



IceTimes

March 2017 / Vol. 21, No. 2

Cologne 2010

Paris 1951

Past to present

Hockey returns to
Cologne and Paris



From the IIHF President

A beautiful union

By René Fasel

Germany and France are “Together for 2017” and ice hockey fans couldn’t be happier.

This will be a special tournament. The 2017 World Championship is the result of an unprecedented cooperative effort between Germany and France to co-host a top-level international ice hockey tournament.

For Paris, this will be the first time that this European capital has hosted the World Championship since 1951. This city is the birthplace of international ice hockey, the site where the IIHF was founded in 1908.

Much has changed since then, we started with six countries and now count over 75 member national associations, 16 of which will compete at this World Championship.

For a co-hosting effort, I think that the organizers chose two perfect venues. Cologne will have the usual Carnival atmosphere, and who can argue with Paris in the spring?

One of Germany’s great hockey towns, Cologne will host the World Championship for the fourth time. Our last visit in 2010 drew record crowds and showed off the city as a prime destination for ice hockey fans, and I expect another fantastic atmosphere in and around LANXESS arena.

Paris’ AccorHotels Arena is a fantastic venue and located right along the banks of the Seine. It has been a long time since IIHF World Championship hockey has been played in the City of Light, and I look forward to the Group B teams putting on a great show for the local ice hockey fans.

I wish the best of luck to all of the participating teams, and expect another great competition on the ice. I hope that this tournament will also serve as a showcase for the German and French national teams to their local fans.

These two countries have made fantastic progress in their hockey programs and now count themselves among the best ice hockey nations competing in the highest division of the World Championship.

I would like to thank the 2017 Organizing Committee along with the German and French Ice Hockey Associations for their excellent cooperation to prepare for this tournament, and

all of the volunteers for their hard work and dedication.

I look forward to seeing you all at the 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship, and hope that you will enjoy your experience in Cologne and Paris. For ice hockey fans attending the tournament, you can read our travel tips on page 10.

During the World Championship we will also have our usual events like the IIHF Annual Congress and the Hall of Fame Induction ceremony. The latter in particular is something I am very excited about. Some of the greatest stars of the modern ice hockey world will be joining our ranks this year, from Joe Sakic to Teemu Selanne, Saku Koivu to Angela Ruggiero to Tony Hand, these players are legends in the game.

We will also hold our Transfer of Knowledge Workshop during the tournament, bringing in future World Championship hosts to share ideas on how best to deliver our biggest tournament.

As we move into the 2017 IIHF World Championship, I am encouraged by the spirit and cooperation displayed by our two host nations, and I hope that they can set a great example for future tournament hosts.



News and Notes

IIHF

The IIHF has named **Blanka Elekes Szentágotai** as its new Women's Program Manager, overseeing all aspects of international women's ice hockey development.



With an education background in journalism and marketing and work experience in the film business, Blanka started working in ice hockey over a decade ago at Hungarian club Fehérvár AV19.

As international manager she oversaw the club's joining of the Erste Bank Eishockey League (EBEL) and served the past three years as the league's vice-president.

Long-time top referee **Danny Kurmann** joins the IIHF as an Officiating Manager as of 1st October 2017.



Kurmann has officiated in the Swiss National League A since 1989 when he start-

ed as a linesman until last April when he called his last game in the final series. In the Swiss league the 51-year-old became a referee in 1993 and in 1997 he was hired as a full-time referee for the Swiss Ice Hockey Federation, officiating over 2,000 games in the NLA and NLB.

His impressive international resume includes officiating in three Olympic Winter Games (2002, 2006, 2010), ten top-level IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships between 1999 and 2012 and six IIHF World Junior Championships. He called both games of the best-of-two World Championship final in 1999, three World Championship bronze medal games and three gold medal games at the World Juniors.

Stefanie Horat has also joined the IIHF as Finance Coordinator.



Born in Ingenbohl, Switzerland, Horat studied sport at the university in Bern with one semester abroad at the University of Calgary. She holds a bachelor degree in sport and sport science and has previously worked as a youth sport project manager. She played ice hockey for 17 years including two years for the Swiss National Team.

CANADA

Jon Cooper (Tampa Bay, NHL) has been named head coach of its National Men's Team in his first stint with Hockey Canada. Cooper will be joined behind the bench by assistant coaches Gerard Gallant, Dave Hakstol (Philadelphia, NHL), and Dave King.

The coaching staff was selected by members of the management group announced earlier in the year: general manager Ron Hextall (Philadelphia, NHL); assistant general manager Sean Burke (Montreal, NHL); director of player personnel Larry Carriere (Montreal, NHL); and Scott Salmond, vice-president of hockey operations and national teams with Hockey Canada.

LATVIA

The Latvian Hockey Federation named **Karlis Zirnis** its new U20 national team head coach.

The 39-year-old has been working as an assistant coach with the men's and U20 national teams at several occasions during the last five seasons including stints at the 2014 Olympics and the last four World Championships.

Zirnis grew up in Latvia and represented his country at the 1995 U18 European Championship C-Pool and the 1996 and 1997 U20 World Championship B-Pool tournaments shortly after

the country's independence. Since 1997 he has been living in North America where he played college and minor-league hockey (CHL, SPHL) in the U.S. until 2010. Afterwards he worked as a scout and coach. This season he has been the head coach of junior team Shreveport Mudbugs of the NAHL after three years as head coach of the Nashville Jr. Predators.

USA

Jeff Blashill, who recently completed his second season as head coach of the NHL's Detroit Red Wings, has been named head coach of the 2017 U.S. Men's National Team that will compete in the upcoming World Championship.

Blashill will be making his debut as head coach of the U.S. Men's National Team. He has previously been involved with U.S. teams in international competition as goaltending coach for the 2009 U.S. National Junior Team at the IIHF World Junior Championship and as assistant coach for both the U.S. Junior Select Team at the 2009 World Junior A Challenge and the U.S. National Under-18 Select Team at the 2006 Ivan Hlinka Memorial Tournament.

Before joining Detroit, Blashill for three seasons (2012-15) was the head coach of the Grand Rapids Griffins, the Red Wings' AHL affiliate.

Obituaries

JOSEF AUGUSTA

Josef Augusta, a star player with the Czechoslovak national team in the 1960s and '70s and equally successful coach later in life has passed away at the age of 70 in Jihlava after a lengthy fight with pancreatic cancer.

Augusta, a left winger, was active with the national team for a decade, later coached the team to success as well. The native of Havlickuv Brod also had a lengthy career with his club team, HC Dukla Jihlava, for whom he started in 1966.

Internationally, Augusta played at the 1969 World Championship at age 22. Czechoslovakia won a bronze medal in the closest tournament ever. All three medallists finished tied with records of eight wins and two losses, but the Soviets and Swedes placed higher because of the goal difference.

Augusta also won silver medals in 1974, 1975, and 1978, but 1976 was his biggest year on the international stage. Augusta helped the Czechoslovakia win silver at the Olympics in Innsbruck in February, and then in September he was named to the team for the inaugural Canada Cup.

Although Augusta didn't play internationally after 1978, he continued to play for Dukla Jihlava until 1982. In all, he won eight national championships with his club team. After retiring, he turned to coaching, first as an assistant with Jihlava and then assuming head coaching duties in 1996.

His experience behind the bench at the league level earned him an assignment as assistant coach to former linemate Ivan Hlinka at the 1999 World Championship, where the Czechs won gold.

Augusta was then head coach for the next three seasons, winning gold again in 2000 and 2001 during what was the very epitome of Czech hockey success (often called the golden hat trick). He also coached the team at the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake, where the team finished 7th.

Augusta's son, Patrik, also had a fine hockey career, both in the NHL and with the Czechs at the 1992 World Championship and Olympics.

GUSTAV BUBNIK

Augustin "Gustav" Bubnik, a player with the Czechoslovakian national team and coach abroad, passed away on 18 April in Prague,

at the age of 88. Bubnik was born in Prague in 1928. He played at the 1948 Olympics at age 19, scoring five goals in four games and winning a silver medal. The team played Canada to a 0-0 tie during the tournament and lost the gold to Canada only because of goals ratio.

A year later, Bubnik played for his country at the World Championship. This time, the Czechs beat Canada, 3-2, in the first game of the final round robin. Bubnik scored the second goal late in the middle period to break a 1-1 tie and propel the team to this historic victory. The Czechs won gold, and Canada silver.

In addition to his international career, Bubnik had a lengthy career in his domestic league, playing many years with LTC Praha and later with Slovan Bratislava. Bubnik had two brothers, Vaclav and Vlastimil, who also played for the national team, but the three never played together.

Bubnik was part of the 1950 Czech team that was arrested en masse on their way to the 1950 World Championship in London. All of the players were charged with treason and many received long jail sentences. Bubnik received a sentence of 14 years but was released after five. During his imprisonment he lost 30kg (66 lbs.).

After recovering from his incarceration, Bubnik turned to coaching, a pursuit he continued for two decades. Although he was behind the bench in the Czech league, he also coached Finland for three years, including the 1968 Olympics and 1967 and '69 World Championship. He later moved to the Netherlands, coaching that national team at the 1981 and '82 Worlds.

In addition to his coaching, Bubnik entered politics and was an MP for the Civic Democratic Party.

VLADIMIR PETROV

Hockey legend Vladimir Petrov passed away on 28 February of cancer.

Petrov was one of the most decorated players in IIHF hockey history. He played in eleven World Championships between 1969 and 1981, winning gold nine times, as well as a silver and bronze medal. He was named to the tournament all-star team four times during the 1970s (1973, '75, '77, and '79). In each instance, he was the leading scorer in the tournament.

Petrov ranks fourth all time in point scored at the World Championships. His 152 points is behind only Alexander Maltsev (153) and longtime linemates Valeri Kharlamov (156)

and Boris Mikhailov (164). Petrov's 74 goals is tied for third all time with Kharlamov, trailing Maltsev (77) and Mikhailov (98). Additionally, Petrov's 78 assists is second all-time behind only Kharlamov's 82. He also set the World Championship record by accruing 34 points at the 1973 tournament, the most ever.

Petrov also won three medals at the Olympics—gold in 1972 and '76 and silver in 1980. He was also one of the top players for the Soviets at the historic 1972 Summit Series against Canada.

In league play, the Mikhailov-Petrov-Kharlamov trio led CSKA Moscow to eleven Soviet championships. Petrov led the league in scoring four times, and in 1969-70 he had an historic season in which he scored 51 goals in just 43 games.

Vladimir Vladimirovich Petrov was born in Krasnogorsk, not far from Moscow, on June 30, 1947. He was only 18 when he joined Krylya Sovetov in the Soviet league, but after two seasons he transferred to the superior CSKA Moscow, where he played for the next 14 years. After finishing his international career at the 1981 Worlds, Petrov still played two more years in the Soviet league with SKA Leningrad before retiring in 1983.

Petrov remained very active in the game at

home after hanging up his skates. He coached briefly and in 1992 was named president of the Ice Hockey Federation of Russia, a position he held for two years. He later worked for Spartak Moscow, CSKA Moscow, and SKA St. Petersburg as club manager.

Petrov was inducted into the IIHF Hall of Fame in 2006, joining Kharlamov (1998) and Mikhailov (2000) among the legends of international hockey.

IIKKA SINISALO

Ilkka Sinisalo, a right winger for Finland internationally and a long-time member of the Philadelphia Flyers, fought a valiant three-year battle with prostate cancer that ended with his death on 5th April in Finland. He was just 58 years old.

Sinisalo died peacefully, in his sleep, surrounded by family at home in Helsinki. Only those close to him knew of his illness.

Sinisalo was discovered by the Flyers in 1980, a time when Finns had not yet caught the eye of NHL scouts. He made his NHL debut the following season at age 23 and made history by scoring his first career goal on a penalty shot, something only five players of the more than 7,500 in league history have accomplished.

Undaunted by the long schedule and tough play of the NHL, Sinisalo increased his goal production every year for the first five years of his career, going from 15 as a rookie to 21, 29, 36, and 39 in 1985/86.

Good speed, good shot, and a knack for creating offence were Sinisalo's trademarks. In all, he played nine seasons with the Flyers before finishing his NHL career with Minnesota and Los Angeles, after which he returned to Finland to play.

After retiring in 1996, he joined Espoo as general manager and soon after started scouting for the San Jose Sharks. In 2004, the Flyers hired him to fulfill the same duties which he continued to do until his passing.

In addition to his fine NHL career, which included 582 regular-season games and 68 more in the playoffs, Sinisalo represented Suomi on several occasions. He played at the 1978 World Juniors in Quebec, Canada, as well as the 1981 Canada Cup. Additionally, he played in the World Championship three years running – 1981, 1982, 1983.

Siniaslo's son, Tomas, also developed into a pro. Tomas was born in Philadelphia during Ilkka's NHL career but has since played mostly in Finland and Denmark.

BOB WILKINSON

Bob Wilkinson, a popular figure in UK ice hockey for more than 35 years, has passed away on 28 February at the age of 74.

Bob's love of the sport began in Durham in 1982 after he retired from the army following 23 years' of service. After taking charge of Durham juniors, followed by the under-19 team, he went onto become England U16s manager in 1984.

Two years later, he was asked by the then British Ice Hockey Association to form the first Great Britain Under-16 team. In 1987, Bob also helped form the first Conference tournament.

Bob was appointed as a director of the EIHA in 2001 and continued running their junior section, overseeing massive growth within junior ice hockey. He went on to be appointed as director for the England national teams. In 2002, he was appointed to the IHUK board and had the responsibility of overseeing Great Britain U20s, GB U18s and Great Britain Women.

During his time in charge of these programmes, he was part of four gold-medal success, four silver and four bronze. He also served as chairman of Ice Hockey UK between 2005 and 2008 and was made an honorary member of IHUK in March of last year - the first person to receive such an accolade.

Back in the dance

Switzerland, Japan qualify for Olympics

By Adam Steiss



Switzerland and Japan's women's national teams have punched their tickets to the 2018 Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang, Korea.

The Swiss defeated the Czech Republic in the deciding game 4-1 and qualifying for the country's fourth straight Olympics.

Swiss star forwards Alina Muller and Lara Stalder each scored twice, while Florence Schelling allowed an early goal but shut the door down on the Czechs the rest of the way to earn Player of the Game honours.

"Unbelievable, it's what we've been dreaming of since last summer," said Stalder, who finished the tournament as the top point scorer with eight goals and four assists in three games.

The Swiss came into the game as the clear favourites, veterans of three Olympics and



The last teams to qualify for the women's ice hockey event, Japan (left) and Switzerland (right) will compete in PyeongChang.

Sochi 2014 bronze medallists. However, Switzerland's only other game against the Czechs at the senior women's level came at the 2016 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship, a 3-1 Czech victory.

But the Czechs had a tall order to fill, trying to contain a team that has scored ten goals in



two games and led by forwards Lara Stalder and Alina Muller who combined for 12 points in that span.

The Swiss will compete in Group B alongside Sweden, Korea, and fellow Final Olympic Qualification Group D winners Japan.

Playing host in the other Olympic Qualification tournament, Japan veteran Hanae Kubo came through when it mattered most as Japan beat Germany 3-1 to secure a place in the 2018 Olympic Winter Games.

With Japan holding a slim 2-1 lead, Kubo's blast from the top of the faceoff circle with 5:17 left in the third period gave the hosts a two-goal cushion and sent them to their third Olympics following Sochi and Nagano. It was Kubo's tournament-leading fifth goal of the tournament. The 34-year-old forward scored a hat trick in the 6-1 win over Austria on Thursday and added another goal in the 4-1 win over France on Saturday.

"Kubo came through like she has all tournament," said Japan coach Takeshi Yamanaka. "She just knows how to score in important situations and played a huge role for us."

Germany pulled their goaltender with two minutes remaining and desperately tried to get back in it but Japan's defence stood tall.

"I put the players out I knew I could count on and they did a great job," Yamanaka said of the final two minutes.

As impressive as Japan was on offence, they gave up only three goals all tournament and finished with the maximum nine points.

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A return to Paris...paired with Cologne

Top class cities set to host the 2017 World Championship

By Andrew Podnieks



France has maintained its position in the top pool for a decade now. Although it has finished no higher than 8th (in 2014), there is an impressive consistency ongoing.

That starts with coach Dave Henderson, who has been behind the bench for the entire 10-year run (and more) and forward Laurent Meunier, who has been the captain for the whole time as well (and more).

It was this consistency that led the French Federation to consider putting a bid in to host the World Championship, but when it struggled with the prospect of selling tickets for 64 games, the Germans came forward and offered a partnership.

And so it is that for the first time since 1951, France will play host to the pre-eminent event of the men's hockey schedule this year.

The Lethbridge Maple Leafs represented Canada in 1951 in Paris and won gold with a 6-0 record. France competed in the B Pool and finished second, but this year, with 16 teams, they will play alongside each other and, on May 11, the two teams will meet at the AccorHotels Arena at 20.15 in a much-anticipated match.



Germany and France are joining forces to host the 2017 IIHF World Championship under the banner "Together for 2017".

Richard Wolowicz / HHOF-IIHF Images

Indeed, a key element for the French Federation was to ensure Canada played in Paris, and sure enough ticket sales for the reigning double-gold medallists have been very strong. Under coach Jon Cooper, Canada has several world-class players already committed to the team, notably Matt Duchene, Claude Giroux, Nathan MacKinnon, Wayne Simmonds, and Jeff Skinner.

Champions in 2015 and 2016, the team looks to have plenty of firepower to make it three in a row.

Other teams in the Paris group include Belarus, Czech Republic, Finland, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland. The Swiss, a natural rival, won bronze in 1951 and Norway was right behind

in fourth, but to compare the tournaments is to see how far the IIHF has come. In 1951, there was no Belarus, and the Czechs didn't compete that year (they were Czechoslovakia back then, of course). Slovenia also didn't exist, and the Finns finished dead last, seventh, their glory days still a long way from reaching fruition.

Today, Finland is one of the top six nations and a gold-medal threat every year. Furthermore, its fantastic successes at the junior levels (U18 and U20) indicate the senior team will have many top stars to choose from in the coming years.

This year is a supremely important one for the Czechs. They have not won a WM medal since a bronze in 2012. Four years without a medal is the longest the team has ever gone without a podium finish in nearly a century of World Championship participation. They have to find their way in the post-Jaromir Jagr era (Jagr still plays, of course, but has retired from the national team).

One can look at Slovenia as one might have looked at France 15 years ago—too good for Division I; not quite good enough to compete with the big boys in the top group. Each year is a challenge, and since 2002 it has an almost perfect record of promotion-demotion in successive years. Thus, 2017 will be no different for the team that played in Division I-A last year.



Team Canada is coming off of back-to-back IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship titles and will compete in Paris.

The other half of the Worlds will be played at the Lanxess Arena in Cologne, Germany. The eight teams in that pool include Denmark, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Russia, Slovakia, Sweden, and the United States.

The Swedes have an incredible record, qualifying to play for a medal in 20 of the last 25 years since the playoff format was introduced to the World Championship in 1992. However, two of those five misses were in 2015 and 2016, so like the Czechs they have something to prove this year.

The U.S. has a history of having trouble recruiting top NHLers, so in recent years it has focused on college players. Guess what? The team has won two bronze medals in the last four year years and has been exciting and competitive. Fans will get a thrill out of watching them play even if the Americans aren't yet household names.

Perhaps the model for France, and one of the best IIHF stories in the last two decades, is the play of Denmark. Coming out of nowhere, the Danes moved up to the top pool in 2003 and have never looked back. These are incredibly

exciting times for them as next year's Worlds will be in Copenhagen and Herning, a first for the nation. All eyes at home will be on the team, so count on an inspired tournament.

Host Germany had a tough year in 2015 for the program, but the top men's team has held its own, even qualifying for the quarter-finals last year. They have benefitted from the development of the U18 and U20 programs, and we can expect only their best performance in Cologne.

The Slovaks are in a rebuilding period, trying to find ways to develop talent at home and building from their youth programs to support the senior team. Although they might not win a medal this year, they are heading in the right direction to try to repeat their success of 2002 when they won World Championship gold.

The Russians have won a medal in each of the last three years (gold in 2014, silver in 2015, bronze in 2016), and no matter who puts on the national-team sweater, Russia is Russia. It will compete for a medal as it always does.

Rounding out the Cologne bracket are Italy and Latvia, the former promoted from Division I-A last year, the latter struggling to stay on top but always finding the fight to do just that.



Visiting the Worlds

Springtime in Paris and Cologne

By Lucas Aykroyd

Wondering what to do between games in Paris and Cologne? Whether you prefer books and culture or beer and chocolate, the two host cities will delight you.

In Paris, iconic sights like the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, Notre Dame Cathedral and the Arc de Triomphe are already on most visitors' to-do lists. But there's much more in the French capital. Art lovers can check out the Centre Pompidou, housing France's national modern art museum with more than 100,000 pieces by Pablo Picasso, Andy Warhol, and others. It celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2017. If you prefer Impressionist art, visit the 1986-built Musee d'Orsay with paintings by Claude Monet and Gustave Courbet.

Shopaholics go wild for the high fashion clothing and luxury goods at world-famous department stores like Printemps and Galeries Lafayette on Boulevard Haussmann. Paris arguably remains Europe's culinary mecca, and a few places to try include Daroco, an

upscale Italian trattoria, Assanabel, featuring Lebanese flavors, and Restaurant Champeaux, with classic French cuisine.

Pick up delectable French wines at La Derriere Goutte or La Cave du Pantheon. For the ultimate sugar rush, sample macaroons and pastries at Laduree and Le Moulin de la Vierge.

For the more somber side of life, Pere-Lachaise Cemetery is home to the tombs of Jim Morrison, Frederic Chopin, and Oscar Wilde, among other greats. The Paris Catacombs have been open to the public since 1874, bizarrely housing millions of artistically arranged bones.

Bibliophiles gravitate to Shakespeare and Company, which Vanity Fair dubbed "the most famous independent bookstore in the world." The charmingly jam-packed store has hosted literary icons from Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald to Philip Pullman and Zadie Smith.

In Cologne, you quite literally can't miss the Kolner Dom. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1996, this twin-spired Gothic cathedral offers spectacular photo opportunities.

If you're craving a workout, climb a 533-step spiral staircase to a viewing platform overlooking the Rhine River.

To celebrate our favourite sport, the Deutsches Sport & Olympia Museum is offering a special exhibition called "Eiszeit" (28 April to 28 May). See how international artists interpreted the passion and colour of hockey.

Next to Cologne's old town, the Chocolate Museum is a tantalizing option. Take a guided tour and discover the history of chocolate from the Mayans to modern times, make your own customized candy bar, or stock up at the on-site Hussel shop. Or you can sample Cologne's famous Kolsch beer at the venerable Paffgen brewpub or the outdoor, leafy Biergarten Rathenauplatz.

Did you know that eau de cologne, the famous perfume, was invented in this city in the early 18th century? On Glockengasse, buy a bottle of cologne at Dufthaus 4711, which has utilized the same formula for over 200 years. More shopping variety awaits on Hohe Strasse and Schildergasse.

Whether or not your favourite team wins the gold medal, you can still have a golden experience away from the rinks in Paris and Cologne.



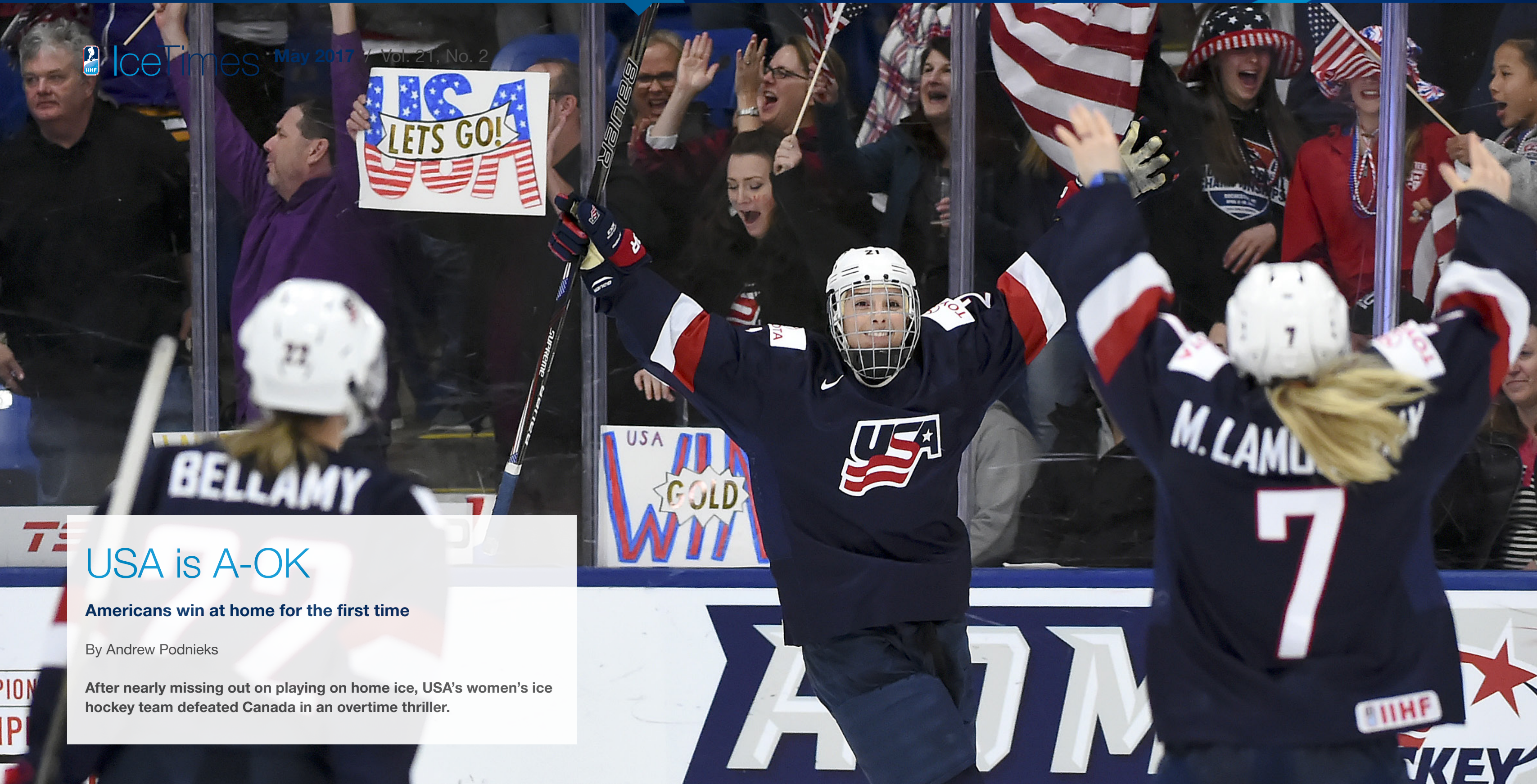
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USA is A-OK

Americans win at home for the first time

By Andrew Podnieks

After nearly missing out on playing on home ice, USA's women's ice hockey team defeated Canada in an overtime thriller.





The 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship started with a comeback and finished with a comeback.

The result was fitting because many games in between were also won by the team not scoring the first goal.

In the opener, Switzerland fell behind the Czechs but rallied, winning 2-1 in overtime.

In the gold-medal game, Canada scored first, then mounted a comeback of its own by scoring late in the third to force overtime. The hero of the tournament, however, was Hilary Knight who took a soft pass from Kendall Coyne and then ripped a hard shot past Shannon Szabados at 10:17 of the fourth period for the gold-medal goal.

This marked the first time the Americans won on home ice, but perhaps more important it marked the fourth straight WW gold-medal win over arch-rivals Canada.

The top three scorers were all American. Coyne and Brianna Decker were tops with 12 points (Coyne also led with five goals), and Knight was third with nine.



USA came through in a big way, winning gold at home after a labour dispute nearly led to a team boycott of the tournament.

The Americans started with an impressive win over Canada, 2-0, and went undefeated in the tournament. Their other closest game came against Finland, which made crucial history of its own. The Finns beat Canada for the first time ever in major competitions, and it did so by playing confident and aggressive hockey.

Three times Finland scored a go-ahead goal, and three times Canada tied it, but a late goal from Ronja Savolainen with 1:41 remaining proved to be the winner. The Finns then rallied from 3-1 down to tie the U.S., and although the home side won, 5-3, it's clear the Finns have become closer to the North Americans than Europeans.

In a surprise matchup, the Finns hammered Germany, 8-0, to win bronze. With Noora Raty in goal, captain Jenni Hiirikoski on defence, and a new crop of young players who are big, fast, and—most important—dedicated, the Finns are heading to PyeongChang brimming with confidence.

This marked the first time ever that Canada lost three games at a World Women's or Olympics. Although Szabados played well, Genevieve Lacasse and Emerance Maschmeyer struggled to prove they are in Szabados's class.

And, although Marie-Philip Poulin has rightly earned a reputation as a big-time player, she was limited to just two goals all tournament and the offence wasn't its usual dominant self.

Another huge story from Plymouth was the performance of the Germans. Promoted from Division I-A this year, they were the eighth seed and surely the weakest team. But, no!

Coach Benjamin Hinterstocker had them playing at a level far greater than expectations. Consider that in their first game they pulled away from Sweden to win, 3-1, their first win against Damkronorna in 16 years.

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They then beat the Czechs, 2-1, thanks to a goal from Laura Kluge with less than two minutes to play. They also came from behind to beat Russia, 2-1, in the quarter-finals. All in all, sensational progress.

For the Czechs, their play started and ended with scoring, or a lack thereof. They lost their first three games by scores of 2-1, 2-1, and 3-1 before finally putting a few pucks in and beating the Swiss, 4-2, in the first game of the relegation. But they followed that with losses of 3-2 and 3-1, and will play in Division I-A next year.

The Swiss are in tough if they hope to repeat as Olympic bronze medallists. They have Florence Schelling in goal, of course, but their two top players—Alina Muller and Laura Stalder—need more help. These two accounted for 17 scoring points and the rest of the team only 19.

They qualified for PyeongChang in February and will stay in the top pool the year after, but more pieces of the puzzle are required at this point.

Sweden won two of five games and is also beset by scoring problems. Sara Grahn had a fine tournament in goal, but it was defenceman Johanna Fallman who led all scor-

ers. Her four goals was double any other teammate, and the team scored just nine times in all.

Russia's Fanuza Kadirova had three goals, but the entire team had but seven while conceding 21. They won bronze last year but didn't look particularly dangerous this time around.

In all, the 2017 Women's Worlds featured some expected results—Canada vs. United States for gold—but also welcomed some terrific surprises. It bodes well for Pyeong-Chang and beyond.

Another huge story from Plymouth was the performance of the Germans...




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Video Highlights:

2017 IIHF Women's World Championship



[Click here to view all the game highlights from the Women's World Championship](#)

Directorate Best
Forward, All-Star, MVP



Brianna Decker, F, USA

5 GP, 3 G, 9 A, 12 P, +11

Decker tied for the scoring lead with teammate Kendall Coyne, each recording 12 points in five games. Decker led all players with nine assists while Coyne was leader in goals with five. She swept the tournament awards for a forward, taking Directorate Top Forward, Media All-Star Forward, and MVP.

Directorate Best
Defenceman, All-Star



Jenni Hiirikoski, D, Finland

6 GP, 3 G, 2 A, 5 P, -3

Finland's star defenceman was once again the best blueliner at the Women's World Championship. She had her fingerprints all over Team Suomi's dominant win over Germany in the bronze medal game, potting a goal and two assists to help Finland win its second bronze in three years.

Directorate Best
Goalkeeper, All-Star



Noora Raty, G, Finland

6 GP, 2.03 GAA, 92.36 SVS%, 2 SO

Noora Raty was a rock between the pipes for her team. She backstopped Finland to its 12th bronze medal, posting a 8-0 shutout against the Germans in the bronze medal game. She was also instrumental in Finland's shocking 4-3 win over Canada in the preliminary round.

USA reclaims gold

Defeat Finland in U18 finale

By Andrew Podnieks



The United States National Team Development Program produced another emphatic U18 victory, knocking off last year's gold medallists, 4-2.

The U.S. won their third gold in the last four U18s and seventh in the last nine, running the table with seven straight wins.

Special teams were decisive. The Americans scored one goal with the extra man and one goal short-handed while Finland was 0-for-6 with the extra man.

"Special teams are always going to set the tone for the game and 5-on-5 sets the tempo," suggested winning coach John Wroblewski. "I think we were great in all facets today. I think our 5-on-5 game was great - we got them running around in their defensive zone and they couldn't get their forecheck going - and our special teams were outstanding as well."



Team USA is back on top of the U18 perch after winning bronze last year. Finland won silver and Russia took the bronze.

More impressive, the Americans have won every top-level gold medal so far this year in IIHF competition--World Juniors, World Women's, Women's U18, and now men's U18.

"I can't describe it," said an ebullient Braeden Tkachuk. "It's an unbelievable feeling. We were confident we could win this and we

all played well as a team. We had great coaching, and we all bought into the system and became brothers."

"Our power play didn't work as it usually does," admitted Kristian Vesalainen, the MVP of the tournament. "They were pretty good in the first period and when they got the chance,

they scored on the power play, so . . . it's disappointing. I think we played hard to the end, but once you get behind like that, it gets really hard. It's disappointing now, but hopefully we appreciate it later."

It was nevertheless another strong showing for silver medallists Finland, who have appeared in the U18 World Championship gold medal game for three straight years.

In the bronze medal game, Sweden created more scoring chances and had the puck more, but Russia scored the goals, taking the bronze with a 3-0 win over Sweden.

The medal was Russia's first in six years at the men's U18. The last one was a bronze in 2011.

"It's not first place," said Kirill Maximov, "but it's still a medal, and it's a good result after the semi-final yesterday. I think we played well as a team and we got a medal - not exactly the one we wanted, but it's better than nothing."

Total attendance for the 31 games at Poprad and Spišská Nová Ves, Slovakia exceeded 73,690, making it the 4th-highest mark in U18 history. France won Division I-A and will play in Russia next year while Latvia lost the relegation series and will play down in Division I-A next year.


IceTimes May 2017 / Vol. 21, No. 2

Video Highlights:

2017 IIHF U18 World Championship



Click here to view all the game highlights from the 2017 IIHF U18 World Championship

Media All-Star team

Goalkeeper: Dylan St. Cyr (USA)
 Defence: Miro Heiskanen (FIN)
 Defence: Maxwell Gidon (USA)
 Forward: Kristian Vesalainen (FIN)
 Forward: Sean Dhooche (USA)
 Forward: Ivan Chekhovich (RUS)

Directorate Best Forward, All-Star, MVP

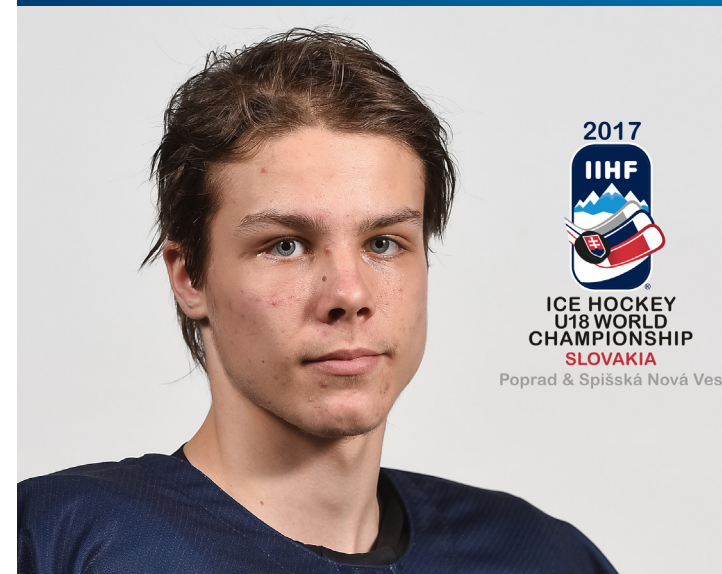


Kristian Vesalainen,
F, Finland

7 GP, 6 G, 7 A, 13 PTS, + 5

Finland's Vesalainen, who led the tournament in goals (6) and points (13) was named MVP, Directorate Best Forward, and made the All-Star team. The 17-year-old definitely raised his NHL draft stock with his 2017 performance, scoring a hat trick against Canada in the preliminary round to win Group A

Directorate Best Defenceman



Miro Heiskanen,
D, Finland

7 GP, 2 G, 10 A, 12 PTS, + 8

The young defenceman was a revelation for the Finns, nearly tying with teammate Vesalainen for the scoring lead and notching twice as many points as the next highest-scoring defenceman. He is projected as a top defensive prospect in the upcoming NHL draft.

Directorate Best Goaltender



Maxim Zhukov
G, Russia

5 GP, 2.63 GAA, 92.59 SVS%

Zhukov helped lead Russia to the semi-finals, putting up a 2.63 GAA through five games. But despite a solid effort, stopping 34 of 36 shots, the Russian netminder from Kaliningrad wasn't able to get his team to the gold medal game, falling 2-1 in overtime to the Finns.

History for France

U18s go to top division for first time ever

By Andy Potts



France won the 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 World Championship Division I Group A and will play in the top division for the first time next year in Russia.

French hockey is on the crest of a wave right now, and Les Bleuets – the young Blues – are making history by winning promotion to the top division of the U18 World Championship for the first time.

An impressive performance in Bled, Slovenia, saw Romain Guibert's squad wrap up top spot in the group with a game to spare. The team finished with a 4-0-0-1 record overall in the tournament.

"Our federation has done a lot of work over the years and I think we have seen better players emerging each year," said team manager Christine Duchamp. "Our clubs are working a lot on [developing youngsters] and we felt our team was better than last



Gregor Podrekar

year, when we only lost games by the odd goal. This year we felt we were stronger, and we had a real chance to win it."

A close relationship between the clubs and the French Ice Hockey Federation has made a big difference.

Changes in the rules for the French championship – at all levels, from the top-flight Ligue Magnus down – made it easier for U18 and U20 players to get ice time in the senior championships and earn valuable experience.

Kazakhstan finished in second place, followed by Denmark, Norway, and Germany. Hungary was relegated to Group B.

Double duty for Bled

Slovenia hosts two U18s, wins Group B

By Andy Potts



Slovenia won the 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 World Championship Division I Group B on home ice, clinching gold with a 4-3 victory over Ukraine.

Slovenia's progress was aided by several returning players. Jugovic, Svetina, Tislar, Sturm, Urukalo, Kapel and goalie Ziga Kogovsek were among those who featured in Italy this time last year, and they demonstrated what they had learned from the experience.

Kogovsek played every minute of his team's campaign, stopping 93.1% of shots for a GAA of 1.61. Jan Drozg, another returnee, led the tournament scoring with 5+8=13 after picking up an astonishing eight-point haul in that huge win over Japan.

Drozg's five-goal tally was matched by team-mate Rok Kapel, as well as Ukraine's Peresunko and Italy's Stephan Deluca, while



Gregor Podrekar

Jugovic was the second top-scorer among defencemen behind Japan's Daiki Miura.

Austria failed to win instant promotion back to Division IA, but did end on a winning note with a 3-2 overtime success over Japan in the final game of the tournament. Marco Rossi was the hero, tying the game with 94 seconds left in regulation time and grabbing the decider at 2:28 of overtime. That meant silver went to the Alps, and bronze to the Far East.

At the foot of the table, newly-promoted Poland battled hard and twice went to overtime. But it failed to record a victory and returns to Division IB next year. Italy took fourth place, one point ahead of Ukraine.

Japan back on top

Defeat Austria, back into top division

By Henrik Manninen



Japan rolled past opponents in the 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship Division I Group A, completing a very successful season for the women's national team.

Exciting times are looming around the corner for Japan with top division hockey and the Winter Olympics to look forward to in 2018.

At the first attempt, Japan's women's national team propelled themselves back into life at the top. In February they won the Olympic Qualification tournament on home ice against Germany to earn their tickets to PyeongChang 2018. They followed this up with a victory on home ice, this time in Sapporo at the Asian Winter Games.

Then in April, they closed out the 2016/2017 season by securing Division I Group A gold and promotion to the next Women's Worlds. Needing only four games to wrap up top spot at the 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Cham-



Japan's won the IIHF Womens' World Championship Division IA, the Asian Winter Games, and qualified for the Olympics.

pionship Division I Group A, their gold medals were sealed following a 4-1 win against hosts Austria, which was also undefeated after the first three games.

"Our strong team defence was the key for us," said head coach Takeshi Yamanaka following their victory where they only conceded four

goals in four games en route to clinching promotion.

Japan will now aim to raise their game for the Winter Olympics in PyeongChang 2018 and the 2019 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship in Finland.

Asia's highest representative in women's hockey had been in cruise control from start to finish at the Division I Group A in Graz.

Emphatically winning the shots 117 against 36 in their three opening games had first seen them edge Hungary 1-0, then blanking Denmark 3-0 in their second game before seeing off a plucky Norway 5-3. When game four came around, Japan had it all in their own hands to wrap up proceedings, as they went head to head with hosts Austria for top spot.

But the Japanese did not waver in front of a hostile crowd in Graz, defeating the Austrians with three unanswered goals en route to a 4-1 victory, then beating bottom-ranked France to preserve an undefeated record and promotion. Austria settled for silver, Norway for bronze.

Japan will have plenty of hard graft ahead of them with their third appearance at the Winter Olympics coming around next year for their experienced crop of roster with an average age of 25.

"Because we are not that tall, we need to focus even more on our speed, but also try and built up strength for us to be able to compete at the highest level," said head coach Yamanaka.

NZ Photo

UAE wins in Asia

Claim 2017 Challenge Cup in shootout

By Adam Steiss



Edging Mongolia 5-4 in its last game, the United Arab Emirates claimed its third IIHF Challenge Cup of Asia title.

Tournament star forward and top scorer Jumah Al Dhaheri got the game winner in the shootout against Mongolia, while goalie Khaled Al Suwaidi stopped both of Mongolia's shooters to seal the gold medal for the Emirati.

The two teams came into the game tied in points after putting up three straight wins in the previous days to set up a winner-take-all clash at The Rink Ice Arena in the Thai capital of Bangkok, which hosted the 2017 Challenge Cup of Asia.

Mongolia built up a 2-0 lead in the first period, and was still up 4-2 halfway through the game before a furious Emirati comeback, led by a pair of goals from Khalifa Al Marhooqi, sent the teams into overtime and eventually closed with



The United Arab Emirates won the tenth edition of the IIHF Challenge Cup of Asia, which was held in Bangkok, Thailand.

a shootout victory for UAE. Marhooqi finished the game with a hat trick, earning him the game's Best Player award.

Al Dhaheri took home both the tournament Top Scorer and Top Forward honours, after posting a sparkling eight goal, six assist stat line in just four games. Hi teammate Al Suwaidi earned the Best Goaltender nod, thanks to a 90.00 save percentage and a 3.00 GAA.

The tenth edition of the Challenge Cup of Asia tournament saw five teams compete in a

four-game round robin. Team Mongolia win its fifth straight medal in the competition, claiming the country's first silver medal ever to go with four bronze in 2013-2016. Tournament hosts Thailand finished ahead of Singapore and Malaysia to claim the 2017 bronze medal.

Team UAE's victory halted the streak of four consecutive tournament victories by Chinese Taipei, which did not participate in the 2017 CCOA after joining the IIHF Championship program where it competed in the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division III.

The IIHF Challenge Cup of Asia is an international ice hockey tournament held annually in Asia, and is designed to provide competitive opportunities for Asian teams that are either in the lower divisions of the IIHF World Championship or do not compete in the World Championship. The first event was held in Hong Kong in 2008.

In the Division I Challenge Cup of Asia, held in April in Kuwait City, tournament hosts Kuwait went unbeaten in three games defeating India, Oman, and Macau.

Earlier in March the Women's Challenge Cup of Asia was held, also in the Thai capital city of Bangkok. The New Zealand U18 women's national team, which competed internationally for the first time, won the tournament. The Womens' Challenge Cup included senior national teams from six Asian countries that are not involved in the IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship program.

The Kiwi girls had an average age of 16 compared to 28 years for the team of host country Thailand, which finished in second place, but it dominated the tournament in five games and edged Thailand 4-3 midway the tournament in a game that eventually decided first place. Thailand finished in second and Singapore in third place.

Gallery



Team USA gets together for a selfie for the third year on a row after beating Canada to win the 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship.



Saana Valkama celebrates with the trophy after winning bronze at the Women's Worlds.



Team Germany finished 4th overall, its best-ever result at the women's top division.



USA's Maxwell Gildon celebrates following a 4-2 win over team Finland in the 2017 IIHF U18 World Championship final.



Team Russia won a U18 gold medal for the first time since 2011, shutting out Sweden 3-0 in the bronze medal game.



Finland's youth program finished the season with a third straight IIHF Ice Hockey U18 World Championship medal.



The 2017 IIHF Women's Challenge Cup of Asia (Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, India, United Arab Emirates, New Zealand, Philippines) together for a photo.



Kids practicing at the Eiffel Tower ice rink, set up to promote the 2017 World Championship.

David Volborth



Kuwait hosted and won the 2017 IIHF Challenge Cup of Asia Division I.

Steve Kingsman/ IIHF-IIHF Images

Germany's Man of Many Matches

Udo Kiessling has seen it all

By Lucas Aykroyd

Few hockey records are safe, but Udo Kiessling's mark of 119 top-level World Championship games will be tough to top.

Between 1976 and 1992, the all-around defenceman from Crimmitschau, Germany also became the first player to compete at five Olympics. A German league legend, Kiessling starred domestically from 1972-73 to 1995-96.

We caught up with this 58-year-old IIHF Hall of Famer before the 2017 Worlds.

Who were your hockey idols when you were growing up?

My biggest idol was Bobby Orr. He was a complete player, he was the greatest. Since I was a defender myself, he was the man I looked up to.



With his international and domestic resume, Udo Kiessling (right) is considered one of Germany's greatest players.

What enabled you to play 119 top-level World Championship games?

I think the reason behind that was, first of all, to be nominated and secondly to be willing to play. For me that was a special kind of appreciation. I was very proud to be able to play for my mother country.

In your era, who were the hardest players to defend against?

I played against the Holik brothers and the fantastic line of Kharlamov, Petrov and Mikhailov. Those three made you feel dizzy, they tossed us around like puppets. And then came the Canadians, like Gretzky or Coffey. I had the pleasure of playing against all the great players.

At your first Olympics in 1976, West Germany won a surprising bronze medal. What do you remember about it?

First of all, playing at the Olympics was a great experience in itself. It was also great that the tournament was played in Innsbruck, Austria. And we played very well, even though we didn't have much experience at the top level. Actually we started to realize the value of the medal a few days after we won it. It was a once-in-a-lifetime achievement.

You played one game for the Minnesota North Stars in 1982-83. Do you wish your NHL experience had lasted longer?

As I mentioned before, I was very proud to play for Team Germany and had promised head coach Xaver Unsinn I'd play at the Worlds in Finland that year. We'd been eliminated with Düsseldorf from the playoffs pretty early and I was in contact with Lou Nanne. He called me just three hours after we had been eliminated. They were interested and I said: "OK, let's do it." It was a completely different experience.

Everything was so much bigger. I think I did a good job. I would have stayed longer if everything had played out right. I was offered a new contract. After 40 games, some incentives would have become active, but the team also

Sergei Guneyev / Sputnik

had the option to assign me to the farm team, where I'd have earned almost nothing. In my opinion, that gave too much power to the club. But still, playing in the NHL was a dream come true.

Between 1984 and 1988, you won four German championships with Cologne, three under Head Coach Hardy Nilsson. What made Hardy such a great fit?

I liked the way Hardy played and how he transformed his play and his ideas into his coaching career. He was a straightforward coach. All those championships were different. It wasn't just lifting the cup and celebrating. Every single championship had its own character and was shaped by the way the regular season and the finals evolved.

You played until you were almost 41. What do you think of Jaromir Jagr playing at age 45 this year?

I am a very pragmatic guy. I wanted to play as long as I could play a significant role on the ice. I haven't seen Jagr play in a few years, but I think he still plays a good role, even though the game has changed.

If he's comfortable with his role and how he performs, there's nothing better for him than to

continue playing. It's not about his age – he is a cult figure and has accomplished a lot.

What do you like most about Cologne?

It's the mentality of the city and how the city represents itself. From a tourism point of view, you have the cathedral and the Rhine River. You won't leave with anything but good memories.

And you have the LANXESS arena, which is older than some other arenas, like the one in Mannheim, but is still state-of-the art in Germany.

Like you, Marco Sturm also played for EV Landshut. What do you think of the job he's doing as head coach of Germany?

I am very happy that he took the job. He is a very experienced guy who not only played many games at the international level, but also enjoyed a long and successful career in the NHL. For Germany, nothing better could have happened.

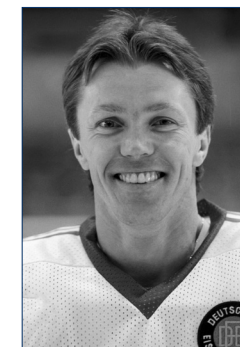
It will give youth hockey and junior players a boost. Also, willingness among the players to play for Team Germany has increased. That's very important.

Germany had spectacular success the last time it hosted the Worlds, finishing fourth in Cologne in 2010. What do you expect this year?

I think we will have a good team. As long as Sturm can put his system into place – playing well defensively and never giving up – I think we can do well. We could be fourth again. I know that is wishful thinking – but we have Sturm as coach and we're playing in Cologne. I'd be more than happy if we accomplish that.



Udo Kiessling GERMANY,



- Born: 10 September, 1958 in Landshut, West Germany
- First ice hockey player to compete in five Winter Olympics (1976-1992)
- Appeared in 13 IIHF World Championships
- Inducted into IIHF Hall of Fame in 2000



Coming up

IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship
GERMANY, Cologne
FRANCE, Paris
06.05.2017 - 21.05.2017

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



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