

The 2007 IIHF season is in the books...



WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS OF THE WORLD: A small sampling of the championship celebrations from all around the globe throughout the 2007 IIHF season.

...but great things are ahead in '08 including the IIHF 100-year celebration



The home-ice curse continues. After host Russia failed in their quest to become the first home team to win the IIHF World Championship since 1986, the pressure is now on Canada as we turn our eyes to Quebec City and Halifax 2008.

RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL

■ ■ The newly crowned World Champion will face double pressure as we for the first time in the history of the IIHF go to Canada with our flagship tournament. Not only will Team Canada want to break the home-ice jinx, but to accomplish this they will have to repeat as world champion, something which always is a tricky task.

The 71st IIHF World Championship in Moscow and Mytishi was a splendid success from an organizational and logistical point of view. The arenas were wonderful, team services were splendid and the media facilities were probably the best ever at an IIHF World Championship. All the designated media areas were of Olympic quality and during the entire event there was not a single remark from media regarding their working conditions.

■ ■ The one thing which was not satisfactory was the attendance figures. Something must have gone wrong when a brand new arena is half empty for a couple of quarter-finals and for one semi-final. I am convinced that this has not been due to the lack of interest, but due to the overpricing of tickets. It's wrong to price tickets far above of what an average fan can afford.

The IIHF has learned a lesson here. In the future the IIHF will be more active in determining the pricing together with the host organizing committee, so the mistake from Moscow will not be repeated.

■ ■ In mid-June the IIHF and the NHL signed the Player Transfer Agreement that will regulate all transfers between the IIHF affiliated member federations and the National Hockey League for the next four years. It is a very important document. The PTA ensures that all player transfers will be regulated in terms of financial compensation and a transfer deadline. The agreement also ensures NHL players' participation in the IIHF World Championships and in the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

All the major European talent producing nations except Russia have signed the agreement, which means that we face the same situation as we did in the last two years. We feel that it would have been a good thing for Russia to join this collective agreement, but the choice is theirs to evaluate what is in the best interests of Russian hockey and their clubs.

■ ■ That Russia is not part the agreement doesn't mean that Russian players will not transfer to the NHL. Those who are free-agents will, but - as the case was during the two previous years with Russia not a part of the agreement - the Russian clubs will not be compensated. (For more on the Player Transfer Agreement, see page 8)

We are approaching what could be the most exciting season in the history of the IIHF. 2008 will be our centennial year and on page 3 you can read what we have in store for you. But before we start the year-long celebrations, we need a nice relaxing summer break, which is exactly what I wish you.

René Fasel
IIHF President

Finland wins the race for 2012 Worlds

■ The biggest news out of the IIHF Annual Congress in Moscow was that Finland was awarded the 2012 IIHF World Championship. Canada, organizers of the 2009 IIHF World U20 Championship, was named the host of the 2010 World Juniors.

Both the Finnish and Swedish Associations campaigned ambitiously in Moscow. Triple Gold Club member Hakan Loob lobbied for Sweden while ex NHL-great Jari Kurri was part of the Finnish delegation. But when it came down to the actual vote, it was a clear decision. Finland got 64 of the congress' votes to Sweden's 35.

The allocation of the 2010 IIHF World U20 Championship to Canada was a bit of a surprise, as Canada already has the 2009 and the 2012 World Juniors. But with no applicants for that year, Hockey Canada took the opportunity to apply for 2010. The tournament will return to Europe in 2013 at the earliest.

USA Hockey scored a unique triple, having won the allocation of three different events in three different years; the 2009 World U18 Championship, the 2011 World U20 Championship, and the 2012 World Women's.

In other congress news:

■ The General Congress voted to extend the contract with IIHF commercial partner Infront until 2017. The contract will give the IIHF more than 200 million Swiss francs over ten years for the TV and marketing rights to the IIHF World Championship, including the Division I-



A SUPERIOR FINNISH: Finland topped Sweden, 64-35, in the race for the 2012 IIHF World Championship. Matti Numminen, Harry Bogomoloff, Timo Bäckman, Heikki Hietanen, Susanna Karjalainen and Kimmo Leinonen celebrate.

level. The current contract was until 2011, but it has now been extended for another six years.

■ The four-man officiating system was approved and will be implemented in the 2007-2008 season for the top division of men's, women's, U20 and U18 and also the European cup competitions. NOTE: The use of the four-man system at the 2008 IIHF World Championship depends on its success during the 2007-2008-season.

■ The General Congress approved the women's and men's Olympic format, for both the qualification and the Olympic tournaments in Vancouver 2010.

■ The international transfer deadline was changed to January 31 of the applicable season. (For countries in the southern hemisphere the deadline will be July 31)

NEWS & NOTES FROM THE HOCKEY WORLD

CHAMPIONSHIP NEWS

SWITZERLAND: The Swiss ice hockey association and the organizing committee of Switzerland 2009 announced on May 30 that Kloten-Zurich will be the second venue of the 2009 IIHF World Championship. The association announced in March that the capitol Berne and its 17,000-capacity BernArena will be the main venue. The dates of the 73rd IIHF World Championship are April 24 - May 10, 2009. The Schluefweg arena in Kloten is right by Zurich's International Airport and has a capacity of 7,561 (5,250 seating capacity, 2,311 standing room). The arena is the home venue of the Swiss league's Kloten Flyers. The distance between the two 2009 World Championship venues is 75 minutes by car. Switzerland last organized the IIHF's flagship event in 1998. 2009 will be the eighth time the event will be held in Switzerland.



AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

SLOVENIA: IIHF President René Fasel, former General Secretary Jan-Ake Edvinsson and treasurer Hans Dobida were inducted to the Slovenian Ice Hockey Hall of Fame during the associations' 80-year festivities in Ljubljana on April 17, 2007.

GERMANY: Edvinsson was also inducted to the German Ice Hockey Hall of Fame on May 20.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

CANADA: Hockey Canada announced on May 29 that **Craig Hartsburg** will be the head coach of Canada's junior national team, this time at the 2008 IIHF World U20 Championship in Czech Republic. Hartsburg, together with assistants **Curtis Hunt** and **Clement Jodoin**, led Canada to its third consecutive World U20 gold medal in Leksand and Mora, Sweden last season. It is the first time the 26-year history of Hockey Canada's Program of Excellence that all three coaches return for a second year.

Peter Smith, head coach of McGill University's women's team, was named Canada's head coach for the upcoming season on June 8 by Hockey Canada. Olympic team coach Melody Davidson has stepped aside to focus on her duties as general manager of the team, but remains a candidate to coach Canada again at the 2010 Olympics

SWEDEN: **Christer Englund** was re-elected as the President of the Swedish Ice Hockey Association on June 10. Englund has held the position since 2004.

OBITUARIES

RUSSIA: Former Soviet national team forward **Yevgeni Mishakov** passed away on May 30 at the age of 66. Mishakov was a member of the Soviet national team that won the IIHF World Championship four times between 1968 and 1971 and he also won two Olympic gold medals, in Grenoble 1968 and in Sapporo 1972. Mishakov represented the mighty CSKA Moscow club between 1963 and 1974. He compiled more than 400 games in the Soviet league scoring 183 goals. Mishakov had an amazing efficiency rate on the national team, scoring 29 goals in 35 World Championship and Olympic games. Mishakov later coached SKA Sverdlovsk and SKA MVO Lipetsk. He was a coaching consultant for HK MVD Tver during the 2006-2007-season.

World Championship allocations

As part of the IIHF Annual congress, the host nations for the upcoming season, as well as some hosts for future seasons were voted on by the congress. The complete list of host nations can be found below. The dates and final cities of each tournament for 2008 will be determined at the Semi-Annual congress in September in Canada.



2008
World Championship Div. I, Grp. A: Innsbruck, AUT
World Championship Div. I, Grp. B: Sapporo, JPN
World Championship Div. II, Grp. A: Brasov, ROM
World Championship Div. II, Grp. B: Newcastle, AUS
World Championship Div. III: Luxembourg City, LUX

Women Championship: Harbin, CHN
Women Championship, Div. I: Riga, LAT
Women Championship, Div. II (no applicants)
Women Championship, Div. III (no applicants)

U20 Championship Div. I, Grp. A: Bad Tölz, GER
U20 Championship Div. I, Grp. B: Riga, LAT
U20 Championship Div. II, Grp. A: Canazei, ITA
U20 Championship Div. II, Grp. B: Tallinn, EST
U20 Championship Div. III: Belgrade/Novi Sad, SER

U18 Championship Div. I, Grp. A: TBA, POL;
U18 Championship Div. I, Grp. B: Riga, LAT
U18 Championship Div. II, Grp. A: Lyon, FRA
U18 Championship Div. II, Grp. B: Tallinn, EST
U18 Championship Div. III: Mexico City, MEX
U18 Championship Div. III, Qual.s: Ismit, TUR

Women U18 Championship: TBA; CAN

2009
U18 Championship: TBA, USA

2010
U20 Championship: TBA, CAN

2011
U20 Championship: TBA, USA

2012
World Championship: Helsinki, Turku, FIN
Women Championship: TBA USA

IHWC.NET has another record breaking year

The official website of the IIHF World Championship, IHWC.NET enjoyed another record breaking year with this year's event in Moscow.

For the first time ever, the site had more than two million visitors, as compared with the previous record, set in 2006 of 1.5 million. The exact number of visits was 2,126,853. As in previous seasons, Latvia paced the rest of the globe, with nearly double the number of hits as the nearest nation. Interest in the United States also increased as the Americans were the second-most frequent visitors to the site.

One of the more popular features for the American visitors was the 'Video on Demand' option, which allowed those based in the U.S. to view highlights and other video options from the games. With Germany's return to the top division, interest was high in that nation, as they came in third on the hits list.

IHWC.NET is an event-based website that is live only for the month during the IIHF World Championship and the two Division I events as well.

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International Ice Hockey Federation

Brandschenkestrasse 50
Postfach CH-8039 Zürich
Switzerland

Phone +41.44.562.22.00
Fax +41.44.562.22.29
Email office@iihf.com

www.iihf.com



IIHF unveils 100-year anniversary plans

History was made on May 8 during the World Championship in Moscow when the IIHF announced the first-ever officially recognized tournament on European soil featuring club teams from the National Hockey League and champions from the European leagues.

The Victoria Cup will be played on an annual basis beginning in September 2008. The series is the first-ever initiative to pit the top teams from North America against their counterpart from Europe.



The announcement was one of several to celebrate IIHF's 100th anniversary during the centennial season.

The IIHF will replace the European Champions Cup with the new Champions Hockey League. This will consist of a series of events among the top European club teams beginning in 2008 and will be the basis for determining

which teams will be eligible to compete for the Victoria Cup. The CHL is modeled after soccer's Champions League.

The choice of the name Victoria Cup is to recognize the Victoria Skating Rink as the birthplace of organized hockey. On March 3, 1875, the first true hockey game took place at that rink in Montreal. It was an indoor game featuring two teams, a referee, and a puck. The score was recorded, and the game was reported in the Montreal Gazette the same day of the game to generate fan interest.

A commemorative marker is planned to be placed on the site of the rink, which is currently a car rental agency. The rink's dimensions were 200' x 85', which is the size that has been the standard for every North American rink ever since.

The IIHF will also formalize the Triple Gold Club by awarding commemorative medals to the 19 players who have won the three most prestigious championships in world hockey: Olympic gold, Stanley Cup, and World Championship gold. The ceremony is planned to take place during the inaugural Victoria Cup in September 2008. The list includes: Tomas Jonsson

(SWE), Hakan Loob (SWE), Mats Naslund (SWE), Valeri Kamensky (RUS), Alexei Gusarov (RUS), Peter Forsberg (SWE), Vyacheslav Fetisov (RUS), Igor Larionov (RUS), Alexander Mogilny (RUS), Vladimir Malakhov (RUS), Joe Sakic (CAN), Brendan Shanahan (CAN), Rob Blake (CAN), Scott Niedermayer (CAN), Jaromir Jagr (CZE), Jiri Slegl (CZE), Nicklas Lidstrom (SWE) and Fredrik Modin (SWE) and Chris Pronger (CAN).

The IIHF will commission 50 experts in hockey to determine the all-time international All-Star Team (one goalie, two defensemen, three forwards) which will be announced during next year's World Championship in Canada. Other celebrations include a coffee-table book celebrating the 100 years of the IIHF. The Top 100 international hockey stories of all time will be presented on www.IIHF.com starting 100 days before Canada 2008, one day at a time, culminating with the top story at the start of the tournament.

On February 29, 2008, a number of games around the world will be identified to be included in the "Charity Global Game" where each goal scored in those games will generate a sum that will be given to a charity named later.

International Fan Day will take place in Canada during next year's tournament. The Hockey Hall of Fame as well as the Olympic Museum will feature a special centennial exhibition on the history of international hockey. An outdoor rink will also be built on the grounds of the IIHF offices and will serve as host to a variety of events over the next season.



ONCE IN A LIFETIME: Rene Fasel & Horst Lichtner lay out the 100-year plans



THRICE IS NICE: Chris Pronger in action in Turin

Pronger joins the Triple Gold Club

The Triple Gold Club added its newest member on June 6th when the Anaheim Ducks won the Stanley Cup.

Canadian defenseman Chris Pronger, 33, became member Nr. 19 of the elite club, which is for players who have won Olympic gold, the IIHF World Championship and the Stanley Cup.

Pronger started collecting his triple already ten years ago when he was a member of Team Canada's World Championship winning team in Finland 1997.

He won the most elusive of the three prizes - the Olympic gold medal - in 2002 in Salt Lake City. Pronger's Anaheim teammate, Scott Niedermayer (in the Triple Gold Club since 2004) became the only TGC-member to have won the Stanley Cup with two different teams. Niedermayer also has won three cups with New Jersey.

As part of the IIHF's 100-year Centennial Celebrations, the Triple Gold Club will be formalized. For a complete list of Triple gold Club members please refer to the story to the left.

Gentlemen... Start your Skoda engines

After the 2007 IIHF World Championship, the Guinness World Records officially recognized Skoda Auto as the longest-serving Main Sponsor of any World Championship in any sport. Skoda is supporting this tournament for the 15th consecutive year.

IIHF President René Fasel said, "the cooperation that the IIHF and Infront Sports & Media have with Skoda is a role model for commercial partnership. It is based on mutual values, common goals, and also a great interest in the game. It makes me extremely happy that this has been recognized by Guinness World Records as the longest-lasting main event sponsorship in sport history."

Detlef Wittig, Chairman of the Board of Skoda Auto, added, "we are very proud that Skoda is a world record holder now. With this longest main sponsorship of World Championships ever in sport history, we have made our contribution to raising the IIHF World



Championships to today's outstanding level. Those 15 years have also showed that teaming up with Skoda Auto is something our partners can safely count on, just as every customer can rely on the quality of our cars. Of course, Skoda also benefits from this partnership: the IIHF World Championships, with their enormous media attention, are helping Skoda to carry the name of the brand to sports fans all over the world and to share in the highly positive image of ice hockey."

The record will be very difficult to beat, as Skoda Auto has already committed to remaining a Main Sponsor of the IIHF World Championship until at least 2011.

FRONT & CENTER: Thanks to a strong partnership, Skoda can be found everywhere during the annual IIHF World Championship... including center ice

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS CUP

The draw to determine the groupings for the IIHF's annual European Champions Cup was held in St. Petersburg on June 15. The top six European nations will compete for club supremacy in January. The event is entering its fourth season and thus far, only Russian club teams have won the cup. This year's pool will feature three veteran teams as Kärpät Oulu (FIN) returns for a record third time, while HC Davos (SUI) Slovan Bratislava (SVK) and Sparta Prague (CZE) are back for a second time. The groups, as determined by the draw, are as follows.



Alexander Ragulin Division (Group A)
Metallurg Magnitogorsk (RUS)
Slovan Bratislava (SVK)
MODO Örnsköldsvik (SWE)

Ivan Hlinka Division (Group B)
Kärpät Oulu (FIN)
HC Davos (SUI)
Sparta Prague (CZE)

The 2008 edition of the European Champions Cup will be played January 10-13.

Guest Columnist Hayley Wickenheiser: 'To compete on a world stage requires a full-time investment'

■ ■ With the conclusion of an extremely successful IIHF World Women's Championship in Winnipeg, Ice Times felt now was a perfect opportunity to address the state of the women's game. And who better to comment on women's ice hockey than its most decorated player? So we enlisted the help of six time World Champion and two-time Olympic winner, Canadian star Hayley Wickenheiser to discuss the past, present and future of the game.

By Hayley Wickenheiser

■ ■ Anyone who attended the 2007 IIHF World Women's Hockey Championship in Winnipeg this past April would have found it hard to believe that international women's hockey is just 17 years old. With record ticket sales, daily in depth media coverage, and capacity crowds of 15,000-plus, Winnipeg put on the most successful World Women's Championship to date. You can talk to any player from any country in the world and they all agree on one thing, it's always exciting to play in Canada.

I hate to compare the men's game to the women's, because you simply cannot. However, looking back at the history of the men's game, one notices that it took Finland 75 years to win a Men's World Championship and Sweden 74 years to win Olympic gold. The Soviet Union, Canada (and Czech Republic to some degree), have dominated the men's hockey scene since the first World Championship in 1920. It took only 16 years of international women's hockey before we had a different outcome in an Olympic final in Torino 2006. Sweden played Canada for the gold medal. When I hear people talk about the fact that it's always Canada and the USA playing for gold medals, I like to remind them of these men's stats.

■ ■ Today, women's hockey is one of the only areas of the game that is seeing improved and steady growth in numbers year to year. In 2002, Canada had approximately 60,000 female players and 489,000 male youth players. Today, we are close to 75,000 females while the male youth side is down to 441,000. The other top three women's hockey countries, Sweden, Finland and the USA have all seen similar trends. Equipment manufacturers and sponsors are starting to notice this trend as well, and see the female game as a market to pay more attention to.

There are some exciting things to look forward to in the women's game. For the first time ever, the World Women's will be held in China in 2008. China seems to be a country that wants to

get serious about women's hockey and that is good to see. The IIHF also deserves credit, moving forward with the first U18 World Women's Championship, to be held in Canada next year. While I see this as a step forward for female hockey, it cannot be at the expense of Under-22 and Senior development areas.

■ ■ To compete on the world stage in international hockey requires a full-time investment from the players and coaches right through to the federation level. To me, being an elite women's hockey player is a commitment and a lifestyle that requires full time training and access to elite coaching. As a player you cannot practice and train a couple times a week, work a part or full time job and play sub-par competition and consider yourself 'world class'. This is the case in too many parts of the world, including Canada.

WICKENHEISER'S SUGGESTIONS TO DEVELOP WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY

■ ■ **Grassroots Development Programs:** We need to attract the best female athletes to hockey at a young age. Countries such as Russia, China, Finland and Sweden are competing with sports like skiing and track and field. Olympic Committees would rather invest in sports that have a better chance to medal. The future of the game relies heavily on targeting young girls aged 6-12. The focus should be on skill and athletic development. 'First be an athlete, then a hockey player'.

■ ■ **National Team Veterans:** Federations must invest in development opportunities for players on the coaching and management side of the game. Mentoring with experienced coaches is a key way to develop these women into future leaders

■ ■ **Referees:** Officiating is the weakest part of the female game. We must have the best referees available to work the best hockey. Male or female, the players don't care. Just as we develop players with coaching and training, the same opportunities must be given to referees.

■ ■ **IIHF Women's Hockey Development Fund:** Create an endowment fund where countries can apply for funding for grassroots development opportunities in their nation.

■ ■ **Canada vs. The World All Star series:** To showcase women's hockey at an elite level, start a best-of-seven series.

■ ■ **IIHF Women's Committee:** Currently there are seven members on this committee, three being women from Russia, Italy and Switzerland. Canada and Finland should be represented on this committee.



Photo: HHOF/IIHF Images

A CHAMPION WITH A VISION: Canada veteran Hayley Wickenheiser outlines how women's hockey can continue to grow and develop.

To raise the level of women's hockey around the world, athletes need to be given access to training and competitive environment that allows them to develop as players. This requires much more financial investment from federations than currently exists. It must start at a grassroots skill development level through to elite programs.

I am often asked the question, 'When will women have a professional hockey league'. My answer in the past was, "let's see what happens after the next Olympics." But my answer today is, "when the best players in the world come together to play in one league."

■ ■ Currently, the best league in the world is the NWHL/WWHL in Canada. Each team is allowed six imports, and only four Americans. To date, there are only a handful of international players participating. Contrary to what some may say, many NWHL/WWHL teams can provide top players with ice time, housing, jobs and sponsorships. It also gives players a chance to train with the best players from North America and take this knowledge back to their countries. I think it's safe to say that on the men's side, countries like Czech Republic and Sweden had increased international success once many of their players made the move to the NHL. When the same thing happens in the women's game, I feel we will begin to move towards a 'pro' league.

I feel fortunate as a female player to live and play for Canada. We have access to coaching, training, competition and a national respect for women's hockey that is not common in any other country in the world. Due to our success as a country, many more young girls are taking up the game today (there are more women playing hockey in Canada than male and female players combined in Sweden). However, I also know that as far as we have come in Canada, it's still an uphill battle everyday for players and leaders to grow the game, and work with Hockey Canada to create more opportunities for women. The same can be said for countries around the world.

■ ■ Hockey in general is moving towards the biggest international stage ever for showcasing our game: Vancouver 2010. My personal and team goal is that we play our best hockey ever and create a legacy people talk about for years to come. I want that to be the goal of every player and nation competing in 2010. To do this requires continued financial and personal investment by all stakeholders involved. Hockey is the greatest game in the world! The IIHF, national federations, players, coaches, leaders and referees owe it to the fans and young girls watching to put on a great show in 2010.

2007 IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP PHOTO GALLERY



PRE-GAME RITUAL: It's not every day that you can see an ice hockey team do the traditional "Haka" dance before a game, but then again, it's not every day that you can see teams from New Zealand (pictured), South Africa, Ireland, Luxembourg and Mongolia all on the ice at in the same tournament as they were in Ireland for the Men's Division III World Championship.

STARE DOWN: Referee Danny Kurmann lets his eyes do the talking as he and Latvian goaltender Edgars Masalskis face-off.



PUT ME IN COACH!: The Canadian bench is ready to spring into action as they watch the game unfold at the World Championship in Moscow.



ON TOP: Rule #1- never rush into an American victory pile at the U18 Championship. As whoever the unlucky player on bottom learned after the U.S. won it's semi-final game.



RED AND WHITE AND...PINK?: Canada's only game in a commemorative pink jersey to raise money for breast cancer research turned out to be just rosy, as the Canadians beat rival USA in the preliminary round game in a shootout.

HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, KID: Slovakia's Pavol Demitra is 100-percent focused as he follows through on a slapshot. in Moscow.



JUMPING IN FEET FIRST: It wasn't only the puck that went into the net when Sweden scored against Latvia at the World Championship, forward Patric Hörnqvist also went along for the ride as he slid into the net after the puck, which can be seen under his skate.

THE LONLIEST NUMBER: One is indeed the lonliest number for U18 Czech Republic forward Tomas Karpov, who is left alone on the ice to comtemplate his team's surprise 9th place finish -- and relegation -- at this year's World U18 Championship in Finland



Memories of Moscow: The Best

By Andrew Podnieks

Another edition of the IIHF World Championship is in the books, and the 56 games played in Moscow and Mytischki featured many dramatic, exciting, and heart-breaking moments. Before we look forward to centennial celebrations in Quebec City and Halifax in 2008, let's look back at some of the highlights of the 2007 World Championship.

Game 1: Phil Kessel scored the first goal of the tournament. The 19-year-old American, who made a remarkable comeback from testicular cancer earlier in his rookie season in the NHL, fired a quick shot over Reinhard Divis's shoulder to send USA on its way to a 6-2 win over Austria.

Game 2: Petteri Nummelin scored for Finland in its easy 5-0 win over Ukraine. Nummelin was playing in his 13th World Championship tournament.



Photo: EUROPHOTO

BACK ON TRACK: *Newly promoted Germany was the talk of Mytischki when they stunned the Czechs, 2-0. While the Germans missed the quarterfinals, their strong performance solidified their position in Canada '08.*

Game 6: Canada's Shea Weber has a tough start to the tournament, earning a match penalty and game misconduct in his first shift and earning a three-game suspension to boot. Canada narrowly defeats Germany 3-2.

Game 7: Giorgio de Bettin scores first to give Italy a 1-0 lead over Sweden. Tre Kronor recovered, though, and won 7-1.

Game 11: Russia's Alexei Morozov strikes for three goals in an 8-1 win over Ukraine.

Game 16: Erik Spets beat Cam Ward with a nice shot to give Norway a 1-0 lead over Canada midway through the first period. The Canadians won, 4-2, but it was not easy.

Game 19: Russia defeated Finland 5-4 in the most entertaining game so far. The Russians built a 4-1 lead with a series of great offensive attacks, but the Finns stormed back in the third period and nearly tied the game.

Game 20: Just when it appeared fans would get to see an overtime or shootout game for the first time in the preliminary round, Jaroslav Bednar scored for the Czechs with just 1:08 left in the third period to break a 3-3 tie and give his team a dramatic win over USA.

Game 21: Jason Cirone scored his second goal of the game to give Italy a shocking 4-3 win over Latvia in the first ever overtime game played during the preliminary round. The goal guaranteed the Italians a trip to Canada for the 2008 World Championship.

Game 24: Rick Nash scored the winning goal, a nice deflection, midway through the third period to give Canada a 5-4 win over Slovakia in a superb and intense game to end the preliminary round.

Game 28: Dimitrij Kostschnew earned a shutout for Germany in a huge 2-0 upset of the Czech Republic during the qualifying round. The young German team, coached by Uwe Krupp, had been slated for relegation by critics prior to the tournament.

Game 29: Canadian captain Shane Doan responded to inane criticisms back home over an incident in NHL play a year and a half ago with a hat trick performance in his team's 6-3 win over Belarus.

Game 30: Morten Ask of Norway scored in overtime to give his team an important 3-2 win over Austria.

Game 31: For nearly 55 minutes, Italy played Russia almost evenly on the scoreboard as the vastly superior Russians had only a 1-0 lead. They scored two late goals to make it a 3-0 final, but kudos to Mickey Goulet's team for keeping things close.

Game 36: In a classic showdown featuring the Czechs and Slovaks, the Slovaks skated to a hard-fought 3-2 win, Marian Gaborik netting the winning goal midway through the third period.

Game 41: Sweden defeated Finland 1-0, but the only goal of the game came after a



TO THE VICTORS GO THE SPOILS: *This year's top-three World Championship finishers, bronze*

terrible miscue by goalie Kari Lehtonen who put the puck into his own goal.

Game 42: Eric Staal gave Canada a 3-2 win over the Czechs in overtime. The Czech goalie was Marek Pinc, Roman Cechmanek's backup, who was put in after regulation when the Czechs qualified for the quarter-finals. It was the only action Pinc saw all tournament.

Game 49: Russia beat the Czechs 4-0 in a the quarter-finals in a game marked by Evgeni Malkin's beautiful goal. He faked a deke on Roman Cechmanek, skated around the net, and tucked the puck in the open net.

Game 52: In the one and only shootout of 2007, Jere Lehtinen scored the only goal to give Finland a tense 5-4 win over USA in a quarter-finals game.

Game 54: Mikko Koivu shocked the Khodynka Arena crowd with a goal in overtime to advance his Finns to the gold medal game and send the host Russians to the bronze medal game.

Game 56: Rick Nash scored the goal of the tournament. In a close 3-2 final game with time winding down, he burst up ice with a Finnish defenceman draped all over him. Nash powered to the net, deked goalie Kari Lehtonen while falling to the ice, all the while being hounded by an opponent. Just minutes later, a gold medal around his neck, Nash was named tournament MVP.

& Worst of 2007



Photos: IIHF/HHOF IMAGES

medalist Russia, gold medalist Canada and silver medalist Finland had many highlights in Moscow

Updated IIHF World Ranking

| '07 Rank | Nation | Points | '06 Rank | Movement |
|----------|----------------|--------|----------|----------|
| 1 | Sweden | 3740 | 1 | 0 |
| 2 | Canada | 3670 | 3 | 1 |
| 3 | Finland | 3640 | 4 | 1 |
| 4 | Czech Republic | 3595 | 2 | -2 |
| 5 | Russia | 3535 | 5 | 0 |
| 6 | Slovakia | 3390 | 6 | 0 |
| 7 | United States | 3375 | 7 | 0 |
| 8 | Switzerland | 3250 | 8 | 0 |
| 9 | Belarus | 3025 | 10 | 1 |
| 10 | Latvia | 2995 | 9 | -1 |
| 11 | Germany | 2925 | 12 | 1 |
| 12 | Denmark | 2855 | 14 | 2 |
| 13 | Italy | 2815 | 17 | 4 |
| 14 | Norway | 2780 | 15 | 1 |
| 15 | Ukraine | 2740 | 13 | -2 |
| 16 | Kazakhstan | 2740 | 11 | -5 |
| 17 | Austria | 2695 | 16 | -1 |
| 18 | Slovenia | 2640 | 18 | 0 |
| 19 | France | 2525 | 19 | 0 |
| 20 | Poland | 2395 | 20 | 0 |
| 21 | Hungary | 2320 | 22 | 1 |
| 22 | Japan | 2305 | 21 | -1 |
| 23 | Estonia | 2165 | 24 | 1 |
| 24 | Netherlands | 2155 | 23 | -1 |
| 25 | Lithuania | 2105 | 25 | 0 |
| 26 | Romania | 1970 | 26 | 0 |
| 27 | China | 1860 | 28 | 1 |
| 28 | Croatia | 1850 | 27 | -1 |
| 29 | Great Britain | 1605 | 31 | 2 |
| 30 | Serbia | 1555 | 29 | -1 |
| 31 | Bulgaria | 1500 | 30 | -1 |
| 32 | Korea | 1320 | 32 | 0 |
| 33 | Australia | 1260 | 34 | 1 |
| 34 | Israel | 1260 | 33 | -1 |
| 35 | Belgium | 1200 | 35 | 0 |
| 36 | Spain | 1090 | 37 | 1 |
| 37 | Iceland | 920 | 40 | 3 |
| 38 | Mexico | 915 | 39 | 1 |
| 39 | New Zealand | 900 | 38 | -1 |
| 40 | Turkey | 830 | 42 | 2 |
| 41 | south Africa | 770 | 41 | 0 |
| 42 | Luxembourg | 710 | 43 | 1 |
| 43 | Ireland | 710 | 44 | 1 |
| 44 | PRK Korea | 660 | 36 | -8 |
| 45 | Armenia | 390 | 45 | 0 |
| 46 | Mongolia | 260 | - | - |

And the award goes to....



Directorate Awards:

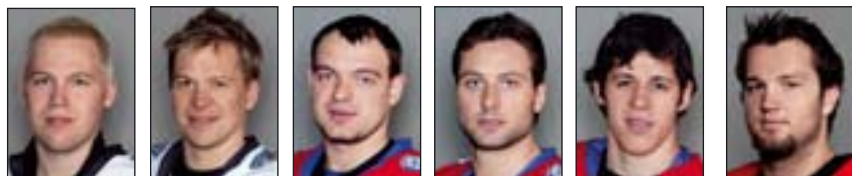
Goaltender: Kari Lehtonen (FIN)

Defenseman: Andrei Markov (RUS)

Forward: Alexei Morozov (RUS)

MVP: Rick Nash (CAN)

Pictured left to right



Media All-Star Awards:

Goalie: Kari Lehtonen (FIN)

Defensemen: Petteri Nummelin (FIN), Andrei Markov (RUS)

Forward: Alexei Morozov (RUS), Evgeni Malkin (RUS), Rick Nash (CAN)

Pictured left to right

CANADA 2008 PRELIMINARY ROUND GROUPS

The groups for the 2008 IIHF World Championship in Canada were determined following the 2007 event in Moscow. Groups A and D will be played in Quebec City, while Groups B and C will be based in Halifax. The groups were decided based on the updated IIHF World Ranking (above). Joining the top 14 teams are newly promoted France and Slovenia, which will play in groups A and B, respectively. Host and defending champion Canada will play the preliminary round in Halifax. However, the semi-final and medal games will all be held in Quebec City.

| Group A | Group B | Group C | Group D |
|-------------|---------------|----------|----------------|
| Quebec City | Halifax | Halifax | Quebec City |
| Sweden | Canada | Finland | Czech Republic |
| Switzerland | United States | Slovakia | Russia |
| Belarus | Latvia | Germany | Denmark |
| France | Slovenia | Norway | Italy |

Canada or Bust! Slovenia and France join the 2008 Party

■ France and Slovenia are back among the world's elite and they are going to Canada 2008. France raised some eyebrows by winning the 2007 IIHF World Championship Division I Group in Qiqihar, China while Slovenia paraded through their group at home in Ljubljana.

Slovenia was a heavy favorite to win on home ice, as most observers gave Kazakhstan the best chances to qualify from the Qiqihar group. The odds were definitely in the Kazakh's favor after the opening two days in China. France lost their opener to Estonia (4-3 in a penalty shoot-out), while Kazakhstan defeated Estonia on Day Two after crushing hosting China 12-0 on opening day.

But slowly momentum swung away from the Kazakhs. For the first time they lost to Poland and the 5-2 defeat came two days before the all-deciding game against France. Meanwhile, the French rebounded after the initial disappointment against Estonia and showed that they meant business in an emphatic 4-0-win over Poland midway through the championship.

■ The final was a thriller. Pierre Edouard Bellemare gave France a 1-0-lead in the first period but Lev Krutokhvostov equalized five minutes into the middle period. Defenseman Benoit Quessandier scored the game and tournament winning goal after only four minutes of the third and Laurent Meunier added an insurance goal 31



WE SALUTE YOU: Slovenia thanks its home fans after securing its place in the 2008 IIHF World Championship in Canada

Russia back on top of U18 Worlds

■ The three-point era was ushered in at the World U18 Championship with a bang at the as the most competitive field ever battled over every point in the standings.

Just how close was this year's 10-team group? Consider that going into the final day of preliminary round action, the Czech Republic could have sealed up first place in its group with a win against Sweden, or ended in last place in the group with a loss. It was the latter that the Czechs suffered, which ultimately sent the normal power-house to the Relegation Round where an even more stunning fate awaited: the demotion to Division I after giving up three goals in the third period against a determined German squad.

■ The Czech Republic wasn't the only jaw-dropping storyline of the championship.

Two-time gold medalist, USA, lost its bid to become a three-peat champion as Russia skated to the gold medal. While Russia and USA finishing in first and second place is nothing new (the teams have held the top two spots at the last four U18 Championships) the way they got to the gold medal game was a definite change of pace for the annual championship.

Both teams struggled through their preliminary round

group, with the Russians ending in second place and the Americans limping to a third place finish. Both teams won their quarterfinal game, but then history was made when the duo won their semi-final matches as well.

It was the first time since the quarterfinal round bye was awarded to the top preliminary round finisher that both teams in the final game did not win their preliminary round groups and enjoy the bye and extra day off.

■ Of course, there was business as usual in several aspects of the championship. The Russians brought their 'next big star' to the tournament in the form of forward Alexey Cherepanov, who was sparked to life at the end of the championship, scoring three goals in the last two games including the game-winner against the U.S.

The Americans also continued their tradition of dominating the individual awards, going an unprecedented three-for-three with the Directorate Awards as Josh Unice (G), Kevin Shattenkirk (D) and James Vanriemsdyk (F) took home the individual honors.

Sweden also earned its second bronze medal in three seasons after defeating Canada, 8-3, and keeping the North American nation winless in the third-place contest at the U18 Championship.



OUI! The French team will feel right at home during next year's World Championship. The team will be based in Quebec City.

seconds from the end. A huge win for the French, who are now going to Quebec City - a town that their forefathers founded 400 years ago. This will be France's first appearance in the top pool since 2004.

■ To describe Slovenia's quick return to the elite division, we only need to say two words: Anze Kopitar. The amazing 19-year old forward, who had 20 goals and 41 assists in his rookie NHL-season with Los Angeles, disappointed no one while producing 14 points (1 goal and 13 assists) in just five games as the hosts breezed through the tournament to book their tickets to Canada next spring.

The Slovenians were not threatened in any game and they secured promotion already after four wins as the 7-1-victory over Japan proved to be enough. The last game against Lithuania was just for the record. As Kopitar proved that he, already at the tender age of 19, is one of the most skilled passers in the world of hockey, Slovenia once again showed that they are the bumblebee of international hockey.

■ There is really no explaining why they should be able to fly at this level, but just as the bumblebee they don't ask why - they just do. Slovenia has just around 100 registered senior hockey players, but they will nevertheless make their fifth top-pool appearance in the last seven years

PLAYER TRANSFER AGREEMENT SIGNED

■ The 2007-2011 Player Transfer Agreement between the IIHF member national associations, their leagues and the National Hockey League was ratified by the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland. Like the 2005-2007 PTA, the Ice Hockey Federation of Russia chose not to be part of the agreement.

The Player Transfer Agreement regulates transfers to the NHL from all non-North American IIHF affiliated associations and leagues.

The highlights of the new PTA:

■ The agreement is for four years; 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11.

■ The signing deadline each year is June 15.

■ The NHL will pay a basic development fee of 9,000,000 USD for the first 45 players, 200,000 USD per player. If the total amount of signed IIHF-players exceeds 45, the NHL will pay an additional 200,000 USD for each additional player.

■ Players who are drafted in the NHL Entry Draft (late June each year) can be signed until July 15 or until August 15 in the year which they are drafted. For players signed between July 16 and August 15, the NHL will pay an additional fee of 100,000 USD.

■ Furthermore, the IIHF will be compensated for players who are signed by NHL-clubs and who are not on the NHL-clubs' roster for 30 games or more (including play-offs) in their first season. The funds generated from this clause will be retained in a Supplementary Fund to be used for IIHF player transfers to the NHL which do not comply with the IIHF/NHL Player Transfer Agreement. This includes situations where IIHF players are drafted from North American clubs to the NHL.

2007 IIHF INLINE HOCKEY WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RECAP

InLine Hockey on a roll after '07 Worlds

Upsets and record crowds highlight annual Championship

■ For proof that InLine Hockey world is both growing and shrinking, one needed to look no further than the 2007 InLine Hockey World Championship in Germany.

A record number of nations are competing to earn one of the coveted 16 slots in the annual World championship, while the gap between the quality of hockey in those nations continues to shrink. In both the Top Division and Division I events, the level of hockey was at an all-time high, as the number of upsets also reached a peak.

Top Division:

■ There's a saying "Life's a journey, not a destination." Perhaps that should have been the motto of this year's top division InLine Hockey World Championship as the Swede's ending as the gold medalist was just one of many interesting steps in the week-long championship that was packed with twists and turns.

No other game defined this year's championship better than the golden game that pitted rivals Finland and Sweden against each other. After Sweden dominated the action through much of the game, the Finns tied things up with one second left in regulation, stunning the 3,000-plus fans in Landshut and sending the game into overtime. While the Swedes pulled out the overtime win, the point was clear: no team, not even the best of the best, was immune from the many surprises at this year's championship.

It was a lesson learned early for the defending champion, USA. Little did the U.S. and Finland know entering this year's event that they would meet in the quarterfinals, meaning that one of the perennial medalists would miss the podium. It was that kind of year for the Top Division as no team was safe from being upended.

■ In the case of Group A, it was a wacky three-way tie for first place that made things interesting for the playoff round. Host Germany came out on top of the three-way jumble thanks to its goal differential. The Americans finished in second place, pitting them against Finland, which finished in an uncharacteristically low third-place in Group B as Slovenia emerged as that group's dark horse, upsetting not only the Finns, but also the Swedes.

Things didn't settle down in the playoff round. After the Americans were ousted by the Finns, the upsets kept pouring in as top-seeded Slovenia lost its quarterfinal

game against Austria, a team that has never won a top division medal. Only Sweden and Germany looked solid going into the final two days of action, but were slated to meet in the semi-finals, ensuring that one of the top teams would be knocked out for the golden game.

In the end, however, despite the numerous upsets along the way, it was the most talented and cool-headed team, Sweden, that earned the gold medal. While Finland was a worthy gold medal opponent, and Germany a persistent squad, the Swedes deserved the 2007 gold.

Division I

■ The Brazilians won the hearts and minds of the fans in both Landshut and Passau with their enthusiasm and passion, so in the end, it seemed only fitting that the South American nation won its first-ever InLine Hockey gold medal.

With the exception of its qualification game, the Brazilians went undefeated in the Division I group and improved steadily as the tournament went on. Helping to pave the path for the spunky Brazilians were a string of Division I surprises that left many of the perennial medalists out of the hunt for a podium place

Last year's gold medalist, Great Britain was ousted in a quarterfinal stunner, while two underdogs, Australia and New Zealand, both won their quarterfinal games. Hungary was as unpredictable as any team among the 16 in Germany, as they went 0-0-3 in the preliminary round, but ended up taking home the bronze medal after skating strong through the playoff round.

■ Brazil's opponent in the golden game was also an unexpected foe as New Zealand, who had lost by 11 goals against Australia in the preliminary round, upended their geographic rivals in the semi-finals, 7-3, for the berth in the final game.

For both teams it was the first chance in their nations' histories to bring home an InLine gold. When the final buzzer sounded, Brazil earned the bragging rights with a 5-4 come-from-behind, overtime win. But not all was lost for the Kiwis as they were happy to have earned the second-ever New Zealand medal at the 2007 InLine Hockey World Championship.



BACK ON THE PODIUM: Sweden reclaimed its top spot at the InLine World Championship, while Germany's Michael Wolf accepted his bronze medal as only a German in Bavaria could - wearing traditional lederhosen.

1996 USA: Minneapolis, St. Paul/Minnesota

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. USA | 7. Italy |
| 2. Canada | 8. Czech Republic |
| 3. Finland | 9. Austria |
| 4. Germany | 10. Australia |
| 5. Russia | 11. Japan |
| 6. Switzerland | |

1997 USA: Anaheim/California

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. USA | 7. Germany |
| 2. Canada | 8. Austria |
| 3. Switzerland | 9. Italy |
| 4. Russia | 10. Netherlands |
| 5. Czech Republic | 11. Australia |
| 6. Finland | 12. Japan |

1998 USA: Anaheim/California (A-Pool)

- | | |
|----------------|------------|
| 1. Canada | 5. Germany |
| 2. USA | 6. Austria |
| 3. Finland | 7. Italy |
| 4. Switzerland | 8. Russia |

2000 Czech Republic: Hradec Kralové/Chocen

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Finland | 8. Netherlands |
| 2. Czech Republic | 9. Australia |
| 3. USA | 10. Brazil |
| 4. Germany | 11. Hungary |
| 5. Slovakia | 12. New Zealand |
| 6. Sweden | 13. Argentina |
| 7. Austria | 14. Chile |

2001 USA: Ellenton (Florida)

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Finland | 7. Austria |
| 2. USA | 8. Brazil |
| 3. Czech Republic | 9. Hungary |
| 4. Slovakia | 10. Australia |
| 5. Sweden | 11. New Zealand |
| 6. Germany | 12. Argentina |

2002 Germany: Nürnberg/Pfaffenhofen

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Sweden | 9. Hungary |
| 2. Finland | 10. Japan |
| 3. Germany | 11. New Zealand |
| 4. Czech Republic | 12. Great Britain |
| 5. USA | 13. Brazil |
| 6. Slovakia | 14. Argentina |
| 7. Slovenia | 15. Belgium |
| 8. Austria | 16. Chile |

2003 Germany: Nürnberg/Amberg

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Finland | 9. Japan |
| 2. Sweden | 10. Brazil |
| 3. USA | 11. Australia |
| 4. Czech Republic | 12. Hungary |
| 5. Germany | 13. Great Britain |
| 6. Slovakia | 14. New Zealand |
| 7. Slovenia | 15. Argentina |
| 8. Austria | 16. South Africa |

2004 Germany: Bad Tölz

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. USA | 9. Great Britain |
| 2. Finland | 10. Brazil |
| 3. Sweden | 11. Japan |
| 4. Germany | 12. Hungary |
| 5. Slovakia | 13. Australia |
| 6. Czech Republic | 14. New Zealand |
| 7. Austria | 15. Belgium |
| 8. Slovenia | 16. Argentina |

2005 Finland: Kuopio

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Sweden | 9. Hungary |
| 2. Finland | 10. Japan |
| 3. USA | 11. Great Britain |
| 4. Czech Republic | 12. Brazil |
| 5. Germany | 13. Australia |
| 6. Slovakia | 14. Namibia |
| 7. Slovenia | 15. Portugal |
| 8. Austria | 16. Chinese Taipei |

2006 Hungary: Budapest

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. USA | 9. Great Britain |
| 2. Sweden | 10. Hungary |
| 3. Finland | 11. Brazil |
| 4. Germany | 12. Japan |
| 5. Czech Republic | 13. Namibia |
| 6. Slovakia | 14. Australia |
| 7. Slovenia | 15. Croatia |
| 8. Austria | 16. Argentina |



Photo: JANI RAJAMAKI, Europhoto

GETTING THE JOB DONE: "The players make the difference, not the coaches," so says Canada's national team head coach Andy Murray. But Murray must be doing something right after leading the Canadian team to the gold medal three times in this four times behind the bench as Canada's head coach.

Magnificent Murray makes it a Triple

By Szymon Szemberg

■ Canadian head coach Andy Murray and the IIHF World Championship seem to go together like peanut butter and jelly. *Ice Times* spoke with Murray to find out the secret to his international success.

In modern IIHF World Championship history, leading a national team to three gold medals is second only to Soviet Union's Viktor Tikhonov. What do you bring to the table that other coaches don't?

I don't bring anything that others don't. I only know that I bring passion for the game, strong sense of responsibility in terms of representing my country, structure and - I hope - ability to relate to others. I have also been fortunate to work with good people.

This is how some hockey observers would describe coach Murray: A true Canadian hockey patriot, with European hockey smarts and shrewdness. Would you agree?

This is quite a compliment and very flattering. I'd have big difficulties saying this about myself. But there is no doubt that I have been fortunate to work eight years with European club hockey. The eight years I spent in Switzerland and Germany helped me a lot in terms of teaching skills and being exposed to many different tactical variations.

Would you say it is correct that you need to know the international game to be able to win in international hockey?

I am not sure. The interaction in hockey is so extensive it has become a universal game, including elements of all styles. It definitely doesn't hurt for a coach to be familiar

with the international game if you are in the World Championships. But it's probably more important for the players.

You said: "I'll carry the stick, I'll drive the team bus, I'll do anything that Hockey Canada asks me to." Where does this commitment come from?

I am from Winnipeg and Father Bauer's national team program was based in the city in the 60s. My father was a huge fan of international hockey and he often went to see Bauer's national team play and he brought me along. And from watching his commitment to the program, I was influenced always to respond when your country is calling.

As the national anthem was about to start in Moscow following the gold medal ceremony, the whole team stood in one line but you stood alone a little behind the others. Somebody ask you to join in, but you politely declined and remained alone during the anthem. Why?

The players make the difference, not the coaches. My philosophy is to lead from behind and let the players take

charge and take control. This is why I wanted them to be the front liners and enjoy the moment.

It's not your style to blow your horn, but surely there is no more qualified Canadian coach than you to consider for the Vancouver Olympics 2010?

If this was 2009, then maybe I would have been the frontrunner. But it's still three years left and lots can happen. I believe that you get what you deserve. If I deserve the job at the time they make the decision, I'll get it. But I would never campaign for it.

After coaching in four World Championships and winning three of them, can you say what the tournament does for players' development?

There is no doubt in my mind that the tournament is great for personal development and that every player who participates gains a lot. Let me just name players like Rob Blake, Kris Draper, Shawn Horcoff and Daniel Briere who all came back to the NHL as better players after competing in the Worlds. I could go on and on naming others who also benefited. All good players should have the ambition to play hockey in April and May.

Hockey history will be made next year when the World Championships go to Canada for the first time. In your mind, what makes the tournament special?

At that time of the year there is only team that every hockey fan in each participating country is pulling for - it's the national team. There is no better feeling then after competing against the world to stand on the ice with a medal around your neck and listen to your anthem. I have a tough time imagining that anything matches that feeling.

ANDY MURRAY FACT FILE:

Born: March 3, 1952 in Souris, Manitoba, Canada

■ Has coached Team Canada on four occasions in the IIHF World Championships, winning gold three times. 1997, 2003 and 2007. Finished sixth in 1998.

■ Won a record six medals for Canada at Spengler Cup.

■ Coached in the Swiss and German leagues 1981-88.

■ Head coach of the NHL Los Angeles Kings 1999-2006. Currently head coach of the NHL's St. Louis Blues.

■ Son Brady Murray recently signed with the Los Angeles Kings after two seasons in Rapperswil-Jona of the Swiss A League.