After the General Congress in Tokyo, we have a largely new Council, a united IIHF family and four very important years ahead of us.

First and foremost, I would like say a wholehearted thank you to the General Congress, the IIHF’s highest legislative body, for the confidence shown in me. I can assure you that the re-election for a fifth term as IIHF President is something is very humbling and it fills me with great honour and an enormous sense of responsibility and pride.

As I have done since 1994, I will stay committed to improving and developing our beautiful game, and at the same time protect the interests of the IIHF and international ice hockey. This has been my driving force since Day 1 on the job and my enthusiasm is as high as it was 18 years ago.

On page 7 in this Ice Times you can read about the eight main challenges which I listed to the Congress in Tokyo. These will be the areas of priority for myself and for the new Council in the upcoming four-year period.

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome Bob Nicholson and Thomas Wu (Vice Presidents), and members Zsuzsanna Kolbenheyer, Vladislav Tretiak, Luc Tardif, Igor Nemecek and Henrik Bach Nielsen to the IIHF’s executive body.

As I already said to various media outlets in Tokyo, I really look forward to working with this group. What makes me very excited is that each and every one of the seven newcomers has accomplished extraordinary things domestically and they have now decided to bring their expertise and passion to the international scene.

At the same time I would like to express my appreciation to the outgoing Council members and thank them for what they have done for the IIHF: Sho Tomita, Frederick Meredith, Murray Costello, Ernest Aljancic, Juraj Siroky, Alexander Medvedev and Monique Scheier-Schneider.

The General Congress showed that the international ice hockey family stands united, which is a pre-condition for success. For the first time since the ground-breaking changes in European hockey 10-15 years ago, we have established a constructive working relationship with the professional leagues and their clubs.

As this is written, two separate Working Groups under the guidance of a Coordination Group have started with their projects, which include presenting concrete proposals for a re-launch of a European club competition, and figuring out how to reform the International Break tournaments. A third group, dealing with governance issues, will be formed shortly.

All groups have representation from the National Federations, Hockey Europe, European Trophy, KHL and the IIHF. Leading up to the next congress in Stockholm in May 2013, the groups should have proposals ready for presentation.

The absence of a collective bargaining agreement between the NHL and their player’s union, and the ensuing lockout, has already had vast consequences on the world of hockey.

For the fans in North America this is a major disappointment. For the fans in Europe this is early Christmas. Approaching November already over 150 NHL players have signed with European clubs and many of them are reporting increased attendance figures.

But from the standpoint of integrity of the game, artificial shifts in competitive balance, and increased costs (salaries and player insurance), the effects of the lockout are negative, also for Europe. The best for most involved parties would be if the labour conflict ended as soon as possible.

René Fasel
IIHF President

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Amidst traditional ceremonies and excellent hospitality, the 135th IIHF Congress took place in Tokyo, Japan. The Congress was hosted for the first time in Asia to honour outgoing IIHF Vice President Sho Tomita.

"General Congress shows a united ice hockey family"
Hockey Forum working groups formed

The Hockey Forum in Barcelona in June resulted in the main players of European ice hockey coming together on three areas of priority: The Member National Associations, Hockey Europe (union of top leagues), European Trophy (top 32 clubs), the KHL and the IIHF decided to form three Working Groups, each of which has received a mandate to find solutions in the areas of:

1. Re-launch of a top European club competition
2. Reforming the International Breaks
3. New Governance structure

It is also a common goal to create a long-term calendar for international club tournaments as well as for national team play, including major championships.

The progress of three Working Groups will be monitored by a Co-ordination Group. The objective for the groups have final proposals ready to be presented to the IIHF Congress in May 2013. The Co-ordination Group, chaired by IIHF Vice President Kalervo Kummola, had its first meeting on September 19 in Copenhagen and it later presented the Working Groups with a framework for their future activity.

The composition of the groups is as follows:

- **Co-ordination**
  - Kalervo Kummola, chair
  - Henriz Lichti, Helm
  - Gernot Tripcke, Hockey Europe
  - Peter Luthi, Nat. Fed.
  - Alexander Medvedev, KHL
  - Anders Terbom, European Trophy

- **Club Competition**
  - Timo Evely, chair, European Trophy
  - Szymon Szemberg, IHF
  - Christian Heitinger, Hockey Europe
  - Martin Liljan, Nat. Fed.
  - Igor Kuperman, KHL
  - Peter John Liu, European Trophy

- **International breaks**
  - Franz Reinl, chair, Nat. Fed.
  - Rob van Rijn, IHF
  - Jörgen Linden, Hockey Europe
  - Igor Kuperman, KHL
  - Peter John Liu, European Trophy

**OBITUARIES**

Karl-Gustav Kalola (FIN, 69), Kalola passed away on 21 September after battling a severe illness. He officiated at three IHF World Championships, three U20 World Championships and the 1980 Olympic Winter Games in Lake Placid, where he called the “Miracle on Ice” game between the United States and the Soviet Union. He also officiated at the 1987 Canada Cup. Between 1969 and 1990 he called 514 games in the Finnish top league and was inducted into the Finnish Hockey Hall of Fame in 1991.

Walter Salmann (SUI, 76), The former Swiss national team forward died of cancer on 12 September at age 76. He was one of the biggest legends in his hometown of Vevey, where he led the club to its only Swiss championship in 1962. Salmann also represented Switzerland in 10 international games including the 1963 IHF World Championship B-Pool and the 1964 Olympic Winter Games. Later he was active with ERC Visp as coach and president and worked in his native region as a businessman and politician.

Richard Bucher (SUI, 56), Former Swiss national team goalie Richard “Rich” Bucher passed away on 6 September following a heart attack. He was 56. Bucher represented Switzerland in two World Championships and the 1988 Olympic Winter Games where he backstopped the underdog Swiss team to 2-1 win over Finland. He led HC Davos to two championships in the ‘90s.

Vladimir Vasilev (RUS, 71), Vladimir Vasilev, a former head coach of the Russian men’s and U20 national teams, died on 8 August as a result of a heart attack. Vasilev has coached Russia in three IHF events, achieving a perfect record during a run to World Junior gold in 1986. Vasilev was named head coach of the Russian national team in 1995 and was behind the bench when Russia placed fourth at the 1996 IHF World Championship in Austria.

Urs Lott (SUI, 63), The former Swiss national team player died on 16 June of Alzheimer’s disease at age 63, one year after his brother Jürg Lott. He was one of the best Swiss forwards of the ’70s and represented the national team in 54 games, including five World Championships, the underdog Swiss team to at 2-1 win over Finland. He led HC Davos to two championships in the ‘90s.

Luigi Lavatai (ITA, 82), The former Italian national goalkeeper who passed away on 15 June, represented Switzerland in five IHF Ice Hockey World Championships, including four in the Top Division. He played for several teams in Switzerland as well as for the legendary French club ACBB Paris. He was 82.

Russell Jones (AUS, 82), Ice Hockey Australia’s long standing member and IHI Victoria’s patron died very ill a number of weeks ago and passed away on 1 October 2012. Russell was a patron of IHI’s for many years and has a ‘Premier A’ trophy named after him. He played for the Melbourne Demons between his early days in the 1970’s and was a member of Australia’s 1960 South Valley Olympic Team.

**International breaks**

The 124th IOC Session in London re-elected IIHF President René Fasel for another four-year term on the International Olympic Committee’s Executive Board. The Executive Board is the highest body within the IOC and assumes the ultimate responsibility for the administration of the IOC. The IOC Session took place in the British capital of London, one day before the opening ceremony of the 2012 Summer Olympics.

**AUSTRIA**

The Austrian Ice Hockey Federation announced that Jason O’Dea and Dietter Kahl will coach the Austrian U20 national team. O’Dea, 34, was the head coach of the U18 national team last season. The Canadian is also coaching the Lower Austria Stars from St. Pölten in the Austrian junior league EBYSL. Kahl, 38, was named assistant coach and brings with him vast international experience. As a player, he represented Austria in 15 IHF World Championships and in three Olympic Winter Games.

**GERMANY**

The German Ice Hockey Association (DIB) introduced Pat Cortina as new head coach of the men’s national team. Cortina appointed as Italy’s assistant coach at the 1992 Olympic Winter Games already at the young age of 27. Four years later he was coaching the U20 national team, and in 2000 he took over the reign of the Italian men’s national team, leading it to three IHF World Championships including two in the Top Division (2001, 2003). In 2003 he became the first national team coach in Hungary and led it to the 2009 IHF World Championship in Switzerland – the first time in 70 years Hungary had appeared in the Top Division.

**KAZAKHSTAN**

The Kazakhstan Ice Hockey Federation named Vladimir Kivronko as its new head coach of the men’s national team. The 62-year-old Russian will also coach the country’s KHL team Barys Astana at the same time. Kivronko has several years of experience at the international stage with Belarus, Slovenia, and Russia. At the same time it was announced that Shumi Rabayev, a player agent, will become the new General Manager of the Kazakh national team after Nurlan Orzabayev’s resignation.

**LATVIA**

The Latvian Hockey Federation announced that it has extended its contract with its national team coach Ted Nolan for the 2012/2013 season. The Canadian coach joined the Latvian national team last season and finished the 2012 IHF Ice Hockey World Championship in tenth place. The contract was signed for one year and will be extended until May 2014 if Latvia qualifies for the 2014 Olympic-Winter Games. Nolan will also work as a consultant for the U20 and U18 national teams.

**LITHUANIA**

The Lithuanian ice hockey Federation signed Bernd Haake from Germany as new head coach of the Lithuanian national team. He will be assisted by Lithuanian U20 and U18 national team coach Andrius Jaduskevičius. Haake, 66, was an assistant coach for the past six years with the Karlsruher Roosters of the German top league. Before that he was coaching in Italy for several years.

**USA**

USA Hockey announced that Don Granato will guide the U.S. National Under-18 team after serving behind the bench for the Under-17 team last season. He is the brother of former NHL player and current Pittsburgh Penguins assistant coach Tony Granato and of former women’s national team player Cammi Granato.

**GIRLS’ HOCKEY TAKE OFF AROUND THE WORLD**

For more info visit IIHF.com/2012GWGW
New IIHF Council created in the Land of the Rising Sun

Introducing the new faces on international ice hockey's highest executive body

By Martin Mark

The 2012 IIHF General Congress elected the new IIHF Council for a four-year term. Bob Nicholson, Thomas Wu, Zsuzsanna Kolbenheyer, Vladimir Tretilak, Luc Tarid, Igor Nemeczek and Henrik Bach Nielsen joined the IIHF's executive body as of 1 October.

The 13-person Council consists of one President, three Vice Presidents and nine other Council members that are elected by the General Congress every four years, as well as the General Secretary as a non-voting member.

René Fasel was re-elected as IIHF President by acclamation. Also for the three Vice Presidents representing those regions there was only one candidate each.

Kalervo Kummola was re-elected as Vice President representing the European and African members. Bob Nicholson was elected as new Vice President for the Americas to succeed Murray Costello and Thomas Wu was elected as new Vice-President for Asia and Oceania succeeding Shoichi Tomita.

In the first round to determine the nine other Council members two female members out of five candidates were elected to fulfil the statutes' minimum number of female representation. Beate Grupp was re-elected for a third term and Zsuzsanna Kolbenheyer joins as a new member.

The seven remaining council members out of 13 female and male candidates were elected in a second round. Christian Englund, Tony Rossi and Frank Gonzalez were re-elected, Vladimir Tretilak, Luc Tarid, Igor Nemeczek and Henrik Bach Nielsen were newly elected. Fabio Orsetti (Switzerland) and Janis Sirklys (Lithuania) were elected as Auditors by acclamation.

Robert Nicholson

Born on May 27, 1953 in Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Nicholson has been Hockey Canada’s president and CEO since 1998. He manages a staff of 95 people within two offices across Canada and oversees all operations for competitions that Canada participates in internationally, including in the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship program and Olympic Winter Games. He was senior vice president of the Canadian Hockey Association from 1992 to 1998 and vice president of programs with the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association from 1990 to 1991.

Before joining the national body, Nicholson was technical director with the British Columbia Amateur Hockey Association from 1989 to 1990. He was inducted into the B.C. Hockey Hall of Fame in 2004 and received the City of Penticton’s 55 Award for having brought recognition to the Penticton area through hockey.

He played minor hockey and Junior A hockey in Penticton, helped the Penticton Bronchos win the BCHL, and B.C.-Alberta championships and played NCAA hockey at Providence College.

Thomas Wu

Born on 3 September 1972 in Hong Kong and educated in the U.S., Wu is an established businessman who successfully re-engineered his family’s listed business in Hong Kong, leading to his present position as Managing Director of Hopewell Holdings Limited. He was selected “Young Global Leader” in 2006 by the World Economic Forum and received several awards recognising good corporate governance practices.

Wu is also active in government and sports sectors and helps create synergy among different sectors. He has long been serving different government advisory roles in Hong Kong and China. He also organised ice hockey by co-founding the Hong Kong Amateur Hockey Club in 2001, which is now the anchor of hockey development in Hong Kong, and establishing the Hong Kong Academy of Ice Hockey in 2007. He also works with other ice hockey associations in the region on their development.

Zsuzsanna Kolbenheyer

Born on July 3, 1972 in Budapest, Hungary. Kolbenheyer was the first registered female ice hockey player in Hungary, starting her career in 1990. She represented Hungary in 55 games with the national team. After her playing career she became the general manager of the women’s national team. As a lawyer she has been a member of the Hungarian Ice Hockey Federation’s Disciplinary Committee since 2000, and member of the governing board since 2012. She is married, and has three children.

Henrik Bach Nielsen

Born on July 12, 1956, in Herning, Denmark. Bach Nielsen served as a board member of Danish club Aalborg for five years until 2005 when he was elected to the Board of the Danish Ice Hockey Association. In 2007, he was elected President of the Danish Ice Hockey Association.

Bach Nielsen was a member of the Danish Sport Confederation’s Media Committee 2006-2010. In 2008, he was appointed to the IIHF Faculty Committee. Bach Nielsen is educated in Political Science and has held executive positions in a major Danish broadcaster company. Currently, he is the owner and president of a real estate development company.

Igor Nemeczek

Born on August 28, 1961 in Bratislava, Slovakia. Finishing his studies at the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education of the Comenius University in Bratislava, Nemeczek began to work for Slovak Bratislava and after military service he continued at the Slovak Ice Hockey Federation as a Sports Manager responsible for the Junior National Teams. For several years he has worked as the head coach of ice hockey teams in Austria and Italy.

In 1999 Nemeczek accepted the offer to work for the Slovak Ice Hockey Federation as General Secretary. There were the successful years of achieving the silver (2000), gold (2002) at world junior tournaments (2003) at the IIHF World Championships.

In 2001 he also joined the Slovak Olympic Committee where he is the Vice President and is responsible for winter sports.

The highlight of his professional career was in the year 2011. He was the General Secretary of the successful 2011 IIHF World Championships in Bratislava and Kosice and at the same time he was elected President of the Slovak Ice Hockey Federation.

Beate Grupp

Born on March 29, 1953 in Trois-Rivières, Canada. Tarid played ice hockey in his native country from age 3 to university level. He came to Europe in 1975 where he played in Brussels (Belgium) before moving to France in 1976 to play for Chamonix and later Rosen.

After his player career, the dual Canadian-French citizen held was in charge of Roxwell’s youth ice hockey program for several years. In 2000, he was appointed head of the ice hockey department at the French Ice Sports Federation. In 2006, he was elected as first President of the newly created French Ice Hockey Federation, a position he was re-elected for in 2010.

An IIHF Sport Committee member since 2008, he is also actively involved in the French Olympic Committee and was named Chef de Mission of the French delegation for the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi.

Luc Tarid

Born on July 12, 1966, in Herning, Denmark. Bach Nielsen leaves the Council after serving for nine years. After a career as a player and former President of the Slovakian development company.

Shoichi Tomita

Before the IIHF Council election was conducted, the outgoing members were honoured and four long-time members were named IIHF Life Members by the IIHF General Congress.

IIHF Vice President Shoichi Tomita from Japan was the longest-serving member on the old IIHF Council. Tomita served the Council for 34 years and has been a Vice President for 18 years. It is in his honour that the Congress is staged in his hometown of Tokyo and in Asia for the first time ever.

“I don’t cry when I say good bye, I made enough work for ice hockey,” Tomita said. “We were only a few Asian nations when I was elected, now we are 17 countries, ice hockey in my life and I’ll never quit before I die.”

Two out of the three Vice Presidents are retiring from the Council, the other being Murray Costello from Canada, who served on the Council for 14 years.

“We are a family, and we reason in a family, that we share a childhood passion for the game,” Costello said. “Looking out over the people [in the Congress room] I see many great stories. Keep the childhood love for hockey. When it comes to an end, it’s time for a new generation.”

Frederick Meredith was credited for his 18 years of service as a Council member, contributing with work on the Statutes, Bylaws and his expertise on European Union regulations.

“It comes from two things. First being born with people and receiving friendship and support from them,” Meredith said when explaining why this work gave him so much satisfaction. “I’m proud to be part of the development and the success we have had in this area.”

Ernest Aljancic leaves the Council after serving for nine years. After a career as a player and former President of the Slovenian federation, Aljancic said third part of his life has now begun.

“Now I’m 67 and I’m ready to work and I wish to stay in ice hockey,” he said. “My new challenge is to work with the Balkan development group.”

Meredith, Costello, Aljancic and Nemeczek were named IIHF Life Members for their contribution towards international ice hockey.
Fasel presents 8-point platform for future
League cooperation, hockey in Asia, player safety among key goals

By Mark Mark

With several veteran ministers retiring from the Council, some younger faces now join the IIHF’s executive body.

Kolbenheyer: "I think that's a great idea from the committee to have the World's Games Ice Hockey Weekend in the program so I saw how it worked in well. We didn’t do two years after that and really young prospects to come to play hockey. It's also very necessary in smaller countries to let girls play together in a team. If we play too long together in a team we will definitely have a team of the boys.

If they play only together in a specific league’s specifics they don’t develop as well. We would like to have good national leagues, but we have to build the back together with the boys. We think that’s very important in the smaller countries. Of course in Canada and in the U.S. it's not that important because they have very good teams from the beginning, but in other countries it’s different.

You were a player for a long time also on the national team. How will it help you for your work within the Council?

Kolbenheyer: "I think players always have a different view on things. I can think like a player and see what could be different.

You have more of a business background. How will this help you in your work as the IIHF's Hockey program?

Kolbenheyer: "We had business training in North America, which lays a foundation and the KHL has maybe sometimes been a headache for others. But there is no question that with- out the KHL we might not have such a strong hockey in countries like Latvia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and now Ukraine."

“Now also Slovenija Bratislava from Slovakia has joined the KHL and the management tells me that the club could never survive as a top European challenger had it stayed in the Slovak league. So we see concrete examples where the KHL has been very good when it comes to keeping and upgrading top club hockey in several countries.”

“Having said that, we must keep a dialogue with the KHL regarding the league’s expansion plans to the west, making sure that we find solutions that are good for everyone involved.”

Asian development

“With our great opportunity to improve Korean ice hockey with PyeongChang being awarded the 2018 Olympic Winter Games and we need to seize this opportunity to improve the standard of Korean ice hockey leading up to 2018 is one of our greatest challenges.”

“China is a sleeping giant. The country has over one billion inhabitants and 300 male hockey players. There is so much to be done in this country. I am very confident that our new Vice President Thomas Wu from Hong Kong can assist the same leading role in Asia as his predecessor Shoichi Tomita did during his long tenure on the Council.”

National Hockey League

“The goal must be to always maintain a good working relationship with the NHL. Right now the league has a different problem with the players in their contract and the effect of this is a huge problem for other teams and hockey must stay vigilant so it doesn’t creep in into our sport.”

Anti-doping

“Also this fight must continue, although it is sometimes costly, because it’s always easy to deal with WADA. The issue with athletes’ reporting their whereabouts is quite challenging for hockey players who constantly move from one place to another. I think having said that the IIHF is helpful, code-compliant and it will stay that way.”

Match-fixing, betting

“We are lucky that match-fixing and betting are not major issues in our sport; but this has become a huge problem for other team sports and ice hockey must stay vigilant so it doesn’t creep in into our sport.”

Vote on youth movement in Council

At the Congress IIHF President Rene Fasel said you help me to keep hockey moving in China with your background. Do you think that’s possible and what do you think hockey will look like in China in five years?

Kolbenheyer: "It’s a great challenge. In working with the Chinese Ice Hockey Association and people at the local level I have a strong feeling that there is a vast potential for Chinese ice hockey to de- velop, so that’s very encouraging for me. I have some programs in the Hong Kong body like the ones already happening in China. The IIHF is also very involved in the Initiative with the Har- bir Institute. If we can find a way for us one to work together we will certainly have more and better hockey in China.

You played hockey for a long time. Do what do you think about women’s hockey interna- tionally and how can the program be improved?

Kolbenheyer: "I think it’s a great idea from the committee to have a full World Championship program every year and I believe we should keep it.

But the smaller nations must realize that without the suc- cess and growing power of the big nations at the World Championship and Olympics we would not have been able to have a good world championship. But we will definitely have a top division and the top division is generated by the big nations. Without success at the top this structure will not work.”

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Congress approves amendments Changes in co-hosted World Championships, qualification, eligibility

The rules changes came as a result of a study conducted during the 2012 Worlds in Sweden and Finland (pictured). Rules for co-hosted World Championships After the experience and research at the co-hosted 2012 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship with various stakeholders, Congress approved rules for future co-hosts. The exact rules will be voted for at the next Congress. Here are some of the key elements:

- Only one main host will become contractual partner of the IIHF. The main host must have necessary sub-contracts in place with the co-host.
- No back-to-back World Championship applications are guaranteed.
- Co-hosting venues have to be named in the bid and cannot be changed after the allocation.
- The travel time between the two venues shall not be more than three hours and the venues be not more than one time zone (1 hour) apart from each other.
- The movement of persons and equipment into and between co-host venues shall be free of travel restrictions.
- Both the main and co-host must have played in the top division in four of the last six years (two out of four for single venues). Additionally, one of the two hosts must be among the top-12 nations of the IIHF World Ranking.
- In the case the national teams from both host countries have been relegated, one pre-determined option to override the right of automatic participation.
- Cross-over quarter-finals will be played in both countries.

Update on Eligibility rules Eligibility rules were adjusted for players who have multiple citizenships or who change their citizenship or acquired or surrendered another citizenship and who want to participate in an IIHF Championship and/or an Olympic competition. If they represent a nation for the first time, they need to have played for at least two consecutive years (370 days) after the player’s 12th birthday in the national competitions of the new country and be a legal resident and citizen of the country.

The Minimal Standards: To participate in the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship will be fully enforced in view of the IIHF’s 2013-2014 championships and will be based on the rules implemented for the IIHF World Championship 2013-2014 of the national programs. One change calls for the minimum number of players in the respective category to play on their games on a full size ice rink in accordance with the IIHF Rulebook. The minimum numbers of registered and participating players remain the same: 60 in the men’s senior and U-20 categories, and for 45 men’s U18, women’s senior and women’s U18 categories.

In order to verify participation, national associations that wish to participate in the IIHF Championship Program must operate and maintain a fully functional online statistical system for any league where players wish to participate in any IIHF Championship category take part. The system must include schedule, standings, statistics, player information and a suspension database.

Other changes:
- The tie-breaking formula in case of equality of points of two or more teams was amended to make it clearer and to avoid any room for different interpretations.
- It is now regulated in the Sport Regulations and not anymore in the Statutes & Bylaws.
- A Member National Association will not be eligible to host the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship Division Group A if it has been relegated from the World Championship in the preceding season unless it has no other applicant.
- A new bylaw concerning match fixing has been added to prevent sporting fraud from entering ice hockey. Any infringement of this prohibition will result in disciplinary sanctions.
- The General Congress will be integrated into Annual Congresses bi-annually. Congress elections will take place in 2014 and every four years thereafter. Statutes and Bylaw amendments will take place in 2014 and every four years thereafter.
- The IIHF will establish an Out-Of-Competition Registered Testing Pool based on the IIHF World Ranking and select a set of players who are eligible for inclusion into the program. This to maintain compliance with the WADA code.

Update on Minimum Standards

Logistical challenges aside, IIHF’s General Manager Marco Krajci sees that new opportunities have opened for his club, a potential which became increasingly limited in the Slovak league.

“As soon as it became known that Slovan would join the KHL, we immediately felt that it was well received not only by our fans in the Bratislava region, but also by many others,” said Krajci.

“Suddenly we started to get ticket requests from Austria (Vienna is only 60 kilometers away, editor’s note), Hungary and also cities in Slovakia which earlier were our opponents. Can you imagine, on July 1, we played an exhibition game here against SKA St. Petersburg. Slovan had not played in Russia since the 1990s. It was well over 30 degrees outside and the Olympics were on television. We had 8,700 in the building.”

“This was the first sign that we were not only doing something that is new but also that we are known all the time about Slovan; we are more than just a club in our country. Slovan has always been Slovakia’s team. We are proud to be the first and only team to have represented many national team players and famous stars.”

Maros Krajci doesn’t say it outright, but it became clear that Slovan Bratislava would not be able keep its ambitions to be a major player in Europe in a league which has an average attendance of 2,099 (last season). Even though Slovan was an overachiever with an average of 9,895 fans, this is still a modest number if compared with the best in Europe.

But adding Slovan Bratislava is something totally different. It is the first KHL acquisition of a truly major and traditional European club from a country outside of the old Soviet borders. Ice Times was present when Slovan and another KHL newcomer, Donbass Donetsk from Ukraine, squared off in their season opener at Bratislava.

Judging by opening night, there was probably not a single person among the 10,305 fans who regretted that Slovan Bratislava – after 91 years of playing in the Champions Hockey League – was leaving the national domestic environment for the Russian dominated KHL.

Away games at traditional rivals like Košice, Dukla Trenčín, Zvolen and MTK will now be relocated to Riga, Moscow, Astana and Kazan. And Khabarovsk, nine time-cup winners were relocated KHL.

The KHL is the best league in Europe and we have a good fan base and a wonderful arena, so when the KHL showed interest of including us in their expansion it wasn’t really a difficult decision.

“I must also be kept in mind that Slovan has always had a very positive approach to everything which has had to do with international hockey,” said Krajci. “We were enthusiastic over the old European Hockey League, we participated and hosted the Continental Cup, Slovan was very proud to play in the Champions Hockey League and when the European Trophy asked us to participate we did not consider that too. So playing in the KHL really reflects us embracing international hockey.

The General Manager admits that the current instability in the European contributed to the club’s openness to Russia.

“The Euro is shaky right now and we don’t know what will happen. By joining the KHL we are splitting the risk between having one foot in Europe and one in Russia...” By jumping leagues, Slovan had to increase their budget almost three-fold to comply with KHL regulations which have a provision of a minimum budget for the pro team of 10 million Euros, including a salary floor of 6.25 million Euros. Slovan is slightly above those two numbers, which still makes the Slovak team a low budget club by KHL standards.

But the General Manager and his ownership group (Slovan is entirely privately owned) see very encouraging signs that the club’s new status is paying dividends already.

For the home opener against Donbas Donetsk you could buy the cheapest ticket for 10 Euros while the most expensive was 16 Euros. The average price for a season ticket is 250 Euros.

“We are hoping to increase our average attendance from almost 6,000 to 8-9,000 in the new season. The Slovak Extraliga has lost its most attractive team and the implications of that could mean to Slovan...

“We have a good fan base and a wonderful arena, so when the KHL showed interest of including us in their expansion it wasn’t really a difficult decision.”

Slovan has sold almost 4,500 season tickets (roughly 50 percent of capacity) which is an extraordinary number for a Slovak team and the sales of VIP boxes and VIP seats have gone beyond expectations.

“We have sold 30 sky boxes which is double from last season and on top of that we have sold 240 additional VIP seats. We have basically only 60 VIP seats left to sell,” said Krajci.

Despite all this, game revenues, compared with the NHL or even Sweden or Switzerland, are modest. An average monthly salary in Slovenia is below 1,000 Euros. This is why ticket prices must be kept moderate.

The transfer deadline has changed from January 31 to February 15 to provide the possibility for international transfers after the last international break. This will give the clubs an opportunity to replace non-registered players who got injured during that break. For the southern hemisphere the deadline is July 31.

New qualification mode Qualification tournaments for the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship tournament will promote only one participant to the lowest tier for the following championship season. Until 2012/2013, it promoted two participants but for the same season and the successful qualifiers had thus to participate in two events during one season.

For complete list of changes: IIHF.com/statutechanges

Slovan heads to the east Slovakia’s most famous club becomes KHL’s biggest catch so far

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Slovan has always been the most nucleated club in our league,” said Nemecek. “Despite that many attendance numbers haven’t been true, Slovan has always been a good draw. Now the club will miss out on this revenue opportunity. But there is no question that, for the club and the fans around Bratislava, joining the KHL is a good thing.”

From having the ambition to win the league title every year, Slovan must get used to setting new, more modest, goals.

“For us the goal this season is very simple, it’s to make the playoffs,” said Maros Krajci. “And we want to do it with a team which is dominated by Slovak players.”
Pula arena, one of the largest Roman amphitheatras in the world. The organziers overcame strictly ice conditions and both games were successfully staged in front of a sellout crowd.

By Martin Merk

PULA – It’s a famous hockey triva: Which is the oldest venue where ice hockey is played?

Knowledgeable hockey fans may say Eastern University’s Wellesley Arena in Boston, originally built in 1910, or the Coliseum in Colonet, Michigan, which has been used constantly since 1913.

But these venues took a back seat to an ice rink that revolutionized the term “classical”. It was located in Arena Pula, a Roman amphitheatre built between 27 BC and 64 AD in what is now modern-day Croatia.

2,000 years after the Romans, gladiators with different helmetts entered the stage on ice skates and with hockey sticks in a coliseum that hockey had never seen before.

Pula is located on the Istrian peninsula, about 260 kilometers west of Zagreb where the home team Medvescak Zagreb came from to host Olimpija Ljubljana from Slovenia, about 260 kilometres west of Zagreb.

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The surface of the old arena was exactly 1,800 square metres of floor to protect the ice from warm weather.

Although the hot period had left Pula some days before, warm winds from the south were a challenge and caused a power outage that stopped the cooling.

“No wonder is the club funded by the Russian KHL. Its President Alexander Medve- dze came to Pula to play with his veteran team against Croatian legends and said: “Medvescak should play in the KHL next season. The probability is 95 per cent.”

Medvescak also meant Milano Rossoblù and Italy and two Russian teams to join.

The first game was tough for the home team. The ice problems could be fixed late and the game started with a lengthy delay around 22:30. On the difficult surface Olimpija was more successful and won 3-2. Caesar wouldn’t be too im-

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At 60, Tretiak reaches new summit
After a career stopping pucks, No. 20 now calls the shots

By Paul Romanuk

TOKYO – International hockey's most decorated player has reached a new milestone in his career. Forty years after he became a household name by starring in the 1972 Summit Series, Vladislav Tretiak, 60, was elected to the Council, IIHF's executive body.

Tretiak is one of the most decorated goaltenders in the history of international hockey.

On his new role as member of IIHF Council:

"I am pleased that I was elected to the Council by a majority of the Congress. It also proves that Russia is considered as one of the leading countries in the world of ice hockey. And many countries are hoping that Russia will help to contribute something new to the development in the world of hockey.

"I hope to help many of the smaller countries. They seem eager to co-operate with us and they trust me to help them. With our assistance, they want to participate more fully in what's taking place in the world of ice hockey. I will do my best to fulfill the expectations of the IIHF Congress."

On the 1972 Summit Series:

"I think about it quite often, especially when I travel to Canada or the United States. I played in four Olympics and in thirteen World Championships, but no one asks me about that. Always I am asked about the 1972 series and if it's not that, it's about the 1980 Olympics in Lake Placid.

On the legacy of the 1972 Summit Series:

"Wherever hockey is played, 1972 will always be remembered. Why? Because 1972 was a revolution for ice hockey. We were representing not only Soviet hockey, but all of European hockey. And, after 1972, it opened the gates for Europeans to the NHL. You can see the result now."

On the changes in the game since 1972:

"Yes, there were two directions – European hockey and Canadian hockey. Today, as a result of 1972, we can see the two styles combined. We have the best from Canadian hockey and the best from European hockey. For example, it's much more difficult for a goalie now to know what to expect. Will it be a shot, will it be a pass? Before it was easier. Playing against the Canadians back then, most of the time they didn't pass, they took the shot. Many Europeans would pass the puck and not take the shot. But this has totally changed in all the leagues now."

On the 1980 "Miracle on Ice" in Lake Placid:

"For the coach [Viktor Tikhonov] to pull me from the game after the first period was a very unusual decision, both to the players on our team and especially me, because the score was 2-2."

"Coach Tikhonov wrote in his memoirs that pulling me from the game was his biggest mistake. But he has never explained to me why he made this decision."

On the regrets of never playing in the NHL with Montreal [Tretiak was drafted by the Canadiens in 1983]:

"I was going to play on that team, but our authorities at that time forbade me from doing this. It is one of the only things I'm sorry I never had the chance to win, the Stanley Cup with the Montreal Canadiens."

"The Canadiens' style was closer to ours. It was more of a European style of hockey they played. It wasn't a rough style… it was a style that the players on our team knew of and appreciated."

Comparing the Soviet Union’s teams against today’s Russian teams

"I can't say what is better or what is worse. But you must understand this: During my time, we were at training camps for 9 of the 12 months during the year. Because of that, it was much easier for the head coach to be working with the players all the time. The coach could take any player from any team and we would play together all the time. The players could play the power play with their eyes closed because they had practiced it so much."

"Now, you have something even like the Olympics and the head coach gets the players only one or two days before! They are good players, but they don't have the chance to practice and play together like we did. I think you must agree with me when I say that, at that time, the teams were stronger because of all the time they spent practicing together. The coach now doesn't have the time to have five and five and five [the famous 'Five Man Units' used by the great Soviet coaches of Tretiak's era] like we used to. I think that, according to those types of criteria, the teams were stronger then, than now."

On his commemorative Summit Series ring:

"In 1972, 16 rings were produced. After each game, one of the best players from each team – one from Canada and one from our team – was given a ring. The design was two crossed hockey sticks with a Canadian flag on one and a Soviet flag on the other. The rings were gold. So this year, to celebrate the 40 years since the series was played, the Russian Federation had the rings re-created – but a little more expensively. We thought that for 40 years we should have it a little more expensive! [laughs]."

"The players who were on the Soviet team received a ring as well as Phil Esposito, because most of the players on the Soviet team felt that he was the best player on the Canadian team. A ring was also given to Wayne Gretzky as a symbolic gesture because of what a great player he was."

Fact file: Vladislav Tretiak

- Born: April 25, 1952 in Dmitrovo, Soviet Union.
- Canada Cup champion: 1981.
- Soviet league champion: 13 times, all with CSKA Moscow.
- Elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1989.
- Elected to IIHF Hall of Fame in 1997.
- Elected President of the Russian Ice Hockey Federation in 2006.