, trainers, team doctors, whoever – we can win.

### **How much do you and coach Jukka Jalonen talk together?**

A lot, actually. We're pretty close. In a club team, the GM and coaches usually do their own jobs, but our national team is totally different. I feel like I'm pretty fortunate to be part of the coaching staff. I'm in all the meetings. We watch the games together. Jukka wants to get everybody involved.

Of course, he has the last word as head coach. After our last pre-tournament exhibition in 2019, we had to choose between two defencemen. That was the only time we voted. It was tied 3-3 with our staff, and Jukka actually cast the deciding vote anyway!

### **Favourite memory from Beijing?**

When the buzzer sounded in the last game [2-1 over ROC]. I had a feeling the whole game we were going to win this one. Usually I'm so



nervous! I played many Olympics. I had a chance as a player to go into the final in 2006, and I know how tough it is.

**In the Tampere final, you gave up a 3-1 lead late but beat Canada 4-3 in OT. How did that feel?**

At the intermission, I thought about how the year before it went the other way. We lost [3-2] to Canada in overtime in Riga. In the first two periods in Tampere, we didn't generate too much. Canada was strong. When they scored those two late goals, I thought, "OK, maybe this is how it should be." You're shocked, but not too much. I felt like, "Last year we lost. It's not going to happen again this year."

**Overtime hero Sakari Manninen and goalie Jussi Olkinuora – both over age 30 – have signed contracts with NHL organizations. Your reaction?**

It's great. Sometimes you see guys like these and you wonder: "Why hasn't anybody found them?" You see how they play, not just against European-based players but also NHLers. They can battle against them at the same level. And finally they get their chance.

It wasn't always a rosy road for Manninen in his career. I feel warm in my heart that he gets a chance to show what he's got. Same with Olkinuora. He is a great battler and he wants to win games.

**The average age on your World Championship team was 30. Do you want to bring in more young guys?**

I hope so. Every year we get these younger guys, and they come in somewhere we don't even expect. And I'm fortunate to see our top guys come through the national team before they go overseas.

Look at a guy like Anton Lundell, what he did for us in 2021 and then with Florida this year.

**With all this success, how do you guard against overconfidence?**

This year, we basically had all our top European players, and we were lucky to be healthy. But I know the road that got us here. I think we're going to see a hungry national team again next year.

Those younger guys coming in, they put pressure on the guys who have been around. It's healthy when you're battling for team spots. Overall, we're going to go back to basics. After you win, it doesn't mean anything next season when the first game starts.

**How about the opportunity to have the Worlds in Tampere again in 2023 with Riga co-hosting?**

It's special, especially after these last few years with a lot of cancellations and empty rinks.

There'll be a big battle among players wanting to play here, including our NHLers, some of whom were disappointed they couldn't come to play in May due to injuries.

Myself, I never got to play in a home-ice World Championship. It truly will be special. I don't know if it's ever going to happen again like this with the same country hosting two years in a row.





# Coming up

## 2022 IIHF World Junior Championship

CANADA, Edmonton  
09-20.08.2022

## 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey U20 World Championship Division II Group B

SERBIA, Belgrade  
12-17.09.2022

## 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship

DENMARK, Herning & Fredrikshavn  
25.08-04.09.2022

## 2022 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship Division I Group B

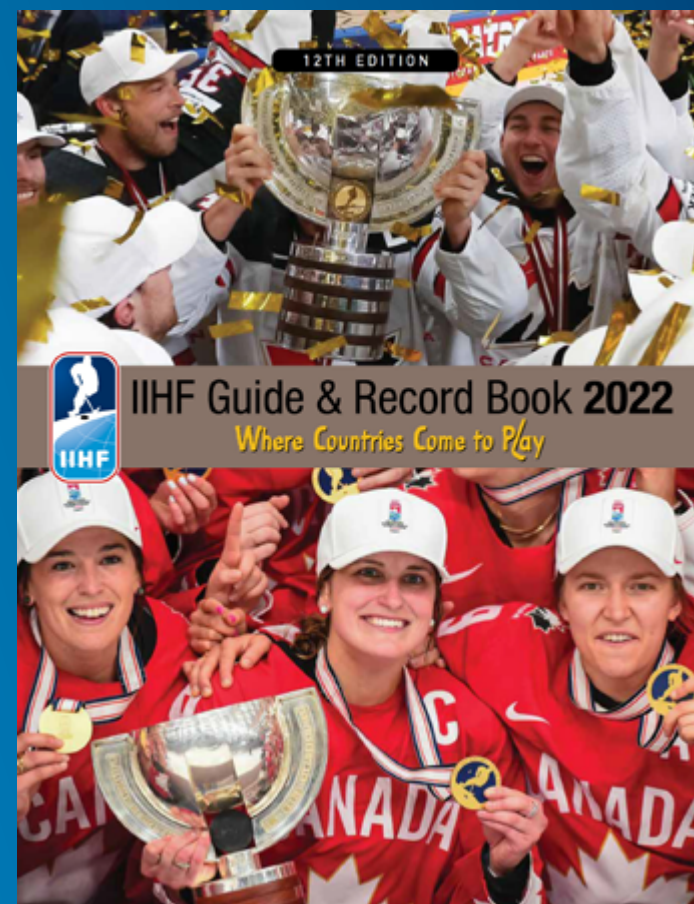
AUSTRIA, Radentheim  
06-11.09.2022

## 2023 IIHF Semi-Annual Congress

TÜRKIYE, Belek  
29.09-01.10.2022

[Click here for 2022/23 IIHF tournament list](#)

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