

Who will have a happy holiday?

Ten teams vie for U20 gold in Sweden

There's an old Christmas carol that says 'it's the most wonderful time of year'. And as we look ahead to the upcoming holiday events, I can say that I heartily agree with that sentiment.

■ For us at the International Ice Hockey Federation, the World U20 Championship always signifies a new beginning. It is our first major event of the season and time when we get to join the rest of the hockey world in the thick of their seasons.

It seems only appropriate that the IIHF World U20 Championship is also a beginning of sorts for so many of the participants. It was at this event that greats like Forsberg, Jagr, Ovechkin and Crosby first made a name for themselves. And I am eager to see who will follow in those great footsteps.

During our 'off-season', (and I use that term lightly since most people in the hockey world know that summer seems to get shorter and shorter each year) we have been busy getting everything ready for the various championship events that will be played around the globe this season.

■ The biggest change you will see in this new season is the three-point system. We are pleased to introduce this new format this year at the World U20 Championship. The Game Winning Shots, better known as shootout, has provided many leagues around the world with dramatic game finales, and I expect it to do the same at our IIHF events - if not the U20s than perhaps somewhere down the road.

RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL

After two near-perfect 'World Juniors' in North America, the event returns to Europe. Sweden has high expectations to live up to, and I am hopeful that the cities of Mora and Leksand will prove to be perfect backdrop for one of our premiere events.

It won't only be the hosts that have high expectations. Many teams taking to the ice this holiday season will have lofty goals. None more than the Canadian U20 team, which after witnessing the support firsthand last year in Vancouver, I can safely say carries the hopes of an entire nation on its shoulders. The two time champions truly have a lot to live up to.

■ Another team on the other side of Europe will also have equally high burden as Ak Bars Kazan attempts to make it three straight titles for Russian teams at the European Champions Cup. The ECC, now in its third season, has produced a Russian



ALL IS WANT FOR CHRISTMAS... Is a U20 gold medal. At least that's what the 10 teams at this year's upcoming championship are wishing for. Pictured above are the eight returning teams from last year's event. Will Canada repeat as champions? Will a new team emerge on the medal podium? Only Santa knows for sure which team's wishes will come true in Sweden this holiday season.

champion each year. Will any other teams be able to challenge the Russian club dominance at the ECC?

And so before our season at the IIHF has even started, we already have more questions than we can answer. But a few things are certain:

Russia will factor greatly into our plans this season - not only is it hosting one of the earliest events of the year, the ECC in St. Petersburg, but we also close our season in Moscow at the 2007 IIHF World Championship.

One of the biggest challenges for the upcoming season is the renewal of the IIHF/NHL Player Transfer Agreement. It is critical for the stability of the transfer market and it is very important to achieve this with the participation of the Russian Ice Hockey Federation.

■ As our season gets warmed up, I urge everyone in our hockey family to take time out and enjoy the holiday season. A new year is always a chance to reflect on the past, but more importantly, look ahead to the future, which is what all of us are doing as the first puck of the IIHF championship season drops.

René Fasel
IIHF President

Obituaries

■ ■ Ernest Aljancic Sr. passed away on Nov. 19 at the age of 90. Aljancic is generally acclaimed as the father of Yugoslav/Slovenian ice hockey. He introduced the game in his home town Ljubljana in 1929 and represented his country as a player for 25 years, before retiring in 1957 at the age of 41. Aljancic Sr. was inducted to the IIHF Hockey Hall of Fame in 2002.

■ ■ Vic Hayliger passed away in Colorado Springs, USA, on Oct. 5 at the age of 87. Hayliger was an American college hockey icon, both as player and coach and served as head coach of Team USA at the 1966 IIHF World Championship. He played a major role in organizing the only US-hosted men's IIHF World Championship, 1962 in Colorado Springs. Hayliger was inducted to the USA Hockey Hall of Fame in 1974.

■ ■ IIHF linesman Mikael Victory, who previously held the family name Ljungqvist, passed away on Nov. 12 at the age of 33 after a battle with cancer. Victory was a linesman working in the Swedish professional Elitserien and was assigned to two IIHF World U20 Championships (2002 and 2004) and two World U18 Championships (2003 and 2005).

■ ■ Heinz Henschel passed away on Oct. 21 at the age 86. He served more than 25 years the German Ice Hockey Federation and was delegation leader of the national teams in eight Olympic Winter Games and 27 IIHF World Championships. Henschel was inducted to the IIHF Hall of Fame in 2003.

Association News

SLOVENIA: The Congress of the Slovenian IHF elected **Damjan Mihevic** as new president. Outgoing president, Ernest Aljancic Jr, was named Life President. The federation also announced that American **Ted Sator** was named head coach of the Slovenian national team.

FINLAND: The Finnish Ice Hockey Association announced on Nov. 15 that **Doug Shedden** and **Jukka Jalonen** will be the new duo leading the Finnish men's national team, beginning after the 2007 IIHF World Championship (Moscow, Russia). Current head coach Erkkka Westerlund will move on to the Principal's position at the Vierumäki Sports Institute after Russia 2007.

BELARUS: Belarus named American **Kurt Fraser**, 48, as its new national team coach. Fraser played 12 seasons in the NHL with Vancouver, Chicago and Minnesota. Fraser's first major event behind the Belarus bench will be the 2007 IIHF World Championship in Moscow.



Russia 2007 tickets: The event website for the 2007 IIHF World Championship in Moscow, Russia has been launched. Go to www.ihwc2007.fhr.ru/eng/ for ticket & accommodation information. Ticket information can also be obtained by e-mailing: ticket@fhr.ru

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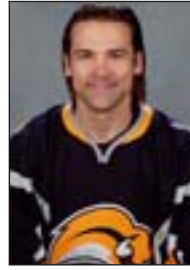


Numminen is the NHL's European ironman

■ ■ Finnish defenseman Teppo Numminen became the dean of all NHL Europeans when he played his 1,252th NHL-game at Carolina on November 14.

The 38-year old Numminen surpassed fellow countryman Jari Kurri who had 1,251 regular season games when he retired in 1998 after 17 NHL-seasons. Numminen is in his 18th NHL-season, also a record for a European player. Numminen,

made his NHL-debut with the Winnipeg Jets in 1988 and played eight seasons there, seven in Phoenix, one in Dallas and is now in his second season with Buffalo. He



FOR CLUB & COUNTRY: Numminen still going strong at 38



had 113 goals and 489 assists when he reached the milestone.

■ ■ The Finnish veteran has represented Finland in four Olympic Winter Games winning two silver medals (1988, 2006) and one bronze (1998). He also played in four IIHF World Championships. Kurri is still the European NHL-leader including playoffs with 1451 games (1251/200). Numminen has played in 66 Stanley Cup playoff games. Kurri also leads in another department - along with Esa Tikkanen, he has five Stanley Cups. Numminen has none.

Five Russian greats lead the IIHF Hall of Fame class

■ ■ The International Ice Hockey Federation announced its 2007 class for the IIHF Hall of Fame on November 21. The group includes 12 new members in addition to the Paul Loicq Award recipient. Nine of the inductees are being honored in the Player's Category, while the remaining three will enter the Builder's Category. The IIHF Hall of Fame was introduced in 1997 and now boasts 143 hockey greats from 22 nations. The group will officially be inducted on May 10 as part of the 2007 IIHF World Championship in Russia. Below is a list of the honorees with short biographies. Go to IIHF.COM for full bios of the inductees.

PLAYER CATEGORY

□ Alexandrov, Veniamin RUS

Born: April 18, 1937 in Moscow, Soviet Union. Won 11 national titles with CSKA Moscow 1955-1969, playing in 400 games and scoring 351 goals. Earned two Olympic gold medals and 11 IIHF World Championship medals, six of which were gold. Passed away in 1991.

□ Bouzek, Vladimir CZE

Born: December 3, 1920 in Trebice, Czechoslovakia. Won two IIHF World Championship titles. In 1948, won silver at both the Olympics and World Championship. Led RH Brno to 10 national titles as coach and also coach of the West German national team 1969 -70. Passed away in 2006.

□ Cerny, Josef CZE

Born: October 18, 1939 in Rozmítal, Czechoslovakia. Played a Czechoslovak league-record 686 games, tallying 403 goals, earning seven straight national titles with ZKL Brno. Played in four Olympics with three medals earned, and 12 IIHF World Championships with 10 medals won.

□ Kölliker, Jakob SUI

Born: July 21, 1953. Holds the Swiss record for national team games played with 213. Played in two Olympics and 12 IIHF World Championships and in over 500 Swiss league games, winning three titles with EHC Biel. Currently head coach of the Swiss U20 team.

□ Konovalenko, Viktor RUS

Born March 11, 1938, in Gorky, Soviet Union. Played his entire career (450 games) with hometown club Torpedo Gorky. Appeared in nine IIHF World Championships, earning eight gold medals and one bronze. Earned two Olympic gold medals in two appearances. Passed away in 1996.

□ Loktev, Konstantin RUS

Born: June 16, 1933, in Moscow, Soviet Union. Won 10 Soviet league titles 1954-1966 with CSKA Moscow, netting 213 league goals in 340 games. Won eight IIHF World Championship medals, and two Olympic medals. As coach led CSKA Moscow to two national titles and struck gold as an assistant coach for the national team at the 1975 World Championship and the 1976 Olympics. Passed away in 1998.

□ Peltonen, Esa FIN

Born: February 25, 1947 in Oulu, Finland. Played in 488 Finnish League games, scoring 317 goals and totalling 527 points. Played in 277 national team games, ranking him 20th all-time. Made four Olympic appearances (1968, 1972, 1976, 1980) and played in 11 IIHF World Championships, totalling 93 goals, 142 points.

□ Rundqvist, Thomas SWE

Born: May 4, 1960 in Vimmerby, Sweden. Spent 14 seasons with Farjestads BK, playing in 494 games and totaling 441 points. Played in eight IIHF World Championships earning two gold and three silver medals, compiling 267 national team games. Also earned two bronze medals in three Olympic appearances.

□ Starshinov, Vyacheslav RUS

Born May 6, 1940, Moscow. Captained Spartak Moscow leading the team to three national titles and totaling 405 goals in 540 games. Played in 10 IIHF World Championships and won nine straight gold medals from 1963 to 1971. Two Olympic gold medals capped career.

BUILDER CATEGORY

□ Bukac, Ludek CZE

Born on April 8, 1935. Coached Sparta, Kosice and Ceske Budejovice, and was the national team coach from 1979 to 1985, winning the World Championship in 1985 and the Olympic silver in 1984. Returned behind the national team bench 1994-1996, winning one more World Championship.

□ Dimitriev, Igor RUS

Born on October 19, 1941. Igor Dimitriev played with the Soviet Wings in 430 league games, scoring 126 times. Assistant coach with the Soviet Wings in 1978 and then as the head coach in 1983. In 1987 he was added to the national team coaching staff coached at numerous World Championships and Olympic events.

□ Dobida, Hans AUT

Born on May 13, 1929 in Graz, Austria. Vice President of the Austrian Ice Hockey Association for 15 years before becoming President in 1977. He was on numerous organizing committees including the 1964 and 1976 Winter Olympics, and the 1967, 1977, 1987 and 1996 IIHF World Championships. On IIHF Council from 1986, currently IIHF treasurer.

PAUL LOICQ AWARD

(For special contribution to the IIHF)

□ Nadin, Bob CAN

Has a career in officiating that dates back to 1955 at local level in Toronto. Moved to the international level, including the 1972 Olympics and the 1976 World U20 Championship. Most recently, Referee Supervisor for IIHF events and currently member of the IIHF's Referee Committee.

Malaysia finds its 'Yzerman' hidden in Switzerland

■ ■ When Malaysia joined the International Ice Hockey Federation in September, it made one player's dream to play on a national team come true.

Jamil Mokhtar was raised in Switzerland and grew up, as many Swiss boys do, on the ice playing hockey. Mokhtar, a dual citizen with a Malaysian father and Swiss mother, was never a superstar on the ice, but still dreamt of one day playing for a national team.

"I started playing when I was 10 years-old," Mokhtar explains. "I was decent, but never good enough for a national team. I had friends that played on the Swiss U18, U20 and even men's teams and always thought it would be a cool experience."

With the formation of the Malaysian men's national ice hockey team, Mokhtar will at last get his cool experience - or at least his 'Cool Runnings' experience when the team plays in its first-ever event at the Asian Winter Games in ChangChun, China in January.

"I think we might be a bit like the Jamacian bobsled team," Mokhtar jokes. "I don't think any of us really know what to expect in China. Some of the teams there, like Kazakhstan and Japan will be very good. But there are others that I know not much about."

■ ■ Mokhtar never expected that his chance to play on a national team - much less a national ice hockey team from Malaysia - would become a reality. The process started five years ago when he was visiting Malaysia with a friend and, on a whim, decided to look up any teams in the area. He found on the internet that there was a local team and was invited to practice with the squad that day.

When Mokhtar showed up at the rink it turned out the practice was actually a game. He was loaned all the necessary equipment and ended up scoring around nine points in the game. Needless to say after that performance, the Malaysians kept him in mind for future squads - if there ever would be future squads.

And so when it was announced that Malaysia would be entering a team in the Asian Winter Games, they called their Wayne Gretzky in Switzerland.

"Well, maybe more like Steve Yzerman," Mokhtar jokes.

■ ■ But will expectations be high for the only 'import' on the Malaysian team?

"I admit that I'm probably the only player on the team that went through a traditional junior program," Mokhtar says. "I like that there's expectations and a little pressure. I don't know just how strong our team will be but I know we will all learn a lot."

Mokhtar has kept in touch with many of the team members since his visit five years ago, but still doesn't know quite what



MR. MALAYSIA: It must have been quite a sight for those in Winterthur, Switzerland, when Malaysian national team member Jamil Mokhtar posed in his EHC Winterthur jersey with the Malaysian flag draped over the goal.

to expect. He does know that at 1.78 meters he is sure to be one of the bigger players on the ice, at least in the preliminary round of the tournament where Malaysia will play in a group with Korea and Hong Kong.

"I remember feeling like a giant the one time I played in Malaysia," Mokhtar says. "When I play in Switzerland all of the other defensemen are about 1.90, so it will be great to go over there and not be considered small."

Before departing for China, Mokhtar has been preparing himself for his national team endeavors, playing with EHC Winterthur's Division II team. Of course his teammates are duly impressed to be playing with a future national team member.

"Oh yeah, the closer the Games get the more they like to tease me," Mokhtar says. "But I also know that they're glad for me. Most of the guys on the team are life-long friends. So they'll be following the results on the internet closely."

■ ■ One of those friends is Swiss national team member Adrian Wichser, who most recently played at the Winter Olympics in Turin.

"When I told him, he was really happy for me," says Mokhtar. "He even gave me some advice and I think might have been a little jealous that I get to go to such an exotic environment to play hockey."

An exotic location for an exotic team with at least one player who will at long last realize his dream of playing on a national team.

Factfile: Malaysia

- **Population:** 24,385,858 (July 2006)
- **Ethnic groups:** Malay 50.4%, Chinese 23.7%, Indigenous 11%, Indian 7.1%, others 7.8%
- **Religions:** Muslim, Buddhist, Daoist, Hindu, Christian, Sikh
- **Languages:** Bahasa Melayu (official), English, Chinese, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Panjabi, Thai
- **Association:** Malaysian Ice Hockey Association became a member of the IIHF in 2006 and is its 65th member. The upcoming Asian Winter Games is its first event with a national team.
- **Climate:** Tropical; annual southwest and northeast monsoons
- **Terrain:** coastal plains rising to hills and mountains. Lowest point: Indian Ocean 0 m Highest point: Gunung Kinabalu 4,100 m



Chinese hockey gets boost from Islanders owner

■ ■ In an effort to boost the grass-roots level of Chinese hockey, Charles Wang, owner of the New York Islanders, signed a deal with the China Winter Sports Administration called China Ice Hockey Project Hope in Beijing.

"Project Hope is a good beginning toward our mutual goals of popularizing the sport of ice hockey and to further develop the talent pool of players here in China," said Wang, a Shanghai-born American.

Essentially, the five-year program will help establish a more formal training program for Chinese hockey. It will ultimately include a China Ice Hockey Training Centre, three Women's Ice Hockey Training Bases, 30 primary schools and 10 high schools all tied into the Project Hope.

■ ■ Currently, there are only three professional ice hockey teams, in Harbin, Qiqihar and Jiamusi, and lack of financial investment has forced Chinese hockey players to play low-level competitions. This has caused Chinese

ice hockey lag behind Asian rivals Japan and South Korea, not to mention traditional powerhouses such as Canada and USA.

Wang's vision is that one day Chinese players will be a part of the NHL. He hopes that the first step of that vision becoming reality and establishing China as one of the top world teams is the new Project Hope.

-with files from China Daily

2007 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS CUP PREVIEW

Sushinsky will not win again - the rest is open at ECC III

■ While the result of the 2007 IIHF European Champions Cup in St. Petersburg (January 11-14) is unknown, two things are certain not to occur again in the third ECC edition:

- Finland's Kärpät Oulu will not lose another ECC-final.
- Maxim Sushinsky, the speedy and extremely gifted forward, will not lead his Russian team to a third consecutive ECC title.

Those who have followed the tournament that represents European club hockey supremacy know that Maxim Sushinsky was instrumental in both Avangard Omsk's and Dynamo Moscow's wins in 2005 and 2006, on both occasions in overtime against Finnish champion Kärpät Oulu.

This time around, Kärpät is not the Finnish champion, HPK Hämeenlinna is, which means that Kärpät will have to wait until at least 2008 to avenge the two ECC gold medal game losses.

■ Maxim Sushinsky will be around in St. Petersburg, but he will not dress for the tournament. The 32-year old skating virtuoso, who played for Avangard Omsk in 2005 and for Dynamo Moscow in 2006, has returned to his home town and after 11 years he is back playing for SKA



Photo: KALLE PARKKINEN

MAXIM CUP NO MORE: Maxim Sushinsky (front and centre) was at the right place with both Avangard Omsk in 2005 (insert) and with Dynamo Moscow in 2006. The 2007 ECC will feature another hero.

St. Petersburg, where he started his career. Sushinsky was named Best ECC Forward in 2005 and won the MVP honors in 2006 and was named to the All Star Team on both occasions. In six ECC games he collected six goals and nine assists for a total of 15 points.

■ But since the Russian champion is Ak Bars Kazan, someone other than Maxim will have to lead the

Russian charge towards a third consecutive home victory.

The big question is whether any team is strong enough to deny Ak Bars Kazan's bid to win a third consecutive ECC for Russia. The team, which has been at the top of the Russian Superleague since the beginning of the season, definitely has the potential.

■ Their first unit with Aleksei Morozov, Sergei Zinovyev and Danis Zaripov had at the start of December, scored almost 100 points between themselves, which is 35 percent of the team's total. Top scorer Morozov had an impressive 22 goals and 18 assists after 27 games. Ak Bars also has the luxury of carrying two national team goalies, Finn Mika Noronen and Russian Aleksander Eremenko.

It is reasonable to assume that HPK Hämeenlinna and Sparta Prague are favorites to get out of the Alexander Ragulin Division while the opening game in the Ivan Hlinka Division between Ak Bars and Sweden's Färjestad will likely determine the finalist from that group.

Alexander Ragulin Division

HPK Hämeenlinna

FIN

Founded: 1929
Championships: (1) 2006

Notable players:

G Miika Wiikman, F
Jani Hassinen, F

Toni Mäkiäho, F Aki Usikartano, D David Schneider
Coach: Jukka Jalonen (since 2001)

League record by Dec 6: 20W-0T-11L, position: 2nd

Notes: Coach Jukka Jalonen will take over the Finnish national team together with Canadian Doug Shedden after the 2007 IIHF World Championship in Russia.



Sparta Prague

CZE

Founded: 1903
Championships: (7) 1953, -54, -90, -93, 2000, -02, -06.

Notable players:

G Dusan Salficky,
D Jiri Vykoukal, D Frantisek Ptacek, F Jaroslav Hlinka, F,
Petr Ton, F Ondrej Kratena, F Jan Hlavac

Coach: Frantisek Vyborny

League record by Dec 6: 16W-0T-15L, position: 6th

Notes: Less than one week before the start of the season Sparta sold its best scorer Jan Marek to Russian Metallurg Magnitogorsk.



MsHK Zilina

SVK

Founded: 1925
Championships: (1) 2006

Notable players:

G Imrich Petrik,
D Agris Saviels, D
Peter Frühauf, F Robert Krajci, F Michal Straka, F Michal Hreus.

Coach: Dusan Gregor

League record by Dec 6: 10W-0T-21L, position: 9th

Notes: The city of Zilina and its mayor Jan Slota is the main sponsor of the club. Michal Straka is the brother of New York Ranger sniper Martin Straka.



■ Teams will play a single round-robin within a three-team group. The winner of each group will advance to the Gold Medal game. If the Gold Medal game is tied after regulation, there will be 10 minute overtime with teams skating four-on-four. If the score is still tied after the overtime period, there will be Game Winning Shot competition (Shoot-out).

■ Teams play for a prize money total of 800,000 CHF with the winner receiving 360,000 CHF and the losing finalist 200,000 CHF.

■ The transfer deadline for the participating teams is December 15. After that date, the teams cannot add any new players to their 30 man ECC long-list roster.

■ On January 10, the teams can register 20 players and two goalkeepers from the long-list for the tournament, the same maximum number which can be used in a game. The minimum number players that a team must register on January 12, is 15 skaters and two goalkeepers.

SCHEDULE (all times local +2 CET)

January 11

HPK Hämeenlinna - MsHK Zilina 15.00
Ak Bars Kazan - Färjestads BK 18.30

January 12

MsHK Zilina - Sparta Prague 15.00
Färjestads BK - HC Lugano 18.30

January 13

Sparta Prague - HPK Hämeenlinna 15.00
HC Lugano - Ak Bars Kazan 18.30

January 14

Group winners meet in Gold Medal game

Ivan Hlinka Division

Ak Bars Kazan

RUS

Founded: 1956
Championships: (1) 2006.

Notable players:

G Mika Noronen, D
Raymond Giroux,

D Vitali Proshkin, F Aleksei Morozov, F Sergei Zinovyev, F
Danis Zaripov, F Vladimir Vorobiev.

Coach: Zinetula Bilyaletdinov

League record by Dec 6: 21W-3T-6L, position: 1st

Notes: Both Ak Bars' goaltenders are national team players. Mika Noronen for Finland, Alex Eremenko for Russia.



HC Lugano

SUI

Founded: 1941
Championships: (7) 1986, -87, -88, -90, -99, 2003, -06

Notable players:

D Dick Tarnström,

D Julien Vauclair, F Rickard Wallin, F Sandy Jeannin,

F Flavien Conne, F Raffaele Sannitz, F Ryan Gardner

Coach: Ivano Zanatta

League record by Dec 6: 14W-0T-12L, position: 4th

Notes: Lugano became the first European team to come back from being down 3-0 in a playoff series when they defeated Ambri-Piotta in the quarterfinal last season.



Färjestads BK

SWE

Founded: 1932
Championships: (7) 1981, -86, -88, -97, -98, 2002, -06

Notable players:

G Daniel Henriksson,

D Thomas Rhodin, D Robert Kantor, D Fredrik Olausson, F

Jörgen Jönsson, F Peter Nordström, F Jonas Höglund

Coach: Roger Melin

League record by Dec 6: 15W-5T-8L, position: 4th

Notes: 40-year old defenseman and 16-year NHL-veteran Fredrik Olausson played in the inaugural 2005 ECC for HV 71 Jönköping.





Photo: LARS HEDELIN

A TRIPLE FOR THE AGES: Team Sweden's and Färjestad's center Jörgen Jönsson is the only player in the World who could pose for this photo that illustrates Jönsson's truly unique success from 2006. Within 85 days, Jönsson won the gold at the Turin Olympics (big medal in the middle), the Swedish national championship gold medal (right) and finally the IIHF World Championship gold medal in Riga (left). Now, "JJ" goes for the quadruple in St. Petersburg, Russia where the gold medal for the best club team in Europe is at stake at the IIHF European Champions Cup.

Jönsson looks to expand on gold reserve

By Szymon Szemberg

■ ■ ■ Some players go through entire careers without winning any major championships. Jörgen Jönsson won everything he possibly could win in a span of 85 whirlwind days in 2006.

- February 26 - Olympic Gold in Turin.
- April 18 - Swedish Championship Gold.
- May 21 - IIHF World Championship Gold in Riga.

Already winning the Olympics and the World Championships in the same season made the 34-year old and seven other Team Sweden mates exceptional. Adding a national championship from one of the major leagues in the World, set Jönsson apart from the rest.

■ ■ ■ Now, Jönsson is looking to add a fourth gold medal to his exclusive collection when he captains Swedish champion Färjestads BK at the third IIHF European Champions Cup in St. Petersburg, Russia (January 11-14, 2007). It would be a considerable achievement since Russian league clubs have won in both 2005 and 2006 while the entries from the Swedish Elitserien have failed miserably at the tournament that crowns the best club team in Europe.

There is a sign in the Färjestad locker room where the three goals of the 2006-2007-season are written down.

1. To win the Nordic Trophy pre-season tournament.
2. To win the ECC
3. To defend the Swedish championship

Number one is already ticked off as Färjestad defeated the two-time ECC-finalist Kärpät Oulu in the gold medal game of the Nordic Trophy. Goal number two is next on the agenda.

"We are well aware that neither HV71 nor Frölunda were very successful in the ECC, so there is a certain pressure on us to perform well," says Jörgen. "We are primarily thinking about winning for our club, but one can't deny that we also represent the

Swedish league and Swedish hockey in general."



■ ■ ■ Jönsson is not an ordinary player, on the contrary. His 266 national team games for Sweden makes him the top international performer in the world among active players. Six more games for Tre Kronor and Jönsson will tie Jonas Bergqvist's Swedish record of 272 appearances in yellow and blue.

Latvia 2006 was his 11th IIHF World Championship while Turin 2006 was his fourth Olympics. Beside the medals Jörgen proudly displays in the photo above, he also has an Olympic gold medal from Lillehammer 1994 and an IIHF World Championship gold from 1998.

■ ■ ■ But Jönsson's attributes go beyond medals and stats. He is what national team coach Bengt-Ake Gustafsson calls a 'coach's dream.' Says Gustafsson: When you start selecting the national team, you put Jörgen's name there as number one."

Jönsson is a consummate professional. This is also reflected in his off-ice demeanor. Despite being in a hectic phase of the season and one day prior to an important league game with Färjestad, Jönsson gave photographer Lars Hedelin all the time he needed to complete the shooting of the above photo.

■ ■ ■ Shooting on behalf of the IIHF, Hedelin had to make close to fifty takes to get the perfect picture where all the three medals turned the right way.

Despite all Jönsson's achievements, he would be the first one to admit that there are players with more skill and talent in the world. But no one, except Jönsson, can boast winning Olympic, World Championship and national championship gold in 85 days.

"It was an incredible period of time", says Jörgen. "It seemed like one thing led to another and after a while winning became a habit.

Will the winning habit carry over to 2007?



Sweden gets gold for beautiful

But will that be enough to end 25 years of U20 misery?

By Szymon Szemberg

■ ■ Sweden has not won an IIHF World U20 Championship for a quarter of a century as the proud hockey nation's juniors have not even secured a medal in the last ten 'World Juniors'.

It is a stunning record considering that Sweden are the reigning World and Olympic champions. The men's national team is furthermore the superior leader in the IIHF World Ranking with 4095 points, 110 points ahead of the Czech Republic and 205 points ahead of Canada.

Since the IIHF's introduction of the playoff system in 1992, Sweden is by far the most consistent hockey nation over that 15-year period with two Olympic gold medals, four IIHF World Championship gold, six silver, four bronze and thirteen 'final four' appearances.

■ ■ How is it possible, and what is the reason behind this remarkable discrepancy between Sweden's junior and senior programs? After all, isn't a top national team a reflection of the junior program? In the case of Swedish, apparently, it's not.



MEDAL READY? *Coach Torgny Bendelin thinks that the dark days of Swedish junior hockey are over.*

Bendelin took over the next season and the program started to make slow, but steady progress, improving one place in each of the last three seasons:

2004 in Finland: 7
2005 in USA: 6
2006 in Canada: 5

■ ■ Last year, for the first time in four championships, the young Swedes were competitive in Vancouver. They played a very good game against the Finns in the quarterfinal, only to lose 1-0 in overtime. At the post-game press conference Torgny Bendelin called it the "most disheartening loss of my career." But he knew that the game proved the Swedish U20 program was rebounding, and it was no fluke.

"When things were very bad four years ago, we invited everyone with passion for Swedish youth hockey to a one-day junior summit," recalls Bendelin. "We identified what had gone wrong with our game and established a ten-point plan to address the problems. But this was like turning a huge ship around. Things were slow in the beginning, but now we have not only turned the ship around, we have set it on a new course and things have started to look better."



DALA HORSE: *The unmistakable symbol of the region.*



THIS IS SWEDEN: *The province of Dalarna and especially the region around the Lake Siljan have in many typical feature are the red houses with white corners. Both the big photo and the insert are from the Leksand. If one gets tired of all the hockey, a walk through this environment should do wonders for the soul.*

"This is not an easy thing to analyze," says Torgny Bendelin, the head coach of the Swedish U20-team. "Right now, our men's national team has enjoyed outstanding success while the junior program is on its way up from the worst period ever. We had huge problems with our junior development in the early 2000s where our young players were poorly educated, they had bad attitude and played without passion."

How much worse can it get? And the problems Bendelin recognized were clearly reflected in the performance of the U20 team in the most prestigious event. Things were so bad at the 2003 World Juniors in Halifax, Canada that Sweden faced relegation. Only a narrow 5-4-win over Belarus saved them in the top pool as the junior Tre Kronor finished an embarrassing eighth.

"Today, we have a deeper pool of players and our top players can compete with the best. After the fifth-place finish in Canada last year, I feel that we finally can start thinking about winning a medal again."

■ ■ Sensational forward Nicklas Bäckström from Brynäs is already one of the best players in the Swedish Elitserien and was, at 18, member of the gold medal team in Riga last spring. Nicklas was picked fourth overall in the 2006 NHL-draft by the Washington Capitals.



TOUGH LOSS: *Nicklas Bergfors (18) and his teammates were down in the dumps after a 1-0 overtime loss to Finland in the quarterfinal in Vancouver last year. But the loss proved that Sweden could compete with the best again.*

"Nicklas has the potential to be the main attraction in Leksand and Mora," says Bendelin. "He possesses great individual skill, he has sophisticated understanding of the game and has very a very good attitude. Already at this age, he is a role model".

But the head coach is very quick to add:

"You don't win this tournament with individual stars as Canada again proved last year. Russia had Evgeni Malkin and other super individuals, but the Canadians just outworked and outthusted them in classic fashion in the gold medal game."

So, who are favorites in Leksand and Mora according to Torgny Bendelin?

setting



Photos: SILJAN TURISM

ways become emblematic of Sweden and its folklore. The most area, the main site of the 2007 IIHF World U20 Championship.

"I consider Canada and USA as gold medal favorites. They again have very strong groups. Finland has a somewhat weaker team on paper than last year, but the Finns are always competitive until the end. Both the Czechs and the Russians are difficult to evaluate. I believe that the Czechs could have more than half the team from the Canadian junior league and you never know how that works out in the end."

So, this should be the World U20 Championship where Sweden's juniors finally are competitive again. And if not, at least one can always admire the scenery around Lake Siljan. As far as the setting for the World Juniors, the Swedish entry is tough to beat.

Sweden's Nicklas Bäckström (right) could become the first Swede to win an IIHF World U20 gold medal after striking gold at the senior World Championship. That trick has already been performed once, by Canada's Patrice Bergeron who won gold at the 2004 IIHF World Championship in Prague and at the 2005 World Juniors in the USA.



DARK HORSE: Nicklas Bäckström could be what Sweden has been missing in the last few years.

THE LAST GOLDEN BOYS: The famous three crowns were missing on the 1981 jerseys and replaced by a hideous polar bear. Head coach Kjell Damberg is in front row, third from left. 25 years after Sweden's only U20 gold, he is the boss of the organizing committee of Sweden 2007.



Photo: STIG KENNE

The junior champions of 1981 will soon be grandfathers

Kjell Damberg sincerely hopes not to be the answer to the following trivia question after January 6, 2007: Who was the last coach to lead the Swedish junior team to an IIHF World U20 Championship gold medal?

"I believe that this could be the year," says Damberg who coached the 1981 team to Sweden's first, only and last World Junior title 25 years ago. "This team is capable to reach the gold medal game."

Damberg not only wants to get rid of the questionable distinction of being the last successful Swedish U20 championship coach. The veteran official and board member of the Swedish Ice Hockey Association is also the chairman of the Sweden 2007 World Juniors organizing committee.

And there is nothing an organizing committee wants more than home team success. Not necessarily for patriotic reasons, but a home team that goes all the way generates interest and ticket sales. Rewind a quarter of a century and you know that it's been a while when the record books tell you that the 1981 World Junior event took place in a country that no longer exists, West Germany.

Damberg's boys (born '61 and '62) toured through the Bavarian winter sport towns of Füssen, Augsburg, Kempten and Oberstdorf and were in pole position before the final game against the favorite Soviet Union. Unlike today's format with a winner-takes-all gold medal game, there was a four-team, round-robin and tie was enough the Swedes, as the Soviets surprisingly lost to Finland on new year's eve.

"I don't remember details, but I recall that we were the better team and beat them 3-2," says Damberg. "Patrik Sundström, who later became an NHL-star, was our leader. Jan 'X-et' Erixon was another great forward, but the key was our mobile defense. I really played my top four defensemen hard."

The quartet Damberg refers to are Michael Thelvé, Peter Andersson, Hakan Nordin and Roger Hägglund. Thelvé, Andersson and Hägglund all made it to the NHL, while Nordin became a national team player and an outstanding defenseman in the Swedish league. Hägglund, who had a stint with the Quebec Nordiques in the mid-80s, died in a car accident in 1992.

But the leader was Patrik Sundström who went on to star for the 'big' Tre Kronor and had a fine 10-year NHL career (Vancouver & New Jersey) where he collected 588 points in 679 games. 19-year NHL-veteran Brendan Shanahan named Sundström as likely the best player he ever had on his line.

"The special thing with Sundström was that he was so good both ways. 'Sunny' was Peter Forsberg before Peter Forsberg," said Shanahan in a recent interview for the New York Post.

Whether the Swedish team of 2007 has a new Patrik Sundström or not is no longer Damberg's problem. 25 years after he did his coaching job in Augsburg, Damberg is the chairman of the organizing committee for Leksand and Mora making him the highest responsible executive of the event.

Damberg is no rookie in organizing major hockey championships. He was member of the organizing committees for the 1993 IIHF World U20 Championship in his home town Gävle (where Peter Forsberg and Marcus Näslund set a number of U20 records that still hold) and for the 1995 IIHF World Championship in Stockholm and Gävle.

"I am not at all worried about us being able to stage a well organized event," says Damberg. "We are also trying harder than ever to make this a successful championship in terms of spectators. We know that junior hockey in Europe is not what it is in Canada, but we have worked harder than ever on the marketing plan."

IS THIS THE NEW OVECHKIN... OR MALKIN? A new IIHF World U20 Championship and a new Russian star emerges. It's not to say that Alexei Cherepanov is a prospect in the Alexander Ovechkin mold, but the early signs are good. While the 2007 World Juniors is mainly for players born '87 and '88, the spectacular forward is born 1989. At the age of 17, he already logs high quality minutes in the Russian Professional Superleague for Avangard Omsk. At the beginning of December, Cherepanov had an impressive 10 goals and seven assists in 24 games. These are numbers that are higher than the ones Ovechkin, Evgeni Malkin and Maxim Afinogenov had at the age of 17. Sergei Samsonov was the best Russian 17-year old when he scored 21 goals and 17 assists in 51 games during the 1995-96-season. Cherepanov, according to early scouting reports, combines a great hockey sense with brilliant puckhandling. This potential next Russian sensation will for sure give the scouts some busy days in Sweden.

U20's on Tour - is this the key to

■ ■ This season Switzerland became the third major hockey nation to introduce a program geared specifically towards improving not only the development of junior players, but the nation's results at the IIHF World U20 Championship as well. With its U20 tour of the Swiss B League, Switzerland joins the ranks of Finland and USA as nations that are going the extra mile to promote a better finish at the major IIHF events.

By Jenny Wiedeke

For Switzerland, taking the next step was an important move after watching its junior development stall. For the last four seasons, Switzerland has been out of the medal race and been forced to settle for a 7th or 8th place finish at the U20 Championship. In fact, the script has remained as predictable as a Swiss watch, with Switzerland going to the relegation round and normally playing Slovakia for the rights to seventh place. It is a story that the Swiss are tired of – and one that they hope this development tour will change.

"The last few years we weren't happy with our international performance," Swiss U20 head coach Jakob Kölliker says. "We sat down and looked for a solution and decided that this tour would be a good start."

■ ■ The idea of working with a junior team on a more regular basis is nothing new.

First it was the Finns, who in 2003 started a barnstorming tour with its U20 team prior to the World U20 Championship. The Finnish U20 team gained valuable experience playing against each Division I team. In total, the 12 games gave the Finns experience working as a group, and gave the coaches a different environment to evaluate its players.

The program was then seen as a kind of 'happy medium' between the expensive USA Hockey National Team Development Program, which has two national teams training year-round together, and the normal international break program, which only allows junior teams to play together once or twice before the U20 Championship. The middle of the road approach has produced steady results for Finland with the nation taking home two bronze medals in the last three seasons.

"This is the third season that we have had the program and overall the players think it is a positive thing," says Finland's U20 Team Manager Timo Bäckman. "For the players on junior teams these game are especially beneficial because it introduces them to a whole new level."

Finland is currently 3W-2T-4L in their tour this season, which Bäckman says is on par as with previous seasons.

■ ■ So it came as no surprise to the Finns when their program was emulated by Switzerland this season. The Swiss, who much like the Finns, don't have the luxury of creating a year-round program for an elite group of players, knew that something had to be done to become more competitive at the U20 Championship.

Although, Swiss coach Jakob Kölliker didn't model his current B League tour from the Finns' program.

"For me it was a matter of doing what was best at the time for Swiss hockey," Kölliker said. "A few of the B League teams had financial problems so it seemed like a good solution and a good time to add some games with our U20s into the league schedule."

Switzerland has a tougher road ahead at the U20s than Finland. In recent years at the World U18 Championship, the Swiss team has bounced back-and-forth between the top division and Division I. Giving Kölliker a team

made up of players with little confidence after getting relegated, or with no knowledge of a high-level championship. The Swiss also know just how fine the line is between finishing safe in 8th place and being relegated with a 9th place ending. It is a fine line Kölliker wants to move further away from.

"These B League games weren't so much for training as they were for junior players to gain more experience and to push the top players. In the end, all the players, and Swiss hockey profits from the experience," Kölliker says.

■ ■ While the tour of the B League (Switzerland's second-tier professional league) may not cure the Swiss confidence problem, the team currently has only two wins in 9 games, it can give the players that were at



LEADING A DOUBLE LIFE: Goaltender Reto Berra had a busy Swiss U20 faced off against his B League squad, the GCK Lions.

With only one regulation win, the Swiss team isn't enjoying the same success as the Finns on their tour. However, the Swiss have competed well, especially recently, with the last five games being one-goal affairs. The results are especially impressive when considering the involved process the U20 coaching staff must endure to get the 22-man roster for each week's game.

With a U20 game scheduled every Thursday, Kölliker and his assistant coaches had to communicate continually with each professional or junior team to get the players released for any given game. Sometimes, it's as easy as making a phone call, but many times it was more involved. Player availability was also the same problem that Finns ran up against. As a result, both nations have used upwards of 60 players in their 12 exhibition games with no set roster.

"For me that was the weakest part of this tour," says Kölliker. "We used too many players. It is good experience for any player, but at the same time I would like to see more of the best players on the ice in more of the games."

Using so many players has its advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side, more players are given the chance to be seen by the U20 coaching staff and the coaches have a greater talent base to evaluate come December. However, the players aren't given experience

the Division I U18 Championship a taste of higher-level competition, better preparing them for what awaits in Mora and Leksand.

■ ■ The Swiss association worked over the summer with B League teams to ensure that the games would be both beneficial and competitive on both ends of the ice. It was decided that rather than the game being mere exhibition events, that the results from each match would count in the B League standings. The result? Nearly all of the B League teams take the game against the U20 team seriously-gunning to get the three points in the season standings.

"Once we had the proposal, the plan came together pretty easily," says Kölliker. "Anytime you start a new program, not everyone will be happy, but the majority of the teams were supportive. I think the more competitive we were able to play, the more widespread support the program gained."

World Junior Success?



Photo: COURTESY OF SWISS ICE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

fall thanks to the new Swiss U20 Tour. Berra, who will play in his second World U20 Championship, was the starting goaltender when the Berra earned the 4-2 win in that game, but was quickly forgiven when he suited up once more for the Swiss squad (inset) later in the tour.

as a group. Both the Swiss and Finnish U20 teams may play up to 12 games this season, but when the final team is selected in mid-December they are still relatively unfamiliar with each other on the ice.

"Some of the players that will be on the U20 team, will not play a single game in our tour," says Finland's Bäckman. "A lot are in Canada or playing in the top Finnish League and cannot be released for the game. But still the 80 or so players that we use are that much better prepared for future national team assignments."

■ ■ Bäckman says that this year the program has been using a younger group of players, many born in 1987 or 1988, which may not directly benefit this year's team, but is sure to have a positive impact on future Finnish U20 squads.

FINLAND U20 TOUR RESULTS

Nov. 27	vs. Jokipojat	L, 0-3
Nov. 26	vs. Hokki	L, 1-3
Nov. 19	vs. TuTo	L, 1-3
Oct. 30	vs. Koo-Vee	W, 6-3
Oct. 29	vs. Sport	L, 0-6
Oct. 8	vs. KooKoo	L, 2-5
Oct. 1	vs. FPS	W, 6-5
Sept. 25	vs. HeKi	T, 2-2
Sept. 24	vs. SaPKo	W, 4-5
Sept. 17	vs. Salamat	T, 2-2

Finnish Division I Tour Record: 3W-2T-5L

In the next few weeks in both Finland and Switzerland, the task will come to pare the 80-plus players down to the final 22-man squad. Both nations will have a training camp prior to U20 Championship where the final selections will be made. In Switzerland, Kölliker and his staff are preparing for the final training camp with about 30 players before the team heads to Sweden.

■ ■ And for the first time ever, the Swiss staff will have more to go on than the international break results and summer training camps. Whether or not that knowledge turns into power will be seen when the U20 Championship comes to a close and the final standings are published in Mora & Leksand.

SWISS U20 TOUR RESULTS

Nov. 29	vs. Olten	W, 3-2 ps
Nov. 23	vs. Langenthal	L, 2-3 ps
Nov. 16	vs. La Chaux-de-Fonds	L, 5-6
Nov. 2	vs. Lausanne HC	W, 3-2
Oct. 26	vs. EHC Chur	L, 1-2
Oct. 19	vs. HC Sierre	L, 2-5
Oct. 12	vs. Visp	L, 3-6
Oct. 5	vs. Biel	L, 2-6
Sept. 28	vs. GCK Lions	L, 2-4
Sept. 21	vs. HC Ajoie	W, 3-2 ps
Sept. 12	vs. Martigny	L, 5-8

Swiss B-League Tour Record: 1W-20TW-10TL-7L

Meet Mr. Switzerland: Jakob 'Köbi' Kölliker

□ □ Every nation has them: the unassuming legends that have quietly broken records and nonchalantly built up hockey in their nation.

For Switzerland, that legend is Jakob 'Köbi' Kölliker, who on Nov. 21 was named a 2007 inductee of the IIHF Hall of Fame (see page 2).

Although the current Swiss U20 national team coach might be finding it harder to stay in the background as his accomplishments and accolades continue to grow.

The former feisty defenseman won three national championships with EHC Biel (1978, 1981, 1983) and still holds the record for most national team games played with 213, which included 12 IIHF World Championships.

But as impressive as his playing resume was, Kölliker's coaching experiences are proving to be just as vast for his native Switzerland. Kölliker has served as the head U20 Swiss coach since 1999. His nine-year tenure tops all of the coaches at this year's events as Switzerland is one of the rare nations to employ a full-time U20 coach.



"The U20 event is great," says Kölliker. "It's something that I always enjoy."

So in his many U20 years is there any one memory that sticks out more?

"Anytime you play in North America it's always special," says Kölliker. "They have such a passion for hockey over there and the atmosphere is amazing. Halifax, Vancouver, Grand Forks, those were all great events."

□ □ Kölliker has also served as the assistant coach of the men's national team for the last several years, during that time, especially in the last few years, the men's team has enjoyed enormous success, with an impressive showing at the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Torino where the team posted upset wins against Canada and Czech Republic finishing a surprising sixth. At the IIHF Championship, the men's team has been a steady performer finishing in the top half of the pack since 2003.

A big reason for the men's success is the familiarity that Kölliker brings from his U20 coaching. When players graduate to the men's team, Kölliker is there to help bridge the gap between the two levels.

Still, Kölliker has big plans for the alpine nation. He would ultimately like to see Switzerland build on its medal count at the U20 Championship and to see it's men's team continue to climb up the IIHF World Ranking.

An unlikely Swiss Star

□ □ The Stastny family has shown that hockey knows no borders when it comes to national teams. But now the Bykov family is stepping up to drive that point home.

In December, Russian national team Coach Vyacheslav Bykov's son, could be suiting up in a red jersey at the IIHF World U20 Championship. But instead of the Russian crest, forward Andrei will be sporting the word 'Suisse' on his chest. Andrei, a Swiss citizen, was invited to the final U20 training camp in Lenzerheide, Switzerland. If he makes the team, it will go down in history as yet another father son pair spreading their skills around the globe.

2007 IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW

The record book tells the story of U20 past, present and future

IN THE NUMBERS: Some milestones to look for when the teams start playing in Mora and Leksand include:

■ Sweden's & USA's 200th U20 game will come in each teams first tournament game.

■ Barring a complete breakdown, Canada will become the first team to reach 300 points at the U20s. The U.S. could reach the 200 point mark.

■ Canada will go for its 3rd straight gold medal for the second time in U20 history.

■ Six nations have played in every U20 Championship: Canada, Finland, Sweden, USA, Russia (also Soviet Union) and Czech Republic (also Czechoslovakia).

ALL TIME IIHF WORLD U20 STANDINGS											
Country	Years	Games	Wins	Ties	Losses	GF	GA	Points	Gold	Silver	Brz.
Canada	30	197	137	21	39	1024	493	295	12	6	4
Finland	30	200	112	16	72	905	620	240	2	4	6
Sweden	30	199	110	13	76	903	584	231	1	6	4
United States	30	199	91	10	98	823	785	192	1	1	2
Soviet Union	15	99	79	5	15	645	250	163	9	3	2
Russia	15	100	69	8	23	425	214	146	3	5	3
Czechoslovakia	16	106	61	12	32	565	342	134	0	5	6
Czech Republic	14	94	46	9	39	340	264	101	2	0	1
Slovakia	11	79	29	9	32	201	210	67	0	0	1
Switzerland	20	130	29	8	93	325	729	66	0	0	1
Germany	21	135	21	3	111	302	848	45	0	0	0
Kazakhstan	4	25	4	2	20	49	140	10	0	0	0
Belarus	5	30	3	2	25	58	170	8	0	0	0
Ukraine	4	26	3	1	17	37	132	7	0	0	0
Poland	6	41	2	2	37	69	361	6	0	0	0
Norway	6	39	3	0	36	72	331	6	0	0	0
France	1	6	1	0	5	6	42	2	0	0	0
Norway	1	6	1	0	5	14	30	2	0	0	0
Austria	2	11	0	1	10	14	99	1	0	0	0
Japan	1	7	0	0	7	9	83	0	0	0	0

Did You Know? Little known facts about U20 records

■ Canada has the best current medal streak of any team. The past eight years includes 2 golds, 4 silvers and 2 bronze

■ Finland's six bronze medals is the most of any team. The Finns have four U20 bronzes in the last five seasons.

■ The last addition to the U20 all-time record book was Alexander Ovechkin in 2005. He ranks fourth in all-time goal scorers. Other than Ovechkin the book has remained unchanged for nearly a decade.

■ This is the fifth time the Swedes have hosted U20s. They grabbed bronze on home ice twice in four tries (in 1979 and in '93).

■ The Czech Republic (Czechoslovakia) is the only team that has won a medal all four times U20s was played in Sweden. The Russians (Soviet Union) have three medals in the four Sweden-hosted events.

■ No team has ever won the U18 and U20 championship in the same season. USA won the 2005 and 2006 U18s and went home without a medal at U20s the last two seasons.

■ Besides the teams that have played at every U20 (see above), Germany is the most-experienced squad, skating in its 22nd U20 championship.

IIHF World U20 Championships

Year	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Venue
1974*	Soviet Union	Finland	Canada	Leningrad
1975*	Soviet Union	Canada	Sweden	Winnipeg/Brandon
1976*	Soviet Union	Canada	Czechoslovakia	Turku
1977	Soviet Union	Canada	Czechoslovakia	B. Bystrica/Zvolen
1978	Soviet Union	Sweden	Canada	Montreal
1979	Soviet Union	Czechoslovakia	Sweden	Karlstad
1980	Soviet Union	Finland	Sweden	Helsinki
1981	Sweden	Finland	Soviet Union	Fussen
1982	Canada	Czechoslovakia	Finland	Minnesota
1983	Soviet Union	Czechoslovakia	Canada	Leningrad
1984	Soviet Union	Finland	Czechoslovakia	Norrkoping/Nykoping
1985	Canada	Czechoslovakia	Soviet Union	Helsinki/Turku
1986	Soviet Union	Canada	USA	Hamilton
1987	Finland	Czechoslovakia	Sweden	Piestany
1988	Canada	Soviet Union	Finland	Moscow
1989	Soviet Union	Sweden	Czechoslovakia	Anchorage
1990	Canada	Soviet Union	Czechoslovakia	Helsinki/Turku
1991	Canada	Soviet Union	Czechoslovakia	Saskatoon
1992	Soviet Union	Sweden	USA	Fussen/Kaufbeuren
1993	Canada	Sweden	Czechoslovakia	Gavle
1994	Canada	Sweden	Russia	Ostrava/Frydek Mistek
1995	Canada	Russia	Sweden	Alberta
1996	Canada	Sweden	Russia	Boston
1997	Canada	USA	Russia	Geneva/Morges
1998	Finland	Russia	Switzerland	Helsinki/Hameenlinna
1999	Russia	Canada	Slovakia	Winnipeg
2000	Czech Republic	Russia	Canada	Skelleftea/Umea
2001	Czech Republic	Finland	Canada	Moscow/Podolsk
2002	Russia	Canada	Finland	Pardubice/Hradec Kral.
2003	Russia	Canada	Finland	Halifax/Sydney
2004	USA	Canada	Finland	Helsinki/Hameenlinna
2005	Canada	Russia	Czech Republic	Grand Forks/Thief River Falls
2006	Canada	Russia	Finland	Vancouver, Kamloops, Kelowna

*denotes unofficial tournament

IIHF World U20 Championship
All-Time Record Book

U20 All Time Leading Scorers:

	GP	G	A	PTS
1. Peter Forsberg (SWE)	14	10	32	42
2. Robert Reichel (TCH)	21	18	22	40
3. Pavel Bure (URS)	21	27	12	39
4. Alexander Mogilny(URS)	21	18	17	35
5. Esa Tikkanen (FIN)	21	17	18	35
6. Vladimir Ruzicka(TCH)	19	25	9	34
7. Markus Naslund (SWE)	14	21	13	34
8. Niklas Sundström (SWE)	21	18	15	33
9. Esa Keskinen (FIN)	14	10	22	32
10. Erik Lindros (CAN)	21	12	19	31

U20 All-Time Goal Scorers:

1. Pavel Bure (URS)	27 goals	1989-91
2. Vladimir Ruzicka (TCH)	25 goals	1981-83
3. Markus Naslund (SWE)	21 goals	1992-93
4. Robert Reichel (TCH)	18 goals	1988-90
Petr Rosol (TCH)	18 goals	1982-84
Alexander Ovechkin (RUS)	18 goals	2003-05

U20 All-Time Assist Leaders

1. Peter Forsberg (SWE)	32 assists	1992-93
2. Robert Reichel (TCH)	22 assists	1988-90
Esa Keskinen(FIN)	22 assists	1984-85
4. Eric Lindros (CAN)	19 assists	1990-92
5. Esa Tikkanen (FIN)	18 assists	1983-85
Raimo Helminen (FIN)	18 assists	1983-83

Single Season Points Leaders:

	PTS	G	A
1. Peter Forsberg (SWE)	31	7	24
2. Markus Naslund (SWE)	24	13	11
Raimo Helminen (FIN)	24	11	13
4. Robert Reichel (TCH)	21	11	10
5. Vladimir Ruzicka (TCH)	20	12	8

Single Season Goal Leaders:

1. Markus Naslund (SWE)	13 goals	1993
2. Pavel Bure (URS)	12 goals	1991
Vladimir Ruzicka (TCH)	12 goals	1983
4. Several tied with 11		

Single Season Assists Leaders:

1. Peter Forsberg (SWE)	24 assists	1993
2. Doug Weight (USA)	14 assists	1991
Esa Keskinen (FIN)	14 assists	1985
4. Jaromir Jagr (TCH)	13 assists	1990
Raimo Helminen (FIN)	13 assists	1984

RESULTS SUMMARY

IIHF Continental Cup

First Round 22-24 September

Group A - Bucharest, Romania

P. Gheorgheni - S. Bucharest	1-11
A. Sofia - S. Ljubljana	0-9
S. Ljubljana - P. Gheorgheni	2-1
S. Bucharest - A. Sofia	12-0
A. Sofia - P. Gheorgheni	1-5
S. Bucharest - S. Ljubljana	5-4

Steaua Bucharest	2	2	0	0	0	17-4	6
Slavija Ljubljana	2	1	0	0	1	13-5	3
Academica Sofia	2	0	0	0	2	0-21	0
Progyrn Gheorgheni	DID NOT COUNT IN STANDINGS						
<i>Steaua Bucharest advances to second round Group D.</i>							

Group B - Belgrade, Serbia

Crvena Zvezda - Medvescak	5-3
Partizan - Polis Akedemisi	20-0
Medvescak - Polis Akedemisi	15-3
Crvena Zvezda - Partizan	1-7
Polis Akedemisi - Crvena Zvezda	2-10
Partizan - Medvescak	9-2

Partizan Belgrade	1	1	0	0	0	20-0	3
Polis Akedemisi	1	0	0	0	1	0-20	0
Crvena Zvezda	DID NOT COUNT IN STANDINGS						
Medvescak	DID NOT COUNT IN STANDINGS						
<i>Partizan Belgrade advances to second round Group E.</i>							

Second Round 13-15 October

Group C - Rouen, France

SonderjyskE - Red Bulls	4-5
Nottingham - Rouen	2-6
Red Bulls - Nottingham	5-2
Rouen - SonderjyskE	2-5
Nottingham - SonderjyskE	2-4
Rouen - Red Bulls	0-6

Red Bulls Salzburg	3	2	1	0	0	16-6	8
SonderjyskE	3	2	0	1	0	13-9	7
Rouen Dragons	3	1	0	0	2	8-13	3
Nottingham Panthers	3	0	0	0	3	6-15	0
<i>Salzburg advances to third round Group F.</i>							

Group D - Oswiecim, Poland

Puigcerda - Bucharest	1-10
Cracovia - Kazakhmys	2-4
Bucharest - Kazakhmys	1-4
Cracovia - Puigcerda	6-2
Kazakhmys - Puigcerda	12-0
Bucharest - Cracovia	2-6

Kazakhmys Karaganda	3	3	0	0	0	20-3	9
MKS Cracovia Krakow	3	2	0	0	1	14-8	6
Steaua Bucharest	3	1	0	0	2	13-11	3
CG Puigcerda	3	0	0	0	3	3-28	0
<i>Kazakhmys Karaganda advances to third round Group F.</i>							

Group E - Elektrenai, Lithuania

Partizan - Sokol Kiev	0-11
Energija - Riga 2000	3-8
Riga 2000 - Partizan	8-0
Sokol Kiev - Energija	10-1
Sokol Kiev - Riga 2000	3-2
Energija - Partizan	6-4

Sokol Kiev	3	3	0	0	0	24-3	9
Riga 2000	3	2	0	0	1	18-6	6
Energija Elektrenai	3	1	0	0	2	10-22	3
Partizan Belgrade	3	0	0	0	3	4-25	0
<i>Sokol Kiev advances to third round Group F.</i>							

Third Round 17-19 November

Group F - Minsk, Belarus

Kazakhmys - Sokol Kiev	6-2
Junost Minsk - Salzburg	1-0
Salzburg - Kazakhmys	2-7
Sokol Kiev - Junost Minsk	2-7
Salzburg - Sokol Kiev	6-3
Junost Minsk - Kazakhmys	2-1 ot

Junost Minsk	3	2	1	0	0	10-3	8
Kazakhmys Karaganda	3	2	0	1	0	14-6	7
Red Bulls Salzburg	3	1	0	0	2	10-9	3
Sokol Kiev	3	0	0	0	3	7-19	0
<i>Junost Minsk advances to Super Final</i>							

IIHF European Women's Champions Cup

First Round 6-8 October

Group A - Stockholm, Sweden

Segeltorps IF - Cergy Pontoise	10-0
IHC Bolzano - Newcastle	4-1
Newcastle - Cergy Pontoise	2-10

Segeltorps IF - IHC Bolzano	9-1
Cergy Pontoise - IHC Bolzano	4-1
Newcastle - Segeltorps IF	0-17

Segeltorps IF	3	3	0	0	0	36-1	9
Cergy Pontoise	3	2	0	1	0	14-13	6
IHC Bolzano	3	1	0	0	2	6-14	3
Newcastle	3	0	0	0	3	3-31	0

Segeltorps IF advances to Final Round.

Group B - Tukums, Latvia

Valerenga - Ilves	0-8
SHK Laima - Dreamland Queens	18-0
Ilves - Dreamland Queens	30-0
SHK Laima - Valerenga	6-2
Dreamland Queens - Valerenga	0-17
Ilves - SHK Laima	6-1

Ilves Tampere	3	3	0	0	0	44-1	9
SHK Laima	3	2	0	1	0	25-8	6
Valerenga	3	1	0	0	2	3-20	3
Dreamland Queens	3	0	0	0	3	0-65	0

Ilves Tampere advances to Final Round.

Group C - Berlin, Germany

OSC Berlin - Ferencvaros	14-0
HC Lugano - Herlev	4-3
Ferencvaros - HC Lugano	1-16
OSC Berlin - Herlev	5-1
Herlev - Ferencvaros	3-0
HC Lugano - OSC Berlin	4-1

HC Lugano	3	3	0	0	0	24-5	9
OSC Berlin	3	2	0	1	0	20-5	6
Herlev	3	1	0	0	2	7-9	3
Ferencvaros	3	0	0	0	3	1-33	0

HC Lugano advances to Final Round.

Group D - Miercurea Ciuc, Romania

Tornado - MHK Martin	23-0
Aisulu - Miercurea Ciuc	16-0
MHK Martin - Aisulu	4-8
Miercurea Ciuc - Tornado	0-26
Miercurea Ciuc - MHK Martin	4-7
Tornado - Aisulu	5-1

Tornado Moscow	3	3	0	0	0	54-1	9
Aisulu	3	2	0	1	0	25-9	6
MHK Martin	3	1	0	0	2	11-35	3
Miercurea Ciuc	3	0	0	0	3	4-49	0

Tornado Moscow advances to Final Round.

Deutschland Cup

Hannover, GERMANY November 9-12

Canada - Latvia	4-2	(1-1, 2-1, 1-0)
Japan - Germany	5-4	(2-2, 1-0, 1-3)
Latvia - Slovakia	0-2	(0-1, 0-1, 0-0)
Switzerland - Japan	4-1	(0-1, 3-0, 1-0)
Slovakia - Canada	5-2	(1-2, 2-0, 2-0)
Germany - Switzerland	2-3	(2-0, 0-1, 0-1, 0-1)
Japan - Latvia (5th place)	1-4	(1-2, 0-2, 0-0)
Germany - Canada (3rd place)	4-5	(2-2, 0-1, 2-2)
Switzerland - Slovakia (1st place)	3-4	(1-1, 1-2, 1-0, 0-1)

Final Standing:

- | | |
|----------------|------------|
| 1. Slovakia | 4. Germany |
| 2. Switzerland | 5. Latvia |
| 3. Canada | 6. Japan |

Karjala Cup

Helsinki, FINLAND November 9-12

Czech Republic - Sweden	5-4	(0-0, 3-2, 2-2)
Finland - Russia	2-3	(0-2, 2-0, 0-1)
Russia - Sweden	5-4	(0-1, 1-1, 4-2)
Czech Republic - Finland	1-2	(0-0, 0-1, 1-1)
Czech Republic - Russia	2-3	(1-0, 0-0, 1-2, 0-1)
Finland - Sweden	0-1	(0-0, 0-1, 0-0)

Russia	3	2	1	0	0	11-8	8
Czech Republic	3	1	0	1	1	8-9	4
Sweden	3	1	0	0	2	9-10	3
Finland	3	1	0	0	2	4-5	3

2006 Women's Four Nations Cup

Kitchener, Ontario, CANADA November 7-11

Finland - Sweden	3-8	(1-0, 2-6, 0-2)
United States - Canada	0-3	(0-2, 0-0, 0-1)
Finland - United States	2-5	(1-1, 1-3, 0-1)
Sweden - Canada	0-7	(0-2, 0-2, 0-3)
Sweden - United States (SF)	0-7	(0-3, 0-3, 0-1)
Canada - Finland (SF)	8-1	(2-0, 3-1, 3-0)
Sweden - Finland (3rd place)	3-2	(0-2, 1-0, 1-1)
Canada - United States (1st place)	5-2	(2-0, 1-0, 2-2)

Final Standing:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Canada 4-0-0 | 3. Sweden 2-0-2 |
| 2. United States 2-0-2 | 4. Finland 0-0-4 |

2006 U20 Four Nations Cup

Breclav / Hodonin, CZECH REPUBLIC November 10-12

Czech Republic - Finland	2-1	(0-0, 2-0, 0-1)
Sweden - Russia	5-1	(2-0, 0-0, 3-1)
Finland - Sweden	1-2	(1-0, 0-1, 0-0)
Czech Republic - Russia	3-4	(1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 0-1) ps
Russia - Finland	4-3	(0-1, 1-2, 2-0, 1-0) ps
Czech Republic - Sweden	3-5	(0-2, 1-1, 0-2)

Sweden	3	3	0	0	0	12-5	9
Russia	3	0	2	0	1	9-11	4
Czech Republic	3	1	0	1	1	8-10	4
Finland	3	0	0	1	2	6-7	1

2006 U20 Four Nations Cup

Füssen, GERMANY November 10-12

Slovakia - Norway	2-3	(2-1, 0-0, 0-1, 0-1)
Germany - Switzerland	2-1	(0-1, 1-0, 1-0)
Switzerland - Slovakia	3-2	(1-1, 0-1, 2-0)
Germany - Norway	4-0	(1-0, 0-0, 3-0)
Norway - Switzerland	3-4	(0-1, 2-2, 1-1)
Germany - Slovakia	5-2	(1-2, 4-0, 0-0)

Germany	3	3	0	0	0	11-3	9
Switzerland	3	2	0	1	0	8-7	6
Norway	3	0	1	0	2	6-10	2
Slovakia	3	0	0	1	2	6-11	1

2006 U18 Four Nations Tournament

Pitea, SWEDEN November 10-12

Finland - United States	0-4	(0-2, 0-1, 0-1)
Sweden - Switzerland	0-4	(0-0, 0-2, 0-2)
Switzerland - Finland	0-3	(0-1, 0-0, 0-2)
Sweden - United States	3-2	(1-1, 2-1, 0-0)
Switzerland - United States	3-1	(0-1, 2-0, 1-0)
Sweden - Finland	2-0	(1-0, 0-0, 1-0)

Switzerland	3	2	0	0	1	7-4	6
Sweden	3	2	0	0	1	5-6	6
United States	3	1	0	0	2	7-6	3
Finland	3	1	0	0	2	3-6	3

2006 U18 Junior A Cup

Yorktown / Humboldt, CANADA November 6-12

Canada West - Russia	6-2	(1-0, 3-1, 2-1)
Germany - Slovakia	1-3	(0-1, 0-0, 1-2)
Russia - Belarus	7-1	(3-0, 1-0, 3-1)
Canada East - Slovakia	4-1	(1-0, 1-1, 2-1)
Canada West - Belarus	10-2	(1-0, 5-1, 4-1)
Canada East - Germany	4-1	(0-0, 2-0, 2-1)
Germany - Russia	1-7	(2-0, 2-0, 3-1)
Belarus - Slovakia	2-8	(1-1, 1-1, 0-6)
Belarus - Germany (5th place)	3-8	(1-3, 0-3, 2-2)
Russia - Canada East (SF)	1-5	(4-0, 1-1, 0-0)
Slovakia - Canada West (SF)	1-7	(0-1, 1-4, 0-2)
Slovakia - Russia (3rd place)	1-2	(0-1, 1-0, 0-0, 0-1)
Canada E. - Canada W.(1st place)	3-4	(0-3, 1-1, 2-0)

Final Standing:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| 1. Canada West | 4. Russia |
| 2. Canada East | 5. Slovakia |
| 3. Russia | 6. Germany |

Men's European Ice Hockey Challenge

Sarpsborg, NORWAY November 10-12

Belarus - Denmark	1-2
Norway - Poland	9-3
Poland - Belarus	0-4
Norway - Denmark	1-0
Denmark - Poland	1-2
Belarus - Norway	3-4

Norway	3	3	0	0	0	14-6	9
Belarus	3	1	0	0	2	8-6	3
Denmark	3	1	0	0	2	2-3	3
Poland	3	1	0	0	2	4-15	3

Budapest, HUNGARY November 10-12

France - Lithuania	8-2
Hungary - Slovenia	7-1
Slovenia - France	1-5
Lithuania - Hungary	2-10
Slovenia - Lithuania	5-2
Hungary - France	3-4

France	3	3	0	0	0	17-6	9
Hungary	3	2	0	0	1	20-7	6
Slovenia	3	1	0	0	3	7-14	3
Lithuania	3	0	0	0	3	6-23	0



Hammarström

A scout's checklist

What basic qualities Hammarström is evaluating when scouting players:

- Skating/Mobility
- Puckhandling
- Hockey sense
- Physical presence
- Attitude/Energy
- Leadership qualities



Photo: HOCKEY HALL OF FAME

A TRAILBLAZER: Inge Hammarström (No. 11) came to the NHL in 1973 to join the Toronto Maple Leafs together with his Brynäs teammate Börje Salming. There were only three Europeans in the NHL that season as fellow Swede Thommie Bergman had joined the Detroit Red Wings one year earlier. Now (portrait), Hammarström is in his 23rd year as an NHL-scout. The 2007 IIHF World U20 Championship will be Inge's 22nd as a professional evaluator of the world's finest hockey talents.

Inge can again scout skill, not muscle

By Szymon Szemberg

■ In his 23rd season as a player scout, Inge Hammarström will be attending his 22nd IIHF World U20 Championship in Leksand & Mora. And after what Inge calls 'a dark decade for hockey', he again likes what he is seeing.

"But we lost many talents during those years. Finally, the decision makers realized that the game must be played according to the rule book."

Inge Hammarström, 58, was one of Europe's finest players in the early 70s and was part of the first wave of Europeans who signed an NHL-contract in 1973. He stayed in Toronto and St. Louis for six solid seasons and after finishing off his career in the Swedish league, Inge started working for the NHL's Central Scouting in 1984 and was hired as the Philadelphia Flyers European scout in 1988.

(There is a beautiful irony in Inge working for Philadelphia, by the way. When he came over to the NHL in 1973, the Flyers were the dirtiest, most violent team in the league and no one was abused more than the two Toronto Swedes, Hammarström and Salming.)

■ Since the mid-80s Hammarström has seen every IIHF World U20 Championship with the exception of the 2003 tournament in Canada. He lists Sweden's Peter Forsberg and Czech Republic's Jaromir Jagr as the best players he has seen participate in the 'World Juniors' and Russian whiz-forward Igor Vyazmikin (1986) as the best who never fulfilled his potential due to off-ice distractions.

Hammarström is on the road at least 160 days a season during which he sees around 250 games. "Last season I scouted 244 games, to be precise," says Inge who admits that watching hockey at the turn of the century was a 'brutal' experience:

"You could barely watch the games. The most talented players were hooked and held by big defenders who could hardly play but were 190 cm and weighed 90 kilos. I don't dare to speculate how many talents we lost during those years but I am sure that the game was set backwards by ten years because the national leagues, the NHL, federations and the IIHF didn't enforce the rulebook."

And now Inge talks with the same speed and energy as his trade mark skating during his playing years:

"Teams invested millions in gym equipment to bulk up the players' muscles and totally neglected the fact that hockey is a game of skill. Players under 180 cm were basically ignored and the coaches who preached the gospel of the mid-zone trap had everybody skating backwards in the neutral zone. The hockey community became blind and almost ruined the game."

And he does not like the expression 'new rule interpretations'. "There are no new rules and no new rule interpretations. The game today is played by the rule book, like it should be."

■ He sees the IIHF World U20 Championship as a significant tournament for both players and scouts: "The World Juniors is a very important part of a young player's education and a very good testing ground," says Inge. "By experience we know that if a player is dominant in this tournament, he should be able to compete at every level in the future."

He believes that Sweden's sensational forward Nicklas Bäckström and Canada's sniper Angelo Esposito could be the players to watch in Leksand and Mora this Christmas and New Year, but hints that the Russians could have a new superstar in the making:

"Aleksi Cherepanov. He only 17, born 1989, but already

plays a regular shift for Avangard Omsk in the Russian league, and scores. He certainly has the potential to be a very good player."

■ Just like almost everyone in the scouting community Inge Hammarström has seen the findings of the recently published IIHF Study that essentially says that too many Europeans with no NHL-potential leave Europe with little hope of making it, while many players who have NHL-potential leave too early.

To him, and also to many other scouts, the study confirms what Inge has been saying for many years.

"I have had disputes with officials from the club I work for and also with other scouts over this issue," says Inge. "There is no doubt that many Europeans leave their clubs far too early. I am convinced that every player should stay and develop in his home environment for as long as possible. There they are familiar with everything, can count on the support from family and friends instead of moving where they have nobody."

■ He takes Sweden's 19-year old Nicklas Bäckström as a good example for making a wise decision. Bäckström played in the 2006 IIHF World Championship in Latvia as an 18-year old. He was drafted 4th overall by Washington a few months later and received a contract offer immediately. But the teenager decided to stay in Brynäs (Hammarström's former club, by coincidence) for at least one more year.

"Very good judgment," says Inge. "Nicklas is a fabulous talent, but he does not yet have the experience to play in the NHL and he is still growing. When he eventually makes the decision to go, he will be ready. Meanwhile, Brynäs and the Swedish league could benefit from his presence."

