



Photo: JC Pinheiro / IIHF-Images

Russian forward Danil Alpakov stood and watched as Sweden raised the IIHF U20 World Championship trophy in Calgary last year. Can Russia overcome home-ice pressure to get back to the final?

Russia has eyes on World Junior trophy



In the 37 year-old history of the IIHF Ice Hockey U20 World Championship, the tournament has never been so far east as this year's edition in Ufa. The outcome? Never more in doubt.

RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL

After some years of being played in well-known hockey centres, the IIHF World Juniors goes to the capital of the Russian republic of Bashkortostan. For most hockey fans in the Western world, Ufa is not widely known and this is why this Ice Times devotes page 8 to introducing this city, founded in 1574.

■ At the same time, the tournament is the most competitive it's been in many years. Since its inception in 1977, Canada has won a record 15 gold medals, followed by Soviet Union/Russia with 13. But the last four years have seen four different winners: Canada 2009, USA 2010, Russia 2011 and Sweden 2012. This has only happened once before when Canada, Finland, Russia and the Czech Republic shared the spoils between 1997 and 2000.

Although there are global concerns with registration in youth hockey, we must be fair to ourselves and keep in mind that never before have so many excellent players been developed by so many nations. There are incredibly talented juniors being produced currently by Canada, Sweden, Russia, USA, Finland and the Czech Republic.

■ Switzerland and Latvia have in recent years developed players who have been drafted high in the first round of the NHL draft. Germany's youth program is improving every year, while Slovakia is in the process of rebuilding its development system. In the lower tier of the under-20 system, Denmark and Norway are showing progress, to the extent where the countries export players to top pro leagues on both sides of the ocean.

Sweden defeated Russia in last year's final in Calgary, 1-0 in overtime. You can be sure that the Russians have been counting the days until the start of Ufa 2013, which I predict will be the most evenly competed World Juniors in many years, perhaps ever.

■ The IIHF announced the inductees to our Hall of Fame and it is a truly formidable class. I would like to congratulate players Peter Forsberg, Danielle Goyette, Paul Henderson, Teppo Numminen, Mats Sundin, builder Jan-Åke Edvinsson and Paul Loicq Award winner Gord Miller. The IIHF Milestone Award goes to the 1954 Soviet Union team. This bodes for a wonderful induction ceremony in Stockholm, Sweden on May 19, 2013.

When you read this, it will be around 400 days left till the opening ceremony of the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi and two months left till the final Olympic qualifiers, three events for men and two for women as the final five Olympic teams will be identified. You can read about the groups on page 4.

■ These final Olympic qualifiers are usually thrillers as so much is at stake for these Sochi hopefuls. Looking at the five groups, it is clear that Germany is the country with most to win – and most to lose. Germany is the favourite to win its respective men's and women's groups, both played on home ice. But with this comes pressure to perform.

This is the time of the year when I would like to wish all fans of hockey a wonderful holiday season and wish you the best of luck in what looks like a very exciting pre-Olympic year 2013 with the Women's World Championship in Ottawa, the men's Worlds in Stockholm-Helsinki and "World Juniors Light" (under-18) in Sochi's Olympic venues. To those who have the opportunity, spend time with your families and recharge your batteries.

René Fasel
IIHF President

IIHF awarded for Balkan project

SOCI – For the development program “Balkan Ice Hockey Union”, the IIHF has been named the International Sports Federation of the Year by the Peace and Sport Awards 2012.

The Balkan program of the International Ice Hockey Federation was nominated together with projects from the International Gymnastics Federation (“Gymnastics for all”) and the World Taekwondo Federation (“Taekwondo Peace Corps”).

■ Joël Bouzou, founder of Peace and Sport, commended the IIHF’s Balkan endeavor, calling it “a remarkable initiative” and “the first ever sport alliance founded in the Balkan with the primary goal of promoting peace and friendly relations among the Balkan nations”.

The awards ceremony was held on Thursday, 1 November as part of the 2012 Peace and Sport International Forum in Sochi, Russia.

“I am very happy and proud to accept this award on behalf of the IIHF and the Balkan Ice Hockey Union,”



IIHF President René Fasel accepts the award from Joël Bouzou, President and Founder of Peace and Sport.

said IIHF President and IOC Executive Committee member René Fasel. “It re-insures us that we did the right thing by identifying the Balkan region to stage a developmental project of this scale.”

■ Fasel recognized two former IIHF Council Members for making it possible to launch the “Balkan Ice Hockey Union”.

“It wouldn’t have been possible without the ef-

forts of Ernest Aljancic and the support from the Vice President of Gazprom, Alexander Medvedev,” said Fasel. “I would like to extend a warm thank you to both Ernest and Alex for their commitment to this cause.”

■ Encompassing nine countries with a total population of 150 million, the BIHU project aims to extend the regional co-operation between the members during a four-year period with a string of short- and long term activities.

The participating nations are: Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Greece, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey.

For this group, Sochi already underway

ZURICH – The IIHF’s technical department is hard at work with preparations for the Olympic Games in Sochi. IT Director Martin Zoellner recently brought his 2014 HYDRA team together for the first time for a pre-integration meeting.

■ With the many complexities that involve setting up a software system for two Olympic hockey tournaments, it’s never too early to get started.

“For us, planning for the Olympics in Sochi started almost as soon as we returned from Vancouver. The team we have assembled has the talent and dedication we require to make sure we deliver on our promises for Sochi,” said Zoellner.

■ A proprietary software system designed and developed by the IIHF, HYDRA maintains player entry lists, tournament schedules, rosters, tournament progression, and all of the statistics of the tournament for players and teams. In addition, the IIHF IT department uploads the data in real time to



The 11-strong IT team that will be at the forefront of IIHF tech operations in Sochi.

www.iihf.com so that the world can follow the progress of their national team.

In addition to the regular members of the IIHF IT department the HYDRA team also includes key contributors who will work as operators and result managers in Sochi. This team brings together an impressive amount of experience, and is comprised of men and women from nine different hockey-playing nations. Half of the team returns from the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver, and four members were also in Turin for the 2006 Olympic Games.

■ While the others are newcomers to the HYDRA team, none of them are newcomers to hockey, and each of them brings an impressive range of credentials. Their experience ranges from working for five years as part of the statistics team for the KHL team in Riga, Latvia, to a former Icelandic national team player.

“Each of the older colleagues have great knowledge and experience in the task we will have to do in Sochi, so I am glad that I had the chance to learn from them and to work together with them,” commented newest team member Sabine Udre.

Convened in Zurich, the HYDRA team covered a wide range of topics. The team had the opportunity to learn about recent enhancements to HYDRA as well as to conduct a hands-on exercise in the IIHF IT lab with simulated games.

Preparations were planned for test events that will take place in Sochi leading up to the Olympics, and the team viewed a presentation on the venues, accommodation, and travel in Sochi from Francesco De Rose, Olympic Project Technology and Coordination, Swiss Timing Limited. When the national teams come together for the 2014 Games, this team will be ready to bring the results to the world.

Worlds Mascot: say hello to Icy



■ The 2013 IIHF World Championship mascot is known as Icy, a Swedish lynx. Icy’s name was chosen by hockey fan Lars Ingels, whose suggestion was the winner in a naming contest, earning him game tickets to the tournament.

NEWS & NOTES

■ **IIHF:** The 4th International Consensus Conference on Concussion in Sport was held in Zurich on November 1-2. For more information check: IIHF.com/2012ICCCS

■ **IIHF: Denmark (Copenhagen) and Latvia (Riga)** announced that they will make a joint bid for the 2017 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship. The IIHF Annual Congress will allocate the event in May 2013.

■ **AUSTRALIA:** Ice Hockey Australia elected a new President, **Kevin Brown**. He succeeds **Don Rurak**, who has taken up the role as Chief Executive Officer. Brown had been on Ice Hockey Australia’s board as treasurer.

■ **BELARUS:** The Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation has named **Andrei Skabelka** as new head coach of its men’s national team. He replaces Finn **Kari Heikkilä**. Skabelka is currently the head coach of HK Gomel of the Belarusian Extraliga, a position he will continue to hold until the end of the season.

■ **LATVIA:** **Tom Coolen** and former Latvian national team player **Aigars Cipruss** joined Latvia’s national team as assistant coaches to Ted Nolan.

■ **NETHERLANDS:** **Larry Suarez** resigned as head coach of the Netherlands’ men’s national team in October and was replaced by **Barry Smith**, who is also the coach of the Tilburg Trappers.

■ **SWEDEN:** **Roger Rönnberg** will step down as coach of the Swedish U20 national team after the World Juniors. He will be succeeded by U18 national team coach **Rikard Grönborg**.

■ **SWITZERLAND:** **Daniel Meier** was named head coach of the Swiss women’s national team that won bronze last spring in Burlington. He succeeds **René Kammerer**, who remains as an assistant coach.

■ **UKRAINE:** **Anatoli Brezvin** was re-elected as President of the Ice Hockey Federation of Ukraine during the federation’s General Congress.

OBITUARIES

Kaspars Astasenko passed away on 23 November at the age of 37. Astasenko represented his country at several international events, with the 2002 Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City and the 2006 IIHF World Championship in his hometown of Riga as career highlights. He also played at the 2001 IIHF World Championship and in two U20 World Championships (C-Pool) and one U18 World Championship (C-Pool) in the years after the restoration of Latvia’s independence. His father, Janis Astasenko, is a member of the Latvian Hockey Federation’s disciplinary committee.



2013 IIHF HoF class among best ever

Announcing the 2013 IIHF Hall of Fame inductees, President René Fasel didn’t mince words: “Classes of international hockey greats can probably not come any better than this.”

The 17th class of the IIHF Hall of Fame will be ceremonially inducted on May 19, 2013 on the Gold Medal Day of the 77th IIHF World Championship in Stockholm:



Peter Forsberg
b. Örnsköldsvik, Sweden, July 20, 1973

■ Peter Forsberg had the vision of a world-class passer, the hands of a top scorer, and the competitive fire of a winner. He was not only the youngest member of the Triple

Gold Club; he reached the three milestones faster than any player, winning World Championship gold and Olympic gold in his first try, in 1992 and 1994, respectively, and the Stanley Cup in 1996, his second NHL season.

In all, Forsberg played for Sweden at four Olympics, five World Championships, two World Cup of Hockey tournaments, and two U20 events. In 63 top-level games, he recorded 57 points. At the 1993 U20 he set a record that will surely never be beat, scoring 31 points.

In 1994-95, Forsberg won the Calder Trophy as the league’s best rookie, and the next year won the Stanley Cup, completing his Triple Gold Club honours at just 22 years old. Two years later, he led Sweden to a gold medal at the 1998 World Championship, and a second Stanley Cup in 2001. Forsberg was on the 2006 Tre Kronor team that won Olympic gold in Turin, giving him his second complete set of Triple Gold Club honours. He retired in 2011, his legend in both Sweden and the NHL secure.



Danielle Goyette
b. St-Nazaire, Quebec, Canada, January 30, 1966

■ In many respects Danielle Goyette was the Gordie Howe of women’s hockey. A superstar talent on offence, she was a gifted scorer who continued to produce with Howe’s consistency. Indeed, she had more points in her final Women’s World Championship in 2007 at age 41 (11) than she did in her first some 15 years earlier as a 26-year-old (10).

Goyette played in three Olympics and nine IIHF Women’s World Championships, winning ten gold medals out of 12. In 61 games at the highest level she averaged a point and a half a game. She led all players in Nagano in 1998 with eight goals and was the scoring leader at the 1992 Women’s Worlds with 10 points.

By the time Goyette had played her final games for Canada in 2007 at age 41, she was second all-time with 15 goals at the Olympics and fourth all-time with 68 points at the Women’s Worlds and third all-time with 37 goals.



Paul Henderson
b. Kincardine, Ontario, Canada, January 28, 1943

■ For 28 days in September 1972, Paul Henderson was the finest hockey player in the world, the hero of a series that changed hock-

ey forever. He scored three game-winning goals at the end of the Canada-Soviet Union Summit Series, the last two the greatest goals in the history of the game.

His series-clinching goal with 34 seconds remaining of Game Eight remains the most celebrated moment in Canada’s sports history, a defining and unifying moment in Canadian culture. No other player’s achievements in international hockey history have had such an impact on one nation as Henderson’s.

In a 19-year pro career in the NHL and WHA he played almost 1,100 games, going to the Stanley Cup finals with Detroit in 1964 and 1966. In junior, Henderson won the Memorial Cup in 1962 and led all scorers in the OHA the next season.



Teppo Numminen
b. Tampere, Finland, July 3, 1968

■ Few players have had the dual careers enjoyed by Teppo Numminen in the NHL and internationally. He played in four Olympics (winning three medals), four IIHF World Championships, and another

four Canada Cup/World Cup events. He retired from the NHL in 2009 having played 1,372 regular-season games, more than any European player.

With the previous induction of his father, Kalevi, as a Builder in 2011, the Numminens become the first father-son pair of inductees in IIHF Hall of Fame history.

One of the greatest international defencemen of the modern era, at the ’88 Olympics in Calgary he won an historic silver medal with Finland, the first time the nation had reached the podium in Olympic ice hockey. Numminen also played at the first three Olympics with NHL player participation, winning a bronze in Nagano and silver in Turin.



Mats Sundin
b. Bromma (Stockholm), Sweden, February 13, 1971

■ There is likely no player in the modern era with a greater international hockey career than Mats Sundin. Four major international titles, three World Championships and one Olympic gold mark his legacy as one of the greatest Europeans to play the game.

Only 20 years old at the 1991 IIHF World Championship, he went end-to-end in the third period against the Soviet Union to score the winning goal for gold. A year later he helped Tre Kronor repeat as World Champions, leading the team with eight points in eight games.

The first European to be selected first overall at the NHL Entry Draft, his 11-year tenure as Toronto Maple Leafs captain was the longest by a European in NHL history. He was also the first Swede to reach 500 goals and in 2012 was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame.

The 2006 Olympics in Turin cemented Sundin’s place in hockey history, as he captained Sweden to a gold medal before retiring from international play.



Jan-Åke Edvinsson
b. Trolle Ljungby, Sweden, September 13, 1941

■ Edvinsson is the architect of the modern IIHF. He was the Federation’s highest executive for 21 years, leading day-to-day operations as the General Secretary between 1986 and 2006, a period longer than anyone in the organization’s history.

Edvinsson turned the IIHF into a modern international sports federation which cast a worldwide influence on the game. When he assumed the position in 1986, the IIHF had 34 member nations and oversaw a tournament program that consisted of just eight events. The annual IIHF budget was 3.5 million Swiss Francs, and the office had but two employees.

Upon his retirement in 2006, the IIHF had 64 member nations spread over every continent, and the annual program of events encompassed 29 international tournaments and several club competitions. The office staff had grown to 25 while the budget in his last year was 50 million Swiss Francs.



Paul Loicq Award: Gord Miller
b. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, June 21, 1964

■ Gord Miller’s dedication has helped TSN make the “World Junior Championships” one of the most successful hockey broadcasts in North America. His support and his commitment to the tournament, which stretches to 18 years and counting, the respect he commands from the broadcast booth, and his knowledge of the event and its history are unparalleled.

He started working at TSN in 1990 as a reporter, and three years later he started a career in the broadcast booth at the IIHF World Championships. In 2002, Miller became the top play-by-play man for TSN and drew work appropriate to his reputation, culminating with the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver.

Milestone Award: 1954 Soviet Union World Championship team

■ When the Soviet Union humbled long-time World Champions Canada by a 7-2 score on the final day of the 1954 World Championship in Stockholm, Sweden it marked the beginning of the modern game.

The 1954 Worlds was the Soviets’ first international appearance. No one knew the players before the opening game but this changed quickly. Goaltender Nikolai Puchkov gave a world-class performance and Vsevolod Bobrov earned the Directorate Award as the Best Forward in the tournament. At the final horn of the Canada game, the Soviets celebrated a victory that not only earned them gold but transformed the landscape of international hockey.



iceTimes is published bi-monthly.

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Nearing the finish line

Olympic qualification enters final phase



A surprising Netherlands team will play in the final qualification.

Dutch derail Hungary

Hungary was the only top-seeded team in the men's tournaments that didn't advance after losing 7-6 to the Netherlands.

The 6,125 fans in Budapest saw goals en masse in a final clash between two undefeated teams with 13 markers scored by as many players.

Hungary opened the scoring, then it was 4-2 for the visitors midway through the game and 4-4 before the intermission. The lead went again back and forth, but Jordy van Oorschot tied the game at six with 90 seconds left in regulation time. His team eventually won in a shootout.

"This game was like a Disney movie," captain Diederik Hagemeijer said. "This is probably our best result in a long time. Given the recent coaching change and our youthful roster, it truly boasts our confidence for the future."

Danish delight in Latvia

The biggest surprise of the weekend was the Danish women's national team, which did not only win the first round in Barcelona in October, but also succeeded in the second stage in Latvia as the lowest seeded entry of the tournament.

The Danes upset host and top seed Latvia in the first game in Valmiera, flashing offensive power in a 4-1 victory.

The Latvians weren't able to regroup from that upset while the Danes continued their streak. Henriette Ostergaard scored the only goal in a win against Austria while playing short-handed, and on the last day the red-and-white team defeated Italy 3-1 despite being outshot.

Josefine Persson scored a pair of goals while goalkeeper Kamilla Lund Nielsen had an outstanding tournament turning away 77 out of 79 shots (97.47%).



Denmark will send its men's and women's teams to the final qualification stage.



Even in Japan, Great Britain managed to bring out their fans.

Brits win in Nikko

Outside the quiet Japanese tourist town of Nikko, Great Britain overcame an opening-game shootout loss to Korea to win Group J, advancing to the Final Olympic Qualification tournament Group E in Riga.

The British came back with a 2-0 shutout of Romania in their second game, setting up a clash in the final game with host Japan. Great Britain jumped out to a 2-0 lead, and held on to win 3-2.

The victory was hailed as Great Britain's most important in 76 years. The last time Great Britain, who was Olympic champion in 1936 and bronze medallist in 1924, competed at the Games in 1948.

Britain, ranked 21st in the world, will play the 11th ranked hosts Latvia, world number 14 France and 17th-ranked Kazakhstan in qualifying group E in February.

GROUP C
Poprad, Slovakia 7-10 February 2013
Slovakia (7)
Norway (10)
Japan (11)
Denmark (19)

Sun shines in Shanghai

Since playing in Vancouver 2010, the Chinese women's team has been on a decline and had to compete in the Olympic Pre-Qualification for a chance to reach Sochi.

But the Chinese mastered the situation with two clear wins against the Netherlands and Great Britain and a tightly contested final against France.

The dominating player was Chinese captain Rui Sun. The 28-year-old, who has been playing for the team since 1999, had four goals and six assists in three games.

Her presence was vital in the last game when the French took a 3-0 lead in the first period. Sun scored the 3-2 goal and assisted on the other two markers to tie the game with 99 seconds left in regulation time. Sun and Baiwei Yu were the only players to score in the deciding shootout.



China competed in the Vancouver 2010 and needs to win Group D to get to Sochi.



Through three games, Ukraine outscored the opposition 22-1.

Ukraine storms through

Ukraine was the only one of the three hosts on the men's side who made use of their home-ice advantage. After lopsided wins over Estonia and Spain, the blue-and-yellow team defeated Poland 5-1 in a clash of neighbours before a sell-out crowd of 6,026 fans.

Poland opened the scoring, but after surviving penalty trouble, Ukraine regrouped and scored five unanswered markers.

Due to the labour conflict in the NHL, both Ukrainian NHLers Ruslan Fedotenko and Olexi Ponikarovsky had the chance to play at Kyiv's Palace of Sports where their hockey career started.

"Poland came out hard while we were testing the water," Fedotenko said. "But we responded well, played hard and controlled the game from then on."

GROUP F
Vojens, Denmark 7-10 February 2013
Denmark (12)
Belarus (13)
Slovenia (18)
Ukraine (20)

By Adam Steiss

The Olympic Pre-Qualification tournament held in Nikko, Japan in November offered a look at the top two ice hockey programs in Asia. While Japan and Korea failed to reach the Final Qualification tournament, both teams are looking ahead to what they hope will be a bright future.

While hockey may not be as popular in the country as baseball or football, the game's development in Asia has its roots in Japan. Hockey has been played here for decades, Japan an IIHF member since 1930. The Asia League, formed in 2003 to increase the level of hockey in the Far East, is headquartered on the island nation.

■ But is Japanese hockey moving forward or back? The core of Japan's youth development system is based around university programs. Hokkaido, the northern island traditionally known as country's lone hockey hotbed, which routinely sends its high school players to Tokyo universities to play hockey, has seen declining participation numbers.

But a new home for the sport has popped up, in an unlikely place. Kansai University, located in the south of the country, closer to Osaka than Tokyo, has developed a hockey program into one of the best in the country, rivaling established programs centred in the Japanese capital.

The program's emergence came about when the university made the unorthodox decision to build a year-round international-size ice rink in 2006. Norio Suzuki, assistant coach to the Japanese national team and former national team player, was hired to revamp the program into a contender.

"For a long time the place for hockey players was Hokkaido. But with less kids playing there now, in the Kansai area other kids began picking up the sport and it's become more popular," said Suzuki.

■ Now there are 23 teams in the Kansai area. The university team, which routinely got kicked out of the first round of the national championship, has now made the quarter-finals five years in a row. At one point the demand to join the university team led to Suzuki carrying 50 players, forcing him to trim the roster down to 30.

"That's the only way the sport is going to grow, to take an area where it isn't well known and build awareness and support for the game," said Suzuki. "Now we get good players coming out from different areas and I think it's a bit similar to the NHL, where they expanded to warmer states and they ended up winning championships."

So after years of having the sport confined to the northern limits of the country, Japan's development program has begun to spread itself out.



Korea and Japan faced off in a thrilling match in front of a packed house in Nikko, Japan. The two Asian nations will compete together for the first time in the 2013 IIHF World Championship Division I Group A.

"In ten years, they'll probably be the leaders in university hockey," said national team head coach Mark Mahon. "It's an evolution, parents are going to realize the university has more to offer, more competitive coaching, better facilities, and commitment to education."

■ The national team fell just short of making it to the Final Qualification tournament, falling by a goal to Great Britain in the final game. But though they failed to seize an opportunity to put international hockey back on the map, the excitement and media attention given to what was an exciting tournament, coupled with the spread of the sport across the country, can only help hockey in the Land of the Rising Sun.

Korea catching up to rivals

Before the start of the Olympic Pre-Qualification tournament Group J in Nikko, Japan, there was a sense that it would be a two-horse race between the host Japanese and Great Britain. After all, these two teams compete in the Division IA level, Romania is one division lower, and the upstart Korean team only just won promotion and wouldn't be a challenge. Or would they?

As Great Britain found out in the first game, they were. Korea came back to upset the Brits in a shootout, then nearly did the same to Japan a day later.

■ By comparison to the top-ranked nations, Korea doesn't have a strong ice hockey team, something Korea Olympic Committee (KOC) President Park Yong-sung admitted back in March 2012 when discussing the preparations for the Winter Olympics, to be held in PyeongChang in 2018.

But he has to be pleased with the efforts made in a short span of time. Only a month later Korea defeated host Poland in Krynica in the final game of the 2012 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division IB, coming back from two goals down to win 3-2 and earn promotion to Division IA, one level below the top.

With that victory, Korea also moved up three spots to 28th overall in the IIHF World Ranking. This is a very positive first step for the men's team, since moving up the rankings is the only way they will be able to qualify for the 2018 Olym-

pics. But in order to make it to the Olympic tournaments, the men's team currently ranked 28th and the women's team currently ranked 26th still have to improve their positions significantly.

A tall order, but not impossible. And with the strides the Korean program has made in both men's and women's ice hockey, there is a push by the Olympic committee and the government to make the teams into contenders in time for the show in PyeonChang.

"We have been encouraged with the advancement of the program in the past few years, and being awarded the 2018 Olympics, it can only benefit the Korean ice hockey landscape and hopefully make us into an even better team going forward," said head coach Sun Wook Byun.

■ One obstacle to player development is a political one. Every male Korean between 18 and 35 is required to serve approximately two years in the military. There are few exceptions to this rule, and none for hockey players (members of the South Korean football team did earn an exemption after earning the bronze medal at the London 2012 Olympics). However, the Korean government now allows for conscripted players to continue to compete and hone their skills in a military league.

The country's youth programs are also enjoying more ice time both locally and overseas. "The infrastructure in Korea lets younger player play games and participate in youth tournament monthly," said KIHA president Gapchul Park. "We also send our U16, U18, U20, senior men and women's team to other hockey nations for overseas training camp. This year, we already sent our U16 and U18 national teams to the Czech Republic and Japan."

■ The Asian League has been a key driver for talent development at the national level. Anyang Halla, one of two Korean teams, won its first league title in 2010, the first non-Japanese team to be crowned champion. 13 of the 22 players competing in Nikko were from Anyang. Five came from the other Korean Asia League team, High1 Chuncheon, and four play in the Finnish second-tier league.

"It's a natural evolution, when you are the best team in your region of the world and you're constantly playing down, you're going to eventually better your neighbours," said Japan head coach Mark Mahon. "Look at Denmark as another example, and how they use their Scandinavian neighbours to develop their players."

■ No more was this apparent than in Korea's second game against their Asian rivals, which saw the Koreans come back to tie the game with 12 seconds left in regulation only to lose in overtime. In fact, had Japan tied Great Britain and the Brits won in overtime in the final game of the tournament, Korea would be preparing for a trip to the Final Olympic Qualification.

Not bad for an "upstart".

Far East teams on the rise

Japan, Korea target PyeongChang 2018

WORLD JUNIORS PREVIEW

Will it be Russia's time in Ufa?

Yakupov, Makarov, Grigorenko among U20 options for hosts

By Lucas Aykroyd



Host Russia could ice as many as 10 returning players at this year's IIHF World U20 Championship in Ufa. That's a plus as coach Mikhail Varnakov's team attempts to win its first gold since Buffalo 2011.

Nine of those players suited up in November's Subway Super Series. (The exception was forward Nikita Kucherov, who was traded from the QMJHL's Quebec Remparts to the Rouyn Noranda Huskies on November 21 after seeing limited ice time thus far this year.)



Nail Yakupov

The six-game cross-Canada series, a warm-up for the World Juniors, pitted a Russian select team against all-star squads from the Canadian major junior leagues: the QMJHL, OHL, and WHL.

"It's a pretty good tournament before the World Juniors," said star Russian forward Nail Yakupov. "It offers good experience. The coach [Mikhail Varnakov] is trying to pull together our team for the World Juniors and make a great team."

Russia prevailed in the series by a margin of 10 points to 8 with a 5-2 win over the WHL in Game Six in Victoria, British Columbia. It was just the second time Russia has won the Subway Super Series in the event's 10-year history.

"Every league plays different hockey," said Yakupov. "The OHL and the Q have more skills, and the WHL hits hard and has more hits."



Mikhail Grigorenko

Yakupov, who was selected first overall by the Edmonton Oilers in the 2012 NHL draft, is the most high-profile likely returnee for Russia. The flashy 19-year-old right winger became the first member of Neft-ekhimik Nizhnekamsk to hit the 10-goal mark this year in his KHL rookie season.



Andrei Makarov

He still has vivid memories of that night: "I don't know why, but two days before, I felt like I would be going in the net. I

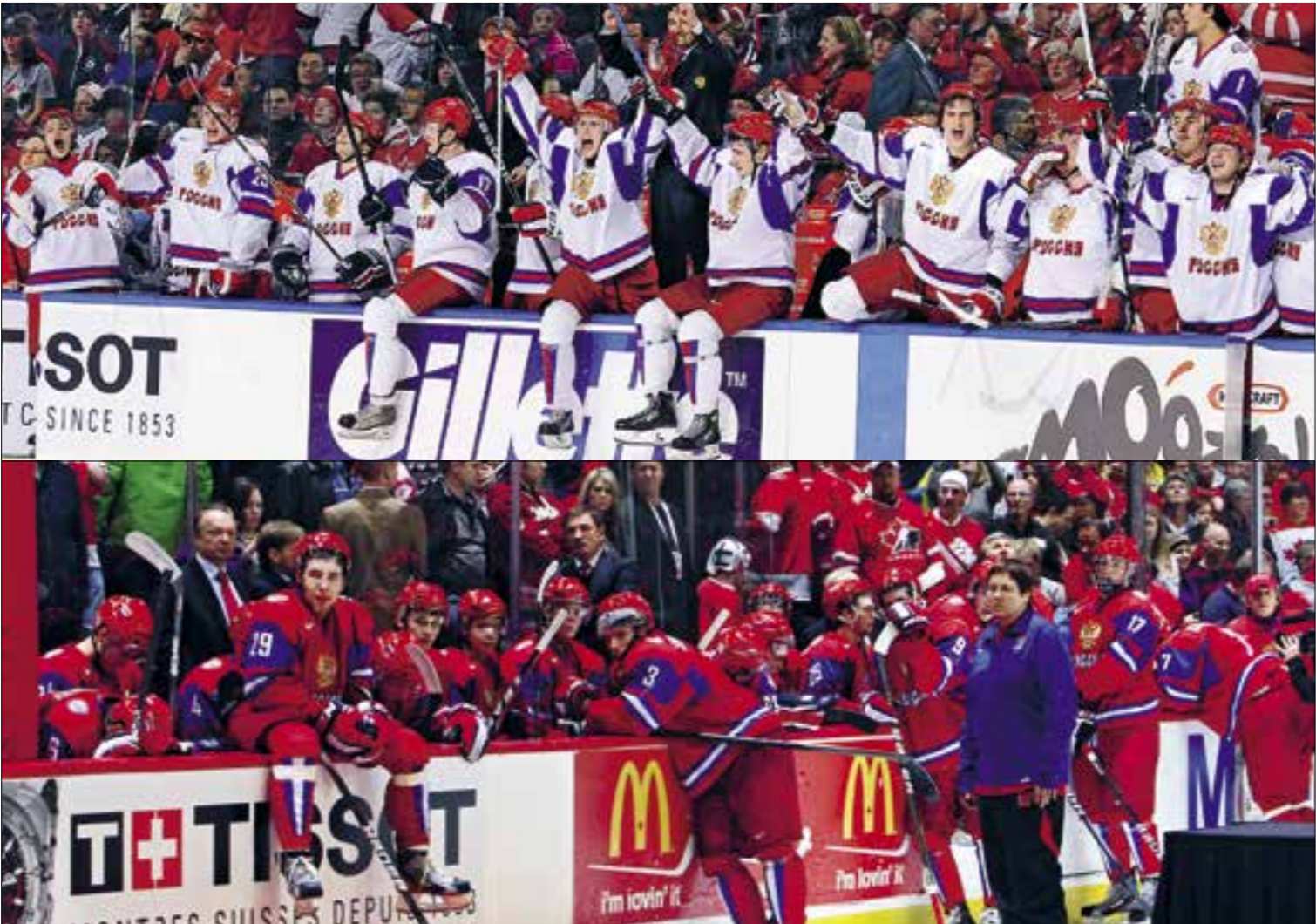


Photo: Matthew Manor / HHOF-IIHF Images

Photo: Francois Laplante / HHOF-IIHF Images

The last two U20 finals have been an emotional roller coaster for the Russians, with an incredible comeback victory against Canada in 2011 (top) followed up by a heartbreaking overtime loss to Sweden (bottom).

told my dad: 'I'm going in the net.' I just felt it. Because I remembered two years ago in Buffalo, we had pretty much the same situation [with Igor Bobkov supplanting Dmitri Shikin]. And with six minutes left, the coach told me: "Go in the net." I said: 'OK.'

"You have to go in and stop the first shot. That's so important for a goalie coming into the game. Canada played in our zone, and 19,000 people were screaming: "Go Canada Go!" That was an amazing feeling. You just have to be happy and do a good job."

Makarov elevated his game to an even higher level in the 2012 final gold medal game. Sweden outshot Russia 58-17 but only won 1-0 on Mika Zibanejad's dramatic overtime goal.

"It was a tough situation in the gold medal game because we lost in OT," said Makarov. "But I tried to do the best I could to keep my team alive."

This time, the 19-year-old Makarov will likely battle for playing time again with Vasilevski. The latter should be

well-prepared to star in Ufa, as he's spent the entire season so far with the MHL's Tolpar Ufa.

"We don't know who our starting goalie will be in the World Juniors yet," said the affable Makarov, who comes off like a young Yevgeni Nabokov in person. "I'm going to try to keep playing well and we'll see what happens."

What about the other Russian veterans?

Mikhail Grigorenko will be a player to watch in his second World Juniors. The towering 18-year-old centre is vying to become the best Russian to emerge from the Quebec Remparts since now-perennial KHL scoring champ Alexander Radulov tore it up with 152 points in 2005-06.

Despite getting off to a slow start with Spartak Moscow in his first KHL season, centre Alexander Khokhlacyov will also have to put up some points for Russia to make noise on home ice.

And expect to see an impressive puck-moving presence from defenceman Mikhail Naumenkov. During the Sub-

way Super Series, he tied with Yakupov, Andrei Sigaryov, and Maxim Shalunov for the team scoring lead with two goals and two assists.

Remarkably, Russia hasn't won a U20 gold medal at home since 1983, when Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) was the host city in Soviet times. The biggest name to emerge from the '83 USSR squad was future NHLer and U20 head coach Sergei Nemchinov. We'll have to wait and see who will replace 2012 Yevgeni Kuznetsov as the standard-bearer for this year's Russian team.

GROUP A Sports Palace	GROUP B Ufa Arena
Sweden	Russia
Finland	Canada
Czech Republic	Slovakia
Switzerland	USA
Latvia	Germany

Finland: The next generation

Lehkonen and others build on fathers' foundation

By Risto Pakarinen

On December 1, KalPa Kuopio was in first place in the SM-liiga standings, and with former and current Team Finland players like Sami Kapanen, Jukka Hentunen, Sakari Salminen, Kalle Kerman, and Jukka Voutilainen on the roster, that not may seem like a big surprise to the casual observer.

But look closer, and you'll see that Kapanen, Voutilainen, and Hentunen have missed half of the team's games due to injuries, and Kerman has only nine points in 29 games. Salminen leads the team in scoring, followed by his linemate, and one of the biggest sensations in the SM-liiga this season: Artturi Lehkonen, 17.

Lehkonen left TPS Turku after last season, having made his SM-liiga debut there as a 16-year-old. He finished the season with four points in 18 games averaging under ten minutes a game. He also played 40 games with the TPS under-20 team, scored 54 points in 40 games, and led the team in scoring.

It was obvious already in the pre-season's European Trophy that the hard work Lehkonen had put in during the summer was about to bear fruit as last season's U18 World Championship leading goal scorer led KalPa in scoring, with five goals, eight points in seven games.

And now, at about SM-liiga's halfway point this season, he has eight goals and 19 points in 28 games, and is second in team scoring. He's regularly skated on KalPa's top line with Sakari Salminen, and most recently, the New York Rangers centre Derek Stepan.

"I got off to a great start in Kuopio, and got the chance to play with great linemates, which has helped me a lot. Stepan's always close so I can make an easy pass," Lehkonen said modestly after a recent home game.

"I'll just try to keep it up for the rest of the season," he said.

Lehkonen's listed as 179 centimetres and 69 kilos, and while he may have added a few kilos since the official weigh-in, he's still not much bigger than that. He is, though, a smart player who reads the game very well, and not all his passes are simple ones, regardless of what he says.

"He's full of surprises in the offensive zone, can score the big goals, and accelerates quickly, especially when in possession of the puck," Göran Stubb, the NHL's Director of European Scouting, told NHL.com as Central Scouting released their preliminary rankings for the 2013 draft.

Lehkonen's transfer to Kuopio didn't go completely under the radar, and not only because he's an exceptional talent. His father, Ismo, is a high-profile coach and a hockey personality in Finland, who also has the dubious honour of holding the record for longest suspension for a coach in the SM-liiga.

The entire Lehkonen family moved to Kuopio to help Artturi on his path to become a star.

"KalPa really showed that they wanted me, and it seemed like a good fit for me. I've learned a lot here, about hockey and life, with all the great and more experienced players like Sami Kapanen and [Jukka] Hentunen around. They know what it takes to get to the next level," Lehkonen said.

"Of course the move was a big deal. I mean, I left all my buddies in Turku, but moving around is a part of a hockey player's life. So far it feels like it was all worth it, I have no regrets," he added.

And why should he? What more could a 17-year-old hockey player want than to play in the top line of the top team in a top European league?

Well, maybe to play in the U20 World Championship, like his father, and his uncle Timo, who was a First Team All-Star goalie in 1985. Lehkonen also wants to see Finland go deep in the tournament.

"It would be a great experience to get to play there, but it's not guaranteed that I'll make the team," he said.

But when it is, Lehkonen is one of several great forwards on the Finnish team, a rare occasion for the country that's famous for its goalies.

"It's true that we have a lot of great forwards coming up, but it's difficult to say why that is. I just know that "Sasha" [Barkov], Juuso [Ikonen] and I have always been sparring each other to get better," Lehkonen said.

"We're all second-generation elite players, so we've got a lot of tips and support from home, from our dads," he added.

Barkov's father, Aleksander Sr, played ten seasons with Tapara Tampere, won one Finnish championship, and played in three World Championships for Russia. Lehkonen's father, Ismo, played over 100 games in the SM-liiga, and one U18 European championship. Ikonen's father, Juha, was Kiekko-Espoo's captain, played over 300 SM-liiga games and won silver with Team Finland in the 1998 World Championship.

Add to that Miro Aaltonen and Thomas Nykopp - and goaltender Joonas Korpisalo - and you have a group of second-generation players whose fathers played over 1,500 SM-liiga games during their careers.

"Then we have [Joel] Armia, [Teuvo] Teräväinen and others," Lehkonen added, and referred to the Buffalo Sabres first-round draft pick from 2011, Chicago's first-round pick from 2012, and Markus Granlund, Calgary's second-round pick in 2011.

"We do have a great team, and obviously, our goal is to get a medal," Lehkonen said.

The shinier the better.



Ufa – a bridge between Europe and Asia

Ice Times profiles the host city of the 2013 World Juniors

By Alexander Yakobson

The 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey U20 World Championship will be held in the Russian city of Ufa from 26 December 2012 to 5 January 2013. It is the most eastern venue in the 37 years of the tournament.

Ufa was founded about 450 years ago, offering fans who visit the city some history. There was a large settlement in ancient times on the land of today's Ufa, which existed as a station for caravan routes connecting the regions of Central Asia, Siberia and the Volga region to the European part of Russia.

Nowadays Ufa is a major transportation hub, being at the intersection of rail, air and river traffic, pipelines and highways that connect European Russia with the Ural mountains and Siberia.

Historically, Ufa has been home to a variety of nationalities, cultures and religions. The city is dominated by three ethnic groups: Turks, Slavs and Finno-Ugric peoples. In total, there are representatives of more than a hundred nationalities. The major religions in the city are Christianity and Islam. By and large, the city is a boundary of sorts between the eastern and western world.

In this respect, Ufa's architecture is characterized by a combination of different styles and traditions. Many temples related to the era of classicism survived, including the Church of the Intercession (1823), the Redeemer Church (1824) and other monuments.

Among the architectural heritage of the building stands the Bashkir State Opera and the Ballet Theatre, where world-famous opera singer Fyodor Shalyapin made his professional debut singing in a choir. Also outstanding dancer and choreographer Rudolf Nureyev was born in Ufa.

To this day, the city continues to produce talent, being home to popular musicians Yuri Shevchuk, Zemfira, violinist and conductor Vladimir Spivakov, writer Sergei Dovlatov, along with many famous athletes such as Igor Kravchuk and Alexander Semak.

The history of hockey in Bashkortostan also took place at



The imposing monument to Bashkir national hero Salavat Yulayev looks over the Belaya river in Ufa.

the crossroads of different cultures and trends. First bandy came to the region and enjoyed popularity. The local team Spartak achieved respectable results in the USSR championships, reaching once, in the early fifties, the semi-finals.

The first hockey game in Ufa was played on 18 February 1953. That match was part of the USSR Cup, and for athletes from Ufa hockey with a puck rather than with a bandy ball was an entirely new experience. When the first game was played, the sport was presented as an exhibition for what initially was called "Canadian hockey" in the Soviet Union.

The first ice hockey teams were founded in 1953-54 by groups of workers from local factories and it was purely amateur.

All equipment was self-made by the players. Sticks were made from beech trees, skates were taken from bandy and bicycle helmets were used to protect the head.

The sport was really organized only in 1963, when one of the most successful hockey clubs of post-Soviet Russia appeared in the lowest national championship, class "B" – Salavat Yulayev Ufa.

The team was named in honour of the Bashkir national hero Salavat Yulayev and found itself on the path to the elite of Soviet hockey rather quickly. In just three years Salavat Yulayev played its first game in the top tier league.

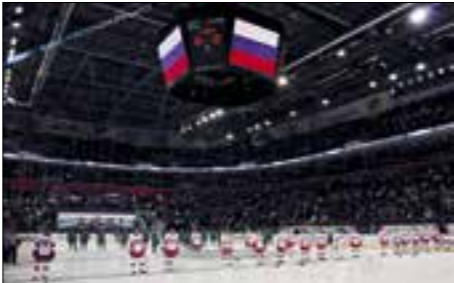
The team has come a long way since then. Today's fully professional Salavat Yulayev is a two-time champion of Russia (2008, 2011) and a three-time regular-season winner. Internationally, Salavat Yulayev was part of the Champions Hockey League in the 2008/2009 season.

After blazing through the group stage with a clean record, Salavat Yulayev reached the semi-final but lost the home-and-away series against the other Russian participant, Metallurg Magnitogorsk.

At present, there are a lot of well-known players on the roster such as Alexander Svitov, Oleg Saprykin, Sergei Zinoviev, Vitali Proshkin, Miroslav Blatak and Vitali Atyushov.

Salavat Yulayev plays its games at Bashkortostan's largest venue for ice sports, the 2007-built Ufa Arena, which will be the main venue for the IIHF World Juniors. The second venue will be the Sports Palace Salavat Yulayev, which was renovated for the event. Both venues are easily accessible from anywhere in the city.

For any hockey fan a winter trip to Ufa will be an interesting journey. Although the capital of Bashkortostan is known as a large scientific and industrial centre of Russia, this amazing city is also famous not only for hockey, but also as one of the most green and spacious cities in Russia.



Above: Ufa Arena, home to the KHL team Salavat Yulayev Ufa.

Photos: Getty Images and City of Ufa



Ufa Fact Box

- Population of Ufa: 1,062,319
- Population of Bashkortostan: 4,072,292
- Foundation of Ufa: 1574 by Ivan the Terrible
- Spoken languages: Russian, Bashkir, Tatar
- Main religions: Orthodox Christianity, Sunni Islam
- Flag of Bashkortostan: blue-white-green with a Kurai flower
- Time zone: Yekaterinburg Time (Moscow +2, Zurich +5, ET +11)
- Travel time from Moscow: 2 hours by plane, 26 hours by train
- Main industries: Oil refining, mechanical engineering
- Average high January: -10.4°C / 13.3°F
- Average low January: -19.5°C / -3.1°F
- Top hockey teams in Bashkortostan:
 - Salavat Yulayev Ufa (KHL)
 - Toros Neftekamsk (VHL)
 - Tolpar Ufa (MHL)

Top to bottom: the flags of Russia, Bashkortostan, and the city of Ufa

Puck drops up north for women's U18

Finland prepares to host top division tournament for the first time



By Tuula Puputti

For the first time ever, Finland will serve as host for the IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship.

However, although they are new to the women's U18s, the Finns have a wealth of experience in staging senior women's world championships. Women have competed for World Championship medals at the senior level on Finnish ice beginning in Tampere (1992), then in Espoo (1999) and Hämeenlinna (2009). The first two tournaments were won by Canada, the last by the United States.

■ As women's hockey continues to rise in popularity around the world, the Finnish Ice Hockey Association is proud to host the 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship in Vierumäki and Heinola, running from 29 December 2012 to 5 January 2013. The Championship brings together eight countries: Canada, USA, Sweden, Germany, Finland, Czech, Russia and Hungary to compete for World Championship medals.

■ The official slogan of the 2013 IIHF WWU18 Championship is Light up a Star! This slogan encourages the young athletes to aim to achieve their very highest level of performance. It also invites the audience to cheer for the teams and to also bring kids to see good role models and get excited about the sport of ice hockey.

The 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship is the sixth edition in the history of the tournament, held for girls age of 18 years and under to compete for a World Championship



Favourites Team USA will be gunning for their fourth gold medal.

Photo: Philip MacCallum / HHOF-IIHF Images

title. The championship was held for the very first time in Calgary, Canada in 2008. Since then the host cities have been Füssen, Germany (2009), Chicago, USA (2012), Stockholm, Sweden (2011) and Zlin & Prerov, Czech Republic (2012).

The U.S. has had the most success in the tournament's history, having won three World Championships. Canada is right behind them with two gold medals, the most recent coming last year. Finland has won a championship medal once, a bronze in the 2011 championship.



Photo: Philip MacCallum / HHOF-IIHF Images



Photo: Jana Chytilova / HHOF-IIHF Images

Top Photo: Canada strung together four consecutive shutouts in 2012, including a 3-0 blanking of the U.S. to win gold. Bottom left: Russia's upset over Switzerland in relegation has them competing at the top level once again. Bottom right: Finland's U18 program will look to repeat the success of its 2011 bronze-medal campaign on home ice.

In 2013 the competition will again be interesting. The hockey family is especially looking forward to see Team Hungary at the top level for the very first time in the history of ice hockey!

■ Interest in girls and women's ice hockey is growing within the northern Scandinavian nation. In Finland during the years 2006-2010 the sport almost doubled its numbers when the number of licensed players grew from 2,500 to 4,700. In Canada girls and women's program are still one of the main target groups, with the number of players approaching close to 80,000.



Sweden followed up its bronze with gold at the Youth Olympics.

Photo: Philip MacCallum / HHOF-IIHF Images

To support more growth the sport needs more exposure. In this respect past organizers have done a great job promoting the event in their countries. The gold medal game in the first U18 women's tournament in Calgary Canada drew already a crowd of 2,156 spectators. In 2012 Zlin & Prerov experienced a girl's hockey invasion by drawing a total crowd of 17,480 spectators to the arenas.

■ With the 2013 championship in Vierumäki and Heinola, the Finnish Ice Hockey Association hopes to draw a crowd total of 15,000 spectators to the arenas to the 22 games in the championship.

The city of Heinola, a city of 20,200 inhabitants just a two-hour drive from Helsinki, serves as a host city for the 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship. The Sport Institute of Finland, located at Vierumäki, a residential area of Heinola, will serve as the second competition venue as well as the practice and accommodation facilities to the teams.

Heinola is a small but active city. Ice Hockey is the most popular sport, with Mestis club Heinolan Peliitat playing at the second-highest level in the Finnish League.

The surrounding region of Häme is known as one of the hotbeds for girls and women's hockey in Finland. In 2013 the Häme region has 13 clubs participating in the Girls Hockey Day event.

Regional pro teams like Ilves Tampere and HPK Hämeenlinna regularly contend for the Finnish Women's Championship League. With the local support, we expect a big turnout for the tournament.

Welcome to Light up the Stars in Heinola and Vierumäki in 29 Dec 2012-5 Jan 2013!

Tuula Puputti is no stranger to staging a hockey tournament, nor to playing in one. A national team goaltender and Olympic medalist for Finland's women's team, she helped to organize and stage the 76th IIHF World Championship in Helsinki and Stockholm as a Service Coordinator. Later this month, she will be in charge of staging the 2013 IIHF U18 Women's World Championship in Vierumäki and Heinola.

GROUP A Heinola, Finland	GROUP B Vierumäki, Finland
Canada	USA
Germany	Sweden
Finland	Czech Republic
Hungary	Russia

Dragons set to slay the rest in Super Final

Hosts Donetsk want payback; Zhlobin, Bolzano in the mix in Ukraine



CONTINENTAL CUP

By Martin Merk

One year ago the Rouen Dragons wrote history when they defeated Donbass Donetsk 5-2 on home ice thanks to two goals in the dying minutes of the game to win the Continental Cup in a three-team tie. It was the first major title for a French team in international hockey.

This time Donbass Donetsk – meanwhile competing in the Russian-based Kontinental Hockey League – was chosen to host the Continental Cup Super Final and seeks revenge against the French. The two returning teams will be joined by the Bolzano Foxes and Metallurg Zhlobin, who both advanced to the final tournament after going to overtime in the third round in November.

The Continental Cup Super Final will take place 11-13 January in Donetsk, Ukraine.



Photo: Stéphanie Oury

Donbass Donetsk came up just short of winning last year's Continental Cup in Rouen against the Dragons. Will the team be able to take advantage of home ice, and couple of NHLers, to claim the 2013 Super Final?



Rouen Dragons (France)

There are teams in Europe that, once they become champions, go on to build a dynasty, with management and players staying for a long period. The Rouen Dragons are one of the best examples.

They won the French championship 12 times and represented France in the Continental Cup Super Final five times. Two times they even hosted the final tournament and ended up as the surprise winner last year.

The team is managed by Quebec-born Guy Fournier, who joined the club as a player in 1988. Rodolphe Garnier is in his fourth year as head coach, as is national team goalkeeper Fabrice Lhenry. Quebecers Marc-André Thinel, Julien Desrosiers, François-Pierre Guénette, now joined by Eric Castonguay, are pillars in the offensive department while former Swedish national team defenceman Johan Åkerman joined the team on the blue line.

After some changes the Dragons had a rough start into the season but got in shape later in autumn. With strong team play and core players who have been playing together for years, the French hope to be more than an underdog once again.

The team from the Normandy region showed its capability last season when it defeated Italian champion 6-0 and Donbass Donetsk 5-2 after losing the second game to Yunost Minsk, 4-2.



Metallurg Zhlobin (Belarus)

Metallurg Zhlobin plays in IIHF club competitions for the first time this season and the Belarusians enter the stage of the Continental Cup Super Final with a 3-0 record from the preliminary round.

The club name appeared for the first time in the '80s when it participated in the championship of the Belarusian Socialist Soviet Republic at an outdoor rink, but the team dissolved a few years after Belarus' independency in the '90s.

With the recent rink building initiative in Belarus, the city opened an indoor facility in 2006, which led to the founding of a new Metallurg Zhlobin club. It reached the quarter-finals of the Belarusian Extraliga in its first year of participation and became one of the country's top teams step by step.

Last season Zhlobin won the regular season and made it to the playoff finals for the first time ever in which they defeated Neman Grodno. The win ended the reign of Yunost Minsk that had won the last three championships. It was the first time since 2003 that a team from outside of Minsk won the national title.

The team has another successful season in Belarus and also defeated Kazakhstan's Beibarys Atyrau, Poland's KH Sanok (with NHL forward Wojtek Wolski) and host Stavanger Oilers in a shootout to advance to the Super Final.



Donbass Donetsk (Ukraine)

Donbass Donetsk is a newcomer in hockey – but one on the fast lane. The mining city has been well known for football. But although hockey came to the city in the '70s, the hockey club as it is known today was only founded in 2005 with the re-opening of the ice rink.

Nevertheless, Donbass won the first Ukrainian championship in 2011 and joined the Russian second-tier league VHL the same year. One year later they went a step further and joined Russia's top league, the KHL.

The team changed a lot to be ready at the next level and the investors aim to build a state of the art arena for its KHL team and a possible World Championship bid.

Already last year the club signed former Ukrainian NHLer Sergi Varlamov. At the outset of the NHL lockout the club added Ukraine's current two NHLers, Ruslan Fedotenko and Olexi Ponikarovsky.

"I was surprised with the atmosphere because it's mostly a soccer town, but now it's becoming a hockey town as well," Ponikarovsky said. "It's their first year in the league and they're trying to make everything possible for the players. It's a pretty good organization and when they reached out for me I said I loved to be there."



Bolzano Foxes (Italy)

The Bolzano Foxes qualified for the Continental Cup Super Final for the second time. Four years ago the team from South Tyrol won the third-round tournament on home ice in a tightly contested final game, 1-0 against the Coventry Blaze from Great Britain.

This time, also in the bilingual capital of South Tyrol, it became even tighter for the Italian champion. Bolzano won the "Fox Fight" 3-2 against the Herning Blue Fox before defeating the Landshut Cannibals 2-0.

Against Toros Neftekamsk, the reigning champion of the Russian second-tier league VHL, it didn't look good when the visitors scored the 2-1 goal late in the third period. But the Italians tied the game with three minutes left and scored again in overtime.

"We have an extraordinary team. We battled for this victory with our hearts, with our character and with our willingness," said Bolzano head coach Brian McCutcheon.

With physical play, some of the best Italian players and a number of imports, the Foxes hope for an upset in Donetsk. To make the team even more competitive, the club profited from the market of locked out NHL players and signed Swedish national team defenceman Niklas Hjalmarsson in the beginning of November.

IIHF SCORES

IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship

Division I - Qualification

Dumfries, Great Britain

Slovakia - France	2 - 3	(0-2, 2-0, 0-1)
Kazakhstan - Italy	0 - 5	(forfeit)
China - Great Britain	1 - 7	(0-3, 0-2, 1-2)
France - Kazakhstan	5 - 0	(2-0, 2-0, 1-0)
Slovakia - China	6 - 3	(3-1, 2-1, 1-1)
Great Britain - Italy	3 - 0	(1-0, 1-0, 1-0)
China - Italy	1 - 2 SO	(0-0, 1-1, 0-0)
Slovakia - Kazakhstan	10 - 0	(2-0, 6-0, 2-0)
Great Britain - France	2 - 3	(0-1, 1-1, 1-1)
Italy - Slovakia	2 - 5	(1-2, 1-1, 0-2)
France - China	3 - 0	(2-0, 0-0, 1-0)
Kazakhstan - Great Britain	1 - 6	(0-2, 1-2, 0-2)
China - Kazakhstan	8 - 2	(1-1, 4-0, 3-1)
Italy - France	1 - 0	(0-0, 0-0, 1-0)
Great Britain - Slovakia	3 - 4	(1-1, 0-3, 2-0)

France	5	4	0	0	1	14:5	12
Slovakia	5	4	0	0	1	27:11	12
Great Britain	5	3	0	0	2	21:9	9
Italy	5	2	1	0	2	10:9	8
China	5	1	0	1	3	13:20	4
Kazakhstan	5	0	0	0	5	3:34	0

France and Slovakia are promoted to the 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship Division I



Photo: Colin Lawson

Slovakia (left) and France (right) made it into the U18 Division I tournament.

Men's Olympic Pre-Qualification Tournament

Group G

Budapest, Hungary

Netherlands - Croatia	8 - 2	(3-0, 3-0, 2-2)
Lithuania - Hungary	1 - 5	(0-2, 1-3, 0-0)
Netherlands - Lithuania	9 - 2	(1-1, 6-1, 2-0)
Hungary - Croatia	13 - 0	(6-0, 3-0, 4-0)
Croatia - Lithuania	1 - 3	(1-2, 0-0, 0-1)
Hungary - Netherlands	6 - 7 SO	(1-3, 3-1, 2-2)

Netherlands	3	2	1	0	0	24:10	8
Hungary	3	2	0	1	0	24:8	7
Lithuania	3	1	0	0	2	6:15	3
Croatia	3	0	0	0	3	3:24	0

Netherlands is promoted to the Final Olympic Qualification stage

Men's Olympic Pre-Qualification Tournament

Group H

Kyiv, Ukraine

Poland - Estonia	8 - 0	(1-0, 3-0, 4-0)
Ukraine - Spain	7 - 0	(2-0, 5-0, 0-0)
Poland - Spain	5 - 0	(1-0, 0-0, 4-0)
Estonia - Ukraine	0 - 10	(0-4, 0-4, 0-2)
Spain - Estonia	5 - 4	(2-0, 1-1, 2-3)
Ukraine - Poland	5 - 1	(1-1, 2-0, 2-0)

Ukraine	3	3	0	0	0	22:1	9
Poland	3	2	0	0	1	14:5	6
Spain	3	1	0	0	2	5:16	3
Estonia	3	0	0	0	3	4:23	0

Ukraine is promoted to the Final Olympic Qualification stage



Photo: Seinosuke Uchigasaki

Japan captain Go Tanaka celebrates his team's overtime goal against Korea.

Men's Olympic Pre-Qualification Tournament

Group J

Nikko, Japan

Great Britain - Korea	4 - 5 SO	(3-1, 1-2, 0-1)
Japan - Romania	2 - 0	(1-0, 0-0, 1-0)
Romania - Great Britain	0 - 3	(0-2, 0-0, 0-1)
Japan - Korea	3 - 2 OT	(1-0, 1-1, 0-1)
Korea - Romania	2-0	(1-0, 0-0, 1-0)
Great Britain - Japan	2-1	(2-0, 0-0, 0-1)

Great Britain	3	2	0	1	0	9:6	7
Korea	3	1	1	1	0	9:7	6
Japan	3	1	1	0	1	6:4	5
Romania	3	0	0	0	3	0:7	0

Great Britain is promoted to the Final Olympic Qualification stage

Women's Olympic Pre-Qualification Tournament

Group E

Shanghai, China

France - Great Britain	7 - 0	(1-0, 2-0, 4-0)
China - Netherlands	5 - 2	(1-0, 1-1, 3-1)
France - Netherlands	3 - 4 SO	(1-0, 1-2, 1-1)
Great Britain - China	0 - 5	(0-2, 0-2, 0-1)
Netherlands - Great Britain	1 - 2	(0-0, 1-0, 0-2)
China - France	4 - 3 SO	(0-3, 2-0, 1-0)

China	3	2	1	0	0	14:5	8
France	3	1	0	2	0	13:8	5
Great Britain	3	1	0	0	2	13:3	3
Netherlands	3	0	1	0	2	7:10	2

China is promoted to the Final Olympic Qualification stage

Women's Olympic Pre-Qualification Tournament

Group F

Valmiera, Latvia

Austria - Italy	7 - 0	(1-0, 2-0, 4-0)
Latvia - Denmark	1 - 4	(0-1, 0-2, 1-1)
Austria - Denmark	0 - 1	(0-0, 0-1, 0-0)
Italy - Latvia	3 - 0	(1-0, 2-0, 0-0)
Denmark - Italy	3 - 1	(0-1, 3-0, 0-0)
Latvia - Austria	2 - 3	(0-1, 1-2, 1-0)

Denmark	3	3	0	0	0	8:2	9
Austria	3	2	0	0	1	10:3	6
Italy	3	1	0	0	2	4:10	3
Latvia	3	0	0	0	3	3:10	0

Denmark is promoted to the Final Olympic Qualification stage



Photo: Chinese Ice Hockey Association

France's Gwendoline Gendarme takes a diving shot in the Olympic qualifier.

Continental Cup

Group D - Bolzano, Italy

Toros - Landshut	2 - 1	(1-0, 0-0, 1-1)
Bolzano - Herning	3 - 2	(0-1, 1-0, 2-1)
Herning - Toros	1 - 3	(0-1, 1-0, 0-2)
Landshut - Bolzano	0 - 2	(0-0, 0-0, 0-2)
Herning - Landshut	4 - 0	(2-0, 2-0, 0-0)
Bolzano - Toros	3 - 2 OT	(1-0, 0-1, 1-1)

Bolzano	3	2	1	0	0	8:4	8
Toros	3	2	0	1	0	7:5	7
Herning	3	1	0	0	2	7:6	3
Landshut	3	0	0	0	3	1:8	0

Bolzano advances to Continental Cup Super Final

Group E - Stavanger, Norway

Zhlobin - Beibarys	3 - 0	(1-0, 2-0, 0-0)
Sanok - Stavanger	4 - 7	(0-2, 3-4, 1-1)
Sanok - Zhlobin	3 - 5	(2-0, 1-3, 0-2)
Stavanger - Beibarys	3 - 2 OT	(2-1, 0-0, 0-1)
Beibarys - Sanok	5 - 1	(3-1, 2-0, 0-0)
Stavanger - Zhlobin	3 - 4 SO	(1-2, 1-0, 1-1)

Metallurg Zhlobin	3	2	1	0	0	12:6	8
Stavanger	3	1	1	1	0	13:10	6
Beibarys	3	1	0	1	1	7:7	4
HK Sanok	3	0	0	0	3	8:17	0

Metallurg Zhlobin advances to Continental Cup Super Final



Photo: Oddmund Sola

Valeri Khlebnikov's shootout goal on Stavanger goalie Ruben Smith.

European Women's Champions Cup

Group A - Bolzano, Italy

Neuilly sur Marne - Gric	12 - 5	(3-0, 4-2, 5-3)
Valladolid - Bolzano	1 - 9	(1-4, 0-4, 0-1)
Neuilly sur Marne - Valladolid	10 - 1	(1-0, 5-1, 4-0)
Bolzano - Gric	9 - 1	(2-0, 3-1, 4-0)
Gric - Valladolid	4 - 3 SO	(1-1, 2-2, 0-0)
Bolzano - Neuilly sur Marne	4 - 2	(1-0, 2-1, 1-1)

Bolzano Eagles	3	3	0	0	0	22:4	9
HC Neuilly sur Marne	3	2	0	0	1	24:10	6
KHL Gric	3	0	1	0	2	10:24	2
Valladolid Panteras	3	0	0	1	2	5:23	1

Bolzano advances to EWCC second round Group E

Group B - Molodechno, Belarus

Aisulu Almaty - Miercurea Ciuc	12 - 0	(7-0, 4-0, 1-0)
Milenyum Ankara - Pantera Minsk	0 - 25	(0-13, 0-3, 0-9)
Aisulu Almaty - Milenyum Ankara	7 - 0	(4-0, 1-0, 2-0)
Pantera Minsk - Miercurea Ciuc	22 - 0	(8-0, 10-0, 4-0)
Miercurea Ciuc - Milenyum Ankara	9 - 2	(2-0, 2-2, 5-0)
Pantera Minsk - Aisulu Almaty	1 - 6	(0-3, 1-2, 0-1)

Aisulu Almaty	3	3	0	0	0	25:1	9
Pantera Minsk	3	2	0	0	1	48:6	6
Miercurea Ciuc	3	1	0	0	2	9:36	3
Milenyum Ankara	3	0	0	0	3	2:41	0

Aisulu Almaty advances to EWCC second round Group F

Group C - Örnköldsvik, Sweden

Hvidovre - MODO	0 - 6	(0-1, 0-3, 0-2)
Välerenga - Laima	4 - 2	(0-2, 1-0, 3-0)
Laima - Hvidovre	1 - 3	(1-0, 0-0, 0-3)
MODO - Välerenga	6 - 0	(2-0, 3-0, 1-0)
Välerenga - Hvidovre	2 - 3	(1-0, 1-2, 0-1)
MODO - Laima	8 - 0	(2-0, 3-0, 3-0)

MODO Örnköldsvik	3	3	0	0	0	20:0	9
Hvidovre	3	2	0	0	1	6:9	6
Välerenga Oslo	3	1	0	0	2	6:11	3
Laima Riga	3	0	0	0	3	3:15	0

MODO Örnköldsvik advances to EWCC second round Group E

Group D - Vienna, Austria

Slavia Prague - Polonia Bytom	11 - 4	(1-0, 5-1, 5-3)
Sabres Vienna - Poprad	16 - 1	(6-0, 6-1, 4-0)
Poprad - Polonia Bytom	4 - 1	(2-1, 1-0, 1-0)
Sabres Vienna - Slavia Prague	0 - 2	(0-1, 0-0, 0-1)
Slavia Prague - Poprad	4 - 0	(2-0, 0-0, 2-0)
Polonia Bytom - Sabres Vienna	0 - 15	(0-6, 0-3, 0-6)

"The best hockey you can see"

Russian legend Larionov talks World Juniors, Sochi, and more

By Lucas Aykroyd

Like many other international greats, Igor Larionov made his first impression at the IIHF World U20 Championship.

The superb playmaking centre scored 12 points in 10 games en route to gold medals with the Soviet Union in 1979 and 1980.

That was just the prelude to a brilliant career that would see him earn Triple Gold Club membership. In 1997, the two-time Olympic champion and four-time World Champion captured his first of three Stanley Cups with the Detroit Red Wings.

Retired since 2004, Larionov nowadays works as a player agent, representing top Russian prospects like Nail Yakupov, chosen first overall by the Edmonton Oilers in the 2012 NHL draft.

Ice Times captured Larionov's thoughts after a Vancouver press conference on 13 November promoting the Subway Super Series. The six-game, cross-Canada series – a prelude to the World Juniors – saw Russia's U20 squad prevail by a total score of 10 points to 8 over QMJHL, OHL, and WHL all-star teams.

What are your feelings about the World Juniors and the preparation the Subway Super Series offers?

The World Juniors are the best time to showcase yourself, because it's the best against the best. When you're 18 or 19 and guys are playing against one another, I think it's the best hockey you can see. Who's going to be the next one for the new generation?

If you talk to the Russian coaches, building the team for the Subway Super Series, that's the biggest test for the boys. If you do well here, you can play in the World Juniors at Christmas. When you're going against the best in North America, that's what your future's going to be. It's the best exhibition games they can imagine, to play in North America a month and a half before the U20 World Championship.

Are you surprised about the success of Nail Yakupov with the KHL's Neftekhimik Nizhnekamsk this season?

I told Nail before the lockout, you should come to Detroit to train with a couple of my players. He came for two weeks and spent every day on the ice. I sent him to the gym with my guys too. The way he was working out, the way he was getting ready for the season, the way he wants to be the best, I told him: "Don't worry. If the lockout starts, you're going back to Russia to play in the KHL. You've never played against men, but you're going to be fine." I know the league, and I know Nail and what he can do. I'm not surprised.



From left: Third overall pick Alex Galchenyuk of the Montreal Canadiens, Igor Larionov and first overall pick Nail Yakupov of the Edmonton Oilers. Larionov, now working as an agent, represents both players, who will undoubtedly compete for Russia in Ufa 2013.

Photo: Dave Sandford / NHL via Getty Images

You saw Pavel Bure inducted into the IIHF Hall of Fame earlier this year. You also attended his Hockey Hall of Fame induction in Toronto. What was your reaction?

That was special. Meeting Pavel for the first time, he was 16 when he came to the Red Army team. He was a young boy. You knew right away he'd have a great future. He had a lot of skill, a lot of life in his mind and legs and hands. Obviously, when he came to Vancouver, I knew he was going to be special for the city. A player with that calibre and skill and flashiness could turn the city around, scoring great goals. [Now] the Hockey Hall of Fame and the entire world paid tribute to his accomplishments. It was a special day for him, his family, and Russian hockey.

Do you ever wish you'd come to the NHL when you were younger?

I have no regrets. I won two Olympics, a few World Championships, and a Canada Cup. I played on the greatest team in history with the Red Army, with great players on the KLM Line. Obviously it would have been nice to come here when I was 19 or 20 years old and get my start when I was young and full of energy. You can play your best hockey when you're young. But I played till I was 44, and I played 14 seasons in the NHL. So that's 27 years altogether. It's not a bad career.

Young Russian players today celebrate goals much more flamboyantly than their Soviet predecessors. How do you feel about that?

I don't think it's bad. Like Phil [Esposito] said, we never smiled when we scored goals. But it's a new generation. They like to celebrate. I don't see any problem. When you score a goal, it's a little masterpiece, created by yourself and your linemates. It's a joy for the young people.

How important is NHL participation at the Sochi Olympics?

I think there should be no issue for the players to come to Sochi, because it's the best way to promote the game around the world and to sell the game and have the best TV ratings for any company during the Olympics. The Russian guys came to Salt Lake and Vancouver, so the Canadian and American guys should be coming to Russia as well. It's better for the game. You've got to be crazy or foolish not to play in the Olympics or not to send the best players.

Vyacheslav Fetisov has recently discussed some ambitious ideas for the KHL: spending more money on stars, expanding into Asia, and staging an annual meeting between the Stanley Cup and Gagarin Cup champions.

It's a good plan. But it's easy to say, but hard to realize. You've got to have a lot of money. Right now, they have 26 teams in the KHL, and I believe there should be less than 26 teams. Expanding, I don't think, is a good idea. I think you have to have a good product, like 12 teams. And slowly expand up to 14 or 16. You know, it's going to take time. There's got to be competition between the teams.

Are you ever amazed by how your life has turned out? You started out as a young player under Communism and now you're a player agent in North America.

I never look back. I just live a day at a time. I try to help the young players, and raise my family. The girls [Alyonka and Diana] are 25 and 21 now, and my son [Igor] is 14, playing in Detroit. I'm traveling around, watching the games, and helping the young guys make less mistakes. I'm trying to guide them to be good hockey players and good people.



Fact file: Igor Larionov

- Born: December 3, 1960 in Voskresensk, Soviet Union
- Olympic gold: 1984, 1988. Bronze: 2002
- World Champion: 1982, 83, 86, 89. Silver: 87, Bronze: 85
- World U20 gold: 1980
- Stanley Cup: 1998, 2002
- Canada Cup: 1981
- Triple Gold Club Member No. 8
- 27 years in pro hockey: 1378 GP, 373 goals, 705 assists, 1078 points
- Inducted to Hockey Hall of Fame and IIHF Hall of Fame