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A new season Semi-Annual Congress IIHF Pre-season wrapup

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From the IIHF President

Cooperation is key

By René Fasel

A new season begins...with new projects, new partnerships, and new opportunities on the horizon.

The IIHF is above all else an organisation built on relationships. We have been fortunate to have built valuable partnerships between the IIHF, its membership, and ice hockey's other major stakeholders.

I am reminded of this good fortune each year, particularly when our membership gets together for the IIHF Semi-Annual Congress.

This Congress takes place each September. A few months have passed since the end of the World Championship, our hockey family have been enjoying some time off in the summer season or taking part in camps and other development programs to help grow the sport.

We then get the chance to reunite at the Congress, where we can share ideas, renew old friendships, and forge new partnerships ahead of the start of the international season.

Strong partnerships lead to strong initiatives. Infront Sports and Marketing-a company responsible for marketing and promoting our World Championship-has entered into an agreement with the IIHF to support the growth of the game by financing new and exciting development projects. The Growing the Game Fund, as it's called, marks a big step forward in the close cooperation between the IIHF, its membership, and Infront...three organizations with a mutual interest to raise ice hockey up to the next level.

Strong partnerships also lead to constructive dialogue. I would like to thank our members for their active cooperation and engagement during the 2017 Semi-Annual Congress, most notably at the two workshops covering governance reform and new proposals to the IIHF Rule Book.

As we move into the next few years, tough questions surrounding governance reform must be faced. There is a lot of pressure on all federationsfrom the International Olympic Committee, from media, from the public-to enhance transparency and analyze their internal structure to ensure they follow the principles of good governance.

It is my goal that we have a strong structure in place within the federation that can keep the positive aspects of our current structure while adding new safeguards in place to ensure the IIHF's long-term stability.

The 2017 Semi-Annual Congress closed a busy summer for the IIHF. We held our 15th Development Camp in Vierumaki, Finland, and in Granada, Spain introduced a new camp dedicated to goaltender development in women's hockey. We also held a officiating camp in Switzerland to prepare referees and linesmen for the upcoming season.

A big thanks goes out to the camp organizers for their invaluable contribution to ice hockey development, and to the IIHF Sport Department for its hard work in organizing these events.

There is much to look forward to this season. starting with the U20 tournaments in December leading up to the World Juniors in Buffalo, USA. The Champions Hockey League heads into its fourth season with a retooled structure, and we also celebrate the tenth season of the Kontinental Hockey League.

And we can't forget about PyeongChang 2018. We will miss the NHL at the upcoming Olympic Winter Games, but regardless we will deliver a top-quality men's event alongside an equally thrilling women's event.

As we go into the 2017/18 season, I wish every country playing in an IIHF tournament the best of luck, and hope that you can meet, work together and build new partnerships for the future.



News and Notes

PYEONGCHANG 2018



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The dates and matchups for the 2018 Winter Olympic Games ice hockey events have been set with the release of both the men's and women's tournament schedules:

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY EVENT

WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY EVENT

The 2018 Olympic Winter Games, to be held in PyeongChang, South Korea, officially kicks off with the Opening Ceremony on 9th February. The men's and women's tournament games will be split up between the newly-constructed Gangneung Hockey Centre, which can hold up ot 10,000 spectators, and the 6,000-capacity Kwandong Hockey Centre.

The Gangneung arena will host the majority of the men's hockey games, as well as both gold medal games. Kwandong arena will house all the women's games with the exception of the semi-finals and the final.

2018 IIHF ICE HOCKEY WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

The IIHF has released the schedule of the 2018 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in Denmark.

CLICK HERE FOR THE SCHEDULE

Host Denmark will compete in Group B at the 11,000-seat Jyske Bank Boxen in Herning and plays on the first night on 4th May at 20:15 in a neighbouring clash with Germany. A North American battle between Team USA and Canada awaits fans in Herning earlier that day at 16:15.

Group A at the 12,500-seat Royal Arena in the capital of Copenhagen will open with Russia vs. France at 16:15 before defending champions Sweden take on Belarus at 20:15.

CANADA

Delaney Collins will serve as head coach of Canada's National Women's Under-18 Team.

Collins served as an assis-

tant coach with Canada's National Women's Under-18 Team at the IIHF Ice Hockey U18



Women's World Championship in 2015 and The 28-year-old Michael Grosz, master of 2017, and won a gold medal with Canada's business administration, served five years with the 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey World Champi-National Women's Development Team at the 2015 Nations Cup. As a player she is a onship Organizing Committee and takes over three-time world champion with Canada's the position of Michael Pfuhl, who will occupy National Women's Team (2000, 2004, 2007). the position of Technical Director.

FINLAND The 36-year-old Stefan Schaidnagel, Sports diploma scientist, now assumes the central Lauri Marjamaki has decided not to extend management position of the sports director his contract as head coach of the Finnish nawithin the DEB and cooperates closely with all tional team after the 2017/2018. national team coaches especially with men's national team head coach Marco Sturm.

The Finnish Ice Hockey Association signed a two-year contract with Jukka Jalonen as head coach of the Finnish men's national

team for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 seasons. Finnish coach Jarmo Tolvanen will be behind the Marjamaki will stay behind the bench for the bench of the Hungarian upcoming season that includes the 2018 men's national team and Olympic Winter Games in Korea and the 2018 also lead the U20 national IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in Denteam. mark.

GERMANY

The German Ice Hockey Federation has set up a new, two-pronged approach to sports and administration, and has appointed Michael Grosz as new General Secretary and Stefan Schaidnagel as the new Director of Sports.



HUNGARY



Tolvanen spent the past two seasons with Stjernen in the top Norwegian league. With the Finnish Ice Hockey Association, he was an assistant coach with the Finnish U17 national team which was followed up with being named the head coach of the U18 and the U20 teams. He was leading the U20 team at the 1992 and 1993 World Juniors and again in 2007.

ITALY

The Italian Ice Sports Federation (FISG) announces that Clayton Beddoes will be the new head coach of the men's national team.



Beddoes, who currently holds the role of assistant coach of ERC Ingolstadt in the German DEL, succeeds Stephan Mair on Italy's bench in order to continue the technical project launched by the FISG three years ago and with the firm goal of presenting the team in the best possible shape to the 2018 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division I Group A, scheduled for next April in Budapest, Hungary.

JAPAN

The Japan Ice Hockey Federation has announced that Akihisa Mizuno will assume the leadership of the Japan Ice Hockey Federation as President, succeeding Mr. Kenichi Chizuka.

Mizuno, 64, has also been serving as Chairman of the Board and Representative Director in Chubu Electric Power Co., Inc. After joining Chubu in 1978, he held various positions including Manager of Chubu's office in Washington and General Manager of the International Business Department. He also served as Consultant for the World Bank. He has been the Chairman and Director at Chubu Electric Power Company, Incorporated since June 2015 and June 2008 respectively.

In addition to Mizuno. Tsutomu Hanzawa was appointed as the new JIHF New General Secretary. He is a former player for the national team, representing Japan in the Olympics in 1972, 1976 and 1980.

LATVIA

Bob Hartley will stay as head coach of the Latvian national team. He agreed to terms with the Latvian Hockey Federation for five more years. The former

Stanley Cup winner joined the Latvians last

spring and led the team at the 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship where it finished in 10th place.

NETHERLANDS

Doug Mason starts a third stint as head coach of the Netherlands' men's national team. He will succeed Chris Eimers, who resigned after the last-place finish at the



2017 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship tional team. He arrived in Division I Group B in Belfast. Warsaw in July and signed a two-year contract. The The native of Sudbury, Ontario, was the 59-year-old replaces Jacek Plachta whose contract was not renewed after three vears.

head coach of the Netherlands' men's national team for six years between 1994/1995 and 1999/2000. He had a second stint in the 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 seasons. During his 14 years as head coach in the top German league DEL he also got the chance to be behind the bench of Team Canada at the Deutschland Cup as an assistant coach.

NORWAY

Thomas Pettersen has been named new head coach of the Norwegian women's national team. He signed for two seasons with the Norwegian Ice Hockey Association.



Pettersen succeeds Laura Rollins, who was coaching the team during the last two years. Pettersen was her assistant during five years first at the U18 women's national team and for the past two years with the senior team.

POLAND

As a player the 42-year-old represented Slova-The Polish Ice Hockey Federation hired Ted kia in four Olympic Games and in 14 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships (12 in the top di-Nolan as new head coach of the men's na-



Nolan coached the Buffalo Sabres and the New York Islanders in the National Hockey League. He won the Jack Adams Award as NHL Coach of the Year in 1997. Between 2011 and 2014 he was coaching the Latvian national team at several occasions including the 2014 Olympic Winter Games and the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships in 2012, 2013 and 2014 before focusing on his coaching duties with the Buffalo Sabres where he was released in 2015 despite two more years under contract.

SLOVAKIA

The Slovak Ice Hockey Federation signed one of its greatest players, Miroslav Satan, as new General Manager of the national team and head of the national team program.



vision where Slovakia has played since 1996), was part of the team that won the only world title for Slovakia in 2002 when he was named Most Valuable Player of the tournament and also won two silver medals (2000, 2012) and a bronze (2003). He was twice on the World Championship All-Star Team, in 2000 and 2002 when he led the tournament in points both times.

Satan spent 14 seasons in the NHL for the Edmonton Oilers, Buffalo Sabres, New York Islanders, Pittsburgh Penguins and Boston Bruins. With the Pens he won the Stanley Cup in 2009. In 2010 he moved back to Europe, played for Dynamo Moscow in the KHL and for Slovan Bratislava that played first in the Slovak Extraliga and then two years with Satan in the Russian KHL. After his career, Satan was selected as GM of Team Europe for the 2016 World Cup of Hockey.

Satan made his first official act as head of the Slovak national team program by signing Zuzana Tomciko**va** as his counterpart on the women's side of the game. The former world-class goalie was named General Ma-



nager for the Slovak women's hockey national teams. Tomcikova was the face of the national team during its most successful years that started in the 2008/2009 season. She helped the Slovak women's national team win two qualification tournaments to qualify for the Olympic Winter Games for the first and only time in Vancouver 2010. The same year Slovakia also earned promotion to the top division in the IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship proaram.

The Slovak Ice Hockey Federation has hired Craig Ramsay as new head coach of the Slovak men's national team.

The two-year contract will include the 2018 Olympic

Winter Games as the next big event for the team as well as the 2018 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in Copenhagen and Herning, Denmark, and the 2019 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship on home ice in Bratislava and Kosice.

Former world-class player Jenny Potter will coach the Slovak women's national team. During her long international career as a player Potter won gold at the 1998 Olympic Winter Games and at four IIHF Ice Hockey

Women's World Championships (2005, 2008, 2009, 2011). She ended her international career

pic season with a new head coach for the men's national team, signing Finnish coach Kari Savolainen to a oneyear contract. It's a return for him having coached the team from 2003 to 2005.

national women's hockey.

Slovenia enters the Olym-

SLOVENIA

Savolainen led the Slovenian national team du-The 2018 Olympics marks the first time since ring two seasons and earned promotion in 2004 1994 that NHL players will not participate in and a 13th-place finish at the 2005 IIHF Ice Hocthe games. The U.S. roster will be comprised key World Championship in Austria - the last time of Europe-based players, eligible players in the Slovenia managed to stay longer than one year American Hockey League and players currently in the top division. Between 2010 and 2013 he playing NCAA hockey. worked with the association as an advisor for the national team. He was the team manager of Fin-Granato, who currently coaches the men's hocland's men's national team from 2014 and 2016. key team at the University of Wisconsin, was an

assistant under Dan Bylsma at the 2014 Olym-Slovenia qualified for the Olympic men's ice pics. The former NHLer coached the Colorado hockey tournament for the second consecutive Avalanche for parts of three seasons and has time. In PyeongChang 2018 the "Lynx" will play served as an assistant with Colorado, Pittsbur-Russia, the United States and Slovakia in the gh and Detroit in the past. group stage.



in 2012 and most recently played during the

2014/15 season for the CWHL's Boston Blades. Now she returns on the international stage as head coach of the Slovaks, who recently earned promotion back to the second tier of inter-

USA

Tony Granato will be behind the bench for the U.S. men's ice hockey team at the 2018 PyeongChang Olympics next February it was announced by USA Hockey



on Friday. Granato will be joined on the bench by assistant coaches Chris Chelios. Scott Young, Keith Allain and Ron Rolston.

Jim Johannson, assistant executive director of hockey operations for USA Hockey, will serve as the general manager of the Olympic team, while **Ben Smith** is the team's director of player personnel.



Obituaries

RUDOLF BATA

Former ice hockey referee and football official passed away on 10 August at age 89.

Bata was born in the Czech city of Zlin in 1927. He officiated 895 ice hockey games for 17 years until stopping in 1977. He was a referee at two Olympic Winter Games (1972, 1976), six IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships (1967, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1973, 1975) and the 1972 Summit Series.

MIKHAIL BUTURLIN

One of the top referees from Russia passed away on 27 June at the age of 39. Buturlin started his career as a player with CSKA Moscow and played several years in the top-two Russian leagues and in Belarus.

He called 324 KHL games since 2010. He officiated international games at the 2017 IIHF Continental Cup Final in Italy, the 2014 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 World Championship Division II Group B in Estonia and the 2011 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division III in South Africa.

LORENZ FUNK

German ice hockey legend Lorenz Funk passed away on 29 Spetember at the age of 70. Funk represented West Germany in 225 international games including three Olympic Winter Games (1968, 1972, 1976) and 13 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships between 1966 and 1979 including eight in the top division.

He was part of the team that won the Olympic bronze medal in Innsbruck 1976. In domestic play he won three national championships, 1966 with his hometown team Bad Tolz and two with Berliner SC (1974, 1976).

SERGEI LANTRATOV

Former Russian world junior champion Sergei Lantratov passed away on 17 July at the age of 61 in his hometown of Novokuznetsk in Siberia.

He played at the U18 European Championship in 1974 (silver) and 1975 (gold) and at the World Junior Championship in 1975 and 1976, winning gold at each occasion. He scored 564 goals and had 734 points in 698 career games for Metallurg Novokuznetsk.

NIKOLAI MASLOV

Meier was among the top goaltenders in the Swiss league in the '60s and led the Grasshopper Club Zurich to the Swiss championship and Former Russian national junior player Nikolai Maslov passed away on 18 July at the age of Cup title in 1966. He represented Switzerland in three IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship 57. B-Pool tournaments between 1965 and 1967.

Maslov was born in Leningrad and played for SKA Leningrad winning a bronze medal in 1987. **NILS NILSSON** As a junior he represented the Soviet Union in the 1978 IIHF U18 European Championship Nils "Dubbel-Nisse" Nilsson, one of Sweden's winning silver and at the 1979 IIHF World Junior greatest international players, died ON 24 June Championship winning gold. after a brief illness. He was 81.

DAN MCKINNON

Dan McKinnon, a member of the U.S. Olympic team that won a silver medal at the Cortina d'Ampezzo Olympics, passed away in Warroad, Minnesota, on 6 August at the age of 95.

McKinnon also represented his country at the 1955 and 1958 World Championship. Born Passed away in Brno on 22 July at the age in 1922, Daniel Duncan McKinnon became a of 75. Sevcik helped the Czechs win silver standout player in his teens. He enlisted in the at the 1965 World Championship. He also war, and later was instrumental in the creation played at the 1966, 1969, and 1970 Worlds, winning another silver in Ljubljana ('66) and of a hockey program at the University of North two consecutive bronze medals ('69,'70). Dakota.

His career highlight was the 1968 Olympics. **ROBERT MEIER** He helped lead Czechoslovakia to a stun-Former Swiss national team goalie passed ning 5-4 win over the Soviets, earning a silver medal. He played in five IIHF events and away at the age of 73. won a medal in each one.

Nilsson was inducted into the IIHF Hall of Fame in 2002 in honour of a career that included two gold medals, two silver, and two bronze in seven World Championships and an Olympic silver medal from the 1964 Games in Innsbruck.

FRANTISEK SEVCIK

IIHF Congress

Rules, governance, development on table



By Adam Steiss

The 2017 IIHF Semi-Annual Congress green-lit some major rule changes and also introduced major development projects for the

Held in Marbella, Spain from 27-30 September, the 2017 IIHF Semi-Annual Congress brings together national federations from around the world together to discuss a wide range of topics surrounding ice hockey.

2017/18 season .

The Semi-Annual Congress is held at the end of summer, and heralds the start of a new hockey season. It follows the Annual Congress and gives the opportunity for member national associations to take part in workshops and meet directly with tournament hosts.

"The coming season is a very important one, especially considering that we have an Olympic year," said IIHF President René Fasel in his welcome speech.



The IIHF Semi-Annual Congress brings the IIHF membership together one last time before the start of the hockey season.

The Congress also aims to tackle many of the major issues facing MNAs and the sport in general. One of the first items on the agenda was a sobering presentation by Youth and Junior Development Committee chairman Petr Briza. Briza presented a carefully-researched and in-depth analysis; conducted by the committee in cooperation with the IIHF office; on the status of the various developing MNAs, in a bid to shed light on the amount of investment currently being made into ice hockey development.

"We came to the conclusion that in order to understand the issues of other federations and how best help them with the resources we have, we needed to get more information," said Briza.

"So we decided to set up a questionnaire for MNAs, starting in February with a pilot group with countries in the Balkans and then extending it to other federations."

In total overall 64 MNAs of the IIHF's 76 member national associations responded to the guestionnaire. Briza shared some sobering statistics on date covering 46 of the respondent nations that participated in the 2016/17 IIHF Championship program. For example, he said that 30% of federations have none or just one full-time staff member, and 43% have max of three full time staff.

"On one side we give a lot of respect and credit to these MNAs for the work they do, because sometimes it can feel like a Sisyphean task. But on the other side it shows our challenges to invest time and money for development when you have this kind of setup."

On the financial side, Briza reported that 57% of the respondent MNAs do not generate enough revenue to break even on their yearly budget, which has a negative effect on development and infrastructure planning. In total, 63% of the federations didn't spend more than 20% of their budget on development and coaching. On the facilities side, 11% of MNAs have none or just one ice rink that fits the IIHF requirements. 15% of MNAs have two or three indoor facilities.

"We face a lot of challenges ahead to increase these numbers," admitted Briza, while emphasizing the need for individual reviews with MNAs on their long-term development plans.

Governance Workshop

The next item on the opening day of Congress was a major workshop addressing governance reform, the first of its kind to be organized by the IIHF.

The workshop was presented by Dave Ogrean, the former executive director of USA Hockey who currently sits on the new IIHF Governance Reform Group.

"The IIHF is an organization that is held in very high regard and looked as a leader and a very successful federation," said Ogrean. "But we have to plan for the future. As we go through these discussions we have to think about what is the best governance model for us?"

"The word here is evolution, not revolution. There are other sports federations that have been embarrassed and had radical transition forced on them in the last couple of years, that's not us. We want to be efficient, we want to be fiscally responsible, and we want to be able to increase the exposure for our sport and have the game growing."

The Congress was then canvassed on a series of questions about governance reform and the IIHF, on topics ranging from term limits for Council members, vote distribution among



IIHF Council Member Henrik Bach Nielsen updates Congress on preparations for the 2018 World Championship in Denmark.

MNAs and potentially other stakeholders, and the distribution of power and responsibility within the current IIHF structure. In the leadup to the next Congress, the reform group will evaluate the input from the MNAs and come up with recommendations.

"Nobody in our group is suggesting that we need to change, but we need to determine whether we should change, because we all want a healthy IIHF," added Ogrean.

Growing the Game Fund

The Semi-Annual Congress was also updated on the new IIHF/Infront Growing the Game Fund, a funding program for ice hockey development initiated between the IIHF and its marketing partner Infront Sports & Media.

"The Growing the Game Fund's mission is to achieve a long-lasting impact on ice hockey development throughout the world," said IIHF



General Secretary Horst Lichtner. "We would support with this money specific development projects and needs and strategic programs that would bring ice hockey to a new level."

The key objective of the fund concept is to strengthen the sport in all its aspects, including but not limited to:

-Appeal to children as a sport to play -Attractiveness to fans and audiences -Competitive and sport quality -Solidarity and unity impact within the global ice hockey family



"Special consideration will be given to projects/ initiatives that demonstrate innovative strategies and realistic targets," added Lichtner.

Four separate projects from the German Ice Hockey Federation, the Hungarian Ice Hockey Federation, and the Dutch Ice Hockey were selected as the first recipients of the Growing the Game Fund.

The Germans came up with two projects, the first being a "We are Hockey" digital media project that would feature an overall hub for collecting information about hockey and producing video content to host on a webpage and social media platforms. Another project focused on introducing youth from migrant backgrounds

to ice hockey as a method for social integration and cultural integration was also presented.

An IT Upgrade and new software project designed to provide analysis and and an education system for sports clubs was approved for the Hungarian Ice Hockey Federation. The Dutch will focus on renewal of its development system via a three-pillar approach targeting junior player development and club development, community-building within ice hockey, and a retooled office structure that would allow for the federation to become more service-oriented to its stakeholders.

Following the presentation of the projects, the Semi-Annual Congress was informed that MNAs can make their own applications prior to the start of the new year.

New rules approved

Delegates from the attending member national associations then got together into groups for the IIHF Rule Proposal Workshop. The workshop was initiated as a way to get direct feedback from the IIHF membership on 19 Major Rule Proposals that were being considered for the 2018-2022 IIHF Rule Book.

The workshop groups were each led by a mix of former hockey players like Jiri Fischer, Lanny

2018-2022 IIHF Rule Book Additions/Changes

-Goal crease in IIHF competitions will be changed to match National Hockey League specifications

-Team staff will be permitted use of electronic tablets on the bench for statistical and tagging purposes

-Relaxed rules for goals scored when the net frame is displaced. As long as the posts are at least partially on the pegs then a goal will count if the puck crosses the goal line

-Video goal review criteria will include goaltender interference

-Goaltenders will be penalized for covering a puck in certain cases where they are able to play it

-Revised definitions for injury classification

NOTE: These rules will go into effect for the 2018/2019 season.

McDonald, Miroslav Satan, along with experienced officials such as Jim Johansson, Peter Zahner, and Tom Renney.

The workshop and esuing vote on the rule changes concluded a year-long process conducted by the IIHF Player Safety Committee, which received and discussed over 100 minor and major rule change proposals from the IIHF Member National Associations and IIHF Committees. "We had so many technical people involved in this process to help form our recommendations with the submitted rule proposals," said Bob Nicholson, the IIHF Vice President who oversaw the rule change process as chairman of the Player Safety Committee. "But what I liked most about this process was that both the small and big ice hockey countries had good discussions during the workshop." In total 11 major rule changes or new rules were approved. They will be written into a new rulebook and will go into effect for the 2018/19 season, meaning they will not be put into place for the upcoming 2018 Olympic Winter Games and the 2018 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship.

"We will work with the IIHF staff to try and get the new IIHF Rule Book out in April or May, so that the countries can get it translated," added Nicholson.

Coach's challenge at PyeongChang 2018

Following the vote, Nicholson and Fasel then asked the participating teams of the 2018 Olympic Winter Games.

During an open discussion on the latest IIHF rule proposals, President René Fasel asked for feedback on the possibility of using a coach's challenge on selected officiating decisions during the Games, such as when a goal is scored on a missed offside or goalie interference call.

Countries including Canada, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, and Russia came out in support of the decision, which prompted the IIHF to agree to initiate an examination into the technical and logistical possibilities of integrating a coach's challenge option at PyeongChang 2018.

Camp life

Development efforts break new ground

By Adam Steiss



The IIHF camp season opened in early July with the 2017 IIHF Hockey Development Camp, the 15th of its kind.

Set in one of Europe's premier sports institutes in the heart of Finland, the camp hosted over a hundred participants for a week of ice hockey training sessions and leadership development programs aimed at enhancing the game worldwide.

Combining IIHF resources, along with local operational expertise and manpower from the associations, the camp invited 105 participants for the week-long camp which ran from 8-15 July.

The campers, their mentors, coaches, and support staff come from all corners of the globe. In total 54 countries have gathered together in Vierumaki for the HDC, including form countries as far away as Mexico, New Zealand, Thailand, and the Philippines.



The Camp's Learn to Play Program paired IIHF MNA instructors with local kids to practice intro to ice hockey lessons.

"For the IIHF it's really important that you act as missionaries when you come back to your countries, that you implement what you learned here and share it with your fellow teammates or coaches," said IIHF Development Committee Chairman Petr Briza in a welcome address to the camp.

Although the HDC is a great opportunity for players from developing hockey nations around the world to experience their first international ice hockey camp, player development is not the primary purpose of the camp. Rather the HDC serves to provide key educational resources and know-how to the various national association staff attending camp.

"Player development is not the main objective of the Camp. The main priority is the development of National Association representatives attending the Leadership Programs," said Camp Director Aku Nieminen. "We invite players to attend the camp in order to facilitate education for the adult participants through real-life working experience. The know-how gained from the camp is then to be further distributed in each country to ensure player development."

For example, a Learn to Play Program was specifically designed to educate instructors on how to plan and operate recruitment events and how to introduce the game to children both on and off the ice. As part of the camp activities a Learn to Play program took place during the week, where instructors got on-the-job experience introducing ice hockey to over 60 local children.

The MNA Leadership Development Program provides National Association leadership and personnel the means and ways to evaluate and enhance their domestic programming.

Other camp programs aim at developing National Association Representatives in their areas of expertise.

CLICK HERE TO VIEW A VIDEO FROM THE CAMP

First goalie camp

Inaugural camp in Granada a success

By Martin Merk



The first IIHF Women's Goaltending Development Camp at the Igloo ice rink in Granada in southern Spain had a successful premiere and promises well for the future.

Last July, 12 goaltending coaches and 40 goaltenders from 16 countries participated in a camp in the Andalusian city that hosted the 2015 Winter Universiade.

The camp is the newest initiative of the IIHF Women's Committee.

"We were thinking whether changes are needed. We decided that we should focus on different positions instead of having full teams at the camps and thought the goalie position is a very important one," said IIHF Council member Zsuzsanna Kolbenheyer.

"If we can improve our goalies, that would be a big help for our countries and the teams. Goalies can make a huge difference at every level."



12 goaltending coaches and 40 goaltenders from 16 countries gathered in Spain for the inaugural IIHF Goaltending camp.

The camp aims at countries outside of the top two nations. The USA and Canada, nevertheless, were still involved by providing coaching and training assistance. Lisa Haley, a former member of the Team Canada senior and U18 women's national teams' coaching staff, supported the IIHF's camp director Blanka Elekes Szentagotai. Fellow countryman and goaltending coach Joe Johnston was the camp's goalie lead.

"The interest in women's hockey has grown by leaps and bounds. The level of competition in international women's hockey continues to evolve, with more nations developing their female hockey programs from the grassroots to the high-performance levels," said Melody Davidson, general manager of national women's team programs for Hockey Canada. "This camp provides us, as leaders in the women's game, the chance to help other nations continuing to build a key component of every team - goaltending. The stronger the competition, the better our teams become, and the more support we can attract for international women's hockey."

Two great examples of why goaltenders can be important for countries with a smaller pool of female hockey players came to Granada as mentors. Florence Schelling was a wall for petitive," concludes Haley. Switzerland both times when the country won bronze at the 2012 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's **CLICK HERE FOR STORIES AND VIDEOS**

World Championship and at the 2014 Olympic Winter Games. Zuzana Tomcikova was key for Slovakia in its temporary rise to the top-eight nations. Her heroics helped the underdogs win two gualification tournaments to make it to the Olympics for the first time in 2010. Both joined the camp as mentors, along with Team USA goalie Brianne McLaughlin, who had just retired after two NWHL seasons.

"We have two European ambassadors here with Florence Schelling and Zuzana Tomcikova, and they both were the most important player on their team at events. Without them, I'm pretty sure their teams wouldn't have performed that well at the elite level. We have some more good goalies in Europe, but in many other countries you don't have many at that level," said Kolbenheyer.

And what does the future of the camp look like?

"It is a new concept. We accomplished a lot that week. We can see how much the goalies have improved. If it's possible continuing with this camp on a regular basis, I think it's going to be a really effective tool to help all the countries to become more com-

Officials readying

The best convene as Olympics approach

By Martin Merk



Top referees and linesmen convened in Magglingen, Switzerland to ready themselves for the 2018 Olympic Winter Games and the 2018 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship program.

The 2017 IIHF Officiating Training Camp took place from 16th to 20th August 2017 at the facilities of the Swiss Federal Office of Sports in Magglingen and the ice sessions at the nearby Tissot Arena in Biel.

30 top IIHF female on-ice officials (16 referees, 14 linesmen) and 20 top IIHF male referees took part in the camp.

The 2017 camp was organized by the IIHF Office in co-operation with the IIHF Officiating Committee and the Swiss Federal Office of Sports (BASPO) as part of the preparations of the upcoming top global events in men's and women's ice hockey.



The top male and female referees and linesmen prepare for the 2018 events via a centralized summer training session.

"It's one of the stages of the review process of potential candidates for the 2018 Olympic Winter Games," said IIHF Officiating Manager Konstantin Komissarov.

"The camp achieved its goals. All the participants were very committed and have the desire to show their skills in a team and their physical condition. The most important thing is to maintain the relations between them and work out the trust within the group, which will help them work the games in the four-official system."

Under the slogan "The Moment Is Coming" the participants had a camp schedule that



included physical testing and exercises on team building, classroom sessions and ice sessions at the Tissot Arena.

Five members of the IIHF Officiating Committee were on-site to meet and observe the candidates, including the committee's chairpersons Sergej Gontcharov and Marta Zawadzka.

The camp participants received information on their physical conditioning and recommendations on how to maintain it during the season, as well as suggestions for its improvement.

During the classroom sessions, the representatives of the IIHF Office reviewed game situations from the IIHF championships and clarified certain game procedures.

The participants received information regarding the operation of the 2018 Olympic Winter Games ice hockey tournaments and the process of the selection of the IIHF on-ice officials for the men's and women's competitions in PyeongChang.

CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Tracking the players

Record number of Europeans sign NHL contracts ahead of season

By Martin Merk

The beginning of the NHL season saw many teams ice new talent from overseas – more than ever.

82 European players either signed with NHL teams or transferred to the system of an NHL franchise – up from 60 last season.

However, as every season not all of these prospects actually make the NHL team and it has become more common to sign players and loan them to a professional team in Europe - one possible reason for the increase.

20 players have been loaned to senior teams in Europe while the others either made the NHL team or will battle for NHL spotlight with their minor-league affiliates.

Another reason for the increased demand of players for the NHL is the league's expansion to 31 teams with the addition of the Vegas Golden Knights.



The #1 overall draft pick of the 2017 NHL Draft, Swiss forward Nico Hischier opened the season with the New Jersey Devils.

The Knights began the season with six European players on the opening-day roster and several more in the system.

For the 11th consecutive year Sweden is leading the way with NHL talent from Europe with a record number of 30 players involved.

After a period of decreasing numbers in transfers to the NHL, the Russians and the Czechs are back to claim the next two spots with 18 and 13 players respectively.

Finland dropped from second to fourth spot with 11 players.

Other countries that moved players include Latvia (3), Switzerland (3), Germany (2), Belarus (1), and Slovakia (1).

A noticeable effect is that while the numbers were generally increasing this year, this increase was created through six countries with higher numbers and only nine countries had players signing with or transferring to an NHL franchise.

Countries that had at least one new player during the last two years but not this season include Austria, Denmark, France, Hungary, Lithuania and Norway.

Of the 81 European players involved 64 came directly from European clubs - also a new record.

12 European players came to their NHL team via at least one season at a North American junior team from four leagues (OHL, QM-JHL, WHL in Canada; USHL in the United States).

25 players played for Swedish clubs last season followed by 21 players from Russian club teams.

CLICK HERE TO SEE THE TRANSFER LIST

World Girls Weekend

Try-hockey events held in 40 countries

By Martin Merk



The seventh annual World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend was held in early October, starting in the Far East and crossing the globe with hundreds of events held on six continents.

Check out some of the highlight events from the 2017 Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend.

AUSTRALIA: Docklands

Ice Hockey Victoria organized one of the four World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend events in Australia. The come-and-try event was held at the O'Brien Group Arena in Docklands with 34 participants.

Daughters, sisters, parents and friends came from near and far to try out ice hockey in a fun environment and with 22 volunteers helping them to gear up for the ice. The coaches taught the girls basic skating skills, how to move and how to stop before they tried out skills and drills.



The Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend saw events organized in 40 different countries to bring ice hockey to girls of all ages.

CANADA: Hamilton

Hockey fever swept through the city of Hamilton with more than 500 girls on the ice in 20 games at the World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend. **•FEATURE STORY**

FINLAND: Mariehamn

Perched between Finland and Sweden, the island of Aland hosted the two women's national teams. There they helped build a new generation at the World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend. **•FEATURE STORY**

CHINESE TAIPEI: Taipei City

Hockey Weekend events in different cities. 70 girls and young ladies between the age of 7 and 20 came to the Taipei Arena following the "Come and have fun!" slogan despite the early Nottingham held an on-ice skill session for 22 ice session at 7:30 in the morning. Those who attendees, organized by the Vipers, the local sewere totally new to ice hockey borrowed skates nior women's hockey team, at the National Ice

•FEATURE STORY **•WATCH THE VIDEO**

GREAT BRITAIN: Various cities

Ice Hockey UK sponsored three World Girls' Ice

and sticks from the national team members who were helping. They learned to skate on a small field of play and played several games like trying to move the puck into a circle or in a bowling-like setup. Girls with some experience went through some hockey drills before all participants were mixed into two teams to play against each other.

GERMANY: Berlin

The Polar Bear family in Berlin is growing as the capital's club Eisbaren Berlin and its youth hockey association Eisbaren Juniors added a women's team for the top women's hockey league, Frauen-Bundesliga.

That's a good time to join in for the World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend where 60 girls kept the 15 coaches at the Wellblechpalast, the club's traditional home in the eastern district of Hohenschonhausen, busy.



Centre. The Whitley Bay Ice Club got 22 participants out for a combination of off-ice activities and on-ice skills. And the Sheffield Shadows club had 100 participants enjoying free skating and sampling hockey at Ice Sheffield.

HONG KONG: Kowloon

Hong Kong annually takes part in the World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend. At the Mega Box shopping mall, around 120 participants joined in between the age of 8 and 53 despite the ice time only starting at 20:45 in the night.

After the registration those who needed help with the equipment got help from members of the Hong Kong Ice Hockey Association. Ten national team players and the national coach were there to help with drills and other activities.



ICELAND: AKUREYRI

One of Iceland's girls' event during the weekend took place in the northern town of Akurevri. 45 girls between the age of 4 and 15 tried ice hockey for the first time and 50 girls from the local club Skautafealg Akureyrar joined in for fun.

The girls got to know the event from the posters at school or through friends. At the stations they practised skating, passing and penalty shots against goalies from the club. Later the girls played scrimmages and off the ice they were able to take photos with Icelandic national team players.

JAPAN: Mikage

One of the first WGIHW events took place in the land of the rising sun. Mikage on Japan's northern island of Hokkaido hosted a World Girls'



with LHF General Secretary Viesturs Koziols Ice Hockey Weekend event. 40 young players of the next generation between 9 and 14 years leading the award ceremony. of age joined in and had fun with the coaches and three Olympians, Kanae Aoki, Azusa Ishi-**MALAYSIA:** Kuala Lumpur mori (Nakaoku) and Tomoe Yamane.

65 girls participated on the first session on Sa-The program was not only about getting some turdayfollowed by 75 participants on Sunday. They were encouraged by their parents and ice time but also to hear from the coach and the some mothers joined on the ice as well. Olympians about dreams and the experiences of the Olympians.

LATVIA: VALMIERA

40 girls and women came to Latvia's World Gir-Is' Ice Hockey Weekend event in Valmiera.

In the first part the girls went onto the ice for an hour-long session with fun exercises and help from members of the women's national team. Later they witnessed a game between the women's national team and the girls' national team **•WATCH THE VIDEO**





Hilda Zamri, the Team Manager of the women's national team, welcomed the girls together with her team, the coaching staff and also members of the men's national team. One part consisted of dry-land activities such as floorball, puck tricks and shooting. On the ice the girls learned basic skills. Pastries from the team members and a photo booth were also there to raise funds for the women's national team.





135 girls and women came to Maaseik for a two-day World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend event. They were split into groups and the first game happened between the Puck Divas and the Chicks on Fire. In total nine teams were formed and two coaches for each team as well as five referees and other officials helped out as volunteers.

The event brings girls from the country together who normally play on boys' teams and once a year, during the World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend, the play together only with girls and make many new friends. It is also an opportunity for them to be on the ice with women's national team players.





RUSSIA: Various cities

In Russia the World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend was busier than ever with Russia's Women's Hockey League getting involved.

All seven teams staged events across Russia to mark the occasion with a series of master-classes stretching right across the country from St. Petersburg on the Baltic to Ukhta in the far North and Krasnoyarsk in central Siberia, about 350 people took part – 150 regular players with girls' teams and a further 200 girls and young women who were new to hockey and, in some cases, stepping onto the ice for the first time. In addition a local organization organized another girls' event in Moscow.

•FEATURE STORY

SWEDEN: Karlskrona

Karlskrona HK has reached a lot in Swedish men's hockey since its founding in 2001. Hosting a World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend event in all seven years, the club also managed to launch women's hockey and has high ambitions there too. About 60 girls came to the event, joined by nine memebrs of Karlskrona's women's team. •FEATURE STORY

Following Saturday's home opener against the **THAILAND: Bangkok** Colorado Avalanche 60 girls from little girls to 23 girls and ladies were on ice at the first-ever 14-year-olds hit the ice at the Prudential Center World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend event in Thaiin Newark. Prior to that, during the first intermission a World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend promo land. The event took place at The Rink Ice Arena, which is located in the Central Plaza Grand game happened on the ice and the Devils an-Rama9 shopping mall in Bangkok. The full-size nounced their partnership with the Metropolitan Riveters – the first partnership between an NHL rink recently hosted events of the IIHF Ice Hockey Challenge Cup of Asia. franchise and an NWHL team.







Members of the women's national team were on-site as well to help the young girls in their first ice hockey experience and to work on the future of Thai women's ice hockey.

USA: Newark

Trying hockey on NHL ice during the World Gir-Is' Ice Hockey Weekend? The New Jersey Devi-Is made it possible!

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USA recaptures Inline gold

VAUGHN

The record champions reclaim throne after defeating Finland

By Martin Merk

SID







Record world champions Unites States won Inline gold, its seventh gold medal in the history of the IIHF **Inline Hockey World Cham**pionship.

The Czech Republic wins bronze, Croatia is relegated to Division I and will be replaced by Slovenia. Argentina remains in Division I, while Hungary, New Zealand and Brazil will play in the regional qualification next year.

Record world champion USA won its seventh gold medal in the history of the IIHF Inline Hockey World Championship after winning 4-2 against Finland, who had reached the final with an undefeated streak as well. USA Hockey has now won five of the six IIHF World Championship titles this season.

"It's been a couple of years with disappointing finishes for us since the last gold and it feels unreal to get back on top. This game meant so much for our team and to get back on top. We were hungry when our chances came", U.S. captain Travis Noe said.

"We knew they're going to be a good team. They looked good all tournament. They played a great game, we just capitalized on our chances early in the game and then we really



Team USA is back on the inline hockey throne after beating Finland 4-2 in the final of the 2017 Inline World Championship.

played strong defence and had a really strong performance from our goalie Troy Redman."

Early goals led the way for Team USA, outshooting Finland 26-25. The Americans built up a 4-0 lead after 20 minutes of play. Although the Finns never gave up, they didn't manage to make up for that during the remainder of the game.

"We lost and Team USA was better today. I'm of course disappointed. We tried to defend better than in earlier games. We should have had the puck more often but we didn't and so we lost", said Teemu Lepaus, who led the tournament in scoring with 11 goals and 11 assists in six games.

Redman was voted Best Goalkeeper, his teammate Matt White Best Forward, and Finland's Petri Partanen Best Defenceman. "To come out on top is a pretty special feeling for all of us. It was a tough game. We scored the first four goals in the first half and they scored their two goals in the second half. It

Uzitk VOTI

could have gone either way, you never know in these type of games" White said, mentioning the difficult semi-final with the Czech Republic.

The Finns had their chances too but didn't capitalize on them for a long time. With four minutes left, Teemu Lepaus missed out on a two-on-one. After winning the ensuing face-off, Jack Combs sent White for a breakaway and the latter beat Airasvaara for the 4-0 goal, which put the game out of reach.

"We had a couple of good shots right away, just played good puck possession, grind them down and we were fortunate enough to beat a really good Finnish team", said Combs.

Airasvaara was then pulled and Juha Taponen came in instead. The Finns would go on to score two goals, but it wasn't enough to catch up to the big lead of the Americans.

Czechs win bronze

The Czech Republic won the bronze medal after beating Sweden 5-2 for third place. It was the first medal since winning the Worlds at home 2011 in Pardubice.

After a 3-0 first period lead by the Czechs, the Swedes tried to get back and outshot their opponent 34-18, but to little avail. David Bernad scored two goals for the Czechs, while Dominik Frodl saved 32 of 34 shots on his goal.

"It's beautiful, it's perfect, it's like a dream!" an excited Bernad said. "It's the highest inline hockey tournament you can play, so this is a very special moment in my career".

Late in the first period, Vladimir Kames ended a lengthy forecheck by the Czechs with a shot from just behind the face-off circles to make it 3-0. That goal would eventually turn out to be the game-winner.

Even though the Swedes came close by scoring the 3-2 goal late in the third, a fourth-period power play goal by Bernad sealed the deal. With one second left, Jakub Strnad then added an empty-netter for good measure.

For the Czechs it's the fifth medal in their history and the first after four World Championships



Inline Division I champs Slovenia won promotion and will compete at the next top division tournament in summer 2019.

outside of the medal ranks. In the relegation round Germany stayed on top while Croatia was relegated to Division I.

Slovenia promoted to top division

Slovenia made its stay in Division I a short one. After five clear wins, the Slovenes also beat Latvia 6-3 in the final for Division I gold, and will be promoted back to the top division.

"It was a tough game, but we expected that," said Jure Sotlar, who was the tournament's scoring leader with 8 goals and 16 assists.

"Every game was difficult but we needed to win because we wanted to be back with the top teams. It's really nice to be able to play in For the first time in three years Brazil played in the top division next time, we're very happy an IIHF tournament, a positive development for about it and are looking forward to it." a country where Inline hockey is the main driver for ice hockey, rather than the other way The deciding goal was scored early in the searound.

cond period by Ales Fajdiga, who redirected the puck in front of the net on a powerplay. Hungary. New Zealand and Brazil are relega-The Latvians came close with a powerplay ted to the regional gualification tournaments in goal of their own, but Slovenia put the game 2018.





out of reach in the third, earning a ticket to the top division. For Latvia, winning silver is the biggest success in the competition since joining the IIHF Inline Hockey World Championship in 2014.

Bronze for Australia, Argentina safe

After silver last year, Australia won bronze on the heels of a 7-3 victory over Great Britain.

At the other end of the standings, Argentina fend off Hungary 5-4 in the shootout to remain in Division I. Owen Haiek scored the only goal in the penalty lottery.

Thanks to the win, the South Americans finished the Division I tournament in fifth place and are again gualified for the next IIHF Inline Hockey World Championship Division I in 2019.

Brazil returns to Inline

Development Cup

Morocco makes history in new tourney

By Martin Merk

Morocco beat Ireland 11-4 in the final to win the inaugural Development Cup, the first time this country has won an international ice hockey tournament.

The four-team tournament is an initiative from some of the smaller IIHF member countries not part of the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship program, similar to the IIHF Ice Hockey Challenge Cup of Asia for the Asian members.

Morocco was the strongest team both in the preliminary round and in the final. The team that mostly consists of Moroccans who played hockey in Europe and Canada finished the event with a 4-0 record, the first time the national team played against teams from Europe.

"Ice hockey in Morocco is a rather young sport and the first generation of players who started as kids in Morocco is slowly moving into senior hockey and represent Morocco," said localla-developed player Mohammed El Idrissi, who usually plays one game a week plus practice in the Moroccan capital.



Morocco celebrates after beating Ireland to win the 2017 Development Cup, its first international tournament victory.

After starting ice hockey at the small rink in Rabat - in the meantime a second small-size rink is used for hockey in Casablanca - Morocco started to look out for international contacts. First Moroccan kids played against kids from hockey countries who were kids of diplomats in Morocco. Later they hosted a Canadian team, French teams, Spanish teams, went to Switzerland for a ten-day camp. In 2008 they participated in the first and only Arab Cup in Abu Dhabi.

"In 2010 we became IIHF member, something "In the beginning it was very hard but now the I'm proud of because that's where all the big and government saw our international tournaments smaller hockey countries are members. I started and the national championship in Morocco. I to speak with many presidents from other counhave all the plans to build an arena from the tries and look for help," said Royal Moroccan Ice IIHF. I have everything ready." Hockey Federation President Khalid Mrini.

"Last year we had the first Africa Cup against teams from Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt. The government started believing in us and saw that it's getting serious. Two years ago we went from



being a national association to being a Royal federation. It means a lot. It means the government started to believe in us and that hockey is growing in Morocco."

While Morocco has passionate diaspora players who represent the country of their roots, hockey has also grown in the country itself since its start. What once began with six players when the ice rink in the Mega Mall in Rabat opened is now a sport with eight club teams. When the national championship begins later this month, they will be joined by a ninth team.

Mrini knows that to develop hockey within the country and be able to play internationally with homegrown players one needs more rinks. While the federation is working on having a third small rink in Agadir, the challenge is to get the first full-size one to be able to play five-on-five.

"Now just the money is missing but I'm working hard for it and Inshallah [if God wills] we will have an ice rink," he said.

"Morocco deserves it."

Philippines win gold

Champions of first SEA Games in Malaysia

By Martin Merk

The first ice hockey tournament of the Southeast Asian Games ended with a surprise winner.

The Philippines, who joined the IIHF just one vear before and had their international debut in February at the 2017 Asian Winter Games in Japan, beat Thailand 5-4 in the deciding game and dethroned the Thai as number-one ice hockey national team in the region. Host Malaysia won bronze.

The Philippines already had a convincing start half a year earlier in Sapporo, where they lost the first game to Kyrgyzstan but then beat Qatar, Kuwait and Macau to conclude the Division II tournament in third place.

In Kuala Lumpur, the Filipinos played for the first time in an official competition against other nations from the Southeast Asian region. They started the tournament on a high note with a 12-0 crushing of Indonesia, and carried that momentum all the way to the title, remaining undefeated throughout the tournament.



The Phillippines, one of the IIHF's newest members, came out of nowhere to win their first international ice hockey tournament.

Neighbours Malaysia and Singapore faced off for the bronze meda. Singapore had beaten Malaysia 5-4 in the last encounter in March at the 2017 CCOA in Bangkok. But in front of a record crowd of 4,024 fans, Malaysia earned bronze with a 8-2 rout of their opponents.

Hockey history in Malaysia

For the first time in the 58-year-old history of the Southeast Asian Games, ice hockey was included in the 29th edition of the multisport event taking place in Kuala Lumpur.

The National Ice Skating Stadium is built in a mall. this. The SEA Games is a very huge event in However, it's different than the many small rinks Southeast Asia and it will definitely change surrounded by shops as they exist throughout things," Loh said. the continent. The ice sheet is internationalsized, the rink has four big dressing rooms, First ice hockey activities have started in rooms for officials and coaches, a jumbotron Cambodia recently. In Vietnam, ice hockey and a seating capacity for 700 spectators, games have been played since 2014 in Hanoi according to Susan Loh, the General Secretary and recently there have been first ice hockey of the Malaysia Ice Hockey Federation. activities in Ho Chi Minh City.

"It's definitely a big step for us. We've been looking forward to the completion of the ice rink and for the big games. It's fantastic because we



have a lot of support from the mall owner. They are so supportive also for the SEA Games," Loh said. "We are looking into hosting IIHF Ice Hockey Challenge Cup of Asia events there too."

11 countries took part in the SEA Games, including five in the first-ever ice hockey tournament. Thailand has had ice hockey the longest, joining the IIHF in 1989. Host Malaysia and neighbouring island city-state Singapore have also been competing in regional IIHF tournaments for many years. Indonesia and the Philippines joined the IIHF one year ago in time for the event and had their first national team games in the IIHF Challenge Cup of Asia and the Asian Winter Games, respectively.

"To be in the SEA Games is very historic and most of the countries are very excited about

CLICK HERE TO SEE A VIDEO PLAYLIST OF THE 2017 SEA GAMES ICE HOCKEY EVENT

Gallery











Slovenia's Jure Sotlar with a scoring chance against Brazil during the prelim. round.

 $22 \langle \rangle$

Coming back from a 2-0 deficit Argentina beat Hungary 5-4 to avoid relegation.



The Philippines joined the IIHF just one year ago and won gold in their international debut at the Southeast Asian Games.



Thailand taking on Malaysia at the 2017 South East Asia Games.



Development Cup champions Morocco pose with runners-up Ireland, the first time both countries played each other.



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An instructor gives training to goalies in Granada, Spain at the first-ever IIHF Women's Goaltending Development Camp.





The Southeast Asian Games ice hockey event was held at the Empire City mall outside Kuala Lumpur.



A Moroccan player dekes out an Irish defender at the inaugural Development Cup in Andorra.

24

Paying it forward

New fund to push ice hockey ahead

By Adam Steiss

Ice hockey development is a practice in patience, dedication, and hard work.

The Growing the Game Fund, spearheaded by the IIHF in cooperation with its marketing partner Infront Sports & Media, is aimed at encouraging member national associations to create development projects that fit their individual needs, and raises awareness for the sport in their country.

The project was conceived by Infront Winter Sports Executive Director Bruno Marty, in cooperation with IIHF General Secretary Horst Lichtner. Ice Times caught up with Mr. Marty to shed more light on the project and his company's close ties to ice hockey.

What were your impressions for the 2017 **IIHF Semi-Annual Congress?**

It once again showed that we have grown together as one big family and that the congress in its current state proves to be very helpful. We come together twice a year to discuss, resolve



Germany aims to capitalize on momentum gained from the World Championship with two Growing the Game Fund projects.

and decide important topics and pending issues. At the same time, the open and transparent atmosphere and the straightforward execution of the congress helps to ensure ice hockey develops at a good pace.

Very specifically, I appreciated the open and engaged discussion about the future IIHF governance, which addressed key topics and provided members the opportunity to give clear feedback about their wishes. Rarely in my career, have I seen such open and constructive discussions.

In your time with Infront, how has the relationship with the IIHF evolved?

I joined Infront in 2006, at which point the part-The IIHF has a strong history of success and nership with the IIHF was already well-estableadership; they have demonstrated how eflished, having partnered since 1981. However, I fective promotion and development can lead believe our relationship has become much closto monetization. A vital sign of this accomplisher and collaborative since then. ment is the immense growth in spectators and



Coming from a purely commercial relationship, where we paid money in return for getting certain rights to market, the IIHF and Infront have become true partners where we jointly work on projects, deliver a vast array of services, help to further commercialize the sport and really strive to bring the sport closer to the fan.

This joint passion for ice hockey and our commitment to providing the best possible experience for fans has led to many innovations in production and digital engagement, such as the first in-goal camera, the cat camera, which swirls above the ice rink, or a huge social media content push around the main events.

As a good example of the event's appeal and success, the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship regularly reaches an audience of over 1 billion, across 165 countries since 2015.

As Executive Director of Winter Sports you have a unique perspective in the efforts that winter sports put in to promote themselves and grow. Do you feel the IIHF is doing enough in this area?



Bruno Marty (left) with Horst Lichtner at the Infront offices.

TV hours in the past ten years: from 2007 to 2017, broadcast time has guadrupled from 2,700 to 8,300 hours, while the audience has doubled from 600 million to 1.3 billion today. This is underlined by the strong commitment from partners like Skoda, who recently celebrated their 25th anniversary with the IIHF and record-breaking attendance and engagement.

Have there been lessons from other sports you've observed that the IIHF could apply?

We regularly bring and discuss examples from other sports with the IIHF team. In joint strategy sessions we determine opportunities to broaden the fan base and to make the sport easier to understand. Some initiatives that we have introduced recently include new (slow motion) cameras to make the puck more visible or digital "Did you know videos" with our iconic presenter Olga explaining the sport from a behindthe-scenes perspective.

And of course, our major new initiative is the Growing the Game Fund, which was created to help countries raise awareness for the sport of ice hockev.

How did the concept of the Growing the Game Fund come about?

The Growing the Game Fund was proposed by Infront as a tool to strengthen ice hockey from a holistic viewpoint, complementary to existing initiatives. It was agreed with the IIHF as part of the prolongation of the joint rights, which we negotiated in 2014. The fund is a great sign of the effective partnership between the IIHF and Infront and aims to leverage the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship as a unique platform to gain global attention for the fund's goals.

Is this a concept you have observed being used in other sports?

No, it was our idea in the course of the negotiation, but it might exist as part of internal development programs inside many other federations. The key differentiator of the "Growing the Game Fund" compared to other programs is that both IIHF Member National Associations and also Non-IIHF entities that have a focus on ice hockey can apply for funding.

Are you pleased with the pilot projects presented by Germany, Hungary, and **Netherlands?**

Yes, there have been multiple interesting applications from IIHF Member National Associations and also Non-IIHF entities; the chosen initiatives are the result of the transparent process - i.e. the IIHF Council reviews all applications and makes a recommendation before the applications are sent to the "Growing the Game Fund" supervisory board for decision.

The supervisory board is composed of two IIHF (one of them is the IIHF President as the Chairman of the Board) and two Infront members. In case of a draw in the decision process, the Chairman (René Fasel / IIHF) always has the final ballot.

Infront had a close cooperation with the **German Ice Hockey Federation leading up** to the 2017 World Championship. Can the Growing the Game projects presented by Germany keep up the positive momentum begun by the Worlds and help bring German ice hockey to a new level?

Following the "Powerplay 26" initiative from Franz Reindl, Germany developed into a respectable player amongst the leading ice hockey nations.



All of the initiative's milestones have been reached so far: Qualification for the 2018 Winter Olympics, significant improvement of the world ranking, a couple of players managing to enter the NHL and finding major success, a Russian teams attending the Deutschland Cup. All these signs are encouraging that Germany is on the right path.

The IIHF's financial health, development projects, and tournament programs are driven by the World Championship. In Infront's opinion what needs to be done to ensure the continued growth of this tournament?

The IIHF already has a strong road map in place: Build upon what has been achieved, keep up the momentum, and ensure stability to guarantee further growth.

At the same time, we are already working on the next major leap for the sport: the digitalization of the IIHF offering.

Here we believe that with Infront's leading digital expertise we can broaden the ice hockey audience significantly, beyond hockey aficionados to a sport consumed by every level of sports fans on a global level.

If you could put on your prediction cap a moment, do you see any major revolutions in the methods by which ice hockey will be consumed by fans in the future?

As mentioned above: Digital, Digital, Digital! The delivery of relevant and captivating content across platforms and devices will guarantee unparalleled ice hockey experiences and a seamless fan journey. It is truly helpful that we play a World Championship every year, compared to many other sports locked in 2-4 year cycles, as this allows for implementation of new technologies and rapid adjustments where needed.

Combined with the exploitation of social channels and technological innovations we see a bright future for ice hockey on a broad level. But let me also emphasize that I do not expect this to happen as a revolution, but much rather as a continuous evolution.

Ice Hockey's profile in Asia has room to grow. With the next two Winter Olympics how else can the Infront IIHF Partnership bring ice hockey to China and beyond?

The development of Asia has been an integral part of the IIHF's overall agenda for many years, long before the Olympics were given to Beijing. It has been addressed by many initiatives such as funding an IIHF Asia office with an experienced IIHF Asia Development Manager.

The Asia Development Foundation, in which Infront funds the further development of ice hockey in Asia with the intention of broadening the sport and enlarging the audience in the region, is an important pillar for the continued investment into development for what is a key segment of the global sport landscape.

However, Asian development is not only about growing the fan base surrounding the Beijing Olympics, rather a holistic approach is needed, i.e. initiatives for growing the number of ice rinks in the country as well as for the development of players, coaches and officials. There are already a variety of projects underway to support this and we are in regular exchange on how to accelerate the development and promotion of the sport in Asia and especially in China, for example by bringing the best national teams in the world to China for a tournament, combined with grassroots initiatives.

As part of the Chinese conglomerate Wanda, Infront can tap into a vast network in the area. Infront's physical footprint with group companies in China (Beijing) and Singapore allows us to closely follow IIHF's growth markets in Asia and offers value upon which the IIHF can rely.



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Coming

IIHF Ice Hockey U20 World CHampionship Division I Group A FRANCE, Courchevel & Meribel 10.12.2017 - 16.12.2017

IIHF Ice Hockey U20 World Championship Division I Group B SLOVENIA, Bled 09.12.2017 - 15.12.2017

IIHF Ice Hockey U20 World CHampionship Division II Group A GREAT BRITAIN, Dumfries 10.12.2017 - 16.12.2017

2018 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship **Division II Group B Qualification** BULGARIA, Sofia 04.12.2017 - 09.12.2017

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