

## USA's women are Worlds beaters



USA's women's hockey team has won five of the last seven IIHF World Championships. Iya Gavrilova celebrates Russia's first bronze medal since 2001 (bottom, middle).



**The trend is clear. USA's women have become IIHF Worlds beaters while Canada still dominates Olympics. What will America's gold in Ottawa mean for the race for gold in Sochi?**

**RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL**

Canada won the first eight IIHF World Women's golds between 1990 and 2004. Since the U.S. broke that sequence with their historic first Worlds title in 2005, they have won five out of seven World Championships.

■ This sets up a very interesting women's tournament in Sochi 2014. After USA's sensational win at Nagano 1998, Canada has taken three consecutive Olympic gold medals; Salt Lake City 2002, Turin 2006 and Vancouver 2010.

As usual when those two teams played in the final, it was a thriller. USA's Amanda Kessel broke a 2-2 tie in the beginning of the third period and that was it.

There also things happening behind the two perennial top women's hockey nations. Russia defeated Finland 2-0 for their second World Championship bronze and the first since 2001. This is also very encouraging for Sochi as every event benefits from a competitive home team.

■ Russia's success goes back to its emphasis on club hockey and especially on the club team Tornado Moscow, which has in recent years dominated the IIHF European Women's Champions Cup. Sweden has chosen a different route, for several years not competing in the EWCC.

Sweden's decline from Olympic bronze in 2006 to relegation play in 2013 could be linked to this fact. It is at the club level that players develop. What you do on national team level is a confirmation of the skills you acquired in the club.

■ After the women's World Championship we are going to the 77th IIHF World Championship in Stockholm and Helsinki. It will be Sweden's turn at trying to stop

the home-ice curse which has been in place since 1986, with the Soviet Union being the last team to win gold on home ice.

For the Swedes it will be a double challenge: Tre Kronor has won the Worlds title eight times, but never at home. Will the Swedes be able to put both ghosts to rest? Just like the championship in Ottawa was the last one for the women before Sochi, the 2013 event will be the last rehearsal for the men before the Olympics.

■ At press time, the IIHF, the NHL and NHLPA and the IOC have held discussions regarding NHL-players' participation at the upcoming Olympics. It is everyone's hope that the parties have reached a solution which would make Sochi 2014 the fifth consecutive best-on-best Olympics.

**René Fasel**  
IIHF President



## Bid for a piece of hockey history

Jerseys worn during HOF Induction to be auctioned off for charity

■ The 2013 IIHF Hall of Fame induction ceremony, set to take place in Stockholm on May 19, will have an added twist this year.

In addition to welcoming Jan-Åke Edvinsson, Peter Forsberg, Danielle Goyette, Paul Henderson, Teppo Numminen, and Mats Sundin to the Hall, ice hockey fans will get to bid on special commemorative jerseys, to be autographed and worn by the inductees during the induction ceremony.



Sundin's Tre Kronor jersey will be among those on auction.

Photo: Steve Porlier / IIHF-IIIHF Images

proceeds going to the respective player's charity of choice.

■ Aside from the inductions, the Hall of Fame ceremony will also honour the latest winner of the Paul Loicq Award, given to those who made an outstanding contribution to international hockey. This year's recipient will be TSN's Gord Miller, for his work as an announcer for 18 IIHF U20 World Championships.

These jerseys, especially made for the occasion, will have a special IIHF Hall of Fame patch with the name of the player, the IIHF Hall of Fame logo, and the date and place of the induction ceremony.

In the weeks leading up to the induction ceremony, the jerseys will be put up for auction on IIHF.com, with the

■ The second-ever Milestone Award will be presented to the 1954 Soviet Union World Championship team. The award is given periodically to teams that have made a significant contribution to the development of international hockey. Soviet star forward Boris Mikhailov will be on hand to accept the award on the team's behalf.

## Gearing up for 2013 Hockey Development Camp

Women's High Performance camp also running in July in Sheffield

■ The International Ice Hockey Federation is pleased to announce the details of its 2013 Hockey Development Camp, which will be held at the Vierumäki Sport Institute in Vierumäki, Finland from July 6-14, 2013. This camp marks the 12th IIHF Global Hockey Development Camp.

The camp program is used as a platform to launch the IIHF's development and education programs, specifically aimed at assisting each National Association to achieve their individually identified objectives, leading to global growth and development of the game.



IIHF Mentors and Instructors help with camp programs.

The camp program is tailor-made to assist each National Association in upgrading and operating quality education programs within their National Association.

The IIHF's National Association Assistance Program will be integrated with the camp program to assist nations in planning, organizing and operating domestic development programs, which may be eligible for IIHF subsidies.

■ The 2013 camp will feature programs for:

- Player Development (Ambassadors of Long Term Athlete Development)
- Team Coach Development (Coach Director / Instructor Education)
- Team Manager Development (National Team / National Instructor Education)
- Equipment Manager Development (National Team / National Instructor Education)
- Administrator's Education Program (National Association / Club Cooperation)
- National Association Learn to Play Instructor Development
- Long Term Athlete Development Program
- Result Manager Program
- Goalkeeper Coach Development

### 2013 High Performance Camp in Sheffield

■ Now entering the third season of programs on the "Road to Sochi 2014 and beyond", the IIHF is pleased to announce that the 2013 IIHF Women's High Performance Camp will be held in Sheffield, United Kingdom, 14th – 21st July 2013.

The program has expanded again this season to include all nations that are involved in the IIHF U18 Women's World Championship program as well as those ranked in the Top 14 Nations. The camp will focus on the 3rd phase of the IIHF's women's hockey development, with players and national team staffs involved in development both on and off the ice.

## OBITUARIES

**Wayne Fleming**, a coach in Europe and the NHL and for Team Canada on the international stage died 26 March in Calgary, Alberta from brain cancer. He was 62. In a coaching career that lasted more than three decades, he was part of the hockey community at the highest level for much of his career. Apart from stints in the NHL, KHL, Swiss National League A, German DEL, and Swedish Elitserien, he was head coach of the Canadian team at the 2001 and 2002 World Championships, and an assistant coach at the 2002 Olympics.

**Dobromir Krastev**, The former President of the Bulgarian Ice Hockey Federation, Dobromir Krastev, passed away in a car accident on 5 April. He was 53. Krastev chaired the organization from 1999 until 2010. He worked as a team leader for the Bulgarian men's national team at several events, most recently at the 2009 IIHF World Championship Division II Group B in Sofia, and was a delegate at many IIHF congresses.

**Dmitri Uchaikin**, Russian forward died on 31 March after suffering a brain hemorrhage stemming from a hit suffered during a playoff game in the Kazakh league. He was 32. Uchaikin spent most of his playing career with Amur Khabarovsk, the city where he was born, before moving to the Kazakh league in 2009 where he played first for Yermak Angarsk before joining Yertis Pavlodar in 2010.

**Kevin Wellman** Former Australian Olympian Ken Wellman passed away on 21 March at 82 years of age. He represented Australia in the 1960 Olympic Winter Games in Squaw Valley. Wellman also captained Australia in the 1962 IIHF World Championship B-Pool.

## NEWS & NOTES

■ **IIHF:** On Sunday, 14 April, the IIHF Facebook Page (IIHF.com/facebook) hit 100,000 fans. The IIHF has been active in the world's largest social network for the last three years to share news, pictures and videos from international hockey with fans, players, coaches and officials from all over the world. The IIHF is also active on Twitter with its news account @IIHFHockey and its live scores account @IIHFScores.

■ **GREAT BRITAIN:** The 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship will for the first time be broadcast live on TV in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Infront Sports & Media, marketing partner of the International Ice Hockey Federation, secured an agreement with Premier Sports. The channel, which operates on the British SKY platform, will show 20 games of the 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship. Premier Sports has also acquired the rights to show all games of Team Great Britain, playing in the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division I Group A in Budapest between 14 and 21 April 2013.

■ **CANADA: Murray Costello** was elected to Canada's Sports Hall of Fame as a Builder in April. It was under Costello that Hockey Canada created the Program of Excellence in 1982. He was also instrumental in the legitimization of women's hockey at the IIHF, ensuring that the 1990 Women's World Championships was a sanctioned event. Out of that success came Olympic participation for women.

■ **USA:** USA Hockey has named **Don Lucia** head coach of the 2014 U.S. national team at the 2014 IIHF World Junior Championship in Malmö, Sweden. Lucia takes over for Phil Housley who led the USA to gold at the 2013 U20 Championships in Ufa, Russia. He has coached 26 seasons of NCAA Division I hockey and his 622 wins rank fourth all-time among active coaches. Since 1999, Lucia has been with the University of Minnesota where he has won two NCAA titles in 2002 and 2003.

## 2012-2016 IIHF Committees convene in Zurich

Main goals outlined include safety, player participation



Photos: Thomas Oswald

The committees for the new term, seen here at the inaugural meetings in Zurich, include 146 experts from various fields who represent 41 different IIHF member countries.

By Martin Merk

■ ■ Following last autumn's election of the IIHF Council, 16 committees were formed and its members convened for a kick-off meeting in Zurich on 27 February.

The committees for the new term include 147 experts from various fields who represent 41 different IIHF member countries.

During their term lasting until 2016, the main tasks of the committees will be to work on issues within their mandate and field of expertise and to make recommendations to the Council.

During the welcome speeches of the IIHF President and the three Vice Presidents, several changes were brought to attention.

Vice President Kalervo Kummola praised the increasing female participation in the IIHF's hockey bodies – a visible change since the Finnish Ice Hockey Association President joined the Council in 1998.

■ An even bigger change compared to the last term is the representation of current and former hockey players as the result of the creation of two new committees, the Athletes Committee and the Player Safety Consulting Group.

In his keynote address, IIHF President René Fasel urged the committee members to make use of their expertise and the opportunities presented to make an impact in international ice hockey with ideas and proposals.

"One of our most important challenges is safety. Our game has changed dramatically in the last fifteen years," Fasel said, suggesting to the newly formed committees how eliminating the red-line offside as well as strict rule interpretations have made the game much faster. "Everybody has to be looking for ways how we can better control the situation with escalating concussions."

"To develop our game, it must be safe," IIHF Vice President Bob Nicholson said. "We have to show parents we have the best game, the safest game and the most fun game. We must make sure we get more participants in the game all over the world."



Mathieu Schneider (left) and Jaroslav Spacek (right) are among the former athletes in the committees.

■ The Athletes Committee is headed Vladislav Tretiak, who brings with him experience both at the highest level of play as one of the most successful goalkeepers ever, and in leadership as a long-time President of the Ice Hockey Federation of Russia.

Former players Philippe Bozon (France), Sean Burke (Canada), Sergei Fyodorov (Russia) and Jaroslav Spacek (Czech Republic) also have played for many years at the top international level while Saku Koivu (Finland) is still playing in Anaheim.

Angela Ruggiero (USA) joins in not only after a long international women's hockey career but also bringing in experience from the same role she has assumed in the International Olympic Committee's Athletes Commission. Also the committee's Secretary, IIHF Marketing Director Christian Hofstetter, is a former athlete having played in the Swiss National League A for many years.

"I didn't see the world behind the doors. That's why I'm happy to have more time with the kids and be an adviser," Spacek described his time after retiring as a player in 2012. "I can see that in my country fewer and fewer kids

come to the rinks. I'd like to help the Czech association and the IIHF to get more kids for the game."

■ The Player Safety Consulting Group includes players and experts from other areas to bring in their expertise. Like Mathieu Schneider, who represented the U.S. as a player and became involved with the National Hockey League Players' Association (NHLPA).

"The Players' Association was a real natural fit for me, it was a tremendous opportunity," said Schneider and is happy to be back at the international stage in his new career. "I'm excited to see the enthusiasm to grow the game worldwide. Player safety certainly became the focal point mainly because of concussions. It became important to protect the players not only for their playing careers but also for their post-careers."

In his work with the NHLPA Schneider has been involved with rule discussions but also improving the equipment, making it smaller so players don't feel invincible and also installing more flexible glass at rinks.

"Obviously hockey is a physical game and we don't want to take that out. That's part of the excitement. But at the same time we want to attract the six- and seven-year old kids. We want the parents to think hockey is a great sport for their kids to learn. They can be part of a team, travel the world and do so many things."

■ There are also other topics the various committees will focus on. In his speech, Kummola pointed out the work that needs to be done in Europe to bring stakeholders together. Working groups have been formed after the Hockey Forum last June and the common goal of the IIHF, national associations, leagues and clubs is to create a new European club competition in view of the 2014/2015 season.

"It's important to involve all stakeholders in the efforts to launch a new European club competition and to follow the good examples from other sports like football," Kummola said.

■ Thomas Wu, the new Asian IIHF Vice President, pointed out the growing potential for hockey in the Far and Middle East countries that are getting wealthier.



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# Ottawa puts on a show: Women's Worlds a hit in nation's capital

Americans prevail, pay back Canada for Burlington loss; Russians surprise field to capture second-ever bronze medal

 By Andrew Podnieks

The 2013 Women's World Championship wrapped up in Ottawa with plenty to talk about, from the expected to the unexpected and a bit of everything in between. The total attendance for the 21 games was 98,155, and although it fell short of the record from Winnipeg in 2007, it was still the second-best attended event ever. As well, the Canada-Finland game of April 5 set a single game record of 18,013.

Overall, game scores were close except for three results involving Canada, which proved the top-scoring team in the tournament with 34 goals in five games. At the other end, the Swiss scored only five goals. The U.S. scored only 17 goals, half Canada's total, but scored when it mattered most.

Here's how the teams fared at the last major competition before the Sochi Olympics.

**Gold – United States:** The Americans blew a 2-0 lead to Canada in the opening game and didn't have an easy road to the finals as Canada did. They managed a 4-2 win over Finland followed by a 5-0 win over the Swiss to set up a semi-finals rematch against Suomi. In that game goalie Noora Raty was sensational, and the game remained scoreless through the first 53 minutes of the game. Two late goals and an empty netter gave the U.S. a 3-0 win and a spot in the finals. Perhaps the most emphatic stat from that decisive game was that they held Canada to just 16 shots. Quote of the tournament goes to forward Hilary Knight who, when asked about the re-match with Canada for gold said: "There is blood in the water, and the sharks are out."

**Silver – Canada:** The hosts performed as expected, reaching the gold-medal game with a perfect record. The highlight of the preliminary round was the opening game in which the team fell behind to the U.S. by a 2-0 score after the first period but rallied with two goals in the third. Jennifer Wakefield then scored the winner in the shootout to send Scotiabank Place fans home happy. The team then had three routes en route to the final game for a re-match against the Americans. Although Canada held the early 1-0 lead and was 2-2 after two periods, Amanda Kessel scored the only goal of the third to give the U.S. its fourth gold in the past five Women's Worlds. Hayley Wickenheiser, who missed half the tournament with injury, didn't register a point all WW and didn't get a single shot on goal in the final. The victory was fully deserved as Canada looked slower and less creative, signaling the need for significant change if it hopes for a different result in Russia next February.

**Bronze – Russia:** It seemed almost like a publicity stunt at first. Bring in a big name NHL player—Alexei Yashin—and give the team more exposure. But Yashin hired a new coach, brought in half a dozen new faces, and made the players believe. He also gave the program more funding and reminded them that Sochi was less than a year away. They responded. Goalie Nadezhda Alexandrova was excellent, and the Russians scored the only two goals of the third period to beat Finland, 2-0, in the game for third place. They lost only one game all tournament (to Canada) and signaled a new confidence heading into the most important Olympics in the nation's history.



With an attendance of 98,155 total spectators (the second highest ever for a women's World Championship) and a record number of TV viewers for the final game, the return of international women's hockey to Ottawa was a big success.

**4th place – Finland:** Give goalie Noora Raty credit. After losing to the Russians, she called out the skaters, saying that scoring five goals in six games in completely unacceptable. Indeed, the Finns had just one goal in their last four games. Raty did her part; she was superb, but the forwards couldn't put the puck in the net.

**5th place – Germany:** The game to decide 5th and 6th places is difficult to play because emotionally players have finished the tournament, but the Germans held together long enough to rally from a 1-0 deficit and beat the Swiss 5-3 for fifth. It's a young team, but goalie Jennifer Harss was excellent and Franziska Busch had four goals. Last year the team had to play the relegation series with Slovakia, so this is an improvement for the team, to be sure.

**6th place – Switzerland:** Like Finland, the team's play here had to be disappointing considering the quality of goaltending Florence Schelling provided La Suisse. Last year's Directorate Award goalie, she was every bit as impressive in 2013, but her teammates provided scoring that resembled binary code: 1, 0, 0, 1 in their first four games. The three goals in the last game was too little, too late, and last year's impressive bronze medal showing is now in the past.

**7th place – Sweden:** The biggest disappointment in Ottawa had to be the play and showing of the Swedes. Nothing went right. Even before the tournament started they had to scratch veteran star goalie Kim Martin from the lineup after she tore her Achilles heel in an exhibition game. Once the tournament got under way they lost to two opponents unexpectedly, 3-2 to the Czechs and 4-0 to the Russians. That sealed their fate, and although they won the relegation round to remain in the top pool, they did so that was humbling rather than celebratory.

**8th place – Czech Republic:** Playing in the top level for the first time in its history, the Czech women shocked the tournament by beating Sweden, 3-2, in its first game. Unfortunately, they lost the next five games and are relegated for 2015, but there is hope. The team had a host of teenagers who also played at the U18, and but for a horrible power play it might have eked out another victory or two. In short, the trip up was great news, and it seems likely they'll be back sooner rather than later.



## USA back at #1 in World Ranking

Russians move into top five, Czechs to top 10

Rank	Country	Total Points	2012 Rank	Movement
1	United States	2960	2	+1
2	Canada	2940	1	-1
3	Finland	2765	3	0
4	Russia	2710	6	+2
5	Switzerland	2665	4	-1
6	Sweden	2620	5	-1
7	Germany	2535	8	+1
8	Slovakia	2430	7	-1
9	Czech Republic	2360	12	+3
10	Japan	2315	11	+1
11	Norway	2280	10	-1
12	Austria	2220	15	+3
13	Latvia	2190	14	+1
14	Kazakhstan	2145	9	-5
15	China	2090	13	-2
16	France	2065	16	0
17	Denmark	1970	19	+2
18	Great Britain	1910	17	-1
19	Italy	1845	18	-1
20	Netherlands	1750	21	+1
21	Slovenia	1615	20	-1
22	Hungary	1585	23	+1
23	Australia	1540	24	+1
24	Croatia	1535	22	-2
25	New Zealand	1455	25	0
26	DPR Korea	1340	31	+5
27	Poland	1340	28	+1
28	Korea	1310	26	-2
29	Spain	1255	30	+1
30	Iceland	1225	29	-1
31	Belgium	1220	27	-4
32	South Africa	1135	32	0
33	Bulgaria	870	33	0
34	Turkey	700	35	+1
35	Ireland	650	36	+1
36	Romania	270	34	-2

## Individual Awards: Canada's Poulin nabs top three honours

Marie-Philip Poulin, who led the 2013 WW in points with 12 and tied for the tournament lead with six goals was named tournament MVP. Nadezhda Alexandrova of Russia led all goalkeepers with a 98.63 save percentage and allowed only one goal in four games. Team USA's Brianna Decker came second in scoring but had the key tying goal in the final.



**Marie-Philip Poulin**  
Most Valuable Player  
Directorate Best Forward  
All-Star Team Forward



**Nadezhda Alexandrova**  
Directorate Best Goalkeeper



**Jenni Hiirikoski**  
Directorate Best Defenceman



**Noora Raty**  
All-Star Team Goalkeeper



**Meaghan Mikkelson**  
All-Star Team Defenceman



**Catherine Ward**  
All-Star Team Defenceman



**Brianna Decker**  
All-Star Team Forward



**Jennifer Wakefield**  
All-Star Team Forward



# Landeskog keeps battling

## NHL Rookie of the Year could shine on home ice in May



By Lucas Aykroyd

When you look at the new era of Swedish hockey after Mats Sundin, Peter Forsberg, and Nicklas Lidström, Gabriel Landeskog may be the crown jewel among the wave of talents born in the early 1990's. Can the Colorado captain also become a leader with Tre Kronor? Don't forget: Landeskog is still only 20.

While it's too early to tell whether Sweden's 1990's generation will have the same international impact as the three ex-superstars all born in the early 70's, one thing is for sure: never before today has Sweden produced such an abundance of high-skilled players who are between ages 19 and 23.

Check out this list of skaters: Erik Karlsson, Victor Hedman, and Jakob Silfverberg (all born in 1990); Oliver Ekman-Larsson and Magnus Pääjärvi (1991); Landeskog and Adam Larsson (1992), Mika Zibanejad and Jonas Brodin (1993). In addition, there are goaltenders Jacob Markström (1990) and Robin Lehner (1991).

They're all NHLers already. Perhaps one or two would have been better served by staying home a season or two longer, but that's a story for another day.

■ As Landeskog has discovered this year, being the captain of an NHL team isn't always necessarily fun. With his Avalanche having struggled to find success, the 20-year-old Swedish left wing's leadership has come under the microscope.

Wearing a letter on his jersey is hardly foreign to Landeskog. The Stockholm native became the first European captain ever of the OHL's Kitchener Rangers in 2010, and donned an A at last year's IIHF World Championship.

There, in his hometown where he began playing for Djurgården's Skatingschool at age 5 before eventually transferring to Hammarby at 9, he added five points as Sweden came sixth on home ice.

Yet when the budding power forward was named the youngest NHL captain in league history back on 4 September (19 years and 286 days), he couldn't have imagined that his sophomore campaign would've been this tough.

■ He has always been precocious. On February 21, 2009, Landeskog became the youngest elite player in Djurgården's history, debuting at 16 years and 90 days vs Brynäs.

Last year, he won the Calder Trophy as the NHL's rookie of the year with 22 goals and 52 points. But this season, he has not only experienced his first work stoppage and but also missed 11 games due to a concussion from a hit by defenceman Brad Stuart of the San Jose Sharks. The 185-cm, 93-kg forward has also had other injuries to deal with.

"I'm not used to this position that I'm in," Landeskog said of being the captain of an NHL franchise at the bottom of the Western Conference standings. "I haven't



Gabriel Landeskog (insert: with the Calder trophy), the NHL's youngest captain, is a strong candidate to play at the Worlds in his native Stockholm for the second straight year -- and maybe in Sochi too. "Photos: André Ringuette / HHOF-IIHF Images, Bruce Bennett / Getty Images

been through this before. So it's something new. But I have a good group of guys around me that support me in decisions and everyday life as a captain in the National Hockey League."

Even though Landeskog bounced back comparatively well after his head injury, recording five goals in six games between March 14 and 27, he sets high standards for himself, and he's far from satisfied.

"It hasn't been as good as I want it to be," said Landeskog. "It hasn't been as good as we need it to be, both in terms of how I've been playing and from a team standpoint. We expect to be doing a lot better than this, and we know we're a better team than the way we're playing."

One bright spot was getting linemate Ryan O'Reilly back in the lineup. The 22-year-old Canadian, who also suited up for his country at last year's Worlds, played for the KHL's Metallurg Magnitogorsk past the end of the NHL lockout since he couldn't come to terms with the Avalanche as a restricted free agent. But he signed a two-year, \$10-million offer sheet from the Calgary Flames on February 28, which Colorado promptly matched. Landeskog enjoys the chemistry he has with O'Reilly.

"It's a lot of fun to be back with him," Landeskog said. "He's good at everything. I think we play the game similarly. He was a big part of my success last year."

■ On March 13, Landeskog tweeted (in Swedish): "You're not a real fan if you're only there for the good times." He was alluding to the difficulties Djurgården has experienced in Allsvenskan play. Traditionally a powerhouse, it finished fifth in the regular season and failed to return to the Elitserien after last year's surprising relegation.

But there might have been an implicit statement to Avalanche fans in there as well, since this club is a long way from its glory days of the 1990's and early 2000's with Joe Sakic, Peter Forsberg, and Patrick Roy.

If there's a silver lining to Colorado's floundering, it's the likelihood that Landeskog will be able to play for his country for a second straight year on home ice at the World Championship. Already in early April, Swedish national team coach Pär Mårts told Ice Times that Landeskog would be picked provided Colorado doesn't make the playoffs and Gabriel stays healthy.

# Russia the team to beat

## 2012 champs atop World Ranking

■ Not surprisingly, defending World Champion Russia is on top of the IIHF Men's Pre-Championship World Ranking prior to the 2013 IIHF World Championship in Stockholm and Helsinki. Finland follows with the Czech Republic third.

The chart to the right is already pre-calculated so you can very easily gauge the 2013 World Ranking which will be official right after the gold medal game. So for example: If Sweden finally breaks the Worlds' home ice curse and wins gold at the Globe Arena on May 19, you simply add the winner's 1200 ranking points (see under "Points Available") to Sweden's current pre-Championship score of 1905.

If Finland finishes second, their pre-Championship ranking points of 1965 get a boost of 1160 fresh points, and so on.

■ Note that the 2013 ranking has no bearing for the Olympic seeding for Sochi 2014. The 2012 ranking determined that. The IIHF World Ranking works around a four-year cycle, with most emphasis given on recent results.

So in the 2013 World Ranking the value of Czech Republic's gold medal points of 1200 in 2010 in Germany will be down to 25% = 300 points. This, while all points earned at the 2009 World Championship will be dropped from the calculation altogether.

■ What would it take for Russia to drop down from the No. 1 position? As there is a forty-point difference between gold and silver and also between silver and bronze, Finland would take over the top spot if they, for example, defeat Russia in the gold medal game or if Finland comes second and Russia third.

Both Canada and the USA need good showings in 2013 to improve their rather humble 5th and 7th positions respectively. Canada is 75 points away from a third place, while the USA needs an exceptional final 2013 position, at the same time as 6th ranked Slovakia falters significantly, to overtake the Slovaks.

Switzerland's 10th position is the lowest since the IIHF introduced the World Ranking in 2004. But the goal for the Swiss is clear – any finish higher than Germany guarantees them overtaking their neighbors, as the difference is only five ranking points.



Rank	Country	Points	Points available
1	Russia	2000	WM 1 1200
2	Finland	1965	2 1160
3	Czech Republic	1955	3 1120
4	Sweden	1905	4 1100
5	Canada	1880	5 1060
6	Slovakia	1840	6 1040
7	USA	1775	7 1020
8	Norway	1745	8 1000
9	Germany	1690	9 960
10	Switzerland	1685	10 940
11	Latvia	1600	11 920
12	Denmark	1580	12 900
13	France	1570	13 880
14	Belarus	1550	14 860
15	Italy	1430	15 840
16	Austria	1425	16 820
17	Kazakhstan	1425	17 800
18	Slovenia	1395	18 780
19	Hungary	1315	19 760
20	Ukraine	1290	20 740
21	Great Britain	1240	21 720
22	Japan	1220	22 700
23	Poland	1175	23 680
24	Netherlands	1125	24 660
25	Lithuania	1100	25 640
26	Estonia	1030	26 620
27	Korea	1020	27 600
28	Romania	1015	28 580
29	Spain	985	29 560
30	Croatia	950	30 540
31	Serbia	895	31 520
32	Australia	830	32 500
33	Bulgaria	730	33 480
34	Iceland	720	34 460
35	Mexico	710	35 440
36	New Zealand	700	36 420
37	Belgium	670	37 400
38	China	620	38 380
39	Turkey	585	39 360
40	Israel	520	40 340
41	South Africa	470	41 320
42	Ireland	445	42 300
43	Luxembourg	400	43 280
44	Greece	370	44 260
45	DPR Korea	300	45 240
46	Mongolia	215	46 220
47	United Arab Emirates	55	47 200
48	Georgia	0	48 180

On the heels of a dominant 2012 World Championship campaign, Russia will try for a repeat performance in the nation's last dress rehearsal before hosting the Olympic Games in 2014.



# Searching for the next big thing

Talent hunter Håkan Andersson shares his insight on the loneliest job in hockey



By Adam Steiss

The scout's life is a tough one. Being constantly on the road, watching countless games and analyzing hundreds of players to find those one or two special ones that could make the pros. It's a lifestyle that Detroit chief of European scouting Håkan Andersson knows well, having been a constant presence in ice rinks across the continent for over twenty years.

Ahead of the 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 World Championship, the last major tournament for NHL prospects before the draft, he sat down to Ice times to discuss his career.

**How important is the U18 World Championship on the scouting calendar?**

It's very important, without a doubt. This is the last time you will have a chance to see those guys that you will be drafting two months later, so it's very important. Every year, there's always players in Europe who come up and impress in this tournament. We got a couple of players to watch out for, couple of Russians, guys in Chelyabinsk, couple of Finns and Swedes too. We have three or four European scouts and more guys coming from North America too.

**For someone who isn't familiar with the process of scouting players, how would you describe a typical day in the scouting business?**

I don't know if there is a typical day, I'm either at home planning my schedule, including booking hotels, travel. I'm a European scout so I spend a lot of time looking at the different league schedules. Anytime I'm at a game in Sweden, Finland, or Russia, there's also a game going on at the same time that I could have been at.

**How many games do you average per year?**

I'd say just over 200.

**What do you look for during a game that the casual fan might miss?**

During a game for example the fan typically watches the puck most of the time, wherever the puck is that's what they see, be it a nice shot or save or whatever. For me I also pay attention to what's happening away from the puck, how does a player react after a bad shift, or how they react on the bench after a good shift.

And also other details, like how does he play the 1-on-1 in front of the net? A lot of times the regular fan will look at who's shooting the puck, while I'm looking at the defence-man to see how he reacts to the play or where his position is relative to the puck and the opposing player. There are a million different things that are part of the game that teams teach players that fans don't see, these are what I look for.

**Does it happen often that you'll go to scout one player then someone else catches your attention?**

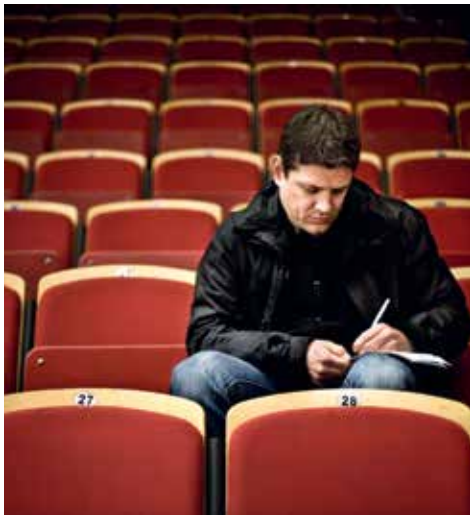
I would say that it doesn't happen a lot. But it has happened, actually a couple of players in Detroit now were discovered this way.

**Which players?**

The biggest one would have been (Pavel) Datsyuk. I went

out to see Dmitri Kalinin, who ended up playing in Buffalo for many years. His team was playing in Yekaterinburg, and they had a small centreman who was on the puck a lot and made some good plays but was also very good defensively, a very smart player. He caught my eye and I was kind of waiting to see if he made the World junior team, and then when he didn't I went to see him a couple of more times and he showed that, well, he was Datsyuk (laughs).

Jonathan Ericsson was another one. He was playing, not in the highest junior league in Sweden but in a secondary league, I went to that game to see a forward that was scoring a lot in the league. The game happened to be against Ericsson's team and the guy was ok but the player that I really liked was on the other team: a defenceman that was



Håkan Andersson has been a Red Wings scout since 1990.

really mobile, was big and nobody could get around him. That was Ericsson (now in his 6th NHL season).

**When scouting a player, do you look to see if they would be a specific fit for the Detroit system?**

Our boss Ken Holland was in his first year as chief of scouting 23 years ago when I started scouting for Detroit. We had a lot of discussions with the scouting group and management group about what our game was like and what we wanted the team to be like. But I think that most of all we look at who has the best chance of making the NHL. Because if we end up with someone we don't like or who doesn't fit our system, he is still an NHL-caliber player and we can just trade him. So I think our philosophy is to pick the best player. It's so hard for a player to make the NHL, and from being drafted to playing for Detroit is almost always a minimum of three to four years, so it's hard to try and determine if he will fit into the system at that age.

**When was the first time you became seriously involved with picking a player at the NHL draft?**

I think the first one was Tomas Holmström, he was a guy that nobody else had seen, and back then the draft was eleven or twelve rounds. So we were getting into the late rounds and at that point Ken was more or less asking if anybody had a name that they believed in. And I put my hand up and had this Holmström character. A little bit of an odd guy, not the best skater in the world, but he had some things that I liked a lot. So Ken said let's grab him and see what happens. Obviously with four Stanley Cups he's gone beyond our expectations.

**With a team as consistently good as Detroit has been, does it get annoying sometimes when you almost never get a top ten pick?**

Oh, without a doubt (laughs). The last one I can really think of is Erik Karlsson, I really early on felt that this little kid could be a star in the NHL, but I just hoped that people wouldn't like him, because there was talk about him being small and he was taking a lot of what people felt were stupid chances with the puck. But it was part of his learning process, obviously he made some mistakes but he turned out to be a helluva player, and I was thinking "Oh I hope he doesn't play as good as I think he is" so we'd have a shot at him. But he ended up going 15th to Ottawa. Obviously if you redid that draft today he'd be a top five pick.

**Are there any big differences between North American and European prospects regarding their development?**

Well I think the one big difference is that the North Americans are usually more advanced physically, they're without a doubt much bigger at 17 and 18 than the Europeans. Skill-wise I don't know if they have an edge, competitiveness maybe a little bit, but that's more of an individual thing.

**Have there been any big changes in how players are scouted from when you started out? For example, are players getting scouted at a younger age now than before?**

No, it's actually the opposite with me. In Sweden we have a tournament for 15, 16 year olds from different states in Sweden that's shown on TV. I followed that closely the first couple of years, but then I realized that the difference between 16 and 18 was big. So I paid less attention to it. Agents fight like cats and dogs over kids then two years later then don't get drafted, which is a shame.

**Are there any countries outside the top four or five that scouts should be checking out in the future?**

Sweden has been doing great, but outside the top nations Norway's a country to keep an eye on, they love winter sports and are coming along. Denmark as well has a couple of guys in the NHL, and there's more players coming out of there. Switzerland has some players, and scouts need to be there. Germany too. In all these countries it's all about the individual, that if he wants to play and has a rink close by you gotta watch out for him.

**How many players do you put on prospect list?**

Around 70, it changes constantly leading up to the last game played. We have a deadline for our final list, around May 1st. After that there are very few changes but up until then it changes every week. It's supposed to change a lot too because if you think you can walk into the draft and pick out the best guys in the right order then you're dreaming.

**What would you say is the toughest position to scout?**

The position that I know the least about is goalies, it takes such a long time for them to peak, and you have to look at a kid and try to project how he will be 10-13 years from now. Viktor Fasth (Anaheim) is a great example, he wasn't on anyone's radar until he turned 28. That tells everything and is a good example that if you love something don't give up.



# Snapshots from the world of hockey



Switzerland and Germany's two No. 24s, Sabrina Zollinger (left) and Lisa Schuster (right) struggle to stay on their feet as they chase the puck at the Women's Worlds.



Japan's Mihu Shishiuchi breaks away from the pack at the Women's World Championship Division I, Group A. Japan won the tournament with Denmark finishing second.



The French women move up to Division IA after winning on home ice in Strasbourg.



The Rouen Dragons celebrate after winning the Ligue Magnus a fourth consecutive time.



Russia's national women's team is going to Sochi with newfound confidence following a successful tournament that netted the country its second-ever bronze medal.



Posting a perfect 7-0 record, Chinese Taipei won the 2013 IIHF Challenge Cup of Asia in Bangkok, the first IIHF tournament ever to be held in Thailand.



Denmark's U18 men's team upset Norway 6-3 on the last day to win promotion.



The Tohoku Free Blades won the Asia League championship.



# Swiss team, league tops in IIHF European attendance survey

ZURICH – One day after the end of the regular season in Europe’s top leagues, the IIHF has released its annual attendance study. SC Bern set a new club attendance record with an average of 16,330 fans while the Swiss NLA set a new league attendance record with 6,620 spectators per game.

SC Bern tops the European attendance ranking for the 12th consecutive year. The club from the Swiss capital city has been on top since it dethroned Germany’s Kölner Haie in 2002.

■ The top-four is unchanged from 2012. Belarusian KHL team Dynamo Minsk remained in second place with an average of 14,299 fans at Minsk Arena – the newly built facility that will also serve as the venue for the 2014 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship – ahead of two German teams, Eisbären Berlin (14,034) and Kölner Haie (12,199).

Russia’s most-attended team, SKA St. Petersburg, moved from sixth to fifth place with 11,917 fans per game and also sixth-ranked Adler Mannheim from Germany (10,796) moved up one place.

Slovakia’s Slovan Bratislava improved from 36th to seventh position with 9,975 fans. Since joining the KHL last year, the club has had all but one game sold out. The club averaged 5,907 fans in the Slovak league last year.

The top-10 is completed by Jokerit Helsinki (9,828) – the home team at Hartwall Arena, one of the two venues for the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships in 2012 and 2013 – the ZSC Lions Zurich (8,745) and Lokomotiv Yaroslavl (8,712).

Swedish Frölunda Gothenburg (from 5th to 11th place) and Germany’s Hamburg Freezers (from 8th to 15th place) had severe drops in spectator numbers, falling out of Europe’s top-10.

Lev Prague is the top new entry in Europe’s top-100 ranking. The newly founded Czech KHL club averaged 7,161 fans to reach 18th place. Incredibly, even though Prague now has three professional clubs competing for fans, Czech Extraliga teams Sparta Prague (25th, from 6,273 to 6,445) and Slavia Prague (66th, from 4,492 to 4,747) both increased their numbers and moved up in the ranking.

The teams with the highest attendance worldwide are currently the Chicago Blackhawks with 21,610 fans followed by the Montreal Canadiens (21,273) and the Detroit Red Wings (20,066).

■ The Swiss National League A claimed back first place in league attendance in Europe with an average of 6,620 fans. Switzerland has been top twice in the last five years while the Swedish Elitserien led the league attendance in 2009, 2010 and 2012.

The average in Switzerland grew by five per cent to set a new all-time record for league attendance in Europe.

The average attendance in the Swedish top league fell by 10.5 per cent to 5,717 fans per game – the lowest

number the league has recorded since 2003. The downfall was mainly caused by the two most popular teams from last year. Frölunda Gothenburg saw a decrease of 18.1 per cent from 10,482 to 8,588 fans while Djurgården Stockholm, the second-most attended Swedish team last year, had to leave the league after being relegated.

But the severe decline cannot only be explained by Djurgården being out of the league. Of the eleven teams that stayed in the league, nine clubs had lower numbers than in 2012. Only the attendance of two teams – the two northern clubs Skellefteå AIK and Luleå HF – went up. Even by taking out Djurgården and the team it was replaced by, Rögle Ängelholm, the average of the other eleven teams dropped by 6.1 per cent.

■ The leagues from Switzerland, Germany, Russia and Sweden have the highest attendance figures worldwide only behind the NHL, which averages 17,703 fans, and ahead of the second-most attended North American league, the AHL with 5,626 fans per game.

The Slovak Extraliga’s average attendance went down by 24.9 per cent due to Slovan Bratislava’s move to the KHL. The league has been dominated on the ice as well as financially by the Bratislava club and its archrival HC Kosice, and losing one of these two teams was a substantial loss for the league.

Of the ten club teams that stayed in the Slovak Extraliga, eight had a lower attendance compared with last year. The attendance average of the ten teams that remained in the league decreased by 14.1 per cent.

The Nikko Ice Bucks from Japan were the best-attended team in Asia with an average of 1,396 fans followed by the Oji Eagles Tomakomai (1,251) and Korean team High1 Chuncheon (1,164).

## Attendance figures in European hockey leagues 2012/2013

Rank	Previous	Club	Country	Average
1	1	SC Bern	SUI	16330
2	2	Dynamo Minsk	BLR	14299
3	3	Eisbären Berlin	GER	14034
4	4	Kölner Haie	GER	12199
5	6	SKA St. Petersburg	RUS	11917
6	7	Adler Mannheim	GER	10796
7	36	Slovan Bratislava	SVK	9975
8	9	Jokerit Helsinki	FIN	9828
9	18	ZSC Lions Zurich	SUI	8745
10	11	Lokomotiv Yaroslavl	RUS	8712
11	5	Frölunda Gothenburg	SWE	8588
12	13	HC Pardubice	CZE	8490
13	10	Avangard Omsk	RUS	8060
14	12	Medvescak Zagreb	CRO	7944
15	8	Hamburg Freezers	GER	7690
16	14	HIFK Helsinki	FIN	7363
17	23	Kometa Brno	CZE	7196
18	new	Lev Prague	CZE	7161
19	15	Salavat Yulayev Ufa	RUS	7160
20	19	Traktor Chelyabinsk	RUS	7142
21	21	Amur Khabarovsk	RUS	7100
22	25	Genève-Servette	SUI	6967
23	20	HV71 Jönköping	SWE	6770
24	26	Fribourg-Gottéron	SUI	6537
25	29	Sparta Prague	CZE	6445
26	35	Sibir Novosibirsk	RUS	6305
27	30	EV Zug	SUI	6302
28	24	Linköpings HC	SWE	6287
29	31	Brynäs Gävle	SWE	6229
30	16	Dinamo Riga	LAT	6228
31	27	Färjestad Karlstad	SWE	6209
32	17	Djurgården Stockholm	SWE-2	6184
33	40	TPS Turku	FIN	6103
34	80	Nuremberg Ice Tigers	GER	6081
35	37	Kärpät Oulu	FIN	6005
36	32	MODO Örnsköldsvik	SWE	5884
37	28	Atlant Mytishi	RUS	5875
38	39	Skoda Plzen	CZE	5838
39	33	Malmö Redhawks	SWE-2	5794
40	22	Metallurg Magnitogorsk	RUS	5765
41	82	Yermak Angarsk	RUS-2	5684
42	43	Tappara Tampere	FIN	5648
43	121	Rytiri Kladno	CZE	5597
44	83	Dynamo Moscow	RUS	5478
45	34	Kloten Flyers	SUI	5366
46	44	SCL Tigers Langnau	SUI	5355
47	41	Torpedo Nizhni Novgorod	RUS	5250
48	50	Skellefteå AIK	SWE	5197
49	47	Luleå HF	SWE	5184
50	51	Neftekhimik Nizhnnekamsk	RUS	5138

## Regular-Season average league attendance Europe

Rank	Previous	League	2013	2012
1	2	Switzerland - National League A	6620	6305
2	3	Germany - Deutsche Eishockey Liga	6172	6060
3	4	Russia - Kontinental Hockey League	6106	5891
4	1	Sweden - Elitserien	5717	6385
5	5	Finland - SM-liiga	5213	5103
6	6	Czech Republic - Extraliga	5169	4824
7	7	Austria - EBEL	3547	3606
8	8	Slovakia - Extraliga	2018	2687
9	9	Great Britain - Elite Ice Hockey League	1977	2028
10	10	Norway - Get Ligaen	1627	1462

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# Raising the Bar

## IIHF VP discusses enforcement of Minimum Participation Standards

By Martin Merk

**ZURICH – At the last IIHF Congress it was approved to enforce the Minimum Participation Standards for national teams in view of the next season.**

The rules have already been in the IIHF’s Statutes & Bylaws for some years but with a moratorium for participants that had already been in the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship program.

As of next season, IIHF Member National Associations who wish to send national teams to competitions have to fulfil a set of rules. They will have to show that they fulfil certain criteria to make sure they have a sufficient number of players, competitions and venues to be able to form national teams in the various categories. Among the main criteria are to have at least one operational, international-size indoor ice rink in the country that is used for national competitions, an operational national league and a certain amount of active players in the respective category.

The national ice hockey bodies have until 15th April to submit evidence of fulfilling these criteria and registering national teams for the 2014 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Program. The final list of participants, the seeding and host nations of the tournaments in all the categories and divisions will become known during the 2013 IIHF Annual Congress in Stockholm, 16-19 May 2013.

IIHF.com asked IIHF Vice President Bob Nicholson about the Minimum Participation Standards and how to assist upcoming nations in improving the level of hockey. Nicholson, who is also the President and CEO of Hockey Canada, is actively involved in these topics as an IIHF Council member and as the Chairman of the Competition & Inline Committee and of the Development & Coaching Committee.

**The Minimum Participation Standards for the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Program will be enforced soon. What is it all about?**

First of all Minimum Standards should be seen as a positive term to improve hockey worldwide and especially with newer, upcoming countries. The Minimum Participation Standards are used to assist in improving leagues, coaches and more importantly players within the countries. Using the IIHF National Association Audit Program, the development and coaching committees are going to take a positive approach to help improve all nations that are willing to work within the International Ice Hockey Federation.

**What are the main criteria to send a national team to the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Program?**

There are a lot of elements within the Minimum Standards, but this year’s focus will be placed on three main areas. They are to have a permanent operational indoor ice rink with an ice sheet meeting the standards within the IIHF Rule Book, to have at least 60 players in the respective category (45 for U18, women, women’s U18) and to have operational leagues with statistics. If the countries have other areas they have to work on within the minimum standards, René Fasel and the IIHF Council along with the committees are going to look at positive ways to make sure everyone else is able to play this year and that we improve – as long as the countries are willing to work with us to improve – their player development.



Both Iceland (left) and Spain (right) are good examples of countries that have improved their development programs to meet the IIHF’s Minimum Standards.

**Why did the IIHF set up these rules for national teams?**

It’s very important for the IIHF to take a lead role in Minimum Standards firstly to improve hockey at all levels and to make sure there is a base within the countries. It’s important that there are a base number of players, one arena and a league so they have a foundation not just to go to a World Championship but to grow the game, get more players involved and improve their chances once they go to a World Championship.

**With which criteria do nations at the edge struggle the most and what can be done to improve things?**

I really think it starts with making sure we find the right ways to introduce players to the game of hockey. We need an ice rink to do that. We need to make sure the young boys and girls get sticks and skates and if we introduce kids to the game of hockey, the national team program will start to flourish from that point on.

**What should national ice hockey associations do if they don’t meet all the criteria?**

I really feel that the key for countries is to make sure they have a minimum of 60 players and an ice arena, and start to play games on a regular base. They have to put all of their effort to those areas to be competitive at a world stage. We will help them to try to meet those standards, but these standards have to be met before they can go to a World Championship.

**Do you think that having these Minimum Standards will motivate these nations to improve?**

I really think that this is going to be a key. The IIHF Council will meet with countries to look at how they can meet all the Minimum Standards and we have to develop plans to make sure whether it’s building an ice rink or getting more kids that we have a plan. The Audit Program we have in place right now should be seen as a great tool to help each and every member national association. I don’t think that people should see the audit as a negative, but as a positive resource to help provide direction and assistance in improving each nation’s unique set of challenges.

**Are there examples of nations that improved their hockey program in the last few years with the aim of meeting the criteria?**

There are some. For example in 2010 the Hungarian association was short the necessary amount of registered girls under 18 to participate in the IIHF Ice Hockey World

Championship Program. After focusing on recruitment, and developing the women’s league, they were able to not only win the Division I Qualification in 2012 but also the following U18 Women’s World Championship Division I itself, promoting them to the Top Division this year, in which they reached 6th place overall.

The United Arab Emirates are a good example of utilizing the IIHF Audit Program as a tool to help focus their efforts on youth development and growing the game, of which has brought in hundreds of local players, helping to establish a foundation of young players for the future.

Other nations have grown their leagues in the last few years to meet the minimum standards, like Iceland from three to six teams, or some like Mexico have established leagues with more games.

**How can the IIHF help nations that don’t meet these criteria?**

By meeting with them, to agree on a plan short-term and long-term to meet the criteria. It’s the IIHF’s responsibility to show leadership but it’s on the countries to work on a plan. At the next IIHF Hockey Development Camp we will work on changes and tailor-made programs for each member national association to assist them in establishing the programming foundation they need. We are looking to organize one-on-one meetings with countries, and working together with the Development Committee so we can identify the needs of each country, and together find workable solutions. If we do this well, Minimum Standards and the Audit Program will become one of the great resources and tools as we look back in five years.

**One big issue is that some member nations don’t have indoor rinks with an international-size ice sheet. What can be done to have more rinks built?**

Ice rinks are a big issue. It costs money to build them. Our Member National Associations have to work within their countries, with the Olympic committees, governments and sponsors to bring the necessary resources forward and see what are the best companies to build arenas within a country. All of those must work together in these countries to make it an affordable situation for hockey to grow.

### Bob Nicholson Fact File

President and CEO of the Canadian Hockey Association, (since June 1998), the governing body of hockey in Canada. Elected IIHF Vice-President representing North America at the 2012 IIHF Congress.

- IIHF representative for Canada
- Chairman of the 1999 World Junior Championship in Winnipeg, Manitoba
- Has been involved in 12 international gold medal campaigns for Team Canada, including two World Championships, five Women’s World Championships, and five U20 World Championships.
- Chairman of IIHF Competition Committee, Development and Coaching Committee



# One-on-one with Nicklas Lidström

Swedish legend and Worlds ambassador misses locker room, not the travel

By Adam Steiss

The general consensus amongst hockey experts is that the best defenceman, and maybe even the best player, to ever come out of Europe was former Detroit Red Wings captain Nicklas Lidström.

The now-retired Swede, winner of four Stanley Cups, an Olympic and World Championship gold, and a twelve-time Norris trophy nominee for best defenceman (he won seven of them), sat down with Ice Times to talk about his new life outside the game.

**How's retirement treating you? Bored yet?**

Not bored (laughs). I've been helping out with my kids' hockey, I'm an assistant coach with one of my son's teams, and with four sons playing hockey it's definitely keeping my schedule full. And then with the World Championship coming up I've been doing a little bit of work with that and more when we get closer to the start of the tournament. On top of all that we're also building a house here in Sweden, and with my scouting job with the Red Wings I don't have too much of a problem filling out my schedule.

**So you're enjoying being a full-time hockey dad?**

Oh yeah it's great I really enjoy it. When I was playing it was really difficult, especially on weekends, to get out and watch the kids play. Now I'm able to get to nearly all their games, either behind the bench or as a spectator in the stands, I really enjoy being there on an everyday basis now.

**You've been living in the U.S. for 21 years, what's it been like returning to Sweden?**

It's been different. It's another lifestyle, especially when you're playing you're so busy all the time with games and travelling and whatnot, and now every really slows down and also the lifestyle in Sweden has been different than the US which me and my wife have had to get used to.

We've spent our summers here every year before coming over, but it's different now with the kids in school. It gets darker here earlier and daily life isn't the same, but it's been good for us and we enjoy being closer to other family members who before could only visit us once or twice a year.

**Anything you miss about living in Detroit?**

I think what I miss most is the locker room chat, being in the locker room and hanging out with the guys. When you go out on the road you go out and have dinner and you really get that camaraderie that is hard to replace when you're outside of hockey. You're so used to being around your teammates all the time that they almost become part of your family. I miss that part, the locker room part, but also the playing part: being in situations where you're competing. Important situations like when you're up a goal or down a goal, the competitiveness during close games, and playing in front of 20,000 people.

**On the flipside, is there anything you don't miss?**

Probably the travel schedule, travelling so much being away from your family for so long. That gets tougher as you get older and you have kids, for example going to play in the



Photo: Europhoto/Jani Rajamäki

*Lidström wearing Olympic gold in Torino 2006. Could he be tempted out of retirement for Sochi?*

west coast for a week or ten days, coming back and playing a game then you're off for another week, that's something I don't miss.

**You mentioned that you're staying one with the organisation as a scout, is it easier as a former NHL player to transition into scouting?**

It helps, you're familiar with different situations on the ice and seeing how players think and react to these situations is a big part of scouting. So I think it helps in that sense, being recently retired and being so close to the game for over twenty years.

**Back in December you were announced as an official ambassador for the 2013 World Championship, are there any projects that you're currently involved in with this role?**

There's some small things that we've done up to now, radio ads and things of that nature, we're having a program called "My Game" where the ambassadors: myself, Peter Forsberg, and Mats Sundin can distribute tickets to a cause or organisation of our choice. For me I wanted to give back to grassroots hockey where I grew up, and I invited a few players and their parents to one of the games in the tournament. So I'm involved with that leading up to the tournament, and looking at the start of the tournament I'm very excited to get things started and be involved as a spectator, rather than as a player.

**Looking at the tournament as an analyst, what would you say Sweden needs to do to win the championship on home ice this year?**

Looking at the games last year, the team was very good offensively, but on the defensive side of the puck they didn't play as

well. I think they have to play better in their own zone in order to have success and go deep into the tournament. I think team defence is going to be very important for Sweden, and it will also depend on who will be available for the tournament too, you know with the NHL's last game on April 27th it's a tight window and not a lot of time until the start of the tournament.

**One player who was very impressive for Sweden in last year's tournament was 22-year-old defenceman Erik Karlsson, what's your assessment of him?**

He's got a bright future in front of him, too bad that injury happened. He really turned it up last year playing with some great speed and great determination, and he plays really well defensively without the puck. That's important when you're a very strong offensive player, to be able to be a great all-around defenceman, and I think that he did that really well last season and he's just going to get better and better for years to come.

**Do you see yourself getting back to hockey as a coach or manager at a high level?**

Not as of right now, maybe down the road in a year or two or maybe a few years if I get that hunger back. For now I'm pleased to be an assistant coach for my twelve year old's team, being on the ice and teaching the kids how to play hockey.

**We got the Winter Olympics coming up next year, have you been approached about maybe putting on the national team jersey once more?**

No nobody's asked me to put on the jersey yet, I got a couple of calls from the Red Wings and some teams in Sweden wondering if I was going to play. You know the Olympics is special, it's a special tournament and I got some fond memories from the one we had in Italy 2006, but if I'm not on the ice I might be up in the stands watching the tournament.

**Going back to the tournament in Italy, how does it stack up against winning the Cup?**

I rank them equally high, you know the Stanley Cup is a goal you set way back in training camp in September, and finally in June you achieve that goal after having played over 100 games, whereas the Olympics you get together for two weeks and then all of a sudden you're back in the NHL again. But you're representing your country and that's what's so special about it, and you're playing against the top players from all the different countries, and that's why I rank them just as equally high.

**With that in mind do you feel that it's important for the game to have NHL players in Sochi?**

I believe so, I believe you should have the best players available, and I know the players really enjoy playing in the tournaments, even though sometimes you have to travel a long ways and it's hard to adjust to the time difference and whatnot. But I truly believe that the NHL should be part of the Olympics.



## Fact file: Nicklas Lidström

- Born: April 28, 1970 in Vasterås, Sweden
- Four-time Stanley Cup Champion
- Twelve-time NHL All-Star
- Seven-time James Norris Trophy winner for top NHL defenceman
- Shares record with Larry Robinson for most consecutive playoff seasons (20)
- Won gold in 1991 IIHF World Championship
- 2006 Winter Olympic gold medalist
- 17th member of Triple Gold Club