



# IceTime

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GIGANTTI Lounge

## Rising Stars

Live from the Juniors  
Tournament results





From the IIHF President

## Juniors take the ice

By René Fasel

**A new year is coming up, which means that it's time for world's top young ice hockey talent to compete in the IIHF's first major international tournament of the season: the World Junior Championship.**

It is a treat to begin the new year with such a top quality ice hockey tournament as the World Juniors. This competition never fails to impress. The world's best and brightest young hockey stars, gathered together in the two Canadian hockey capitals of Montreal and Toronto to battle it out for international U20 ice hockey supremacy, will be a treat to watch.

For many of these young players, the World Juniors can be the final opportunity they have to represent their country in international competition. This is apparent in the dedication and effort exhibited throughout the tournament. These young men leave it all out there on the ice, much to the delight of the hockey fans lucky enough to witness the Juniors live.

The growth of this tournament as a complement to the World Championship has picked up by leaps and bounds. Through hard work and mutually beneficial partnerships with organizations such as Hockey Canada and TSN (more on page 9), the IIHF World Junior Championship has turned into an annual tradition in Canada, and is now becoming more and more popular in Europe as well.

When this tournament wraps up in January, we will next turn to the ninth edition of the IIHF U18 Women's World Championship, taking place in Zlin and Prerov, Czech Republic. As we continue on our journey to grow the women's game internationally, I hope that this tournament can inspire young women around the world to pick up sticks and hit the ice.

The IIHF's mandate to grow the game is symbolized in the work of our individual IIHF Committees, who met together for the first time in December to exchange ideas and build their mandates for the next four years. You can read more about the IIHF's 2016 Central Committee Meetings on page 9.

The first major task for our committees and member national associations will be the review of the IIHF Sport Regulations and Playing Rules. Full reviews will be conducted by the

IIHF Player Safety Committee, in cooperation with other committees like Coaching, Competition, Medical and Officiating, and I look forward to seeing the final proposals.

Our efforts to promote good governance and ethical practices within the IIHF have also begun in earnest with the first meeting of the Governance Reform Group. With the International Olympic Committee's Agenda 2020 placing an emphasis on transparency and good governance, it is important that the IIHF take a leading role in updating its practices to set an example for the future.

During the Central Committee Meetings I spent the day moving between each of the committee meeting rooms, in order to get a clear idea of the latest and most pressing issues affecting ice hockey today. I was very encouraged by the level of participation and detailed discussions that each of the committee members brought to the table, and I am confident that going forward our beloved sport of ice hockey will benefit greatly from the work that began in Zurich this month.

In closing, I wish all of the world's ice hockey fans, our member national associations, and everyone around the world who is passionate about our great game a wonderful end of the year and nothing but the very best in 2017.





## News and Notes



### AUSTRIA

**Roger Bader** will coach the Austrian men's national team for the remainder of the season it was confirmed after a board meeting of the Austrian Ice Hockey Association. He will also continue to serve as head coach of the U20 national team.

Bader is already the third head coach for the men's national team this year. After Dan Ratushny left Austria to coach Lausanne HC of the Swiss NLA, sport director and veteran coach Alpo Suhonen was leading the team in the Final Olympic Qualification in Riga, Latvia, in September but after the unsatisfactory results Roger Bader was chosen to coach the

team at least for the recent Euro Ice Hockey Challenge tournament in Budapest, Hungary. Now his assignment has been extended for the remainder of the season.

The 52-year-old Swiss spent his coaching career in Switzerland until 2013 where he was coaching senior hockey club teams but also several junior national teams including being head coach at three U18 World Championships.

Since 2014 he has been working for the Austrian Ice Hockey Association as U20 national team coach, development coach and mentor for club coaches – duties that he will continue. He has also been the assistant coach of the men's national team since last season and at the Olympic Qualification in September.

Last year he led Austria to a silver medal at the 2016 IIHF Ice Hockey U20 World Championship Division I Group A.

### CANADA

Hockey Canada announced on 1 December that the 2019 IIHF World Junior Championship has been allocated to Vancouver and Victoria.

It is the second time in history that the World Juniors will take place in the Western provin-

ce of British Columbia. In 2006, Vancouver co-hosted the tournament along with Kelowna and Kamloops.

Rogers Arena, the site of the 2010 Olympic hockey tournament and home of the Vancouver Canucks, will host 19 games, including the medal round.

The Save-on-Foods Memorial Centre will host 14 games in Victoria. The 2005-completed building, with a capacity of 7,400, is home to the WHL's Victoria Royals.



### LATVIA

The Latvian Hockey Federation signed Canadian coach **Bob Hartley** to lead the national team for the 2016/2017 season with an option for another year.

Hartley will be the second former NHL coach after Ted Nolan (2011-2014) to lead the Latvian men's national team. Hartley led the Colorado Avalanche to a Stanley Cup win in 2001 and later also coached the Atlanta Thrashers and until last season the Calgary Flames. In 2015 he won the Jack Adams Award as NHL head coach of the year but was fired in May 2016.

The 56-year-old also won championships as a junior coach with the Hawkesbury Hawks (CJHL; 1990, 1991) and Laval Titan (QMJHL; 1993) and later in professional hockey with the American Hockey League's Hershey Bears (1997) and most recently in 2012 the Swiss championship with the ZSC Lions Zurich during a one-year stint in Europe where he had Latvian forward Ronalds Kenins among his players.

"I'm excited for the newest challenge in my career as a coach. It will be my first experience working with a national team and I'm grateful to the Latvian Hockey Federation for giving me the opportunity and confidence," Hartley said.

At the 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship the Latvians will play in the group in Cologne and battle for a quarter-final spot against Russia, the United States, Sweden, Slovakia, host Germany, Denmark and Italy.

## Obituaries

### FRANCO GALLO

Former Italian national team player Franco Gallo passed away on 9 December at the age of 72. His funeral will be held today in Merano.

Gallo was born in Italy, in Sesto San Giovanni, but his family moved to Canada where he fell in love with the sport. When he was 22 he returned to Italy where he first played for Diavoli Milan and later for Bolzano where we won an Italian title contributing 21 goals in 22 games. Later he also played for several other teams in the Italian league including Merano where he was living.

Between 1969 and 1973 he represented Italy in five World Championship tournaments. Three in the B-Pool and two in the C-Pool.

### OSCAR MUDRY

Former Swiss national team player Oscar Mudry passed away on 29 November in his hometown of Martigny. He was 91 years old.

Mudry was a founding member of HC Martigny as a 14-year-old in 1939 and became the first player from the city to play in the top Swiss league when he moved to Lausanne HC.

He was also called to the national team and made the squad for the 1953 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship on home ice in Zurich and Basel where Switzerland won the bronze medal.

He later returned to his hometown team where he worked as a coach and later served as a President.

### PERTTI NIEMINEN

Pertti “Pepita” Nieminen, a forward with the Finnish national team and long-time Finnish-league veteran, died on 8th November in Turku, Finland.

A native of Hameenlinna, Nieminen rose to prominence with HPK starting in 1952 before transferring to TPS Turku. He made his first appearance for Suomi at the 1957 World Championship in Moscow. Finland finished fourth in what was only the team’s sixth ever appearance at the tournament. He played in six successive tournaments for Finland, including five World Championships and the 1960 Olympics.

It was at the Olympics in Squaw Valley, that Nieminen was at his best. He had three two-goal games and scored twice in the third period of an 8-4 loss to the Soviets. Nieminen was a world-class footballer as well, helping the TPS team to a silver medal at the national champi-

onship in 1960. For his distinguished career, the Finnish Ice Hockey Association made him Lion number 32 in the country’s pantheon of greats in 1985.

### GENNADI TSYGUROV

Former Russian coach Gennadi Tsygurov passed away on 14 December at the age of 75 after long illness. Tsygurov coached several Russian teams both internationally and in the top Russian league and was also involved with the Kazakh national team.

One of Tsygurov’s greatest moments was when Russia beat host Canada 3-2 in the gold medal game to claim the 1999 IIHF World Junior Championship. It was Tsygurov’s second stint with the U20 team after leading Russia to a bronze-medal finish in 1994. The Chelyabinsk native spent all his career as a player with his hometown team Traktor Chelyabinsk where he was respectfully nicknamed “Brigadir” and played 658 games.

It was also at Traktor Chelyabinsk where he started his coaching career once he stopped playing. And when he later coached Lada Togliatti, he made it the first team not from Moscow to win a Russian/Soviet championship in 1994. In 1996 he led Lada to another championship and one year later the team won the European Cup. In the ‘90s he coached Rus-

sia’s U20 national team and worked as an assistant coach with the men’s national team as several tournaments including the 1999 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship. He was also an assistant coach for the Kazakh national team at four World Championship events and the 2006 Olympics.

### FRANS VAN ERP

The former President of the Ice Hockey Association of the Netherlands passed away on 29 November at the age of 92 in The Hague.

The Eindhoven native was involved in the founding of the ice hockey club in Groningen in 1969 where he was also coaching the team. For his work in engineering he moved to The Hague where he became involved in the hockey club as well. Later he started to work for the association in turbulent times first as a sports director, then as Vice President and eventually he was elected as President in 1989 to succeed Sjoerd Feenstra when the latter moved to the National Olympic Committee.

In 1994 he ran as one of several candidates for presidency at the IIHF when a successor for Gunther Sabetzki was to be found. Current IIHF President Rene Fasel won that election and van Erp took a step back. In 1994 he was Honorary Chairman of the Ice Hockey Association of the Netherlands.




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## Building the game

### Committee experts converge in Zurich

By Adam Steiss

**Over 120 ice hockey representatives, including former players, game officials, medical doctors, and trainers, gathered together in Zurich for the IIHF Central Committee Meetings.**


[Click here for a recap video from the 2016 IIHF Central Committee Meeting](#)

The three-day event began on 7 December and was aimed at promoted synergies and fostering new partnerships among the various committee members, who come from a wide range of backgrounds but share the same love and passion for the sport.

In all the IIHF has 19 committees and working groups, whose new members were named during the 2016 IIHF Semi-Annual Congress last September. These committees bring together a group of talented experts in fields such as sports management, officiating, good governance, finance, player and coach education, and broadcasting to name a few.



*German national team head coach Marco Sturm discussed with committee member some of the issues affecting ice hockey.*

The central meetings marked the first time that these members have gotten together. In total 124 different persons coming from 31 different countries were named to the committees as suggested by the IIHF membership. This number does not include ad-hoc members and external experts who may be involved as well.

The Central Committee Meetings opened with a welcome speech from IIHF President

René Fasel. He pointed out the challenges facing ice hockey, specifically his concerns with player safety, which will be addressed by the Player Safety Committee comprised of acting IIHF Vice-President Bob Nicholson, and includes former professional hockey players such as Jiri Fischer, Stéphane Quintal and Victor Stancescu.

“Player safety must be one of our biggest priorities,” said Fasel. “This is why we decided

to have these meetings, to help bring in ideas from all the experts. It’s not a simple solution, we need advice from doctors, from players, from equipment manufacturers. Most of these experts are here with us today.”

The committees are highly specialized and designed to come up with concrete recommendations to improve the sport of ice hockey. Aside from the usual committees for Competition, Development, Coaching, and Officiating to name a few, new committees have also been created to help tackle some of the issues that the IIHF faces in the modern sports world.

For example, a TV/New Media/Marketing Committee will follow developments in the area of digital media and evaluate new elements in sports marketing, such as virtual advertising.

An independent Ethics and Integrity Committee has also been set up to advise the Council and the President on building ethical and transparent policy and develop educational materials and measures for all other Committee members and other IIHF bodies to follow that encourages ethical practices and good governance. Good Governance strategies and policy creation was also a topic of debate for the newly created Governance Reform Group, led by chairman Ron DeGregorio.



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Another topic mentioned by Fasel in the opening session was the need to promote the

sport in Asia, a responsibility largely falling to the Asian Committee headed by Thomas Wu but could also foster synergy efforts with other committees like TV/Broadcast.

“With the Olympics coming to Asia twice in Korea and then China, we need to treat these events as a tool to help to promote the sport in this region. Chinese President Xi Jinping said that he wants to have 300 million Chinese practise winter sport. If ice hockey can catch even one percent of this number that’s three million new players, more than the rest of the world put together.”

The introductory presentation to the committees was given by former NHLer and current German national team coach Marco Sturm, who outlined some of the main challenges facing ice hockey. Drawing from his own experience, Sturm highlighted noticeable inconsistencies in the level of coaching training and education, which he believed is holding back player development in the growing hockey nations.

“The skill level of coaches needs to be raised, particularly at the youth level, we need to draw on the experience of top ice hockey nations and create ways where we can transfer



*The 2016-2020 IIHF Committee Members gathered together for a group photo ahead of the Central Meetings in Zurich.*

knowledge and coaching skills to developing hockey countries.”

Sturm also mentioned the issues he has in getting players to compete in tournaments during international breaks. He cited motivational issues and exhaustion due to an often busy ice hockey schedule that includes domestic games, international games, and international club play such as Champions Hockey League. He hoped that a revised ice hockey

calander could alleviate this, which would be a point of focus for the Competition and Coordination Committee.

On the safety issue, Sturm was in full support of new measures like the concussion protocol, which has caused some players to be removed from a game for assessment. Despite player protest, Sturm maintain that these kinds of protocols are necessary for the long-term health of the player and to a further

extent the health of the game itself.

“As a coach I respect it,” he said. “I see the need for it, if the player needs time to come back, whether it be five days or five months, he will get it.”

Following the opening day, the committees conducted internal discussions and also held joint meetings with each other on issues that fall into their respective realms of influence.

Among the major topics that were discussed was the IIHF Rule Change procedure, which occurs every four years and will be spearheaded by the Player Safety Committee. Committee chairmen Bob Nicholson, Medical Committee Chairman Henrik Bach Nielsen, and Athlete’s Committee Chairman Vladislav Tretiak brought their three committtees together for an afternoon session and tabled early discussions for proposed rule changes.

The committees also discussed plans for the creation of an online player safety ressource platform, designe to share safety education to parents and coaches and also promote good technical skills to ice hockey players.

The final session concluded on Friday, 9th December with each Committee presenting its action plan for the upcoming season.



## Celebrating 20 years

### Continental Cup finale in Ritten

By Martin Merk



The stage is set for the 2016/17 IIHF Continental Cup, a tournament that is celebrating its 20th anniversary as one of the longest lasting pan-European club competitions.

The schedule and location for the 2017 IIHF Continental Cup Final is now known. Host Ritten Sport will play its first game against Kazakh champion Beibarys Atyrau.

The Nottingham Panthers and the Odense Bulldogs will play the early game on the opening day, 13th January.

[Click here for the full game schedule](#)

The tournament will be hosted from 13th to 15th January in Ritten, a town near Bolzano in the northern Italian region of South Tyrol. The four teams qualified for the final tournament through the semi-final round that was played in November.



From left: Nottingham Panthers, Odense Bulldogs, Ritten Sport, and Beibarys Atyrau will contest the 20th Continental Cup.

It will be the second time that the Continental Cup Final will take place in Italy after 2003 when Milan co-hosted the event with Lugano, Switzerland.

The winner of the 2017 IIHF Continental Cup will get the chance to play in the Champions Hockey League 2017/2018 pending formal approval by the CHL board.

This was the case with the last three winners – the Stavanger Oilers from Norway in 2014,

Neman Grodno from Belarus in 2015 and the Rouen Dragons from France in 2016.

The ticket sale for the final tournament has opened. Tournament packages for all six games are available for €55, a single-game ticket can be purchased for €17.50.

[Click here to order tickets online](#)

The 2016/2017 season is the Continental Cup's 20-year-anniversary season.

The tournament will be hosted from 13th to 15th January in Ritten, a town near Bolzano in the northern Italian region of South Tyrol. The four teams qualified for the final tournament through the semi-final round that was played in November.

The winner of the 20th IIHF Continental Cup is far from certain as the field is very balanced. None of the four teams competing has ever made it this far in the tournament, but the Nottingham Panthers have come close in the past and will look to become the first team in history from the UK to win the Continental Cup.

In fact, none of the participating clubs' home countries have ever had a Continental Cup champion, so whichever team wins a tenth nation will join the other nine European countries that can claim to have won at least one Continental Cup title.

In recognition of the Continental Cup's 20-year-anniversary season, a commemorative video was created to celebrate the tournament and its past winners.

[Click here to view the video](#)

Max Pattis, Soren Kottai, Kasper Glimborg,



## Euro-NHL transfers

### Swedes, Finns lead charge

By Martin Merk

**The number of European players trying to make the NHL remains stable at a high level. 60 new players either signed their first contracts with their NHL teams or even moved to play in an NHL organizations.**

[Click here for the full list of players](#)

From those 60 players, 46 were with teams in Europe in the last season while 14 came via North American junior or college teams. However, none of the latter group has made the NHL team yet. Those rookies who have remained with the NHL teams at this stage came from European professional club teams from leagues such as the Finnish Liiga, the Russian-based KHL, the Swedish Hockey League (SHL) or the Swiss NLA.

One of them is the Finnish forward in the picture. Patrik Laine, who moved from Tappara Tampere to the Winnipeg Jets, leads all NHL rookies in scoring (18 points) and goals (12).

Since a slow year in 2009 with only 32 signed



From left: Jesse Puljujarvi, Sebastian Aho, and Patrik Laine led a bumper crop of young Finnish talent going to the NHL.

European players, the number of new arrivals has been consistent between 53 and 62. The class of 2016 thus is one of the biggest groups and up from 56 last year. Additionally, one European player returned from Europe to the NHL, Russian national team forward Alexander Radulov, who moved from CSKA Moscow to the Montreal Canadiens but has played in the NHL before.

Sweden is back as the leading nation in this statistic. After a slow year by recent Swedish standards with 12 freshly signed players in 2015, the number rose to 22 this year. Finland is second and saw its number increase from 12 to an all-time

high 13 new players followed by Russia (8) and the Czech Republic (7). The only other two nations with more than one new player are Denmark (3) and Slovakia (2).

For Denmark it's a comeback with a record number for the country after no players one year ago. Philip Larsen and Patrick Bjorkstrand played in the KHL last season with a Finnish and Croatian club team respectively while Patrick Russell left home as a 16-year-old to play four years as a junior in Sweden and three years in the U.S.. Of the trio Larsen is currently the only player left in the NHL having appeared in 13 games for the Vancouver Canucks.

Among those with the biggest decrease are Switzerland (from 5 to 1), Russia (from 12 to 8) and Germany (from 2 to 0). In the last decade Germany only once had no player moving to the NHL, in 2012.

The list also includes two remarkable re-entries. Goaltender Mantas Armalis is the first player from Lithuania to --move to an NHL organization since Darius Kasparaitis (1992) and Dainius Zubrus (1996), the only two NHL players from the Baltic country. The Lithuanian national team goalie, who spent his career in Sweden previously, is currently with the AHL's San Jose Barracuda after having been signed by the Sharks.

Hungary's first player to sign with an NHL team since Janos Vas in 2005 is a goalie as well. Adam Vay was one of the discoveries of the 2016 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in which Hungary got its first top-level victory in 77 years, against Belarus. He moved from Hungarian club team Debrecen to the Minnesota Wild organization but is currently playing for the ECHL's Quad City Mallards. Still, he's hoping to become the first player raised in Hungary to make the NHL.

Yohann Auvitu became the next French player to make the NHL. After eight years in Finland he was signed by the New Jersey Devils and made the team.





## World Juniors Live

**TSN has built tournament into a Canadian ratings machine**

By Andrew Podnieks

The World Junior Championship has taken on a special identity in Canada, growing from humble beginnings into an annual holiday tradition in the country.





**When you think of hockey immortality, you think of the Stanley Cup or Olympic gold. When you think of 99, you think of Wayne Gretzky.**

And when you think of the World Junior Championship in Canada, you think of TSN.

This was not always so. In the early days of the U20, TSN didn't exist and TV coverage in Canada and around the world was scant. That all changed in 1991, when TSN came on the air and decided to embrace the world of international hockey.

"When Canada beat Russia to win gold in '91, that really got us going," said TSN Vice-President and Live Events Executive Producer Paul Graham, who has been with the broadcaster all this time.

"Next year, in Fussen, our coverage was still modest. We didn't even cover all of Canada's games; we had a crew of maybe four or five. Things really started to change in 1993 when Canada won gold again to start a run of five years in a row. That team had some big names—Paul Kariya, Chris Pronger, Alexandre Daigle. The Swedes had Peter Forsberg and Mikael Nylander."



*The 1991 IIHF World Junior Championship broadcast on TSN reached 1.4 million viewers, a network record at the time.*

Of course, all teams can't win every year, so besides being the country of origin for the game, promoting a winning team can't hurt.

But as Graham points out, there's more to it than golden luck.

"Canada's winning really helped, but we really got behind the event in every way possible," he continued. "We started to promote the players and the rivalries, used it with the draft. We dedicated various platforms to promote the tournament and the players."

As well, TSN worked with the two most prominent members of the hockey community. "We worked closely with the IIHF to make it a mini-World Championship," Graham said. "We made it top-notch coverage, and we also worked with Hockey Canada. They always wanted to start the tournament with an easy game and get a feel for the event. We convinced them to start with a bang—Canada-Russia on Boxing Day! And, when we can, we finish the round robin with Canada and the U.S. on New Year's Eve. That generated excitement right from the first day through the first round."

Several years ago Canada was automatically awarded the U20 every other year by the IIHF, a guarantee that helped TSN, of course, but one that was necessitated by the lower profile that the event had in Europe. That has since changed.

"In recent years, the interest in Europe has grown incredibly," Graham enthused. "Ufa was a huge success, then Malmö, and last year in Finland. Those were countries you used to see maybe 100 fans at games; now big rinks are sold out. And TV coverage has expanded tremendously in those countries, and even places like Belarus and Latvia are picking up some games. The Europeans now get it, and the juniors is growing."





Andre Ringette / HHOF-IIHF Images

Graham continued this thread. “In Canada, the World Juniors is a family tradition between Christmas and New Year’s. The kids play hard, and you know they’ll all be in the NHL one day soon. I think it’s important now to think of it as a world tournament, not just Canada. Last year, we really pushed Laine and Puljujarvi because we knew one of them at least would be with a Canadian team, and they were among the best undrafted players in the world.”

And as Graham pointed out, the days of Canada’s dominance are at an end. “One thing is clear; it’s not Canada’s tournament any more,” he noted.

“I think five teams in the last six years have won, and the chances of any country winning five in a row the way Canada did twice is very

unlikely. I mean, 2015 was a heck of a team for Canada, and they just barely won.”

TSN is happy to see popularity overseas and over the last 20 years has put more and more effort into making its broadcasts of the highest calibre. “We put our top people at the event,” Graham added. “Gord Miller is as good as it gets for play-by-play; James Duthie is the best host; no one knows junior hockey like Craig Button, and Bob McKenzie is the most respected voice in the game.”

“I give out certificates to everyone who does the juniors every year,” Graham revealed. “It’s



Andrea Cardin / HHOF-IIHF Images

a huge sacrifice, and we try to make them as comfortable as possible, but still, they’re giving up their Christmas. Some have been with us for more than 20 years. It’s fantastic.”

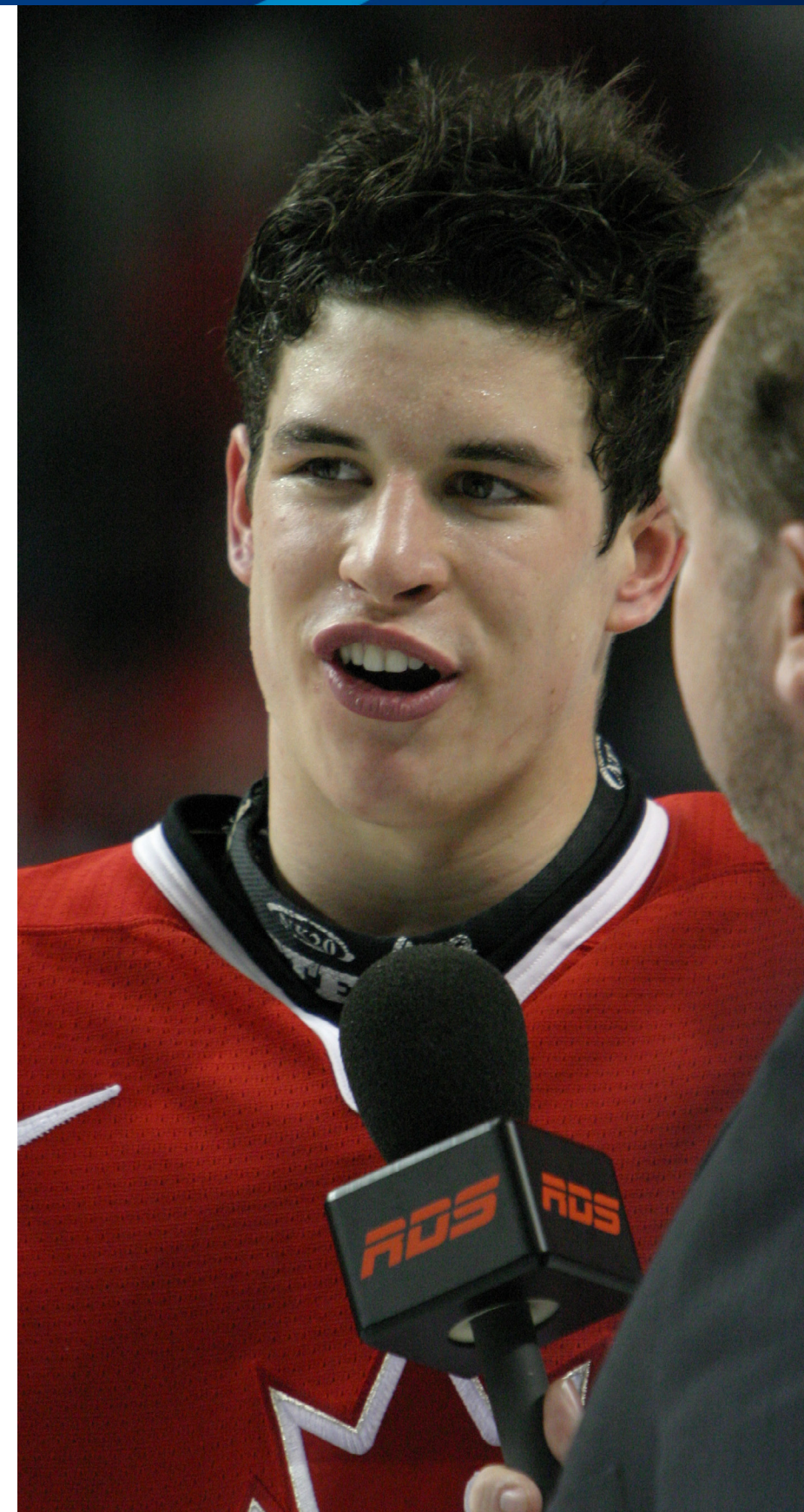
## BY THE NUMBERS

**-The World Junior Championship has accounted for nine of the 15 most-watched programs in TSN history**

**-TSN had more than 120 production staff working in Toronto and Montreal during the 2015 World Juniors**

**-The 2011 gold medal game drew a record 6.1 million viewers. The 2015 final drew 5.95 million viewers**

**-More than 2.7 million unique Canadian viewers watched Finland’s 4-3 overtime win on home ice over Russia in the 2016 World Juniors**





## Next generation

### U18 Women's Worlds heads to Europe

By Andrew Podnieks



**The Czech Republic has a big act to follow in January 2017 as Zlin and Prerov get set to host the upcoming IIHF U18 Women's World Championship.**

Last year, in St. Catharines, Canada, the tournament shattered several single-game attendance records (topping out at 5,516 for the Canada-United States gold-medal game) as well as total attendance for the tournament (34,520 for the 21 games).

Those records might last along time, but the Czechs have an outstanding event lined up all the same. It all begins with the North American rivalry, which is as fierce as ever and shows no signs of slowing down. Since the inaugural WW18 in 2008, the teams have won all gold, the U.S. currently holding a 5-4 edge as we head to the 10th edition in 2017.

The hosts have won two medals in this event, bronze in 2008 and 2014. Although they fi-



*They will be challenged against the North American teams, but 2017 hosts Czech Republic could be primed for a medal.*

nished fifth last year, they did so with one 15-year-old (Magdalena Erbenova) and eight 16-year-olds. As well, the Czechs lost by a slim 3-2 score to eventual bronze winners Sweden in last year's quarter-finals and then beat Finland, 3-1, in the game to decide 5th place. Things look promising for the Czech team to have a chance to finish on the podium.

At the other end of the spectrum, 2017 will see the return of Japan, which was demoted after the 2015 WW18 and earned promotion last year by winning Division I in Miskolc, Hungary. France was relegated last year and will be in Division I this year.

The Japanese cannot be taken lightly after

last year's win with a team that has 14 players eligible to return, including goalie Ayu Tono-saki, who posted a 5-0 record last year and allowed just two goals in 275 minutes of play (GAA 0.44).

Switzerland counted heavily on offence from Alina Muller last year. She led the entire tournament in goals (7) and points (9), but she is now with the senior team. Who will lead the offense this year is up for debate. On the positive, the Swiss were the youngest team by far last year, boasting two players born in 2001, nine in 2000, and four in 1999. This will be an experienced team, many members of which are still eligible for 2018 as well.

Sweden placed third last year, but the Finns last won a bronze in 2011. Nevertheless, their developmental programs are strong. Celine Tedenby, one of Sweden's best forwards last year, is returning, but both goaltenders are no longer eligible. Veterans Petra Nieminen and Jenniina Nylund will be leaders for the Finns.

Russia, meanwhile, won't have Fanuza Kadirova now that she is a senior player, and that's a big problem. She scored five of the team's nine goals last year and assisted on two others. Scoring could end up being a huge challenge for the team unless another talented player can make a big step forward.



## Belarus to Buffalo

### U20s promoted to 2018 World Juniors

By Chapin Landvogt



**Belarus came out on top in Bremerhaven, winning the 2017 IIHF U20 World Championship Division I Group A and with it a return to the top division.**

Ten seconds before the siren rang to complete Belarus' 4-0 victory over Austria, ensuring a move back up into the world's top U20 group, the arena was flooded with the sound of emphatic cheers and the clapping of sticks coming from Belarus' player bench.

Not long thereafter, all those sticks were scattered across the ice along with helmets and gloves as the team hurriedly piled itself on top of its goalie Alexander Osipkov, who had just pitched his first shutout of the event to claim first place overall in the tournament.

"I am so happy right now," shouted team captain Ilya Sushko. "I am happy for this magic end to the tournament. I'm happy for my teammates and the coaching staff. I'm so



*Belarus returns to the top division a year after being relegated, and will make its eighth World Juniors appearance in 2018.*

relieved, because no-one gave us this tournament as a present. All of the teams were good. Every game was difficult. We had to battle for everything. I am so proud of our accomplishments."

The path to promotion was anything but easy for a program that just about looked to be in

shambles after being dominated by Switzerland in the relegation round of last winter's World Juniors in Helsinki, Finland.

After a clear 6-3 victory over France to get the tournament started, the team needed three third-period goals against Norway to ensure a 4-2 win. A 4-3 overtime loss to host Germany

was followed by a hard-fought 3-1 win over Kazakhstan.

The elation head coach Yuri Faikov felt couldn't be masked. "I simply can't find the words to describe how good this feels. We worked so hard for this. I am very proud of everyone involved."

The final 4-0 victory was once again made possible thanks to the offensive contributions of the tournament's top goal scorer Alexander Belevich (6 goals), later named the tournament's top forward, and the point production of linemate Ruslan Vasilchuk, who concluded the game tied for the tournament lead with 10 points, having contribute three to this decisive victory.

"I can't tell you how great this feeling is right now," explained an excited Vasilchuk. "All these opponents were so strong and demanded so much of us to achieve this promotion. If I'm around the top of the scoring list here, it's only been made possible by my teammates, who I'd like to thank for their play and sacrifice in making this experience possible."

The year has now been a real big one of Belarusian hockey, which not only gained promotion here in Bremerhaven, but had also done so domestically in Minsk last spring at the U18 World Championship.

Sven Peter



## Hungary makes it

**Team promoted with help from Italy**

By Szabolcs Zavodsky



**After coming up just short against Poland, the Hungarian national team was given one last chance during an exciting final day to win the gold medal.**

And it used it, defeating Slovenia 4-3 to clinch the tournament on home ice in Budapest.

Poland had to settle for silver, tournament favourites Slovenia and Italy finished in third and fourth place respectively while Ukraine avoiding relegation in the final game of the tournament with a 3-1 win over Great Britain.

On the final day all Poland had to do was beat an Italian team that had nothing on the line. But the Azzuri won 5-4, which meant that the Hungarians controlled their own destiny and Poland needed help from Slovenia.



Laszlo Mudra

Stipsicz summed up the past week for his team: "It is huge that this team stuck together the way it did. I don't think I have ever been a part of a team like this that came back so many times and in so many games in such hard circumstances. We had cohesion and team spirit. It was amazing how this team came together. This is what helped us prevail in all the games throughout the tournament."

With the win Hungary won the gold medals, earned promotion to the Division I Group A and is ranked 17th overall in the U20 program – the highest ranking since 2008.

Like last year Poland finished in second place and Slovenia was third. In the closing match of the day Ukraine beat Great Britain 3-1 in a battle to avoid relegation.

## Gold for Lithuania

**U20s get over hump with win vs. Japan**

By Joeri Loonen



**After three consecutive silver medals, Lithuania finally managed to claim gold at the IIHF Ice Hockey U20 World Championship Division II Group A.**

Four unanswered goals including an Emilijus Krakauskas hat trick were key in a 6-4 victory over Japan on the final day of the tournament.

The 6-4 victory means Lithuania will return to the Division I Group B for the first time since 2010.

Japan, who were relegated to Division II Group A last year after withdrawing from the tournament in France, will remain playing in the Division II for another year.

In a game with the bronze medal at stake, three third-period goals ensured Romania won a roller coaster game against hosts Estonia, 6-5.



Hendrik Soots

Croatia was relegated to Division II Group B after squandering a 2-0 lead against the Netherlands. The Dutch were pointless before this game but leapfrogged Croatia in the standings after a 3-2 victory and with that, sent the Croats down.

Emilijus Krakauskas finished the tournament as the tournament's top scorer with 15 points from five games and was selected the Best Forward of the tournament by the directorate.

His team mate Artur Pavliukov was voted Best Goaltender whereas Japan's Yusuke Kon claimed the best tournament defence-man award.



## Olympic qualifiers

### France, Norway advance to final round

By Henrik Manninen Martin Merk



**Norway and France kept their Olympic dreams alive as they roll on to the Final Olympic Qualification where a place for PyeongChang 2018 is up for grabs.**

Winning the Women's Olympic Qualification Preliminary Round 3 Group F on home ice in Stavanger, Norway sealed their progress after beating Slovakia 6-2 during the final day. Norway, who earlier had seen off Hungary (4-0) and Kazakhstan (5-0), was never shaken nor stirred as they racked up three victories in as many days. Hungary grabbed second spot followed by Slovakia and Kazakhstan.

The win means that Norway will now travel to Arosa, Switzerland, for the final round of the Olympic Qualification where Switzerland, the Czech Republic and Denmark await between 9th and 12th February 2017. The other group of the Final Olympic Qualification includes Japan, Germany, Austria and France.



France (left) and Norway (right) both went undefeated on home ice to secure a place in the Final Olympic Qualification.

Mathea Fischer led the way offensively for Norway with two goals and an assist during their final day win against Slovakia, while at the other end, netminder Ena Nystrom made 19 saves in a team-effort which bodes well for the future.

"Our girls stayed confident all the time, we had a few penalty kills too many, but everyone worked



Regis Godsec, Brian McHattie

together and stayed positive and that's what I expect from them," said Norway head coach Laura Rollins.

Meanwhile, the French women's national team remains in contention for a ticket to the PyeongChang 2018 Olympics.

The French finished in first place ahead of Italy, Latvia and China. The team in blue completed its undefeated streak in its preliminary-round group on home ice in front of 928 fans in Cergy-Pontoise near Paris with an 8-1 win against Latvia and will travel to Tomakomai, Japan, for the Final Olympic Qualification.

Emmanuelle Passard led the way offensively with two goals and an assist in the first period.

"We are very happy and joyful. We came here to win first place and now we're there. Our physical play really made a difference," Passard said.

"We know that in the next round the opponents will be tougher but everything is open and I think we will be able to challenge these teams. The games will be faster, the players will be more skilled and the goalies will be better. We need a strong team play and to play solid defensively because there we will pay immediately for every mistake."

Both tournaments will be played from 9th to 12th February. The winners will join the top-5 nations of the Women's World Ranking – USA, Canada, Finland, Russia and Sweden – and host Korea in the 2018 Olympic women's ice hockey tournament.



## Gallery



Belarus forward Dmitri Buinitski with a breakaway chance against German netminder Mirko Pantkowski at the U20 Worlds Division I Group A.



The Lithuanian U20 players cheer their goalie after beating Japan in Division II Group B.



Hungary celebrates its first victory in the Division I Group B category since 2003.





Brian McHattie

Norwegian forward Millie Sirum scores the 2-1 goal on Slovak netminder Romana Kiapesova at the Olympic Qualification.



Regis Godec

France won on home ice in Cergy-Pontoise and will travel to Tomakomai, Japan, for the Final Olympic Qualification.



Kuan-Wen Wang

Chinese Taipei won 2-1 in the deciding game against Belgium, to finish first in the 2017 IIHF Women's World Championship Division II Group B Qualification and earn its first ever participation in the Women's World Championship program.



## French connection

### Luc Tardif brings the Worlds to Paris

By Andrew Podnieks

**When Luc Tardif was growing up in Trois-Rivieres, Quebec, he never could have envisaged the hockey life that was to be laid out before him.**

Yet after some four decades in Europe, he is more French than Canadian, and his wildest ambitions for the French ice hockey federation have been realized. Along with serving as French Ice Hockey Federation President, Tardif is heavily involved in the IIHF Council as Treasurer, and will co-chair both the upcoming 2017 World Junior Championship and the 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship.

#### How did you end up in Europe in the first place?

I played all of my junior hockey at Trois-Rivieres and then went to the University of Quebec in Trois-Rivieres. After I graduated, I was asked about playing in Brussels.

It had never occurred to me to continue playing hockey, but I love travel and adventure, so



Luc Tardif and fellow IIHF Council Member Franz Reindl are leading the 2017 World Championship organization.

I said yes. I planned on staying one year, but I met my wife there and never went back to Quebec.

#### But Brussels was merely the starting point, wasn't it?

Yes. After my second year there, I played in a tournament at the end of the season in Chamonix. It was incredible. I fell in love with the city

and played there for eight years. By this time, I was more European than Canadian.

#### And from there you moved north?

In 1984, I was offered a chance to play in Rouen. I said I would go but only if I could do more than just play. I wanted a new challenge.

We were promoted from second division to

first after my first year, and five years later we won the championship.

I think now it's the most successful hockey city in France. We've won more league championships, the Continental Cup, developed kids leagues.

#### You said that you wanted to do more than just play. What do you mean?

In France, the organization of hockey was different from Canada. Ice hockey was one of 14 sports under the umbrella federation. The president of the ice hockey federation asked me to become involved in the administration side, and I accepted. This became a very political job. I felt we needed an independent organization, and on April 30, 2006, we achieved that goal. It was the greatest moment of my hockey life.

#### Once you had achieved this independence, what was the next step?

We needed our own centre where we would have our offices and an arena for all national programs to train and practice and play. We found land in Cergy-Pontoise, and the city was very helpful with us. They contributed 17 million Euros of a 27 million Euro budget to build our dream home.

Minas Panagiotakis / IIHF Images





**In addition to your tireless work with the French federation, though, you have had a career job and worked with the IIHF. How was this possible?**

I have also been a commercial engineer in France with Bouygues for 27 years, and I became involved in the IIHF in 2008 when Murray Costello asked me to join the Competition Committee. Four years later, René Fasel asked me to join the Council and soon after I was also on the Executive Committee. I admit, there have been times when I wasn't sure I could do it all, but it's been incredible.

**How did you get the World Championship back to Paris?**

It all began late one night when Franz Re-

indl and I were having a late-night talk. He wanted to bid on the 2017 championship, but he was interested in a partnership.

We have been in the top pool now for ten years. It has never been easy, but we have stayed up every year. As a result, we had wanted to host, but we didn't feel we could do it on our own.

**How does hosting fit into the larger plans of the French federation?**

Hosting is another huge step for us. We now have three players in the NHL, several more in the KHL, and I believe we're continuing to grow.

I hope that after 14 days next May there will be a new perspective of hockey in France, from the fans, the media, the players, from other nations. We're very excited. It doesn't get better than this.

**What about the future, after Paris next year?**

We are building new arenas across the country every year, but it is still a regional sport. In some areas, it's very popular, and in others it isn't well known at all.

It's a challenge, but I think we're succeeding. A key element is the Accord Arena in Paris. It was built in 1985 but had a 100 million Euro renovation last year. We need Paris to be a centre for us.

**And on ice?**

Of course, the biggest thing that will help French hockey is winning. When we beat Russia in 2013 and Canada the next year, we were on the front page of the news. When we don't win big games, people aren't so interested.



**Luc Tardif**  
President,  
FIHF



- Born: March 29, 1953 in Trois-Rivières, Canada
- Played ice hockey in Brussels, Chamonix and Rouen
- France's Chef de Mission for 2014 Olympics in Sochi
- Currently serving on IIHF Council as Treasurer





# Coming up

## 2017 IIHF World Junior Championship

CANADA, Montreal and Toronto  
26.12.2016 - 05.01.2017

## 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey U20 World Championship Division II Group B

SPAIN, Logrono  
07.01.2017 - 13.01.2017

## 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey U20 World Championship Division III

NEW ZEALAND, Dunedin  
16.01.2017 - 22.01.2017

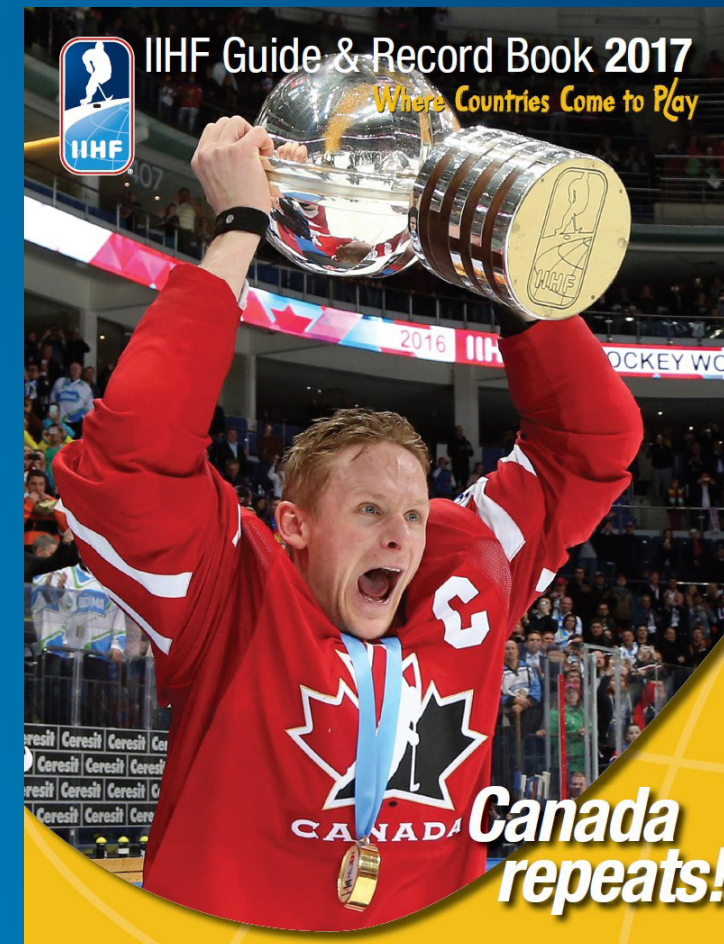
## 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship

CZECH REPUBLIC, Zlin and Prerov  
07.01.2017 - 14.01.2017

## IIHF Continental Cup Final

ITALY, Ritten  
13.01.2017 - 15.01.2017

[Click here for full IIHF Calendar of Events](#)



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