

Storybook 2010 season comes to a close



Czech Republic provides fairytale finish to a perfect year for ice hockey



A storybook season ended with a fairytale game. Czech Republic's gold medal win was the most surprising since at least 1987 and the most unexpected in the nation's history, including the Czechoslovak era.

RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL

■ The Soviets were heavily favoured in the championship 23 years ago where they didn't lose a game but still lost the title to the Swedes who won their first gold in 25 years.

It was a surprise, but the Swedish team was definitely a medal candidate that year in Vienna. But after finishing 7 - 5 - 6 - 7 in the last four major IIHF events, nobody even mentioned the Czechs leading up to Germany 2010, not even as a medal contender.

But this championship was one of a kind. After losing to Norway and Switzerland, the Czechs defeated the Swedes twice, Canada, Finland and Russia to grab the nation's 12th world title. This means that coach Vladimir Ruzicka's team defeated four out of five countries that were ahead of the Czech Republic in the IIHF World Ranking prior to the event.

■ The win proves once again that a strong team concept can overcome a star studded opponent, especially in a one-game decider. Suddenly all the traditional Czech elements were there, stifling defense, solid goaltending and opportunistic scoring.

■ Apart from the Czech upset, the things we will remember from Germany are the fans and the atmosphere. The 74th World Championship drew a total attendance of 548,768 to Gelsenkirchen, Cologne and Mannheim. This is the second highest figure in the history of the tournament, second only to Czech Republic 2004 which had four thousand more.

Of course, the organizers built a solid base when a world-record crowd of 77,803 filled the Veltins Arena for the Germany - United States opener. The 2-1 win for the home team gave Germany, and the entire event, the much-needed momentum and it carried coach Uwe Krupp's men to the semi-final where the Germans were less than two minutes from taking Russia to overtime.

Germany was not the only country that showed progress. Denmark advanced to the quarterfinal for the first time ever, Norway was very close while Switzerland showed creative and exciting hockey in wins against the Czechs and Canada.

■ As we close the books on the 2009-2010 season, this is more than we could have expected; the best Olympics ever with a gold medal game which already is a classic, a world-record attendance at the Worlds opener, more than half a million people at our flagship event in an Olympic year and several feel-good stories in Cologne and Mannheim. I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to Uwe Harnos and Franz Reindl and his staff on the Germany 2010 OC and say a warm thank you to all in the hockey family who contributed to the success of international hockey in 2010.

René Fasel
IIHF President

Czech it out - 2015 Worlds go to Prague & Ostrava

■ It was a good spring for the Czech Republic. In the same week, the nation won the World Championship gold medal and secured the rights to host the 2015 Worlds. It will be the tenth time that Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic has hosted the IIHF's flagship event.

There was no question which championship presentation made the best impression on the congress delegates from the 68 IIHF member nations. The congress voting resulted in a clear cut 84-22 victory for the Czechs. The other applicant was Ukraine.

"We have been working on this presentation for the last three years," said Martin Urban, General Secretary of the Czech Ice Hockey Association. "We last hosted in 2004, so it's about time."

■ The tournament will be co-hosted by Prague and Ostrava, just as in 2004. That year, the Czechs set an

all-time attendance record of 552,097, a record Urban hopes to break. "Of course, that will be our goal, but it will be tough. In 2004, the arena was new, but now we have everything ready in plenty of time."

Prague has the distinction of hosting more World Championship games – 284 – than any other city in the world, the first coming in 1933.

■ The 18,000-seat O2 Arena, formerly known as Sazka Arena, in Prague will be the main venue. The arena was built for the 2004 Worlds. It will be used for two preliminary-round groups, one qualification-round group, three relegation-round games, the quarterfinals, semi-finals and the medal games.

Ostrava, about 360 km from Prague, will host two preliminary-round groups, a qualification-round group and three relegation-round games. Games will be held in the CEZ Arena with a capacity for 9,800 spectators.



2010 Honorees

The IIHF Hall of Fame inducted five new members on May 23rd in a ceremony held in Cologne, Germany. The class of 2010 included four players and one builder. From left to right, the honorees were: Forward Dieter Hegen from Germany, Finland female hockey pioneer Riikka Nieminen Valila, Helena Fagerlund, who accepted the builder's award on behalf of her deceased father Rickard, Paul Loicq Award winner Lou Vairo from the U.S., Latvian goaltending legend Arturs Irbe and Russian star forward Vladimir Krutov. Each inductee received a plaque, jersey and commemorative pin.

Photo: IIHF/HoF/Matthew Manor

NEWS & NOTES FROM THE HOCKEY WORLD

■ **ARMENIA:** Armenia was suspended indefinitely from the IIHF due to eligibility issues with their men's national team at the 2010 IIHF World Championship Division III Group B. Armenia was on probation due to eligibility issues in the past. They used several ineligible players and are suspected of having submitted false information about players of American-Armenian double citizenship. The results of all games involving the Armenian team will not count for the tournament.

■ **GERMANY:** The IIHF officially rolled out an anti-doping campaign at the 2010 World Championship. The 'Green Puck' has become the symbol of anti-doping awareness.

Green pucks were used in warm-ups for three games and throughout the World Championship various hockey personalities were in a video stating that 'doping is not ok.'

■ **CZECH REPUBLIC:** The Czech Ice Hockey Association announced before the start of the World Championship that Alois Hadamczik will become new national team coach next season. He will take over from Vladimir Ruzicka, who won the 2010 gold medal.

■ **GERMANY:** For the second straight year, after the World Championship there were no new names added to the IIHF's Triple Gold Club, which recognizes players that have won the Stanley Cup, Olympic Gold and World Championship Gold. The last player added to the club was Canadian Eric Staal after winning the Olympic gold.

■ **SPAIN:** Former IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch died in a Barcelona hospital at the age of 89 on April 21. "It was his visions and persistence that opened the Olympic Games to professional athletes," said IIHF President René Fasel, who calls Samaranch his mentor.

■ **GREAT BRITAIN:** Neville Moralee passed away after a short illness on April 17. He served on the Ice Hockey UK Board since its inception in 2000 and was most recently its Vice-President. Moralee attended many IIHF Congresses. Most recently he held the post of the Director and Treasurer of the English Ice Hockey Association.

NUMBERS FROM GERMANY 2010

■ Germany 2010 set the bar high for future organizers. Just a few of the numbers that were reported when the event ended:

□ 548,768 spectators saw all 56 games. It is only second to only the most-attended World Championship, 2004 in the Czech Republic (552,097).

□ Without the opening game in Gelsenkirchen, Germany would rank third all-time in attendance.

□ 77,803 spectators saw the USA-Germany opening game in Gelsenkirchen for a hockey world record.

□ 19,132 at the gold medal game set the attendance record for a world championship game in an indoor hockey arena.

□ The 18,522 fans that attended the Slovakia vs. Russia game on May 9 was the record attendance for a non-playoff game without the host team playing.



Whistling 'round the world



□ For the first time in history, a European referee will bring his expertise to the NHL. It was announced that Marcus Vinnerborg will make the jump from Sweden's Elitserien next season.

■ The 37-year-old native of Ljungby has been officiating since 1987, and his impressive resume includes each IIHF World Championship from 2006 to 2009 (including the 2008 Russia-Canada gold medal game in Quebec City) and the 2010 Olympics. He has also refereed at the World Juniors and numerous European club and international competitions, such as the Karjala Cup, Spengler Cup, and Sweden Hockey Games.

"It can't get any bigger than this. Never before has it even been on the radar for a European referee to go to the NHL, but thanks to Konstantin Komissarov, the IIHF officiating manager, and Terry Gregson, the NHL director of officiating, it has now become true," Vinnerborg said over the phone from Sweden.

■ The possibility was brought up during the Vancouver Olympics which were officiated by mixed IIHF-NHL teams, and a few weeks ago, Vinnerborg got the actual, official offer.

Professionally, it's a no-brainer. But Vinnerborg is no 18-year-old kid from Sweden, who's just been drafted to the NHL.

"I still have to pinch myself. It's the best league in the world, and to be working with some of the most experienced and competent referees will be wonderful. However, I'm 37, have a wife and two daughters, so we had to sit down and talk it all through," he says.

"I first saw Marcus officiate a game in 2005, and have



CHANGING HIS STRIPES: Swedish referee Marcus Vinnerborg is the first European official to join the ranks of the NHL.

been watching him ever since, including in Vancouver [during the 2010 Olympics]," said NHL director of officials Terry Gregson. "He meshes extremely well [with NHL on-ice officials] on blended crews for World Championships and Olympics. Plus, he is a quality person. His knowledge of the North American game and his work ethic and professionalism will make him a positive addition to the NHL staff."

■ Gregson also cited his positive relationship with IIHF officiating manager Konstantin Komissarov as another factor that has helped make this historic move by Vinnerborg possible. The IIHF adopted the four-man system for officials starting at the 2008 Worlds in Canada.

Vinnerborg heads to Toronto in September to take part in the NHL's pre-season camp for officials. The plan is that he will work American Hockey League games prior to officiating in the NHL.

Meet Morocco: IIHF Member #69

Population: 31,627,428

Area: 446,550 sq km, slightly larger than California

Location: Northern Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, between Algeria and Western Sahara

Capital City: Rabat

Hockey History: The nation already has about 90 players registered, 40 junior and 50 senior. A national team played in an invitational tournament, the 2008 Arab Cup, together with IIHF members Kuwait and United Arab Emirates, and Algeria.

About the region: The northern coast and interior are mountainous with large areas of bordering plateaus, inter-mountain valleys, and rich coastal plains. The climate is Mediterranean, becoming more extreme in further inland.



The hosts with the most: 2011 event sites set

■ The bulk of the 2010-2011 IIHF events were allocated at the Annual Congress in Germany. Three events, one women's and two U18s are still awaiting their host city to be determined.

Below is a list of where the various championships will be played in the upcoming season:

MENS:

Top Division:	Slovakia (Bratislava/Kosice)
Division I, Group A:	Hungary (Budapest)
Division I, Group B:	Ukraine (Kyiv)
Division II, Group A:	Australia (Melbourne)
Division II, Group B:	Croatia (Zagreb)
Division III, Group A:	South Africa (Cape Town)

U20s:

Top Division:	USA (Buffalo, Niagara)
Division I, Group A:	Belarus (Bobruisk)
Division I, Group B:	Slovenia (Bled)
Division II, Group A:	Netherlands (Eindhoven)
Division II, Group B:	Romania (Miercurea Ciuc)
Division III:	Mexico (Mexico City)

U18s:

Top Division:	Germany (TBA)
Division I, Group A:	Latvia (Riga)
Division I, Group B:	Slovenia (Bled)
Division II, Group A:	TBA
Division II, Group B:	TBA
Division III, Group A:	Chinese Taipei (Taipei City)
Division III, Group B:	Mexico (Mexico City)

WOMENS U18s:

Top Division:	Sweden (TBA)
Division I:	Russia (TBA)

WOMENS

Top Division:	Switzerland (Winterthur, Zurich)
Division I:	Germany (Ravensburg)
Division II:	France (Briançon or Cannes)
Division III:	TBA
Division IV:	Iceland (Reykjavik)
Division V:	Bulgaria (Sofia)



IRON MAN: Finnish defenseman Petteri Nummelin passed Jiri Holik and Sven Tumba on the all-time list as the only player to appear in 15 top division World Championships. He was honored before the game against Germany by German General Secretary Franz Reindl, Finnish Federation President Kalervo Kummola and IIHF President Rene Fasel.



A glimpse at www.worldhockeysummit.com

iceTimes is published bi-monthly.

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77,803! A great day for hockey

By Andrew Podnieks

Gelsenkirchen put on a show for the ages. American college had its 'Cold War'. The NHL has its 'Winter Classic'. Now the World Championship had its answer with the world record-setting game in Veltins Arena in Gelsenkirchen. What was so great about the game? Big picture answer: everything. But let's look at a few details.

Appearances. Gelsenkirchen had fans around the rails, filling in the dead space of a football field between the playing area and the stadium seating. When you walked into Gelsenkirchen and looked around, you had no idea you were in a football stadium. There were no kilometres of tubes and ice freezing equipment around the field. There were no play areas, no loitering stadium employees. Just like a typical arena, it was all ice and fans.

The ice. Although not flawless, there were no delays to fill in holes, no worried conversations between referees, no pucks bouncing wildly. The ice definitely got more snowy as the period went on, but not so much as to affect play.

Indoor-outdoor. Because the World Championship was in May in Germany, a true outdoor game wasn't possible. Moving the game indoors, but to a larger arena, was the main reason for the game's success.

Sightlines. There were no obstructed views from afar (though likely there were some closer to the action). What Gelsenkirchen showed is that you CAN have more than 50,000 fans for a hockey game without sacrificing the game.

Cool moments. How strange is it to watch a game and have a bird fly by? How cool is it to watch the Zambonis drive out from underneath the stadium, making their way through the crowd? How spectacular was it to not be able to hear the referee's whistle, the crunch of bodies against the glass because the chanting, drumming, and cheering of 77,803 fans was deafening?

Oh, and by the way, Germany won the game, 2-1, in overtime no less!



Updated IIHF World Ranking

'10 Rank	Nation	Points	'09 Rank	Movement
1	RUS	3980	2	1
2	CAN	3970	1	-1
3	SWE	3845	4	1
4	FIN	3805	3	-1
5	CZE	3785	6	1
6	USA	3650	5	-1
7	SUI	3540	8	1
8	SVK	3405	7	-1
9	GER	3360	12	3
10	BLR	3360	9	-1
11	NOR	3305	11	0
12	LAT	3265	10	-2
13	DEN	3185	13	0
14	AUT	2935	14	0
15	FRA	2900	16	1
16	ITA	2860	15	-1
17	KAZ	2790	19	2
18	UKR	2760	17	-1
19	SLO	2730	18	-1
20	HUN	2655	20	0
21	JPN	2575	21	0
22	POL	2405	22	0
23	GBR	2350	24	1
24	LTU	2300	23	-1
25	NED	2210	25	0
26	CRO	2125	27	1
27	EST	2100	26	-1
28	ROU	1945	28	0
29	SRB	1935	29	0
30	ESP	1790	30	0
31	BUL	1560	31	0
32	MEX	1520	32	0
33	KOR	1485	33	0
34	AUS	1350	34	0
35	TUR	1265	37	2
36	BEL	1240	36	0
37	CHN	1120	35	-2
38	ISL	1095	39	1
39	ISR	970	38	-1
40	NZL	925	40	0
41	IRL	750	42	1
42	RSA	735	41	-1
43	PRK	730	43	0
44	LUX	665	44	0
45	GRE	595	46	1
46	MGL	540	45	-1
47	UAE	220	NEW	2
48	BIH	100	47	-1
49	ARM	0	48	-1

Photos: IIHF/HHOF IMAGES

A MASS OF HUMANITY: Germany now holds the World Record for attendance at an ice hockey game after a memorable evening on May 7th. The sheer amount of fans was staggering as seen in the large photo and the smaller inset to the left. Even better for the record-setting crowd was when Michael Wolf (center photo) scored the opening goal 25 minutes into action. The German bench can be seen celebrating the goal (right) as thousands of fans look on in the background

Cinderella Czechs take the 2010 title

By Andrew Podnieks

Germany 2010 produced some of the most startling results in World Championship history. Although order was restored for the gold-medal game, another Russia-Czech classic, earlier games saw many an underdog not only win, but play skilled and exciting hockey.

There were the darling Danes, that made the quarterfinals for the first time ever, prompting a TV broadcaster to say he would run across a bridge naked if the Danes made it to the semis (luckily for him, Denmark's fairy tale ended against the Swedes in the quarterfinals.) Then there were the surprise Swiss, who soared in the preliminary and qualification round only to be inexplicably ousted in the quarterfinals. Which brings us to the magician of the event - host Germany. The Germans went from 15th last season, to an amazing fourth-place finish this year. The turnaround helped to pack arenas and gave the tournament a life of its own. Of course, there were countless other storylines during the three-week event. Read on to see if your favorite moments made our list.

GAME 1 - USA VS. GERMANY

Germany beats the United States 2-1 in overtime in Gelsenkirchen, the game setting a world record of 77,803 for a hockey game (see page four for more). Felix Schutz is the OT hero for the Germans.

GAME 3 - FINLAND VS. DENMARK

Notable for two reasons, this Finland-Denmark game saw the Danes stun the favoured Finns by a 4-1 score. It propelled the Danes to an excellent tournament and spoiled the night for Petteri Nummelin. The following game, he was presented with a plaque from Rene Fasel to honour his record-setting 15th World Championship.

GAME 9 - USA VS. DENMARK

Denmark strikes again. Stefan Lassen made for another memorable game for the Danes. His team tied the United States 1-1 after regulation, and then at 2:04 of overtime he scored to give his team another unexpected victory.

GAME 14 - CZECH REPUBLIC VS. NORWAY

Another Nordic nation stole the headlines as Norway broke a 1-1 tie with the Czech Republic after scoring midway through the second period and again early in the third, and hung on for a stunning 3-2 win over the eventual gold medalists.



BEAR HUG: Petr Vampola and Miroslav Blatak embrace after the final second ticks off the clock.

Republic after scoring midway through the second period and again early in the third, and hung on for a stunning 3-2 win over the eventual gold medalists.

GAME 17 - DENMARK VS. GERMANY
Germany delighted a capacity crowd at LanXess Arena by beating Denmark, 3-1. Goalie Dennis Endras was excellent for the Germans, stopping 23 of 24 shots. The game would prove to be a key to the German success later in the event.

GAME 20 - CANADA VS. SWITZERLAND
For the first time in World Championship history, the Swiss defeated Canada. The 4-1 score was a sign of things to come for



GOLDEN GUYS! After struggling in recent years at both the junior and senior level, the 2010 Czech team earned redemption, and gold, in Germany. Photos: IIHF/HHOF IMAGES

both teams as the Swiss continued to upend big-name opponents, while the Canadians bowed out early.

GAME 25 - SLOVAKIA VS. DENMARK

In one of the most remarkable 14 minutes of hockey ever played at the World Championship, Denmark raced out to a 6-0 lead over Slovakia by the 13:42 mark of the first period. This was far and away the most dominating performance by a Danish team, or any other, at this level and against such a strong opponent.

GAME 26 - CANADA VS. NORWAY

Canada beat Norway 12-1 and 19-year-old Jordan Eberle, making his debut with the senior team, had a goal and three assists for the winners. More surprisingly, however, it was Canada's last win of the tournament.

GAME 29 - USA VS. KAZAKHSTAN

The United States beat Kazakhstan 10-0 in the opening game of the Relegation Round, a surprising position for the Americans despite their inexperienced lineup. They had no problem winning the group and remaining in the top division.

GAME 32 - SWITZERLAND VS. CZECH REPUBLIC

Proving the 4-1 win over Canada was no fluke, the Swiss jumped to a 2-0 lead over

the Czech Republic in the first period and held on for an impressive 3-2 win.

GAME 37 - GERMANY VS. BELARUS

An amazing game charged with energy and great playmaking saw the Germans lose the battle against Belarus, but still win the war for the event. With just 54 seconds left and German goalie Endras on the bench for a sixth skater, Marcel Muller tied the game to send it to overtime. A huge turnover in the Belarus end, however, created a three-on-none in the extra period, and Alexei Kalyuzhny scored the winner. But despite the two points, Belarus' tournament was finished, while Germany lived on.

GAME 49 - FINLAND VS. CZECH REPUBLIC

Petri Kontiola scored just 55 seconds into the quarterfinals to give the Finns a 1-0 lead over the Czechs, a lead that held up the rest of the period and all of the second. But the Czechs tied the game early in the third and won in a shootout. It was the first of three, one-goal Czech victories in the medal round.

GAME 53 - SWEDEN VS. CZECH REPUBLIC

Given that the Czechs won the gold medal, the game against Sweden must go down as one of the most sensational in the nation's history. The Czechs and Swedes exchan-

ged first-period goals. The Swedes scored in the second to take a lead they nursed the rest of the game. But with just 7.5 seconds left and goalie Tomas Vokoun on the bench, Karel Rachunek drilled a loose puck in the slot past a helpless Jonas Gustavsson, and the Czechs won the shootout to advance to the gold-medal game.

GAME 54 - SWEDEN VS. GERMANY

On the verge of making history, the Germans went up 1-0 on Russia in the first period. The Russians tied the game in the second, and just when it looked like overtime was imminent, the Germans made the one mistake to cost them a first-time spot in the gold-medal game. Philip Gogulla's turnover inside the Russian blueline gave Russia a two-on-one, and Pavel Datsyuk scored with just 1:50 left in regulation to deny the host its moment in history.

GAME 56 - RUSSIA VS. CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czechs stunned the Russians by scoring just 20 seconds after the opening faceoff and hung on for a 2-1 win over the superstar-laden Russians to win an improbable gold. Earlier in the tournament 38-year-old Jaromir Jagr had chastised many players for not coming to Germany, but by the end the young and largely unknown team won the tournament.

SLOVAKIA 2011 PRELIMINARY ROUND GROUPS

Next year the 2011 IIHF World Championship will move to Slovakia, which will host the annual event for the first time ever. Kosice and capital Bratislava will serve as the host cities. Following the 2010 championship in Germany, the groups for the 2011 edition were determined based on the nations' new position in the IIHF World Ranking. Groups A and D will be played in Bratislava, located just minutes from the Austrian border and Vienna. Bratislava boasts a new, state-of-the-art, 10,000-seat arena that will open its gates in November. Groups B and C will be based in Kosice and will be in the 8,373-seat Ladislav Trojak Arena that was opened in 2006. Joining the top 14 teams are newly promoted Austria and Slovenia, which will play in groups C and A, respectively. Defending champion Czech Republic will play the preliminary round in Bratislava, together with host Slovakia, which is sure to pack the arena for the preliminary round. Bratislava will also serve as the venue for the semi-final and medal games.



Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Bratislava	Kosice	Kosice	Bratislava
Russia	Canada	Sweden	Finland
Slovakia	Switzerland	United States	Czech Republic
Germany	Belarus	Norway	Latvia
Slovenia	France	Austria	Denmark

The envelope please...



DIRECTORATE AWARDS:
Goaltender: Dennis Endras (GER)
Defenseman: Petteri Nummelin (FIN)
Forward: Pavel Datsyuk (RUS)
MVP: Dennis Endras (GER)



MEDIA ALL-STAR AWARDS:
Goalie: Dennis Endras (GER)
Defensemen: Christian Ehrhoff (GER), Petteri Nummelin (FIN)
Forwards: Pavel Datsyuk (RUS), Evgeni Malkin (RUS), Magnus Paajarvi-Svensson (SWE)



And the winner is.... U18, and Division I titles also handed out

DIVISION I, GROUP A:



After being dealt one of the toughest hands at the 2009 World Championship in Switzerland, Austria made fast work of making its return to the top division. The Austrians finished the 2009 Worlds in 14th place, ordinarily good enough to be safe from relegation, but because of a sub-par performance by this year's host Germany, Austria had to take the Germans' place in Division I. It made no difference to the Alpine nation. The Austrians kept their head high and their goal in sight, sweeping through the opposition with a perfect 5-0 record.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

The title ultimately came down to the two top teams: Ukraine and Austria. The Austrians took a 2-0 lead, only to have it cut in half by the Ukrainians. The lead stood through a tough finale that saw the Austrians forced to kill a five-minute power-play. They did, and hung on for the win, the promotion and the gold medal. "The game could have been won by either team," Austria coach Bill Gilligan said. "Thank God we survived that five-minute penalty kill at the end."

THE SILVER CURSE

For Ukraine, the second-place finish was another case of 'close, but no cigar.' The Ukrainians, who were last in the top division in 2007, have finished in second place the last three seasons at the Division I event. Last year, it was the Italians that picked the Ukrainians off. The silver finish is particularly tough for the Ukraine, which has expressed its desire to someday host the top-level event. A wish that is tough to make happen until the team can become a mainstay among the elite 16 nations.

THEY'RE ALL ABOUT THE BRONZE

Much like the Ukraine, Japan is eerily consistent at the Division I level. The 2010 event

marked the fifth-straight bronze medal finish for the Japanese. While the consistency might not seem bad to an onlooker, for head coach Mark Mahon and the rest of the team, it is frustrating considering the progress that the country has made in its hockey development. The last time Japan made an appearance at the top level was in 2004, when their free pass to stay among the elite 16 teams expired. Now, they must find a way to get over the bronze hump, which once again stood in their way.

GOING DOWN

Of course, Serbia would love to have the problems of Ukraine and Japan and be in a medal position at this year's Division I championship. Instead, the Serbians are headed straight back to Division II after suffering a handful of double-digit losses. The bright spot for Serbia came in its final game, when it took the Netherlands to a shootout. While the Netherlands ultimately won the game, the point earned for Serbia was a positive finish to an otherwise tough tournament. The Netherlands closed the event in fourth place and Lithuania ended safe in fifth place.



to the top division. But the unbeaten Hungarians couldn't stave off a strong Slovenian attack in the third period of the final game which knocked Hungary out of the golden picture and punched Slovenia's ticket to Slovakia. Now Hungary has to go home and regroup for its 2013 bid.

50-50 CHANCE:

Nearly as dramatic as the winner-takes-all game for gold, was the loser-loses-all game for relegation. It came down to Croatia and Korea, which were both looking for their first win in the final-day meeting. A strong three-goal performance from the Koreans in the first period was simply too much for the Croatians to overcome as they lost the game and the chance to stay at the Division I level. For newly-promoted Korea, the win was a huge step, while for Croatia it was a tough pill to swallow after staying in Division I for the last three seasons.

DIVISION I, GROUP B:



It took a little grit and a lot of determination, but in the end Slovenia was able to rejoin the top tier of the World Championship after a two-year absence. The Slovenians eked out three close games, including a one-goal opening day victory against Poland and a key 4-3 shootout win against Great Britain to earn the promotion with an unbeaten record. Oddly enough, Slovenia had a relatively easy time against runner-up Hungary with a 4-1 win on the last day of action.

BOUNCING BALL

Now the biggest question for Slovenia looms: Will the see-saw nation at last be able to stay among the World's elite for longer than one season? The last time the nation was able to make back-to-back appearances was in 2002-2003. Since then, the team has literally bounced back and forth between the top division and Division I. Last year's runner-up finish at Division I marked the first time that Slovenia failed to make the immediate trip back to the top level, finishing second to Kazakhstan. Unless the Slovenians can solve the puzzle of the elite 16 nations, the hard work on home ice will have been for naught.

HUNGER NOT SATISFIED

In 2008, Hungary was a dark horse team that made its way to the top division for the first time in 60 years. What a difference a few years make. This year, the Hungarians were among the favored teams and after the first four games in pole position to return

WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP:



The American U18 team completed a rare double-double in junior hockey. After their U20 counterparts won gold at the World Juniors in December, the U18s followed up with the gold in Belarus. It was the American's second straight gold medal at U18s completing a trio of junior golds. The win underlines the American's efforts to bolster their international hockey results through junior development.

Two players, goaltender Jack Campbell and forward Jason Zucker, were members of all three golden teams. For Campbell, the success is particularly sweet after he played in net for all three events and capped off his triumph with Top Goaltender honors at this year's U18s.

WOE CANADA

On the other end of the spectrum was America's normal North American rival, Canada.



WORLD WOMEN U18 CHAMPIONSHIP:



It was a banner year for Canadian women's hockey. Following on the heels of the Olympic gold, the women's younger counterparts also claimed the U18 gold medal with a dramatic overtime win against the U.S. The win is the first-ever for the Canadians at the event and caps off a year of redemption for the northern nation on the women's side. With no World Women's Championship in an Olympic year, the U18 Women's took center stage and had a rare opportunity for the younger generation to show their skills while not lingering in the shadows of their senior counterparts. The result was a tournament filled with twists and turns.

The maple leaf U18s had what can only be called a disastrous tournament, becoming the first-ever Canadian junior team to play in a relegation round. Luckily, Canada made it through to next year's top level, where they will hope to get back into the rivalry against the two-time defending champs.

SILVER SWEDES

For Sweden, this year's U18s highlighted its biggest problem -- the inability to win the big game, especially against North American teams. The Swedes have made enormous strides in its junior development, but when looking back through the recent years, the story is almost always the same: A talented Swedish squad fights its way to a medal game, where an American or Canadian team dashes its hopes.

SWISS & FINNS ON THE RISE

Canada's poor showing left a gap for another team to fill. Enter Switzerland and Finland. The Swiss, which were in the relegation round last year and in Division I two years ago, came from out of nowhere to earn a place in the medal round. Unfortunately, they fell in the quarterfinals against a strong Russian team, but the fifth-place finish was the country's best since the early part of the decade.

For the Finns, the second straight bronze medal was a clear signal that the country is looking to reclaim its place among the top junior teams after struggling for the last five seasons. Finland was the unlikely winner of its preliminary round group and lost against the Americans in the semi-finals, but the Finns rallied on medal day and topped the Russians, 5-1, thanks to a four-goal third period.

SEE YOU LATER:

There was no happy ending for host Belarus. Despite putting on a successful event, Belarus went winless and along with Latvia, was relegated to Division I.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE POND

While the final featuring the two North American nations was no surprise, there were a few shocks in Chicago -- namely the strong performance of the Germans, who made it to their first-ever medal game at a women's world championship event after a 2-1 win against Finland in the quarterfinals. For the Germans, the performance was a strong signal that its women's program is fighting back from a tough few seasons that saw their women's team get relegated from the top division and miss out on the 2010 Olympics.

MORE SURPRISES

Also a surprise was the relegation of Russia, which was swept in the best-of-three relegation round series by the Czech Republic. The Czech U18 team has become one of the toughest to predict at the young event. The first two years, the Czechs were in the bronze medal game, a surprise to many. This year, just as shocking, was the fact that the Czechs were sent to the relegation round to take on Russia in the best-of-three series.

NORDIC NATIONS MISS EACH OTHER

Because of Germany's strong performance and surprise appearance in the bronze medal game, normal Nordic foes Sweden and Finland did not face each other during the course of the event. Normally, the meeting between the two top-tier teams is as much anticipated as the North American battle. But this year, the Swedes were clearly the superior team as they skated onto the bronze medal, while the Finns finished well out of contention, settling for fifth place after beating Japan, 4-1, in the consolation game.

IIHF World Championship

Cologne, Mannheim, Gelsenkirchen, GERMANY

Preliminary Round - Group A

Belarus - Kazakhstan	5 - 1	(0-0, 2-2, 3-0)
Slovakia - Russia	1 - 3	(0-1, 0-1, 1-1)
Russia - Kazakhstan	4 - 1	(1-0, 2-0, 1-1)
Belarus - Slovakia	2 - 4	(2-0, 0-2, 0-2)
Russia - Belarus	3 - 1	(1-0, 2-0, 0-1)
Kazakhstan - Slovakia	1 - 5	(0-1, 0-2, 1-2)

Russia	3	3	0	0	0	10	3	9
Slovakia	3	2	0	0	1	10	6	6
Belarus	3	1	0	0	2	8	9	3
Kazakhstan	3	0	0	0	3	4	:14	0

Preliminary Round - Group B

Canada - Italy	5 - 1	(2-1, 2-0, 1-0)
Switzerland - Latvia	3 - 1	(1-0, 1-0, 1-1)
Switzerland - Italy	3 - 0	(0-0, 1-0, 2-0)
Latvia - Canada	1 - 6	(0-2, 0-4, 1-0)
Italy - Latvia	2 - 5	(1-1, 0-1, 1-3)
Canada - Switzerland	1 - 4	(1-2, 0-1, 0-1)

Switzerland	3	3	0	0	0	10	2	9
Canada	3	2	0	0	1	12	6	6
Latvia	3	1	0	0	2	7	:11	3
Italy	3	0	0	0	3	3	:13	0

Preliminary Round - Group C

Czech Republic - France	6 - 2	(2-0, 2-0, 2-2)
Norway - Sweden	2 - 5	(0-2, 1-0, 1-3)
Czech Republic - Norway	2 - 3	(0-1, 1-1, 1-1)
Sweden - France	3 - 2	(1-0, 2-0, 0-2)
France - Norway	1 - 5	(1-0, 0-1, 0-4)
Sweden - Czech Republic	1 - 2	(0-1, 1-1, 0-0)

Sweden	3	2	0	0	1	9	6	6
Czech Republic	3	2	0	0	1	10	6	6
Norway	3	2	0	0	1	10	8	6
France	3	0	0	0	3	5	:14	0

Preliminary Round - Group D

United States - Germany	1 - 2	(0-0, 0-1, 1-0) OT
Finland - Denmark	1 - 4	(1-2, 0-1, 0-1)
United States - Denmark	1 - 2	(0-0, 1-1, 0-0) OT
Germany - Finland	0 - 1	(0-0, 0-1, 0-0)
Denmark - Germany	1 - 3	(1-1, 0-2, 0-0)
Finland - United States	3 - 2	(0-1, 1-0, 2-1)

Finland	3	2	0	0	1	5	6	6
Germany	3	1	1	0	1	5	3	5
Denmark	3	1	1	0	1	7	5	5
United States	3	0	0	2	1	4	:7	2

Qualification Round - Group E

Finland - Denmark	1 - 4	(1-2, 0-1, 0-1)
Slovakia - Russia	1 - 3	(0-1, 0-1, 1-1)
Germany - Finland	0 - 1	(0-0, 0-1, 0-0)
Belarus - Slovakia	2 - 4	(2-0, 0-2, 0-2)
Denmark - Germany	1 - 3	(1-1, 0-2, 0-0)
Russia - Belarus	3 - 1	(1-0, 2-0, 0-1)
Slovakia - Denmark	0 - 6	(0-6, 0-0, 0-0)
Finland - Belarus	2 - 0	(0-0, 2-0, 0-0)
Russia - Germany	3 - 2	(1-0, 1-1, 1-1)
Denmark - Russia	1 - 6	(0-2, 1-1, 0-3)
Germany - Belarus	1 - 2	(0-1, 0-0, 1-0) OT
Finland - Slovakia	5 - 2	(0-0, 3-0, 2-2)
Belarus - Denmark	2 - 1	(0-1, 1-0, 1-0)
Slovakia - Germany	1 - 2	(0-1, 1-1, 0-0)
Russia - Finland	5 - 0	(1-0, 2-0, 2-0)

Russia	5	5	0	0	0	20	5	15
Finland	5	3	0	0	2	9	:11	9
Germany	5	2	0	1	2	8	:8	7
Denmark	5	2	0	0	3	13	:12	6
Belarus	5	1	1	0	3	7	:11	5
Slovakia	5	1	0	0	4	8	:18	3

Qualification Round - Group F

Switzerland - Latvia	3 - 1	(1-0, 1-0, 1-1)
Norway - Sweden	2 - 5	(0-2, 1-0, 1-3)
Latvia - Canada	1 - 6	(0-2, 0-4, 1-0)
Czech Republic - Norway	2 - 3	(0-1, 1-1, 1-1)
Canada - Switzerland	1 - 4	(1-2, 0-1, 0-1)
Sweden - Czech Republic	1 - 2	(0-1, 1-1, 0-0)
Canada - Norway	12 - 1	(1-1, 7-0, 4-0)
Sweden - Latvia	4 - 2	(3-1, 0-0, 1-1)
Switzerland - Czech Republic	3 - 2	(2-0, 1-2, 0-0)
Latvia - Norway	5 - 0	(0-0, 0-0, 5-0)
Sweden - Canada	3 - 1	(1-0, 2-0, 0-1)
Norway - Switzerland	3 - 2	(3-1, 0-0, 0-1)
Czech Republic - Latvia	3 - 1	(0-0, 2-0, 1-1)

Switzerland	5	4	1	0	0	29	10	14
Hungary	5	4	0	0	1	21	6	12
Poland	5	3	0	0	2	15	:12	9
Great Britain	5	2	0	1	2	10	:10	7
Korea	5	1	0	0	4	13	:21	3
Croatia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Slovenia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Hungary	5	4	0	0	1	21	6	12
Poland	5	3	0	0	2	15	:12	9
Great Britain	5	2	0	1	2	10	:10	7
Korea	5	1	0	0	4	13	:21	3
Croatia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Slovenia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Switzerland	5	4	0	0	1	21	6	12
Poland	5	3	0	0	2	15	:12	9
Great Britain	5	2	0	1	2	10	:10	7
Korea	5	1	0	0	4	13	:21	3
Croatia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Slovenia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Switzerland	5	4	0	0	1	21	6	12
Poland	5	3	0	0	2	15	:12	9
Great Britain	5	2	0	1	2	10	:10	7
Korea	5	1	0	0	4	13	:21	3
Croatia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Slovenia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Switzerland	5	4	0	0	1	21	6	12
Poland	5	3	0	0	2	15	:12	9
Great Britain	5	2	0	1	2	10	:10	7
Korea	5	1	0	0	4	13	:21	3
Croatia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Slovenia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Switzerland	5	4	0	0	1	21	6	12
Poland	5	3	0	0	2	15	:12	9
Great Britain	5	2	0	1	2	10	:10	7
Korea	5	1	0	0	4	13	:21	3
Croatia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Slovenia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0

Canada - Czech Republic	2 - 3	(1-1, 0-2, 1-0)
Switzerland - Sweden	0 - 5	(0-1, 0-2, 0-2)

Sweden	5	3	0	0	1	18	7	12
Switzerland	5	3	0	0	2	12	:12	9
Czech Republic	5	3	0	0	2	12	:10	9
Canada	5	2	0	0	3	22	:12	6
Norway	5	2	0	0	3	9	:26	6
Latvia	5	1	0	0	4	10	:16	3

Relegation Round

United States - Kazakhstan	10-0	(4-0, 5-0, 1-0)
Italy - France	1 - 2	(0-1, 0-0, 1-1)
France - United States	0 - 4	(0-0, 0-2, 0-2)
Italy - Kazakhstan	2 - 1	(0-0, 0-0, 2-1)
United States - Italy	3 - 2	(1-0, 0-1, 1-1) SO
Kazakhstan - France	3 - 5	(2-3, 0-1, 1-1)

United States	3	2	1	0	0	17	2	8
France	3	2	0	0	1	7	:8	6
Italy	3	1	0	1	1	5	:6	4
Kazakhstan	3	0	0	0	3	4	:17	0

Italy & Kazakhstan are relegated to 2011 World Championship, Division I

Playoff Round

Finland - Czech Republic (QF)	1 - 2	(1-0, 0-0, 0-1) SO
Sweden - Denmark (QF)	4 - 2	(1-0, 2-1, 1-1)
Russia - Canada (QF)	5 - 2	(1-0, 2-0, 2-2)
Switzerland - Germany (QF)	0 - 1	(0-0, 0-1, 0-0)
Sweden - Czech Republic (SF)	2 - 3	(1-1, 1-0, 0-1) SO
Russia - Germany (SF)	2 - 1	(0-1, 1-0, 1-0)
Sweden - Germany (bronze)	3 - 1	(1-0, 0-1, 2-0)
Russia - Czech Republic (gold)	1 - 2	(0-1, 0-1, 1-0)

IIHF World Championship - Div. I, Grp. A

Tilburg, NETHERLANDS April 19-24

Lithuania - Ukraine	5-12	(0-2, 4-4, 1-6)
Serbia - Austria	0-13	(0-7, 0-3, 0-3)
Netherlands - Japan	1 - 3	(0-1, 0-2, 1-0)
Japan - Serbia	5 - 0	(1-0, 3-0, 1-0)
Ukraine - Netherlands	9 - 2	(3-0, 4-1, 2-1)
Ukraine - Serbia	15-2	(1-1, 6-0, 8-1)
Japan - Austria	1 - 3	(0-2, 1-0, 0-1)
Lithuania - Netherlands	1 - 4	(1-1, 0-2, 0-1)
Ukraine - Japan	2 - 1	(0-0, 1-0, 1-1)
Serbia - Lithuania	4-10	(0-3, 1-3, 3-4)
Austria - Netherlands	4 - 1	(2-1, 2-0, 0-0)
Japan - Lithuania	7 - 1	(2-0, 2-1, 3-0)
Netherlands - Serbia	3 - 2	(2-1, 0-1, 0-0) OT
Austria - Ukraine	2 - 1	(1-0, 0-0, 1-1)

Austria	5	5	0	0	0	28	5	15
Ukraine	5	4	0	0	1	39	:12	12
Japan	5	3	0	0	2	17	:7	9
Netherlands	5	1	1	0	3	11	:19	5
Lithuania	5	1	0	0	4	19	:33	3
Serbia	5	0	0	1	4	8	:46	1

Austria is promoted to 2011 World Championship in Slovakia

Serbia is relegated to 2011 World Championship, Division II

IIHF World Championship - Div. I, Grp. B

Ljubljana, SLOVENIA April 17-23

Korea - Hungary	2 - 4	(0-0, 1-3, 1-1)
Croatia - Great Britain	1 - 4	(1-1, 0-2, 0-1)
Poland - Slovenia	2 - 3	(1-3, 1-0, 0-0)
Great Britain - Korea	2 - 1	(0-0, 1-1, 1-0)
Hungary - Poland	6 - 0	(2-0, 0-0, 4-0)
Slovenia - Croatia	10-1	(6-0, 1-1, 3-0)
Korea - Poland	2 - 5	(1-3, 1-1, 0-1)
Hungary - Croatia	8 - 0	(3-0, 5-0, 0-0)
Slovenia - Great Britain	4 - 3	(1-0, 1-0, 1-3) OT
Poland - Croatia	6 - 0	(3-0, 2-0, 1-0)
Great Britain - Hungary	0 - 2	(0-0, 0-1, 0-1)
Slovenia - Korea	8 - 3	(3-0, 2-2, 3-1)
Croatia - Korea	2 - 5	(1-3, 0-1, 1-1)
Great Britain - Poland	1 - 2	(1-0, 0-1, 0-1)
Hungary - Slovenia	1 - 4	(1-1, 0-1, 0-2)

Slovenia	5	4	1	0	0	29	10	14
Hungary	5	4	0	0	1	21	6	12
Poland	5	3	0	0	2	15	:12	9
Great Britain	5	2	0	1	2	10	:10	7
Korea	5	1	0	0	4	13	:21	3
Croatia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Slovenia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Hungary	5	4	0	0	1	21	6	12
Poland	5	3	0	0	2	15	:12	9
Great Britain	5	2	0	1	2	10	:10	7
Korea	5	1	0	0	4	13	:21	3
Croatia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Slovenia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Hungary	5	4	0	0	1	21	6	12
Poland	5	3	0	0	2	15	:12	9
Great Britain	5	2	0	1	2	10	:10	7
Korea	5	1	0	0	4	13	:21	3
Croatia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Slovenia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Hungary	5	4	0	0	1	21	6	12
Poland	5	3	0	0	2	15	:12	9
Great Britain	5	2	0	1	2	10	:10	7
Korea	5	1	0	0	4	13	:21	3
Croatia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0
Slovenia	5	0	0	0	5	4	:33	0

Slovenia is promoted to 2011 World Championship in Slovakia

Croatia is relegated to 2011 World Championship, Division II

IIHF World Championship - Div. II, Grp. A

Mexico City, MEXICO April 11-17

Spain - Australia	6 - 0	(2-0, 1-0, 3-0)
Turkey - Bulgaria	3-12	(0-4, 2-2, 1-6)
Belgium - Mexico	5 - 2	(2-1, 2-0, 1-1)
Australia - Bulgaria	11-4	(3-0, 6-3, 2-1)
Belgium - Spain	1 - 6	(0-0, 1-2, 0-4)
Mexico - Turkey	9 - 2	(2-1, 3-1, 4-0)
Belgium - Turkey	13-1	(3-1, 6-0, 4-0)
Spain - Bulgaria	10-3	(3-2, 1-0, 6-1)
Australia - Mexico	5 - 2	(3-1, 0-0, 2-1)
Bulgaria - Belgium	4 - 5	(1-3, 3-1, 0-1)
Turkey - Australia	1-10	(0-3, 0-4, 1-3)

"It's so right to wear this jersey"

Latvian netminder is a legend in his country and around the globe

By Andrew Podnieks

■ ■ One of the highlights of the 2010 World Championship was the IIHF Hall of Fame induction ceremony that took place on the afternoon of the final day of action, May 23, 2010. And one of the top moments of that induction was the speech given by one of the inductees, diminutive Latvian goalie Arturs Irbe.

Always honest and talkative in interviews during his playing days, Irbe was equally effusive at the podium, wearing his Latvian sweater one last time and holding the plaque honoring his induction. Afterwards, he discussed his life in hockey.

What did you think in the early 1990s when you realized the Soviet Union was collapsing and Latvia was going to gain independence?

I could never even imagine that I could play for my country when I grew up. I enjoyed hockey and just wanted to play my best and enjoy winning. It was 1990 and early 1991 that our country began the long and hard road to independence, and once this happened, I made my choice. I could have continued to play for the Unified Team, as it was called, and gotten more medals, but I chose to quit once I could see we would have our own country again. I'm the son of Latvia, not the Soviet Union. While I did that, I missed quite a few years of international action, but it didn't stand in the way of my career, and it was exciting when I finally had the opportunity in 1996 to play for Latvia. And then on our third try we got into the A Pool where our team has been ever since. Those were some of the proudest moments in my career. I think it's so right that I'm wearing the Latvian jersey being introduced to the Hall of Fame.

Did you feel bitter when you played for the Soviet Union?

When you play, you always have to find a reason to play besides just having fun.

It's not top level hockey if you just play for fun. I can't say I was bitter. I was playing on the Soviet national team, the top team in the world. And for me being from the periphery-not from Moscow or a big Russian team, but from Riga, which was considered a second-tier team, and speaking a different language - it was much harder to make the team. I took it as a big achievement just to make it. I had to be better than the others, clearly better, not just the same. If I was only as good, I probably wouldn't have made the team. I wor-



PROUD TO WEAR MAROON: There is perhaps not a more recognizable name on the back of a Latvian jersey than Arturs Irbe. The iconic goaltender remains the hero of the hockey-crazed nation and still sets that standard that Latvian players hope to equal



ked hard to win for the team. The only show of my feelings during those days had nothing to do with my teammates and coaches, who I respected. I resisted the flag and I resisted the country I represented. The only thing I did was when the Soviet anthem was played and the flag raised, I kept my head down and never looked up at the flag-and of course I never sang the anthem.

Is there one game from your career with Latvia from 1996 until you retired that stands out?

Of course, it's the "game of the century," as Latvians call it, which actually happened at the turn of the century, at the 2000 World Championship when our underdog Latvian team beat the NHL-star laden Russian team. That's the game I feel defines my career. I've had a lot of wins and lots of opportunity to have fun on the ice, but that was the most emotionally-charged feeling of my career. I sang the anthem and had tears in my eyes, and I was proud of it.

Latvia is almost 20 years old now. How is the hockey development? Does a 15- or 16-year-old kid have enough chance to develop at home, or does he have to go to Russia or Canada to learn the game?

It's actually quite incredible with so little funding that we have been able to maintain our place in the top division. It just shows how great a place hockey has in our country. Our fans love the game, and when parents love the game, kids soak it up and become fans and want to play. And parents cannot resist; they will give everything to help the kid play. And that's why we continue to produce good enough hockey players to continue to play in the top pool. I think our youth hockey program, though, is drying up, and it's not up to par in today's hockey world. There need to be improvements, but this needs to be done from the bottom to the top, not from the top to the bottom. It will take not one or two people but a team with a new way of thinking, a new approach, to change things. I'm sure it will happen. We just have to survive these tough times with the economy. We're just hanging on right now, but we definitely have potential.

Arturs Irbe Fact File

- ☐ Hometown: Riga, Latvia
- ☐ Birthdate: February 2, 1967
- ☐ International accomplishments:
 - Nine World Championship appearances
 - Two Olympic appearances
 - 2006 Olympic Flag bearer for Latvia
- ☐ Professional accomplishments
 - 12-year NHL career
 - Two NHL All-Star game appearances
 - Led the Carolina Hurricanes to the Stanley Cup finals in 2002