

Back Czech, fore Czech - **GOLD CZECH**



Photo: JUUKA RAUTIO, Europhoto

THEY KNOW HOW TO WALTZ: When the IIHF World Championship is hosted in the Austrian capital, don't bet against the Czechs. It's the third time they collect gold in Vienna.

If nothing else, the 2005 IIHF World Championship in Austria proved that international hockey is getting more competitive with greater equality in each passing year.

RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL

■ I wrote in the editorial prior to the 69th IIHF World Championship in Vienna and Innsbruck: "It's difficult to remember a tournament so open and without any clear-cut favourites as the one we are about to witness. The 2005 IIHF World Championship has at least seven teams with potential for the gold medal."

All four quarterfinals and both semifinals were one-goal games. Two of the quarterfinals had to be decided by a penalty shootout while the Czech Republic-Sweden semifinal was the lone overtime game of the championship.

There is no doubt that, along with a lucky bounce here and there, seven teams had a shot at the gold medal. The new number-eight team in the world, Switzerland, led their quarterfinal against Sweden 1-0 before the Tre Kronor scored a pair to turn the game around.

■ If the hockey world has achieved great parity among the Top-seven, the next goal must be to close the gap to the eighth ranked team. Some years ago it seemed that Germany would position themselves as the bridge-maker, but the sad demise of the Germans has seen the vastly improved Swiss take that position.

From time to time, it's interesting to reflect back to the history of the IIHF World Championship and try to see trends. Twenty years ago, the difference between the

number one team and the number eight team was seven to ten goals. Seven years ago a semifinal between Sweden and Switzerland resulted in a 7-2 game.

■ I attribute this to the globalisation of the game, the constantly improving standard of coaching in the countries just below the Top-7 and the IIHF's determination to keep 16 nations in the top pool of the World Championship. I see Denmark, Slovenia and also Belarus as splendid examples of hockey programs which might not have been where they are today if we had drawn the line at 12 teams.

Again, the hockey in our flagship event was high-quality entertainment, with the game's superstars being presented with an environment where they can excel and be the best. The excitement was nerve-wrenching. You can call the penalty shoot-out a lottery, but the drama that is created is phenomenal. And most often, the team with the best shooters and the hottest goalie wins.

And, usually, when all is said and done, the best team wins it all. And this year, the Czechs had what it took.

■ Off the ice, we had our problems, especially in Vienna with the poor ice quality in the opening stages of the tournament. This is something that cannot happen in a World Championship and it makes us realize that, in the future, the IIHF must assume more control over the host organizer and be more "hands-on".

We are entering the most compressed and exciting stage in the international hockey calendar. As this is written, we have 250 days left to the XX Olympic Winter Games in Turin and three months later Riga and Latvia will receive the hockey world for the 70th IIHF World Championship.

Continued on next page

Continued from page one:

■ Before that, at Christmas and New Year's we are going back to Canada for 2006 IIHF World U20 Championship (where all games in Vancouver are already officially listed as "sold out") and as soon as the "World Juniors" are over, the best club team in Europe will be determined in the 2nd IIHF European Champions Cup in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Ice hockey has so far sold the most tickets of all Olympic competitions for Turin, 125,000 tickets as of May. The 2006 IIHF World Championship in Riga will be something to behold. As the IIHF visited the Latvian capital for the draw of the groups next year, we were overwhelmed by the passion and anticipation that the Latvian people have for this event, a full year before it finally gets there.

■ The travelling Latvian fans, who have added to much colour to the tournament since they reached the top pool in 1997, will now enjoy the privilege of being hosts. Latvia will become the 15th country to organize the top pool of the IIHF World Championship and it will be the first time since 1966 (Ljubljana, former Yugoslavia) that the tournament will be hosted by a country where the event has never been before.

■ Finally, as you all have noticed, the name of this IIHF newsletter has changed from News Release to *Ice Times*, as part of the federation's new corporate identity, that also includes a new logo. The logo was introduced at Austria 2005 and it was very well received. I wish you all a nice summer.

René Fasel
IIHF President

Austria 2005 seventh on all-time attendance list

■ The total attendance in Austria 2005 was 323,974. Although this does not set a new record, the smaller arenas were close to capacity for almost every game in both Innsbruck and Vienna. The games were played to an average attendance rate of 82 percent of arena capacity.

The top IIHF World Championship attendance records are as follows:

1. Czech Republic	2004 - 552,097
2. Finland	1997 - 526,172
3. Finland	2003 - 454,693
4. Germany	2001 - 407,000
5. Sweden	1989 - 388,000
6. Sweden	1995 - 325,571
7. Austria	2005 - 323,974
8. Russia	2000 - 318,449
9. Finland	1991 - 310,627
10. Sweden	2002 - 305,541

■ The new IIHF logo can be downloaded from:

www.iihf.com/iihf/ci/logo.htm

Username: logo Password: iihf01

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INTERNATIONAL
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Photo: CITY-PRESS, Berlin

HOTBED OF HOCKEY: Cologne and its KölnArena-fans made the 2001 IIHF World Championship memorable and nine years later - now together with Mannheim - the city will again host the event. KölnArena holds the IIHF World Championship attendance record for an indoor game with 18,539 on April 29, 2001.

Germany wins bid for 2010 Championship Macao admitted as IIHF's 64th member

■ Germany was relegated to Division I, but won a big consolation prize.

The 2005 IIHF Annual Congress awarded the 2010 IIHF World Championship to Germany. The venues will be Cologne and Mannheim. Germany defeated the competing bid from Belarus (Minsk and Zhodino) with 89 votes to 18. Initial bidder Slovakia withdrew from the 2010 race prior to the start of the congress while Sweden withdrew immediately prior to the start of the voting.

Both Slovakia and Sweden postponed their bids until next year when the congress will allocate the 2011 championship.

Germany/West Germany has previously hosted the World Championship on six occasions: 1930, 1955, 1975, 1983, 1993 and 2001. Germany also hosted the 1936 Olympic ice hockey tournament, which also counted as a World Championship.

■ Cologne's KölnArena is the biggest hockey building in Europe with a capacity of 18,500 fans, while the SAP Arena in Mannheim will have a capacity of 15,000 fans once it is completed this autumn. KölnArena was one of the venues when Germany organized the 2001 IIHF World Championship. The games in Cologne were a splendid success as the KölnArena hosted 250,000 fans in the ten games that were played there.

Cologne also set an all-time record for an IIHF World Championship indoor game when 18,539 fans attended the Germany - Czech Republic game on April 29, 2001.

The 2006 IIHF World Championship Division I, Group A was allocated to Amiens, France, while the 2006 IIHF World Championship Division I, Group B was allocated to Tallinn, Estonia. See the complete list of 2006 IIHF World Championship allocations on page 11.

■ The congress approved the council's proposal of allocating the IIHF World U20 Championship to Canada every third year until 2012. Canada, who will host the upcoming 2006 "World Juniors" in Vancouver, Kelowna and Kamloops, will also host the event in 2009 and 2012. The decision is based on a special agreement between the IIHF and Hockey Canada where the immense interest of this event in Canada was a key factor.

■ The congress approved the admission of Macao as its 64th member national association. Macao, a former Portuguese colony, is a part of China, but enjoys a high degree of autonomy. Pakistan also applied for a membership but the congress postponed the application until the ice hockey program will have a better structure.

■ The national associations of France, Italy, Spain and Turkey received an extended deadline from the congress, April 1, 2006, to create independent ice hockey associations of their countries as opposed to being an ice hockey section of a winter sports federation. The previous deadline was July 1, 2005. The IIHF Congress had previously taken a decision that only independent ice hockey associations will be able to apply for a full membership within the IIHF, as opposed to associate membership.

■ Mr. Jukka-Pekka Vuorinen, the competition manager of the ice hockey tournament of the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Torino, reported to the congress that 125,000 tickets are sold for the ice hockey events. This amounts to 28 percent of all

tickets sold so far for Torino 2006, which means that ice hockey has sold the most tickets of all Olympic competitions for Torino. There are, however, many tickets left for ice hockey, especially for the women's tournament. Mr. Vuorinen said that the goal is to sell 300,000 tickets for hockey. The main venue for ice hockey will be the brand new 12,200-seat Palasport Olimpico, with the refurbished Torino Esposizioni as the second venue. The Esposizioni will accommodate 6,000 fans.

The Organizing Committee of Latvia 2006 held an impressive presentation for the congress about the 70th IIHF World Championship in the capital of Riga next year.

The Latvia 2006 OC informed delegates that the construction of the 11,000-seat RigaArena is on schedule, as is the refurbishment of the second venue, the Skonto Arena, that will accommodate 6,000-7,000 fans. The arenas are just walking distance from each other.



MACAO: Member no. 64

Not only players celebrated in Austria 2005 - television broadcasters had a ball too



Photo: EUROPHOTO

PEAK MOMENT: With less than one minute to play in the 2005 Gold Medal game (see clock in the upper left corner) 22 Czechs players started to celebrate the win, while an impressive audience of three million did the same back home in front of their TV-sets. While Canada lost the title, TSN again struck gold with record IIHF World Championship ratings.

■ TV-broadcasters again recorded excellent ratings at the IIHF World Championship. Almost three million Czechs (2.94) watched the gold medal game against Canada on Czech TV on May 15, a very impressive number considering the nation's population is 10 million. The market share of the broadcast was over 60 percent as almost one-third of all Czechs watched their heroes defeat Canada for the gold medal.

The broadcast generated the highest rating from a single sports event in the Czech Republic in the last three years.

Numbers from some other countries:

Canada: The live coverage of Canada's gold medal game on TSN and its French sister channel RDS attracted a national audience of 1,7 million viewers, making it the most-watched IIHF World Championship game ever in TSN's history. Audience levels peaked at almost 2 million viewers towards the end of the game.

TSN's coverage of the championship final, marks a 64

percent increase over last year's gold medal game, Canada against Sweden. The sport channel's coverage of Team Canada's nine games throughout this year's event averaged a record-setting 518,000 viewers, making it the most successful IIHF World Championship in TSN history.

Sweden: 1.025 million hockey fans (out of a population of nine million) tuned in TV3's broadcast of the semi-final against the Czech Republic for a 43.71 market share.

Finland: The most watched game in the country was not the quarterfinal loss to Russia on May 12 as would be expected, but the 0-0-draw against Latvia in the last game of the Qualifying Round. 1.227 million Finns (out of a population of 5.2 million) tuned in to the YLE-broadcast that evening for a 57 percent market share. 1.164 millions returned for the heartbreaking quarterfinal where the Finns lost in the penalty shootout.

In total, 60 TV-stations in 33 countries and territories carried live games or highlights from Austria 2005.

■ During the 2005 IIHF World Championship the official website IHWC.NET was again a very popular instrument for hockey fans around the world to get the latest information about the tournament. IHWC.NET was a huge success also from a traffic perspective. The site created more than 70 million page views since the launch of the 2005 edition at the beginning of the Division I in mid-April. Until the end of the final in Vienna over 600,000 users logged on spending an average time of nearly 16 minutes on the site. IHWC.NET has been the official website of the world championship for the last five years.

IIHF Disciplinary Announcements

Positive Doping Test Suspensions:

Tsimafei Filin (BLR) was disqualified from the 2005 IIHF World Championship in Austria on May 4 following a positive doping test conducted after the Slovakia vs Belarus game on April 30.

Oleksandr Pobyedonostsev (UKR) was disqualified from the 2005 IIHF World Championship in Austria on May 5 following a positive doping test conducted after the Sweden vs Ukraine game on May 1.

■ Following the championship, the IIHF Disciplinary Committee will meet to determine what further sanctions will be taken against the players.

Disciplinary Suspensions:

■ Following the game Turkey vs Bulgaria at the 2005 IIHF World U18 Championship Div III, 10.03.05:

Stefan Nokolov (BUL) suspended for the first two games of the 2006 U20 Championship played by Bulgaria.

Samuel Gyrukov (BUL) suspended from all IIHF sanctioned competitions from the date of the decision (24.05.05) up to the 30th April 2006.

■ Following the games Mexico vs Ireland and South Africa vs Luxembourg at the 2005 IIHF World Championship Div III, 12.03.2005:

Garrett MacNeill (IRL) suspended for the first game of the 2006 World Championship played by Ireland.

Miguel Gutierrez Porter (MEX) suspended for the first game of the 2006 World Championship played by Mexico.

Christophe Thiry (LUX) suspended for the first three games of the 2006 World Championship played by Luxembourg.

■ Following the game Slovenia vs Hungary in the 2005 IIHF World Women Championship Div III on 09.03.2005:

Katalin Gerny (HUN) and **Edit Daranyi** (HUN) are suspended for the first game of the 2006 World Women Championship played by Hungary.

Europe's six elite clubs to play for record prize sum at ECC

■ Europe's top six clubs - as determined by the 2005 IIHF World Ranking - will compete in the 2006 IIHF European Champions Cup in St. Petersburg, Russia on January 5-8. The highest ranked European countries following the 2005 IIHF World Championships are: Sweden (2), Czech Republic (3), Slovakia (4), Russia (5), Finland (7) and Switzerland (8).

The countries and their national leagues will be represented by the 2004-2005 national champions at the IIHF European Champions Cup. (The numbers in brackets indicate the total number of national championships won by the club).

Sweden: Frölunda HC, Gothenburg (3)

Czech Republic: HC Pardubice (4, 3 as Czechoslovak champion, 1 as Czech)

Slovakia: Slovan Bratislava (6, 1 as Czechoslovak champion, 5 as Slovak)

Russia: Dynamo Moscow (9, 4 as Soviet champion, 5 as Russian)

Finland: Kärpät Oulu (3)

Switzerland: HC Davos (27)

■ Kärpät Oulu is the only returnee from the inaugural ECC. The Finnish champion lost the Gold Medal game, 2-1, in overtime against Russia's Avangard Omsk in St. Petersburg last January.



Switzerland will make its first ECC appearance as the Swiss overtook Germany in the IIHF World Ranking following Austria 2005.

■ The "Super-Six" club teams of Europe will play for a record prize sum of 700,000 Swiss francs. The ECC General Assembly, which will convene in St. Petersburg on June 14-16, will determine the distribution plan of the prize money as well as the groups and the playing schedule.

The ECC-format has the six teams play in two three-team groups, where the winners of each group meet in the Gold Medal game on January 8. All games will be played at the 12,350-seat St. Petersburg Ice Palace, the venue of the 2000 IIHF World Championship and also one of two venues for the 2007 IIHF World Championship.

2005 IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SPECIAL

ALL-STAR TEAM (selected by the media)



G: Vokoun, CZE



D: Kronwall, SWE



D: Zidicky, CZE



F: Nash, CAN



F: Jagr, CZE



F: Thornton, CAN

DIRECTORATE BEST PLAYER AWARDS

Best Goalkeeper: Tomas Vokoun, Czech Rep.

Best Defenseman: Wayne Redden, Canada

Best Forward: Alexei Kovalev, Russia

MVP: Joe Thornton, Canada



World Championship Rewind: Looking back at 2005

April 30 - Amazin' Mezin: The 2005 World Championship opens with a few close calls for the favorites. Slovakia survives, 2-1, against Belarus, which featured a 52-save performance by Andrei Mezin. Russia slips by host Austria, 4-2, in what would be one of the hosts' few strong performances.

May 1 - Hamburg, we have a problem: Germany is the first team to be upset at the championship as plucky Kazakhstan skates to a 2-1 win. The loss was the start of a disastrous tournament for the Germans, who ended up getting relegated to Division I.

May 2 - First Summit Meeting: The Russia-Slovakia game is the first major match-up of the championship and doesn't disappoint as the teams skate to a 3-3 draw. It is the first real test for both big-name rosters.

May 3 - The Slash heard 'round the world: The Czechs have no problems dispensing Germany, 2-0, but come away from the game with a loss as Jaromir Jagr left the game after getting slashed on the pinkie by German Stefan Shauer. The pinkie would go on to become the most famous digit at the championship.

May 4 - Super Sweden: In the most highly anticipated game of Group C, Sweden dominates Finland in a 5-1 win. Finland scored within the first minute of play but that was all that was heard from the Finns as Sweden cruised to first place in its Preliminary Round group.

May 5 - Meet Your Neighbors: The United States and Canada close out the Preliminary Round with the most entertaining game of the group. Canada was in championship form in the 3-1 win, lifting them to first place in their group. Meanwhile, it seemed only fitting that it was rival Switzerland that sealed Germany's Relegation Round fate with a dominant 5-1 win.

May 6 - Kiss Your Sister: The next round starts off on a neutral note as three of the four games end in a tie. Switzerland overachieves in a 3-3 tie against the

Russians, while Finland and the U.S. combine for six goals in the third period in their 4-4 draw. Surprisingly, it was Slovenia netting the only win of the day in a 4-3 decision against Denmark-putting the Danes in a perilous position in the Relegation Round.

May 7 - So, we meet again: It was the showdown at the Innsbruck Corral between Canada and Sweden as last year's gold medal match-up was a thriller. Canada held a 3-1 lead, but Sweden stormed back in one of its best-played periods of the championship, netting three goals in the second. In the end, Sweden got its revenge for last year's silver finish with a 5-4 win.

May 8 - Welcome Back Russia: Alexander Semin scored midway through the third period to give Russia a 2-1 win over Czech Republic, putting the nation back on the championship map. The win ultimately decided the first-place finisher in the Qualification Group as the Russians held the edge over the Czechs. In Innsbruck, Sweden self-destructed against the Americans in a 5-1 loss.

May 9 - Ukraine Upsets: The United States entered its game against the Ukraine with a chance of earning first place in its Qualification group, but instead found itself struggling after skating to a 1-1 tie. The tie left things in the Innsbruck qualification group wide open heading into the final stretch. In Vienna, Switzerland clinched its spot in the quarterfinals with a win over Belarus.

May 10 - Deutschland Disaster: Kaspar Degen's goal in the third period was the final nail in the coffin for Germany. The goal lifted Denmark to a 4-3 win and guaranteed the Nordic nation a spot in among the top 16 next year. For Germany, only a miracle could save the once-proud hockey nation from Division I. Ukraine almost pulled off its second surprise of the championship, but Canada's Rick Nash saved the day with a late goal for the 2-1 win.

May 11 - The Hosts without the Most: With only one game scheduled, it was Austria's chance to grab the

spotlight and shine...or not. The hosts, who with a win could save both themselves and Germany from relegation, instead played one of their worst games of the championship, falling 6-2 against Slovenia. The loss sent both German-speaking nations to Division I and left the hosts winless at their own championship.

May 12 - All the Marbles: Quarterfinal day lived up to its expectations as the best day of hockey yet. All four games were decided by one goal, including the déjà vu shootout scenario between the Czech Republic and United States. This year, Tomas Vokoun put the lid on Andy Roach on the final chance of the shootout to lift his team into the semis with a 3-2 win. Russia also needs a shootout to get past Finland. The Finns held a 2-0 lead in the first period, but watched it evaporate as Russia roared back and stole the win in the shootout. In Innsbruck, Canada and Slovakia fought in a back-and-forth battle, until Canada's Joe Thornton put the win away with just over four minutes left in the game.

May 14 - Storming Back: It looked like Canada would dominate its semifinal game after jumping out to a 4-0 lead against the Russians, but like before, Russia bounced back in tandem chipped away at the lead, until they trailed by just one goal with 14 minutes left in the game. But Russia's late-magic ran out, as, despite 42 shots, it couldn't net the equalizer. Sweden missed its chance at a third-straight appearance in the golden game, when Radek Dvorak scored 4:43 into overtime to give the Czechs their first chance at gold since 2001.

May 15 - An the winner is...: Russia pounced on a deflated Swedish squad and nabbed the bronze medal in a 6-3 win. It was the year's biggest turnaround as the Russians went from 10th place last year, to third. In the golden game, Canada learned the hard way that Tomas Vokoun and the Czech defense were for real as the Czechs shutout the defending champions, 3-0.

Updated: 2005 Men's & Women's IHF World Ranking

■ ■ With the close of the 2005 IHF World Championship season, teams are either basking in the glory of a job well done, or re-tooling in anticipation of next season. Perhaps the easiest way to see how each team did during the year is the IHF World Ranking system.

The ranking was updated immediately following the 2005 World Championship in Austria and reflects some of the many plots witnessed during the season.

2005 MEN'S WORLD RANKING

'05 Rank	Country	Points	'04 Rank	Move
1	CAN	3220	1	0
2	SWE	3095	2	0
3	CZE	3065	4	1
4	SVK	2965	3	-
5	RUS	2905	7	2
6	USA	2865	6	0
7	FIN	2865	5	-2
8	SUI	2715	9	1
9	LAT	2675	10	1
10	GER	2580	8	-2
11	UKR	2490	12	1
12	BLR	2430	13	1
13	AUT	2430	11	-2
14	DEN	2400	14	0
15	KAZ	2335	17	2
16	SLO	2295	16	0
17	FRA	2150	18	1
18	NOR	2105	21	3
19	ITA	2100	20	1
20	JPN	2090	16	-4
21	POL	2085	19	-2
22	HUN	1920	22	0
23	NED	1885	23	0
24	EST	1860	24	0
25	GBR	1780	25	0
26	ROM	1685	26	0
27	LTU	1620	27	0
28	CHN	1515	28	0
29	SCG	1420	29	0
30	CRO	1390	31	1
31	KOR	1360	30	-1
32	BEL	1255	33	1
33	BUL	1235	32	-1
34	AUS	1195	35	1
35	ISR	1140	36	1
36	PRK	1105	37	1
37	ESP	1090	34	-3
38	NZL	910	40	2
39	ISL	875	39	0
40	RSA	845	38	-2
41	TUR	795	43	2
42	LUX	785	42	0
43	MEX	775	41	-2
44	IRL	455	44	0
45	ARM	420	45	0

■ ■ Within the top 16, the two biggest movers were Russia and Kazakhstan. Russia moved up two spots in the ranking after nabbing bronze at this year's championship, a vast improvement from the 2004 tenth-place finish. The Kazaks were rewarded by the two spot boost as well after their first appearance in the Qualification Round.

Overall, Norway was the biggest gainer, moving up three spots after winning its Division I championship this year. On the other end of the spectrum, Japan plummeted four spots after a disappointing showing in its Division I championship.

■ ■ On the women's side, things remained relatively the same. The top four teams, Canada, USA, Finland and Sweden didn't budge. Only one team, Denmark, enjoyed a significant move upwards. The Danes improved from 16th to 14th place.

The upcoming season is particularly important for teams as two events will be included in the 2006 World Ranking. Both the 2006 Olympics and 2006 World Championship events will be included next year's points, for men.

2005 WOMEN'S WORLD RANKING

'05 Rank	Country	Points	'04 Rank	Move
1	CAN	2960	1	0
2	USA	2940	2	0
3	FIN	2765	3	0
4	SWE	2760	4	0
5	GER	2625	6	1
6	RUS	2605	5	-1
7	CHN	2575	7	0
8	KAZ	2475	9	1
9	SUI	2430	8	-1
10	JPN	2380	10	0
11	CZE	1840	11	0
12	FRA	1780	13	1
13	LAT	1750	12	-1
14	DEN	1700	16	2
15	NOR	1695	14	-1
16	PRK	1635	15	-1
17	ITA	1610	17	0
18	SVK	1585	18	0
19	NED	1505	19	0
20	GBR	1425	21	1
21	SLO	1385	22	1
22	AUS	1375	20	-2
23	BEL	1335	24	1
24	HUN	1320	23	-1
25	AUT	1285	26	1
26	ROM	1185	25	-1
27	KOR	1050	27	0
28	RSA	790	28	0
29	NZL	580	29	0
30	ISL	540	30	0

Ready for Riga: Draw is first step



DONE DRAW: Latvian television provided a live broadcast from the draw for the 70th IHF World Championship at the historic Gild House in down-town Riga on May 17. Kirovs Lipmans, President of the Latvian Ice Hockey Association, and IHF President René Fasel seem quite content with how the four Preliminary Round groups developed. The 2006 IHF World Championship will take place May 6 – 21, the latest ever date for the event.

■ ■ The draw for the 2006 IHF World Championship took place in Riga on May 17. The draw placed the 16 World Championship teams into their respective Preliminary Round groups based on the IHF World Ranking (see left).

Several interesting Preliminary Round games will be played thanks to the luck of the draw. The A Group is sure to be a fan favorite with the host Latvia, defending champion Czech Republic and fan frenzied Finland in the mix. Sweden and Switzerland highlight the B Group and Russia and Slovakia are the headliners of the C Group. Meanwhile, in the D Group, fate has put North American rivals Canada and USA in the same group.

■ ■ The top level teams in the draw (ranked 1-4) were Canada, Sweden, Czech Republic, and Slovakia. The Czechs are the defending champion, while Canada was the silver medalist. The second level (ranked 5-8) included Russia, USA, Finland, and Switzerland. Russia was this year's bronze medalist, but was still placed on the second tier because of its current place in the IHF World Ranking.

The third level (ranked 9-12) were Latvia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Denmark. And finally, the fourth level (ranked 13-16) consisted of Kazakhstan, Slovenia, Norway, and Italy.

■ ■ Based on the above, the draw determined the following Preliminary Round groups for the 2006 IHF World Championship:

Group A
Czech Republic
Finland
Latvia
Slovenia

Group B
Sweden
Switzerland
Ukraine
Italy

Group C
Slovakia
Russia
Belarus
Kazakhstan

Group D
Canada
United States
Denmark
Norway

For the Qualification Round, it will be Groups A and D that come together, and Groups B and C that combine.

The rebirth of a national team

By Szymon Szemberg
Vienna, Austria

■ ■ ■ 2005 will be remembered as the year of the resurgence of the Czechs - and Jaromir Jagr. After the incredible years in the late 90s and early 2000s, when Team Czech Republic dominated the hockey world with the 1998 Olympic gold and three consecutive IIHF World Championship titles (1999-2001), the success story came to an abrupt end.

The Czechs suddenly couldn't find a way to win anymore. In the next four major events (2002 Olympics, 2002-2004 IIHF World Championships) the national team didn't win a single medal and were ousted in the quarterfinals in three out of the four majors. The only semi-final the team reached was in Finland in 2003.

At the same time, Jaromir Jagr's status as the best offensive forward in the world took a hit. He was no longer a dominating force in the NHL and his leadership qualities on the national team were questioned as he did not provide the much needed spark in Salt Lake City, nor in Sweden 2002.

On home ice in Prague last year, the Czech fans were stunned by the Jagr-led team's penalty shoot-out defeat against the USA in the quarterfinal. Ironically, Jagr was among those who missed a penalty shot in the shoot-out.

■ ■ ■ But what a difference a year makes. When the NHL owners announced the lockout last autumn following the 2004 World Cup of Hockey (where Jagr & Co. lost to eventual winner Canada in the WCH semi-final), the famous number 68 signed with his home club of Kladno in the Czech league and later transferred to Russian powerhouse Avangard Omsk.

The Siberian experience was apparently something that the 32-year old veteran relished. Those who were lucky enough to attend the inaugural IIHF European Champions Cup in January, saw the revival of a superstar. Jagr was the dominant force behind Avangard's gold-medal game win against Finland's Kärpät Oulu, where he assisted on the equalizer and later provided a clinical finish on the overtime winner.

Having put this prestigious title on his resume, Jagr was now committed to go after the only major hockey championship he had yet to win. Already after the disappointment in Prague last spring, Jagr could read all the stories how that was likely the last chance of winning the IIHF World Championship and become a member of the Triple Gold Club; for players who have won the IIHF World Championship, Olympics and Stanley Cup.

■ ■ ■ Jagr overcame the pain from playing with a broken pinkie in the final stages of Austria 2005 and he was the driving force behind the nerve-shattering wins over the USA in the quarter-final (in a penalty shootout) and against Sweden in the semi-final (on overtime).

After the 3-0 gold medal game win against two-time defending champion Canada, Jagr finally got rid of his world championship ghosts.

"I am happy that nobody will describe me as the bad-luck guy of the national team anymore", said Jagr in the champagne drenched Czech locker room after the final. "We were lucky in the shootout against the USA and in the overtime against Sweden. But I started to believe that we could do when we scored 2-0-goal in the final".

About finally making it to the Triple Gold Club as member 15: "There are not many



players who have it and you have to be lucky to play on great teams to accomplish that. Erich Kuhnackl was a great forward, but he was never able to reach this while playing for Germany. Marcel Dionne was a superstar for 19 years in the NHL, but he was never on a team that won the Stanley Cup. For most Canadians and Americans, the Olympic gold was something they could start dreaming about just recently. As I said, you have to be lucky."

When Jaromir speaks about 'lucky', he means "to be at the right place at the right time". Jagr was not the only one. Also defenseman Jiri Slegr was 'lucky' as he became the 16th player to join the 'TGC'. While also a member of the Czech 1998 Olympic gold medal team, Slegr won the Stanley Cup with Detroit in 2002.

■ ■ ■ Slegr is the only one of the 16 TGC-members whose father also has won one of the three championships. Jiri Bubla (Jiri Jr. chose his mother's maternal name Slegr when growing up) was an All-Star defenseman with the Czechoslovak national team in the 70s and won three IIHF World Championship golds, in 1972, 1976 and 1977.

Bubla also played in two Olympics, but never came closer to winning than the 1976 silver medal in Innsbruck.

"I am very happy that I have finally reached it and that I even got a chance to reach it", said the 34-year old Slegr, who already represented the Czech Republic as a 20-year old in the 1992 Olympics in Albertville. "It could have been my last opportunity because the time has come to give younger players a chance on the team. That's why I was willing to do my very best to win this championship."

"Every trophy or medal is different. But after I quit hockey, they will be side by side in the same place to remind me of the beautiful moments."

- and a national hero



Photo: EUROPHOTO

CZECH MATES: The Czech winning formula from 1996-2001 is back. Just like in the golden years from the late 90s, the Czechs are winning the penalty shootouts and the overtimes and they like to get under their opponents skin by cleverly defending a 1-0-lead. Insert photo: Jaromir Jagr can finally kiss the one trophy missing.

Jagr and Sleggr admitted to hockey's exclusive society



MEMBERS 15 & 16: Jaromir Jagr & Jiri Sleggr

■■ The following 16 players form the unique Triple Gold Club that has won the IIHF World Championship, Olympic ice hockey gold and the Stanley Cup. Jaromir Jagr and Jiri Sleggr joined the group following Czech Republic's victory in Austria 2005.

WS = World Senior Championship
OG = Olympic Games
SC = Stanley Cup

1. **Tomas Jonsson (Sweden)**
WS 91, OG 94
SC 82, 83 (NY Islanders)
2. **Hakan Loob (Sweden)**
WS 87, 91, OG 94
SC 89 (Calgary)
3. **Mats Naslund (Sweden)**
WS 91, OG 94
SC 86 (Montreal)
4. **Valeri Kamensky (Russia)**
WS 86, 89, 90, OG 88
SC 96 (Colorado)
5. **Alexei Gusarov (Russia)**
WS 89, 90, OG 88
SC 96 (Colorado)
6. **Peter Forsberg (Sweden)**
WS 92, 98, OG 94
SC 96, 01 (Colorado)
7. **Vyacheslav Fetisov (Russia)**
WS 78, 81, 82, 83, 86, 89, 90, OG 84, 88
SC 97, 98 (Detroit)
8. **Igor Larionov (Russia)**
WS 82, 83, 86, 89, OG 84, 88
SC 97, 98 (Detroit)
9. **Alexander Mogilny (Russia)**
WS 89, OG 88
SC 00 (New Jersey)
10. **Vladimir Malakhov (Russia)**
WS 90, OG 92
SC 00 (New Jersey)
11. **Joe Sakic (Canada)**
WS 94, OG 02
SC 96, 01 (Colorado)
12. **Brendan Shanahan (Canada)**
WS 94, OG 02
SC 97, 98 (Detroit)
13. **Rob Blake (Canada)**
WS 94, 97, OG 02
SC 01 (Colorado)
14. **Scott Niedermayer (Canada)**
WS 04, OG 02
SC 95, 00, 03 (New Jersey)
15. **Jaromir Jagr (Czech Republic)**
WS 05, OG 98
SC 91, 92 (Pittsburgh)
16. **Jiri Sleggr (Czech Republic)**
WS 05, OG 98
SC 02 (Detroit)

He almost had it all

■■ Joe Thornton had a spectacular year. The 24-year old Canadian won the Swiss league championship with HC Davos and led the same club to the prestigious Spengler Cup victory over Christmas.

When Thornton suited up for Team Canada for Austria 2005, he immediately took over the role the team's leader as he sparked the high-scoring line with Rick Nash and Simon Gagne. Thornton scored six goals and added ten assists in nine world championship games to lead all scorers in the tournament.

■■ He was named to the media All Star Team and he was the run-away leader in the voting for the MVP-title. As Joe Thornton received the MVP-trophy from the hands of IIHF President René Fasel, he put all efforts together to produce a hint of a smile. The most important trophy was missing in Thornton's collection.



THORNTON: Most valuable - but not golden.

2005 IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP PHOTO GALLERY



HEADS DOWN: Austria captain Deiter Kalt and Germany's Alexander Barta dig in for a face-off. By the end of the tournament, the two relegated teams had their heads down for a different reason.

THE PUCK STOPS HERE: And so does Sweden's gold medal hopes, as the puck sails past Sweden goaltender Henrik Lundqvist. The puck in question was the Czech Republic's overtime game-winner in the semifinal game.



BEND IT LIKE OLLI: Finland's Olli Jokinen pushes his stick to the limit while trying to get a shot off in the quarterfinal game against Russia.



HEADS AND SHOULDERS ABOVE THE REST: Young Slovenian sensation Anze Kopitar (center of photo to the right of the goalkeeper) towers above his teammates in more ways than one, as the 18-year-old star was a standout for the nation. Kopitar is sure to have many more highlight moments at next year's World Championship since his team avoided relegation and will be back among the top 16 teams in Riga.



HOW'D THAT GET IN THERE?: Latvia's Arturs Irbe looks over his shoulder to discover the puck had slipped by him during his team's game against Sweden.

ON HIGHER GROUND: Russian fans had something to cheer this year. Their team went from a dismal 10th-place ending last season to an impressive bronze medal finish this year.



PSST DID YOU HEAR?: We're the #8 team in the world, could be what Martin Gerber is saying after Switzerland made it to the quarterfinals.

USA, all the way at U18 Worlds



A place of honor: The U.S. put the U18 Championship trophy in a prime location while listening to the national anthem after the gold medal game

Looking at it on paper, the United States' gold medal win at the 2005 IIHF U18 World Championship seemed almost too easy.

The team cruised to a 5-1 win over Canada in the final game, the most lopsided score in a U18 championship final since 2001 when Russia downed Switzerland, 6-2. The U.S. had by far the best player on the ice in forward Phil Kessel, who obliterated the competition with nine goals and seven assists in his six games. The squad also boasted the top goaltender in Jeff Frazee, who finished the championship with a .959 saves percentage. And of course Team USA finished with an unblemished 6-0-0 record.

But while it looks like things were a cakewalk for the U.S., in fact, it was a challenge for the team to rise to the top of this year's U18 class for its second-ever gold medal at the event.

In fact, it was Kessel who netted what could be argued as the Team USA's most important goal. With 2:27 left in the U.S. preliminary round game against host Czech Republic, he scored to lift the U.S. to a 4-3 win and an automatic berth in the semifinals. Things were simply that tight for the Americans, and the rest of the teams, throughout the championship.

For host Czech Republic, luck was on the other side of the coin as the team was not only on the losing end in the preliminary round against the U.S., but also in the bronze medal game against Sweden, where Nicklas Bergfors made the difference for the Swedes, netting two goals in his team's 4-2 bronze win. It was the first medal for Sweden at the U18 Championship since 2000.

Sweden's neighbor, Finland, was not as fortunate, as a one-goal loss sent the once-dominant U18 nation to the relegation round for the second consecutive year. Ultimately, Finland avoided getting relegated as Switzerland and Denmark were the bottom two teams in the round.

For the United States, the game of inches gave the team its third medal in four years at the U18 Championship.

New faces at 2006 Worlds: Italy and Norway join the mix

They say that timing is everything. And no two nations would agree more than Norway and Italy, the winners of the 2005 Division I World Championship.

By winning their respective tournaments, both teams will move up into the top 16 teams in the world and play at next year's World Championship in Riga, Latvia.

The promotion comes at a time when teams are starting to avoid the quick bounce back to the Division I level. Both of the teams promoted from last year's Division I's, Ukraine and Slovenia, managed to stay among the world's elite squads.

The promotion this year also means that the on-the-cusp nations will not have to face relegated Germany and Austria, who are sure to give next year's Division I teams fits in their quest for the World Championship.

And especially for Italy, the timing of the triumph couldn't be better as all eyes will be on Torino during the 2006 Olympic Winter Games -- a perfect prelude to the team's first appearance in the World Championship since 2002.

Norway's win signaled the end of five years of frustration in Division I. After coming up just shy when the team hosted the Division I's in 2004, Norway came into the 2005 tournament on a mission.

It was a mission they had no problems accomplishing.

Norway was by far and away the best team in the group hosted by Debrecen, Hungary, losing only one point in a 2-2-tie against Hungary on the first day of action. The final game against Japan was admittedly a tough one, but only until the Norwegians got their second goal at 15:10 of the second period and cruised on to the 5-0 win.

As strong as Norway was, the team had the potential to

be even better as forward Espen Knutsen was missing with concussion symptoms and Per Age Skröder was gone for family reasons. With the addition of these players, the Norwegians could easily follow in Slovenia and Ukraine's footsteps and become a contender to stay at the top level for many years to come.

As favored as Norway was to win its Division I group, Italy was that much more of a surprise. While the Italians had the skill to win the group, most eyes were on France to walk away with gold.

But a wacky championship that saw an amazing five ties kept people on the edge of their seats waiting to see which team would emerge on top.



Polar Bears Peak: After coming close for several years, Norway finally won its Division I tournament and will play with world's to 16 teams.

In the end, it came down to a face-off between France and Italy in a winner-takes all game.

Both teams were 3-1-0 entering the game and were evenly matched throughout the 60 minutes. Italy jumped out to a 2-0 lead within the first seven minutes of the game, and held on for dear life, holding off France for the 2-1 win.

Despite the close standings, Italy was truly the most deserving team of the championship scoring 17 goals while allowing only three. France finished in second place with a 16:9 goal differential, while the Netherlands closed out the medallists with one win, three ties and a loss.



Viva Italia: 2006 promises to be an exciting year for Italian hockey. Not only is the nation hosting the 2006 Olympics, but they will also play in the World Championship.

While it is never an easy task to stay up at the top level, Italy could also state a case to remain among the world's elite. The experience the team will gain at the 2006 Olympics will undoubtedly be beneficial.

But for the time being, both Italy and Norway can enjoy their summers knowing that next year they will be playing on hockey's largest stage.

RESULTS SUMMARY

IIHF World Championship

Vienna & Innsbruck, AUSTRIA April 30 - May 15, 2005

Preliminary Round - Group A

Russia - Austria	4 - 2	(1-1, 1-0, 2-1)				
Slovakia - Belarus	2 - 1	(0-0, 0-0, 2-1)				
Slovakia - Russia	3 - 3	(1-0, 1-2, 1-1)				
Belarus - Austria	5 - 0	(1-0, 2-0, 2-0)				
Russia - Belarus	2 - 0	(0-0, 1-0, 1-0)				
Austria - Slovakia	1 - 8	(0-1, 0-2, 1-5)				
<hr/>						
Slovakia	3	2	1	0	13 - 5	5
Russia	3	2	1	0	9 - 5	5
Belarus	3	1	0	2	6 - 4	2
Austria	3	0	0	3	3 - 17	0

Preliminary Round - Group B

Latvia - Canada	4 - 6	(1-1, 1-4, 2-1)
USA - Slovenia	7 - 0	(3-0, 2-0, 2-0)
Canada - Slovenia	8 - 0	(3-0, 2-0, 3-0)
USA - Latvia	3 - 1	(0-1, 1-0, 2-0)
Slovenia - Latvia	1 - 3	(0-1, 1-1, 0-1)
Canada - USA	3 - 1	(0-0, 2-1, 1-0)

Canada	3	3	0	0	17 - 5	6
USA	3	2	0	1	11 - 4	4
Latvia	3	1	0	2	8 - 10	2
Slovenia	3	0	0	3	1 - 18	0

Preliminary Round - Group C

Finland - Denmark	2 - 1	(1-0, 0-0, 1-1)
Ukraine - Sweden	2 - 3	(0-2, 2-0, 0-1)
Finland - Ukraine	4 - 1	(1-0, 2-1, 1-0)
Sweden - Denmark	7 - 0	(2-0, 3-0, 2-0)
Denmark - Ukraine	1 - 2	(0-0, 1-1, 0-1)
Sweden - Finland	5 - 1	(2-1, 2-0, 1-0)

Sweden	3	3	0	0	15 - 3	6
Finland	3	2	0	1	7 - 7	4
Ukraine	3	1	0	2	5 - 8	2
Denmark	3	0	0	3	2 - 11	0

Preliminary Round - Group D

Switzerland - Czech Rep.	1 - 3	(1-2, 0-0, 0-1)
Germany - Kazakhstan	1 - 2	(0-1, 1-0, 0-0)
Kazakhstan - Switzerland	1 - 2	(1-1, 0-0, 0-1)
Czech Republic - Germany	2 - 0	(1-0, 0-0, 1-0)
Czech Rep. - Kazakhstan	1 - 0	(0-0, 1-0, 0-0)
Germany - Switzerland	1 - 5	(1-1, 0-1, 0-3)

Czech Republic	3	3	0	0	6 - 1	6
Switzerland	3	2	0	1	8 - 5	4
Kazakhstan	3	1	0	2	3 - 4	2
Germany	3	0	0	3	2 - 9	0

Qualification Round - Group E

Russia - Switzerland	3 - 3	(2-2, 1-1, 0-0)
Belarus - Kazakhstan	2 - 0	(0-0, 1-0, 1-0)
Slovakia - Czech Republic	1 - 5	(0-2, 1-3, 0-0)
Slovakia - Switzerland	3 - 1	(0-0, 2-1, 1-0)
Czech Republic - Russia	1 - 2	(1-0, 0-1, 0-1)
Russia - Kazakhstan	3 - 1	(0-0, 3-0, 0-1)
Switzerland - Belarus	2 - 0	(1-0, 0-0, 1-0)
Kazakhstan - Slovakia	1 - 3	(1-1, 0-1, 0-1)
Czech Republic - Belarus	5 - 1	(1-0, 2-1, 2-0)

Russia	5	3	2	0	13 - 8	8
Czech Republic	5	4	0	1	15 - 5	8
Slovakia	5	3	1	1	12 - 11	7
Switzerland	5	2	1	2	9 - 10	5
Belarus	5	1	0	4	4 - 11	2
Kazakhstan	5	0	0	5	3 - 11	0

Qualification Round - Group F

USA - Finland	4 - 4	(1-1, 0-0, 3-3)
Latvia - Ukraine	3 - 0	(0-0, 1-0, 2-0)
Canada - Sweden	4 - 5	(2-1, 1-3, 0-0)
Canada - Finland	3 - 3	(0-1, 1-1, 2-1)
Sweden - USA	1 - 5	(0-1, 0-2, 1-2)
USA - Ukraine	1 - 1	(0-0, 0-1, 1-0)
Finland - Latvia	0 - 0	(0-0, 0-0, 0-0)
Ukraine - Canada	1 - 2	(1-1, 0-0, 0-1)
Sweden - Latvia	9 - 1	(3-0, 2-0, 4-1)

Sweden	5	4	0	1	23 - 13	8
Canada	5	3	1	1	18 - 14	7
United States	5	2	2	1	14 - 10	6
Finland	5	1	3	1	12 - 13	5
Latvia	5	1	1	3	9 - 18	3
Ukraine	5	0	1	4	5 - 13	1

Relegation Round - Group G

Germany - Austria	2 - 2	(2-0, 0-1, 0-1)
Slovenia - Denmark	4 - 3	(0-3, 1-0, 3-0)
Denmark - Austria	4 - 3	(1-3, 2-0, 1-0)
Slovenia - Germany	1 - 9	(0-3, 0-5, 1-1)
Germany - Denmark	2 - 3	(1-1, 1-1, 0-1)
Austria - Slovenia	2 - 6	(1-0, 0-3, 1-3)

Slovenia	3	2	0	1	11 - 14	4
Denmark	3	2	0	1	10 - 9	4
Germany	3	1	1	1	13 - 6	3
Austria	3	0	1	2	7 - 12	1

Quarterfinal Games

Czech Republic - USA	3 - 2	(0-1, 0-1, 2-0) GWS
Canada - Slovakia	5 - 4	(2-2, 1-1, 2-1)
Russia - Finland	4 - 3	(2-3, 1-0, 0-0) GWS
Sweden - Switzerland	2 - 1	(1-1, 1-0, 0-0)

Semi-Final Games

Russia - Canada	3 - 4	(0-3, 2-1, 1-0)
Sweden - Czech Republic	2 - 3	(0-0, 1-1, 1-1, 0-1) OT

Bronze Medal Game

Sweden - Russia	3 - 6	(2-3, 0-3, 1-0)
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Gold Medal Game

Czech Republic - Canada	3 - 0	(1-0, 0-0, 2-0)
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Final Standing

1. Czech Republic	9. Latvia
2. Canada	10. Belarus
3. Russia	11. Ukraine
4. Sweden	12. Kazakhstan
5. Slovakia	13. Slovenia
6. United States	14. Denmark
7. Finland	15. Germany
8. Switzerland	16. Austria

Germany & Austria relegated to 2006 IIHF World Championship Division I

Directorate Awards:

Best Goalkeeper: Tomas Vokoun, CZE
 Best Defenseman: Wade Redden, CAN
 Best Forward: Alexei Kovalev, RUS
 Most Valuable Player: Joe Thornton, CAN

Media All-Star Team:

Goaltender: Tomas Vokoun, CZE
 Defensesmen: Niklas Kronwall (SWE); Marek Sidlicky (CZE)
 Forwards: Joe Thornton (CAN), Rick Nash (CAN), Jaromir Jagr (CZE)

IIHF World Championship Div. I, Grp. A

Debrecen, HUNGARY, April 17 - 23, 2005

Great Britain - Poland	0 - 2	(0-0, 0-1, 0-1)
China - Japan	1 - 8	(0-2, 1-4, 0-2)
Hungary - Norway	2 - 2	(2-1, 0-1, 0-0)
Poland - China	9 - 3	(2-1, 5-1, 2-0)
Norway - Great Britain	8 - 3	(4-1, 2-1, 2-1)
Japan - Hungary	0 - 3	(0-1, 0-1, 0-1)
Japan - Great Britain	5 - 3	(0-0, 2-1, 3-2)
Norway - Poland	3 - 2	(1-0, 0-1, 2-1)
China - Hungary	0 - 9	(0-2, 0-2, 0-3)
Norway - China	25 - 1	(6-0, 9-1, 10-0)
Poland - Japan	2 - 1	(1-0, 1-0, 0-1)
Hungary - Great Britain	0 - 3	(0-0, 0-1, 0-2)
Japan - Norway	0 - 5	(0-1, 0-2, 0-2)
Great Britain - China	10 - 0	(0-0, 6-0, 4-0)
Poland - Hungary	1 - 1	(0-1, 1-0, 0-0)

Norway	5	4	1	0	43 - 8	9
Poland	5	3	1	1	16 - 8	7
Hungary	5	2	2	1	15 - 6	6
Japan	5	2	0	3	14 - 14	4
Great Britain	5	2	0	3	19 - 15	4
China	5	0	0	5	5 - 61	0

Norway promoted to 2006 IIHF World Championship
China Relegated to 2006 IIHF World Championship Div. II

IIHF World Championship Div. I, Grp. B

Eindhoven, NETHERLANDS April 17-23, 2005

Estonia - Italy	0 - 2	(0-1, 0-1, 0-0)
Romania - Netherlands	3 - 6	(2-0, 1-3, 0-3)
Lithuania - France	3 - 5	(2-4, 0-1, 1-0)
Italy - Romania	7 - 0	(2-0, 2-0, 3-0)
France - Estonia	3 - 3	(0-2, 2-1, 1-0)
Netherlands - Lithuania	3 - 3	(1-0, 1-3, 1-0)
Lithuania - Estonia	4 - 4	(1-2, 2-2, 1-0)
France - Romania	6 - 1	(1-0, 3-1, 2-0)
Italy - Netherlands	1 - 1	(0-0, 1-1, 0-0)

Italy - Lithuania	5 - 1	(0-0, 5-1, 0-0)
Estonia - Romania	6 - 3	(3-0, 1-3, 2-0)
Netherlands - France	0 - 1	(0-0, 0-0, 0-1)
Romania - Lithuania	0 - 5	(0-1, 0-3, 0-1)
France - Italy	1 - 2	(0-2, 1-0, 0-0)
Netherlands - Estonia	3 - 3	(2-2, 0-0, 1-1)

Italy	5	4	1	0	17 - 3	9
France	5	3	1	1	16 - 9	7
Netherlands	5	1	3	1	13 - 11	5
Estonia	5	1	3	1	16 - 15	5
Lithuania	5	1	2	2	16 - 17	4
Romania	5	0	0	5	7 - 30	0

Italy promoted to 2006 IIHF World Championship

Romania Relegated to 2006 IIHF World Championship Div. II

IIHF World Championship Div. II, Grp. A

Zagreb, CROATIA April 10-16, 2005

Turkey - Korea	0 - 14	(0-8, 0-2, 0-4)
New Zealand - Australia	0 - 4	(0-1, 0-2, 0-1)
Bulgaria - Croatia	1 - 9	(0-3, 0-3, 1-3)
Australia - Turkey	20 - 1	(10-0, 6-0, 4-1)
Korea - Bulgaria	7 - 0	(4-0, 3-0, 0-0)
Croatia - New Zealand	14 - 0	(5-0, 5-0, 4-0)
Korea - New Zealand	3 - 0	(2-0, 0-0, 1-0)
Turkey - Bulgaria	0 - 13	(0-1, 0-6, 0-6)
Croatia - Australia	3 - 2	(0-1, 1-0, 2-1)
Bulgaria - New Zealand	7 - 6	(1-2, 5-4, 1-0)
Australia - Korea	4 - 0	(1-0, 2-0, 1-0)
Croatia - Turkey	15 - 1	(6-0, 3-1, 6-0)
Australia - Bulgaria	4 - 1	(1-1, 0-0, 3-0)
New Zealand - Turkey	8 - 3	(3-0, 2-2, 3-1)
Korea - Croatia	2 - 5	(1-2, 1-0, 0-3)

Croatia	5	5	0	0	46 - 6	10
Australia	5	4	0	1	34 - 5	8
Korea	5	3	0	2	26 - 9	6
Bulgaria	5	2	0	3	22 - 26	4
New Zealand	5	1	0	4	14 - 31	2
Turkey	5	0	0	5	5 - 70	0

Croatia promoted to 2006 IIHF World Championship Division I
Turkey Relegated to 2006 IIHF World Championship Division III

IIHF World Championship Div. II, Grp. B

Belgrade, SERBIA & MONTENEGRO April 4-10, 2005

Israel - DPR Korea	4 - 4	(0-0, 2-1, 2-3)
Iceland - Belgium	3 - 4	(1-2, 1-1, 1-1)
Spain - Serbia & Montenegro	0 - 6	(0-2, 0-1, 0-3)
Belgium - Spain	2 - 1	(1-0, 0-1, 1-0)
Iceland - DPR Korea	3 - 2	(1-2, 1-0, 1-0)
Serbia & Montenegro - Israel	1 - 5	(0-2, 1-1, 0-2)
Spain - Iceland	5 - 2	(0-1, 2-0, 3-1)
Belgium - Israel	4 - 7	(2-4, 1-2, 1-1)
Serbia & Mont. - DPR Korea	7 - 1	(1-0, 4-0, 2-1)
DPR Korea - Belgium	3 - 1	(0-0, 1-0, 2-1)
Spain - Israel	0 - 1	(0-0, 0-0, 0-1)
Iceland - Serbia & Montenegro	2 - 11	(0-6, 2-3, 0-2)
Israel - Iceland	4 - 2	(0-0, 2-0, 2-2)
DPR Korea - Spain	4 - 2	(2-2, 0-0, 2-0)
Belgium - Serbia & Montenegro	2 - 5	(2-2, 0-2, 0-1)

Israel	5	4	1	0	21 - 11	9
Serbia & Mont.	5	4	0	1	20 - 10	8
DPR Korea	5	2	1	2	14 - 17	5
Belgium	5	2	0	3	13 - 19	4
Spain	5	1	0	4	8 - 15	2
Iceland	5	1	0	4	12 - 26	2

Israel promoted to 2006 IIHF World Championship Division I
Iceland Relegated to 2006 IIHF World Championship Division III

IIHF World U18 Championship

Plzen & Ceske Budejovice, CZECH REPUBLIC April 4-14, 2005

Preliminary Round - Group A

Germany - Canada	1 - 2	(1-1, 0-1, 0-0)
Sweden - Russia	1 - 2	(0-1, 1-1, 0-0)
Denmark - Germany	1 - 3	(0-0, 1-2, 0-1)
Canada - Sweden	1 - 2	(0-1, 1-1, 0-0)
Russia - Denmark	2 - 1	(0-0, 1-1, 1-0)
Germany - Russia	4 - 12	(0-7, 0-3, 4-2)
Canada - Denmark	15 - 1	(2-0, 5-0, 8-1)
Sweden - Germany	3 - 2	(0-0, 3-1, 0-1)
Russia - Canada	3 - 6	(1-2, 1-2, 1-2)
Denmark - Sweden	1 - 3	(0-1, 1-0, 0-2)

RESULTS SUMMARY

Canada	4	3	0	1	24 - 7	6
Sweden	4	3	0	1	9 - 6	6
Russia	4	3	0	1	19-12	6
Germany	4	1	0	3	10-18	2
Denmark	4	0	0	4	4 - 23	0

Canada earns automatic berth to semi-final round

Preliminary Round - Group B

Slovakia - United States	1 - 3	(0-1, 1-2, 0-0)
Switzerland - Czech Republic	1 - 4	(0-0, 1-3, 0-1)
Finland - Switzerland	3 - 1	(1-0, 2-1, 0-0)
Czech Republic - Slovakia	3 - 0	(0-0, 2-0, 1-0)
United States - Finland	3 - 0	(1-0, 1-0, 1-0)
Switzerland - United States	1 - 7	(1-1, 0-3, 0-3)
Slovakia - Switzerland	2 - 1	(1-1, 0-0, 1-0)
Czech Republic - Finland	6 - 1	(0-1, 5-0, 1-0)
Finland - Slovakia	2 - 3	(0-0, 1-2, 1-1)
United States - Czech Rep.	4 - 3	(0-1, 3-2, 1-0)

United States	4	4	0	0	17 - 5	8
Czech Republic	4	3	0	1	16 - 6	6
Slovakia	4	2	0	2	6 - 9	4
Finland	4	1	0	3	6 - 13	2
Switzerland	4	0	0	4	4 - 16	0

United States earns automatic berth to semi-final round

Relegation Round

Denmark - Germany	1 - 3	(0-0, 1-2, 0-1)
Finland - Switzerland	3 - 1	(1-0, 2-1, 0-0)
Germany - Switzerland	2 - 0	(1-0, 0-0, 1-0)
Finland - Denmark	3 - 2	(1-1, 2-0, 0-1)
Germany - Finland	2 - 4	(0-2, 2-1, 0-1)
Denmark - Switzerland	2 - 4	(1-2, 1-0, 0-2)

Finland	3	3	0	0	10 - 5	6
Germany	3	2	0	1	7 - 5	4
Switzerland	3	1	0	2	5 - 7	2
Denmark	3	0	0	3	5 - 10	0

Quarterfinal Games

Sweden - Slovakia	5 - 3	(3-1, 1-2, 1-0)
Czech Republic - Russia	5 - 1	(2-0, 2-0, 1-1)

Semi-Final Games

United States - Sweden	6 - 2	(1-0, 4-1, 1-1)
Canada - Czech Republic	3 - 2	(1-0, 0-2, 1-0)

Placement Game

Slovakia - Russia	2 - 5	(0-2, 0-2, 2-1)
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Bronze Medal Game

Sweden - Czech Republic	4 - 2	(3-1, 0-0, 1-1)
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Gold Medal Game

United States - Canada	5 - 1	(2-1, 1-0, 2-0)
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Final Standing

1. United States	9. Slovakia
2. Canada	10. Finland
3. Sweden	11. Germany
4. Czech Republic	12. Switzerland
5. Russia	13. Denmark

Switzerland & Denmark relegated to 2006 IIHF World U18 Championship Division I

Directorate Awards:

Best Goalkeeper: Ondrej Pavelec (CZE)
 Best Defenseman: Luc Bourdon (CAN)
 Best Forward: Phil Kessel (USA)
 Most Valuable Player: Phil Kessel (USA)

Media All-Star Team:

Goaltender: Ondrej Pavelec (CZE)
 Defensemen: Vyacheslav Buravchikov (RUS), Kristopher Letang (CAN)
 Forwards: Nicklas Bergfors (SWE), Phil Kessel (USA), Martin Hanzal (CZE)

Where in the World:
List of 2006 events

■ Every year at the IIHF Annual Congress, the Calendar of Events is set for the upcoming season. Below is the allocation of each IIHF Championship and other major events for the 2006 season.

IIHF WORLD WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

LATVIA, Riga 05-21.05.06

IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group A

FRANCE, Amiens 24-30.04.06

IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group B

ESTONIA, Tallinn 23-29.04.06

IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group A

BULGARIA, Sofia 27.03-02.04.06

IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group B

NEW ZEALAND, Auckland 03-09.04.06

IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III

ICELAND, Reykjavik 22-28.04.06

IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP

CANADA, Vancouver, Kelowna & Kamloops 26.12.05-05.01.06

IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group A

SLOVENIA, Bled 11-17.12.05

IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group B

BELARUS, Minsk 12-18.12.05

IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group A

ROMANIA, Bucharest 12-18.12.05

IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group B

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO TBA

IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III

LITHUANIA, Kaunas 03-09.01.06

IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP

SWEDEN, Halmstad & Ängelholm 12-22.04.06

IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group A

HUNGARY, Miskolc 03-09.04.06

IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group B

LATVIA, Riga 03-09.04.06

IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group A

ITALY, Bolzano 02.08.04.06

IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group B

LITHUANIA, Elektrenai & Kaunas 19-25.03.06

IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III

ISRAEL, Metula 13-20.03.06

IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III QUAL.

APPLICANTS TBA

2005 IIHF IN-LINE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

FINLAND, Kuopio 09-16.07.05

IIHF EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS CUP (ECC)

RUSSIA, St Petersburg 05-08.01.06

2006 IIHF EUROPEAN WOMEN CHAMPIONS CUP

Preliminary Round Oct. 2005 Final Dec. 2005

2006 IIHF CONTINENTAL CUP

TBA

Israel opening hockey world's eyes

■ Israel, the middle-eastern country with one rink (Matula, in north Israel) has earned promotion to Division I of the IIHF World Championship after winning the gold medal in the 2005 IIHF World Championship Division II in Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro.

The win is one of the biggest feats that international ice hockey has ever seen. The team, coached by Canadian Jean Perron, who led the Montreal Canadians to the Stanley Cup victory in 1986, defeated Iceland 4-2 on Sunday, April 10 to clinch the division win. Perron also coached Israel's under-18 team in the IIHF World Championship program, leading that team to a third-place finish in the U18, division III in Sofia, Bulgaria in March.

■ Israeli standouts were goalie Evgeny Gussin, who allowed 11 goals in five games, and forward Oren Eizenman, who had ten goals and 14 points in five games. Three of the goals were game winners. Israel started to look like a serious promotion contender after a 7-4 win against Belgium, one of the founding IIHF nations, in the third round.

Perron was 'recruited' to coach the Israeli national team by Alan Maislin, a Montreal-based businessman who is also the chairman of the Israeli Ice Hockey Association. Perron's involvement started with the Israel U18 tea last year.

"I approached him about it and he jumped at the opportunity," said Maislin.

minor league players, most are immigrants from North America or Russia, can now look forward to facing division I team made up largely of full-time professional players. Division I, formerly known as the B-Pool, is the level below the top-16 IIHF World Championship.

■ But for Israel, winning the Division II Championship is just the first step. There are already plans to build another ice rink in Tel-Aviv for the nation's 100 or so registered players. The nation is also hoping to add more players to its program and ultimately make an appearance in the Olympics.

"I want that Israel one day can play Olympic hockey," said Maislin. "I believe that we have the potential. To survive in this country, you have to have mental toughness and our players won't have problems with being tough. Now we just need to add some skill."



CHAMPS: Team Israel poses at this year's Division II World Championship with head coach Jean Perron in the middle of the group.

Israel's recreational, college and

Preparing to ring in the 2006 Winter Olympics



Photo: NADINE SCHAFFER, Toroc

A MAN AND HIS CASTLE: When Jukka-Pekka Vuorinen was hired as the Competition Manager of the 2006 Olympic Ice Hockey events in June 2003, there was really nothing that resembled a hockey arena on the site. When this photo was taken with approximately 250 days until the first face-off, the arena was clearly taking shape.

By Szymon Szemberg, IIHF

■ With 250 days left to the XX Olympic Winter Games in Turin, Italy, the IIHF *Ice Times* checked in with Jukka-Pekka Vuorinen, who is the Competition Manager for both men's and women's ice hockey events. "J-P" has been stationed in the northern Italian city since June 2003 to plan and oversee the Olympic hockey tournaments.

What is the most challenging part of your job?

So far, it has been to find all the right people. Since Turin is not really a hockey city and Italy not a genuine hockey country, I had to look elsewhere for most positions. Right now I have 35 contractors and 270 volunteers. You need a good core of experienced people to make this project work.

Looking back at all previous Olympics, both summer and winter, there is always a drama with venues not being ready on schedule. How is the situation in Turin?

All four venues, the two competition venues and the two training venues will be ready on schedule. The last one to be completed is one of the training venues and that will be ready in January 2006. The main arena, Palasport Olimpico, will be completed at the end of October. We can probably even start making ice there in September.

Give us a short summary of the two hockey venues, the capacity and also the distance between them.

The Palasport Olimpico is a brand new arena which will seat around 12,300 fans and it is located just by the Olympic Stadium, the venue of the opening and closing ceremonies. The Torino Esposizioni is an exhibi-

tion centre which is refurbished into a hockey arena and it will take some 6,000 fans. The distance between them is four kilometres.

What would you say about the arenas from the fan and media perspective?

The Palasport Olimpico will be a great place for fans to watch hockey and a very convenient place for media to work from. It will have all the modern comfort you can expect with great sightlines. The Esposizioni has a more intimate atmosphere since it's not so big, but it will also be a very good arena for the fans as well as for media. At this arena, we will use the attached university building as the media centre. I think many will be nicely surprised by the second venue.



Italy is not really a genuine hockey country. How will that affect the hockey tournament?

I don't think anyone will notice since most of the fans who watch Olympic competition are travelling fans and we will have many of those. On the other hand, this will be a great opportunity for Italian hockey to use this exposure for its development program. I really hope they will seize the chance.

You were in charge of the host organization of the 2003 IIHF World Championship in Finland. What is the biggest difference between the 2003 job and the Olympic assignment?

In 2003 I was in charge of overseeing the entire organisation, while here I am in charge of only the sports related issues and I consult on the rest. Another difference is the lack of hockey culture in Italy. In Finland, you really don't have to explain things to people about hockey. Here you must often take an extra look to see if they understand hockey related problems.

At this point we still don't know whether NHL players will participate or not. Will that make a big difference as far as the organizers are concerned?

I was more concerned about that in the beginning, not anymore really. I think many players with Olympic potential will opt to stay in Europe over the Olympics due to the unsolved lockout situation. Also if you look back at 1994, we had a great Olympic tournament in Lillehammer without any NHL participation. The Olympics have such a strong value in themselves that they are not dependent on any individual athletes taking part or not.

You reported at the IIHF Congress in Vienna that 125,000 tickets were already sold for the hockey events. What is the goal?

The TOROC goal is 280,000 tickets sold, my own estimation says close to 300,000. Of all tickets sold so far, the hockey share is 28 percent. No other sport has sold more tickets.

Are you planning to see any other Olympic events other than hockey?

Dan Moro, who had my position in Salt Lake City, told me that his biggest mistake was not to see anything else than hockey in 2002. I will really try to get away one day to catch the Olympic spirit in other sports, providing everything works fine in the four hockey venues. I'd like to see some alpine skiing event.

What will you do when it's over?

I really hope that there will be some openings in the hockey business for someone who has been in charge of organizing an Olympic hockey tournament and an IIHF World Championship. I'll definitely try to stay in hockey.

■ For Turin 2006 updates and ticket info, go to: www.torino2006.org