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Photo: Thomas Freyer, IIHF (left), Tommy Hall (right)

BIG DEAL & SMALL GEAR: The IIHF Semi-Annual Congress in Vilamoura, Portugal in September was the site of many major decisions that will affect the world of international ice hockey. IIHF President René Fasel and NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly (holding a poster of the Turin 2006 ice hockey symbol) finalized the Olympic agreement which secures the NHL players' participation in Turin 2006 and most probably in Vancouver 2010 as well. The congress also approved a down-sizing of the goalkeepers' equipment, as worn by Sweden's national team goalie Henrik Lundqvist in the right photo.

Done deal - Turin 2006 is signed & sealed

All pieces in the puzzle that is the world of international ice hockey are now in place following the 2005 IIHF Semi-Annual Congress. What was decided in Vilamoura, Portugal in late September will affect fans, players and officials for many years to come.

RENÉ FASEL EDITORIAL

■■■ Just six months ago, the hockey world was in somewhat disarray. As the NHL lockout was still in effect, we couldn't tell what ramifications it would have on the international game, especially regarding Olympic participation and the Player Transfer Agreement for players going between the IIHF member national associations and the National Hockey League.

When the NHL and its Player's Association agreed upon a new Collective Bargaining Agreement, it was time for us to swiftly change focus to the vital issues mentioned above. We fairly quickly agreed to terms for both the Olympic participation for NHL players for Turin 2006 and the Player Transfer Agreement.

■■■ Following our meetings in Portugal, we should be very satisfied with the fact that hockey fans from all over the world will see an Olympic hockey tournament of the highest possible quality in Turin in February. The meetings in Vilamoura gave us the opportunity to finalize the outstanding issues and details with the NHL's Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly and with the NHLPA's new Chief Executive Officer Ted Saskin.

The ratification process of the Player Transfer Agreement with the national associa-

tions and their national leagues was a demanding process that took a lot of time and energy to finalize. Some European leagues wanted more time to study the transfer agreement but when this was written, the PTA was being signed & sealed.

I regret deeply that the Russian clubs did not want to join the two-year agreement which now includes all the remaining European hockey nations, specifically the Czech Republic, Germany, Finland, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland. I still hope that the Russians will re-consider and join the pact for the 2006-2007-season.

The new PTA holds three major improvements for the European IIHF-affiliated clubs whose players sign with NHL-teams:

- Higher compensation for each player.
- Earlier deadline (June 15) for transfers of players under contract.
- Additional fee if player does not participate in 30 NHL games in his first season.

■■■ The congress decided to approve the proposal that will see the size of the goalkeepers' equipment reduced by approximately 10 percent, as of the start of the 2006-07-season. This, and also the expansion of the top pool of the IIHF World Women Championship to nine teams, were two major adjustments that should change the international hockey scene for the better.

Both changes will be closely monitored to see if they have the desired effects.

René Fasel
IIHF President

December 22 is deadline for men's Olympic roster announcements

■■■ The following decisions regarding the XX Olympic Winter Games in Turin 2006 and the men's tournament were made at a special Olympic meeting in Vilamoura, Portugal with the representatives of the participating nations, the NHL and the NHLPA:

□ Deadlines for roster submissions:

October 24, 2005. This is the final date for the national ice hockey associations to submit a list of candidates to their National Olympic Committee (NOC). The list can have an unlimited number of entries, but a player who is not on the list as of October 24 cannot be added to the Olympic team at a later stage. All players on the long-list will be subject to doping tests by WADA, the World Anti-Doping Agency or national anti-doping agencies.



December 22, 2005. This is the deadline for officially announcing the Olympic rosters (20 skaters and 3 goalkeepers) by the national ice hockey associations. This is a "soft" deadline as players who are injured or out of form can be replaced until the final rosters are registered to the Olympic Directorate in Turin, twenty-four hours before the start of the tournament. (See next deadline).

February 14, 2006. The teams will submit the names of the participating players at the first Olympic Directorate in Turin, twenty-four hours before the start of the tournament.

The maximum number of players allowed on a Team Registration Form at the beginning of the men's Olympic tournament is 20 skaters and 3 goalkeepers. The minimum

is 15 skaters and 2 goalkeepers.

□ Olympic goalkeepers' equipment measurements:

Following an extensive discussion, it was decided that the present IIHF rules regarding goalkeepers' equipment sizes will be applied in Turin 2006. Goaltenders coming from the NHL will have the choice of staying with the current down-sized NHL equipment or to 'upgrade' to current IIHF sized equipment.

□ The men's Olympic ice hockey tournament in Turin 2006 will be officiated by six IIHF referees and four NHL referees to be named later. The on-ice officials will be assigned to games by the IIHF Referee Supervisor group (including one NHL representative)

The nominated referees:

Thomas Andersson (SWE), Vladimir Sindler (CZE), Timo Favorin (FIN), Vyacheslav Bulanov (RUS), Danny Kurmann (SUI), Christer Larking (SWE) and four NHL referees (CAN/USA) to be named in the first week of December.

Linesmen: Petr Blumel (CZE), Kevin Redding (USA), Derek Doucette (CAN), Joacim Karlsson (SWE), Sergey Shelyanin (RUS), Antti Hamalainen (FIN), Miroslav Halecky (SVK), Tomas Gemeinhart (GER), Milan Masik (SVK), Stefan Fonselius (FIN) and four NHL linesmen (CAN/USA) to be named in the first week of December.

See page 11 for list of on-ice official assignments for other top IIHF events.

Major congress decisions: Goalkeepers get smaller, World Women's top pool expands to nine-team format

The following decisions were made at the 2005 IIHF Semi-Annual Congress in Vilamoura, Portugal.

■■■ **Thursday, September 15:** The congress approved the proposal of a general down-sizing of the goalkeeper equipment. The new goalkeeper equipment measurements for leg guards, catching glove and blocking glove will be, in general, reduced by around 10 percent. See page 8 for a detailed report on the new measurements.

The new measurements will apply for all IIHF Top Pool and Division I World Championships, as of the start of the 2006-2007 season. The Division II and Division III levels of the IIHF World Championship program have a two-year grace period for the down-sizing of the equipment.

The new goalkeeper equipment measurements will conform with the recent down-sizing of goalkeeper's equipment in the National Hockey League.

■■■ **Saturday, September 17:** The top pool of the IIHF World Women Championship will expand from eight teams to nine as of the yet-to-be allocated 2007 World Women's event. This format was already used for the

2004 IIHF World Women Championship in Halifax, Canada as a result of an extraordinary decision that followed the cancellation of the 2003 women's top pool event in China due to the outbreak of the SARS disease.

The objective of the new 3 x 3-group format is to produce higher quality games and more parity, as it is tailor-made to suit the balance of power in the top pool of the World Women Championship. All the lower women's divisions will remain six-team championships.

■■■ The congress postponed the decision regarding the implementation of the 3-point system to the Annual Congress in Riga, Latvia in May 2006. The full proposal includes awarding the winning team with 3 points, 1 point for a tie at the conclusion of regular time (1 extra point for OT win) and no points for a regulation time loss, as well a 4-on-4, five-minute overtime and a shootout if the overtime ends scoreless.

The congress did not reject the change, which would include the entire IIHF World Championship program in all age groups, but asked for more time to study the proposal as the implementation is planned for as of the 2006-2007 season.

■■■ The congress also decided to postpone the proposal regarding U20 and U18 qualification tournaments to the Annual Congress in Riga. The objective of the qualification tournaments is to ensure that the strongest possible teams compete in the top pools of the U20 and U18 World Championships.

The proposed four-team qualification tournament would include the top two teams that are promoted from the division I level and the two last teams from the top pool. The proposed time frame for the U20 qualifications is the September national team break (the two top from the qualifications would join the top pool in December/January) while U18 qualifications would be played in November and the winners would promote to the top pool in April.

New Player Transfer Deal includes six Euro countries

■■■ The new Player Transfer Agreement between the IIHF member national associations, their leagues and the National Hockey League was signed by all relevant European hockey countries except Russia.

The highlights of the new PTA:

- The agreement is for two years, 2005-06 and 2006-07.
- The signing deadline for 2005-06 was August 24, 2005. The deadline for 2006-07 is June 15, 2006.
- Players who are drafted in the 2006 NHL Entry Draft in late June can be signed until July 15 or until August 15. For players signed between July 16 and August 15, the NHL will pay an additional fee of 100,000 USD.
- The NHL will pay a basic development fee of 200,000 USD for each IIHF-player signed. If the total amount of signed IIHF-players exceeds 45, the amount for each player (46-60) will be 225,000 USD.
- For each signed IIHF-player, who is not on NHL-roster for 30 games or more (including playoffs), the NHL will pay additional payments:
 - a) 50,000 USD for players selected in the first round of the NHL Entry Draft.
 - b) 100,000 USD for player selected in the second round of the NHL Entry Draft.
 - c) 150,000 USD for players selected in the third or subsequent round of the NHL Entry Draft.

IIHF Notes



■■■ The Executive Directorate of Latvia 2006 announced that **Chris Reynolds** has been appointed as Sports Director of the 2006 IIHF World Championship in Riga. Reynolds will oversee all game related aspects such as medical services, statistics, co-ordination of game officials, team services and the coaching symposium. Reynolds, who will start in December 2005, currently holds the position of Hockey Director for the Anschutz Entertainment Group in Europe. Reynolds worked for the IIHF's Sports Department from 1997 - 2001.

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International Ice Hockey Federation

Brandschenkestrasse 50
Postfach CH-8039 Zürich
Switzerland

Phone +41.44.562.22.00
Fax +41.44.562.22.29
Email office@iihf.com



www.iihf.com

European NHL-hopefuls 05-06

■■ List includes only first-time signings under the new IIHF-NHL Player Transfer Agreement, not players returning to NHL following the 04-05 lockout. This list is unofficial and does not necessarily reflect the final pay-out list. List also includes Russian players, although Russia did not sign the PTA. (Total 43 Europeans, 1 Japanese)

July 28

CZE - Zbynek Hrdel (-85) - TB - Rimouski QMJHL 02-05
GER - Patrick Ehelechner (-84) - SJ - Sudbury OHL 03-04 - Hannover 01-03
CZE - Martin Lojek (-85) - FLA - Brampton OHL 02-05

July 29

SWE - Henrik Lundqvist (-82) - NYR - Frolunda 01-05

July 31

RUS - Andrei Mukachev (-80) - NAS - CSKA Moscow 02-05

August 2

RUS - Roman Voloshenko (-86) - MIN - Krylia Sovetov 02-05

August 3

CZE - Vojtech Polak (-85) - DAL - K.Vary, Sparta P, Dukla J, K.Vary 01-05

August 4

SWE - Johan Franzen (-79) - DET - Linkoping 01-05

August 5

RUS - Alexander Ovechkin (-85) - WAS - Dynamo Moscow 01-05

August 8

CZE - Miroslav Kopriva (-83) - MIN - Kladno 03-05

August 9

SWE - Alexander Steen (-84) - TOR - Frolunda 01-04, Modo 04-05

SWE - Staffan Kronwall (-82) - TOR - Djurgarden 02-05, Brynas 05

August 11

SVK - Jaroslav Halak (-85) - MTL - Slovan B. 02-04, Lewiston, QMJHL 04-05

JPN - Yutaka Fukufuji (-82) - LA - Kokudo 01-02, ECHL 02-05

August 12

SVK - Roman Kukumberg (-80) - TOR - Dukla Trencin 01-04, Nizhnekamsk 04-05

SWE - Yared Hagos (-83) - DAL - AIK 01-03, Timra 03-05

August 15

CZE - Martin Tuma (-85) - FLA - Litvinov 01-02, OHL/AHL 03-05

August 16

KAZ - Vitaly Kolesnik (-79) - COL - Torpedo Ust Kamenogorsk 01-05

August 17

FIN - Masi Marjamaki (-85) - NYI - Assat Pori 01-02, WHL 02-05

FIN - Hannu Pikkarainen (-83) - NYR - IFK Helsinki 02-05 (returned to HIFK)

CZE - Petr Prucha (-82) - NYR - Pardubice 01-05

August 18

CZE - Rostislav Olesz (-85) - FLA - Vitkovice 01-04, Sparta Prague 04-05

August 19

FIN - Valtteri Filppula (-84) - DET - Jokerit 01-05

HUN - Janos Vas (-84) - DAL - Malmo 02-04, Halmstad 04-05

CZE - Jaroslav Balastik (-79) - CLB - Zlin 01-02, HPK 02-03, Zlin 02-05

August 22

FIN - Jarkko Immonen (-82) - NYR - 01-02 Assat Pori, 02-05 JypHT

August 23

CZE - Petr Sykora (-78) - WAS - Pardubice 01-05, Nashville 98-99

CZE - Marek Kvapil (-85) - TB - Slavia Prague 03-04, Saginaw OHL 04-05

FIN - Pekka Rinne (-82) - NAS - Karpat Oulu 01-05

FIN - Lauri Tukonen (-86) - LA - Espoo Blues 03-05

FIN - Petteri Nokelainen (-86) - NYI - SaiPa 02-05

August 24

CZE - Ladislav Smid (-86) - ANA - Liberec 02-05

SWE - Niklas Nordgren (-79) - CAR - Timra 01-05

SWE - Nicklas Grossman (-85) - DAL - Sodertalje 02-05

SWE - Lou Eriksson (-85) - DAL - Frolunda 03-05

SWE - Daniel Fernholm (-83) - PIT - 03-05 Hammarby/Djurgarden 04-05 Bolzano

FIN - Jussi Jokinen (-83) - DAL - 01-05 Karpat Oulu

SUI - Tobias Stephan (-84) - DAL - 01-02 Chur, 02-05 Klooten

SVK - Peter Olvecky (-85) - MIN - Dukla Trencin 03-05

Signings announced after the August 24 deadline

August 25

SUI - Mark Streit (-77) - MTL - Zurich 01-05

SVK - Andrej Meszaros (-85) - OTT - Dukla Trencin, 02-04, Vanc. WHL 04-05

August 29

CZE - Tomas Popperle (-84) - CLB - Sparta Prague 03-05

August 30

SWE - Robert Nilsson (-85) - NYI - Leksand 02-04, Fribourg 04, Djurgarden 04-05

September 6

SLO - Anze Kopitar (-87) - LA - Acroni Jesenice 02-04, Sodertalje 04-05

Total: CZE 11, SWE 10, FIN 8, SVK 4, RUS 3, SUI 2, HUN 1, GER 1, KAZ 1, JPN 1, SLO 1

Kharlamov and Costello go to Hall

■■ Valeri Kharlamov (Russia) and Cam Neely (Canada) were elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame in the Player Category. In the Builder Category, IIHF Council member, Murray Costello, was elected. The vote was made in June at the annual meeting of the Selection Committee in Toronto.



KHARLAMOV

Kharlamov (born 1948) combined speed, strength, intelligence, spectacular skills and a natural goal scoring ability during an outstanding 14-year career with CSKA Moscow. Kharlamov led CSKA to 11 league championships.



COSTELLO

He participated in 11 consecutive IIHF World Championships and helped the Soviet Union win gold on eight occasions. In other international play, he participated in three Olympic Games, winning gold in 1972 and 1976, and was a key member on one of the greatest lines in hockey history, partnering with CSKA teammates Boris Mikhailov and Vladimir Petrov.

Kharlamov and his wife died in a car accident while returning from vacation on August 17, 1981.

Kharlamov became only the second European player, who had never played in the NHL, to be inducted. Vladislav Tretiak was the first. Kharlamov was inducted to the IIHF Hall of Fame in 1998.

■■ Costello began his professional hockey career playing parts of two seasons

with the Boston Bruins and the Detroit Red Wings from 1954 - 55 to 1956 - 57. He left hockey for law school and later became President of the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association (now Hockey Canada) in 1979, holding that position until his retirement in 1998.

Costello has been a member of the IIHF Council since 1998. He is also chairman of the IIHF Medical and Junior Committees. He was an IIHF internal auditor for eight years before he was elected to the council.

"I never envisioned it would end up like this," he said from his Ottawa home. "To see myself among the people in that Hall is difficult to comprehend. I have been privileged to have the chance to live my life fulfilling my childhood passion," said Costello. "To be rewarded for doing it is really beyond anything that I ever expected."

While heading the CAHA, the process that led to formation of the national junior team was started.

"The success of that program remains rewarding to me," said Costello. "Players who were on our national junior teams still respond to the call to play for the country and that is quite special to me."

■■ The 2005 Induction Celebration will be held on Monday, November 7th, at the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto

Art of USA calls it a career after 30 years

■■ Art Berglund, Senior Director of International Administration at USA Hockey, retired on June 30 after a more than 30-year career with the organization as both a volunteer and member of the national office staff.

Berglund was involved with USA Hockey since 1973 and officially joined the national office staff in 1984. Before accepting his current position in 1996, he spent 11 years as director of national teams and international activities. He managed or served on the administrative staff of more than 30 U.S. teams in tournaments across the world, including six Olympic Winter Games.

Berglund was the general manager for eight U.S. National Junior Teams between 1977 and 1992, and from 1985-91, he held the same position with the U.S. men's national team. He managed his second U.S. Olympic men's team in 1988.

■■ Adding to his impressive resume, Berglund was the assistant general manager for two U.S. entries into the Canada Cup tournament (1981, 1991). He chaired the 1984 U.S. Olympic Player Selection Committee and was director of player personnel for three U.S. Olympic Teams (1992, 1994, 2002), including the silver-medal-winning 2002 squad.

Berglund will remain with USA Hockey on a part-time basis as a consultant to the international department.



BERGLUND

"That USA is dominant force on all levels within the IIHF program is on many accounts related to Art Berglund's efforts. When Art started with USA Hockey, their national teams only occasionally performed well. Today, every time a US team participates, they are a medal contender," said IIHF President René Fasel.



KINGS OF THE WORLD: Sweden celebrates its second-ever InLine Hockey title with a group photo. Meanwhile, Great Britain takes a break from its bronze celebration to pose with Brazil in the Division I championship.

Tre Kronor nabs second InLine Hockey crown

■■■ For the first time ever, the InLine Hockey powerhouse nation, Finland, was hosting the championship in the northern town of Kuopio and looked to be in prime position for a gold medal after cruising through the preliminary round unbeaten.

But Sweden had something else in mind. The 2003 gold medallists rebounded from a 6-8 preliminary round loss against the Finns to cruise to a 4-2 win in the golden game, stunning Finland and the 3,000+ fans that gathered to cheer the home team on.

The two meetings could not have been any more different. In the first game, the teams were aggressive, combining for 30 penalty minutes, while in the golden game, there was only one penalty whistled in the first period.

Sweden held a 3-0 in the third period before Finland found its scoring touch when Jussi Eloranta made it a 3-1 game. But by the start of the fourth period, Sweden had extended its lead to 4-1 and never looked back as the defense took over allowing only one additional goal in the golden win.

For Sweden, the golden win was especially sweet as it came against historic rival Finland, a team that knocked the Swedes out of contention for the gold medal last year.

Since 2002, the two Scandinavian nations have provided the InLine Hockey World Championship with one of the most exciting and competitive rivalries. In 2002, Sweden came from out of nowhere to win the gold medal - forcing Finland to settle for the bronze. That loss was particularly hard for the Finns, who were the two-time defending gold medallists, while the Swedes had never won a medal in the top division.

In 2003, the tables were turned when the teams met

again in the gold medal game. This time Finland came away the winner, while Sweden settled for silver. Last year, it was Finland again with the upper hand, winning the semi-final game against Sweden. Sweden was forced to play only for bronze, which it won, while Finland lost the gold to the Americans.

■■■ So the golden match-up came as no surprise to the InLine Hockey world as the teams battled in another classic chapter of the rivalry. Despite not being present on the podium in the first six years of the championship, after this year's gold medal finish, Sweden can truly claim its a place among the InLine hockey elite with two golds, a silver and a bronze in the last four years.

Of course, the other two medallists at this year's World Championship are considered the other two powerhouses in the InLine world. Despite the golden loss, Finland now has three gold, three silver and three bronze medals to its credit. Meanwhile, this year's bronze medallists, the United States took home its ninth medal in 10 InLine Hockey World Championships - including a record four golds.

In fact, this year's medallists were the same three teams on the podium for the last three years.

Division I Championship

Hungary could be called the all-or-nothing team of the InLine Hockey World Championships. After winning the gold medal in 2002, the Hungarians fell short of the podium for the next two seasons. But this year, the Hungarians bounced back in a big way, reclaiming the top spot after downing Japan, 6-3, in the Division I gold medal game. Ironically, it was a re-match of 2002 golden game.

Japan, the 2003 gold medallist, and last year's bronze finisher, put up a good fight in the final game, attempt-

ing to stage a comeback in the fourth period, but the five-goal lead that the Hungarians had built proved to be too much for Japan to overcome.

■■■ What is especially unique about this year's golden game was the fact that neither team won its preliminary round group. Instead, Great Britain, the bronze winner, and Brazil earned the top spots from the preliminary round groups and thus the right to play a qualification game to make it into the top division. Only Great Britain came close to every Division I team's goal, as the squad was one goal away from earning a spot among the elite eight in the qualification. But ultimately, Slovenia held on for the 5-4 win.

Qualification for 2006

Croatia will play for the first time ever at the IIHF InLine Hockey World Championship next year after winning the European Qualification Tournament in Pfaffenhofen. Croatia defeated Bulgaria, 10-3, and Liechtenstein, 12-4, en route to the qualification title. Bulgaria finished in second place after defeating Liechtenstein 10-8. Croatia will be the 16th-seeded team in 2006.

2005 IIHF InLine Hockey Championship

Top Division:	Division I:
1. Sweden	1. Hungary
2. Finland	2. Japan
3. United States	3. Great Britain
4. Czech Republic	4. Brazil
5. Germany	5. Australia
6. Slovenia	6. Portugal
7. Slovakia	7. Namibia
8. Austria	8. Chinese Taipei

We are the champions of the World

All national (men's) champions from IIHF member associations:

Armenia:	Dinamo Yeravan
Asian Hockey League	Kokudo Tokyo (JPN)
Australia:	West Sydney Ice Dogs
Austria:	Vienna Capitals
Belarus:	Yunost Minsk
Belgium:	IHC Leuven
Bosnia & Herzegov:	HK Bosna Sarajevo
Bulgaria:	Slavia Sofia
Canada:	London Knights (Memorial Cup)
	Thunder Bay Bombers (Allan Cup)
China:	Qiqihar
Chinese Taipei:	Taipeh Raptors
Croatia:	KHL Medvescak, Zagreb
Czech Republic:	HC Moeller-Pardubice
Denmark:	Herning Blue Fox
DPR Korea:	Phyongyang
Estonia:	HK Stars, Tallinn
Finland:	Kärpät Oulu
France:	Mulhouse Scorpions
Germany:	Eisbären Berlin
Great Britain:	Coventry Blaze
Hongkong:	Budweiser
Hungary:	Alba-Volan, Szekesfehervar
Iceland:	Skaufelag Akureyrar
Ireland:	No competition
Israel:	Hapoel Ganai-Aviv
Italy:	Milano Vipers
Japan:	Oji Tomakomai
Kazakhstan:	Kazzinc Torpedo, Ust-Kamenogorsk
Korea:	Yonsei University
Latvia:	HC Riga 2000
Lithuania:	Energija Elektrenai
Luxembourg:	No competition
Mexico:	Jurassics San Jeronimo, Mexico City
Mongolia:	Baganuur
Netherlands:	Amsterdam Bulldogs
New Zealand:	Auckland Whalers
Norway:	Valerenga Oslo
Poland:	GKS Tychy
Portugal:	No competition
Romania:	Steaua Bucharest
Russia:	Dynamo Moscow
Serbia & Montenegro:	Crvena Zvezda Belgrade
Singapore:	Linear Technology Lions
Slovakia:	Slovan Bratislava
Slovenia:	Acroni Jesenice
South Africa:	Krugersdorp Wildcats
Spain:	CH Jaca
Sweden:	Frolunda Indians, Gothenburg
Switzerland:	HC Davos
Thailand:	No competition
Turkey:	Polis Akademisi, Ankara
Ukraine:	Sokol Kiev
United Arab Emirates:	No competition
USA:	NCAA - University of Denver Pioneers



CROATIA: Medvescak struck again



DENMARK: Herning outfoxed all



HUNGARY: Alba Volan always hungry



FINLAND: Back-to-back Kärpät



LATVIA: Familiar scene for Riga 2000

■■ USA Hockey announced on June 30, 2005 that Dave Ogle returned as

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the Executive Director of the association, after nearly six years away from the post he served from 1993-99. The University of Connecticut grad who has twice worked for both USA Hockey (his career began in 1978 as the director of public relations) and the United States Olympic Committee and is coming off three years at USA Football, also as executive director.

■■ Team Finland and Montreal Canadiens captain and forward Saku Koivu is among 15 Olympians nominated to compete for two places that will open next year on the International Olympic Committee's Athletes Commission. The election will take place during the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy, and will be open to athletes participating in those Games.

■■ Mats Naslund, one of Sweden's most accomplished players, was appointed

Manager of the Swedish men's national team on July 4. Naslund's co-operation with head-coach Bengt-Ake Gustafsson started successfully as Sweden won the Ceska Pojistovna Cup in September, the first tournament of the four-leg European Hockey Tour.

■■ USA Hockey named Peter Laviolette (Carolina Hurricanes) the head coach of the 2006 U.S. Olympic men's hockey team on August 16. He led men's national team at the 2005 IIHF World Championship, finishing seventh. He also served as the head coach of the men's national team that won the bronze medal at the 2004 IIHF World Championship. He was the head coach of the winning team at the 2003 Deutschland Cup and the assistant coach at the 2004 World Cup of Hockey.

IIHF Disciplinary Announcements

■■ The IIHF Disciplinary Committee suspended the Belarus player Tsimafei Filin for two years from all competition or activity authorized or organized by the IIHF or any IIHF member national association. The Deciding Panel of the committee made the decision on June 28.

Filin, 21, tested positive in a random doping control on April 30, 2005 following the game against Slovakia at the 2005 IIHF World Championship in Vienna, Austria.

Both the A-sample as well as the requested test of the B-sample confirmed the presence of the metabolite norandrosterone of the anabolic steroid nandrolone. The concentration was more than 250 higher than the WADA reporting threshold of 2ng/ml. The period of suspension started on May 4, 2005 (the date of the confirmation of the B-sample) and will end on May 3rd, 2007.

■■ The IIHF Disciplinary Committee suspended USA Hockey player Justin Mercer (born: May 13, 1987) for the two first games played by Team USA at the 2006 IIHF World U20 Championship (in Canada, December 16, 2005 - January 5, 2006).

Mercer received a match penalty at the end of the gold medal game of the 2005 IIHF World U18 Championship in the Czech Republic against Canada when he hit Canadian player Colton Yellowhorn with a check from behind against the boards. The committee wrote in its report that the action not only resulted in an injury to Yellowhorn, but contained high risks for an even more severe injury.

Obituaries

■■ IIHF Hall of Famer Jacques Lacarrière passed away at the age of 99 on July 28, 2005. Lacarrière was a player on the French national team at the 1928 and 1936 Olympic Winter Games and one of the founders of the French Ice Hockey Association. Lacarrière was inducted to the IIHF Hall of Fame in 1998.

■■ Former IIHF Council member Bogdan Tyszkiewicz died suddenly in Warsaw, Poland on July 31, 2005. He was 50. Tyszkiewicz, who was a top international referee in the 80s, was on the IIHF Council 1994-1998. He was also President of the Polish Ice Hockey Association in the 90s.



Bogdan Tyszkiewicz

■■ Former Czechoslovak defenseman Rudolf Tajcnar died at the age of 57 on August 2, 2005. Tajcnar was member of the Czechoslovak team which won the 1972 IIHF World Championship in Prague. Tajcnar, a Slovak born in Bratislava, also won the European Championship in 1971 and the Olympic bronze in Sapporo in 1972. In the late 70s he played in the Philadelphia Flyers organization and also represented the WHA Edmonton Oilers, being one of the first Czechoslovak hockey players to leave the country to pursue a career in the west.

■■ Legendary Russian national team goaltender Nikolai Puchkov died at the age of 75 on August 8, 2005. Puchkov was the goalie who led the Soviet Union to its first ever IIHF World Championship gold medal in Stockholm in 1954 and also to the first Olympic gold medal, in Cortina in 1956. Puchkov, who played for Dynamo Moscow, VVS Moscow and CSKA Moscow, also won Olympic bronze in Squaw Valley in 1960.

Happy hockey campers spend

By Jenny Wiedeke
Vierumaki, Finland

■■■ For one week in July, the hockey world was united in Finland as the International Ice Hockey Federation hosted its Hockey Development Camp in Vierumaki.

Both the camp and Vierumaki are becoming familiar sites on the IIHF summer calendar as it was the third consecutive year that the IIHF hosted a Development Camp in the central Finland sports heaven.

This year's camp was a return to focus on male hockey players after a successful female development camp in 2004. Over 400 participants from 45 nations converged on Vierumaki for a week of learning, growing and friendship.

"Every year it's amazing to see how this camp continues to evolve," IIHF Sport Director Dave Fitzpatrick said outside the sports pavilion in Vierumaki. "The camp just continues to grow and envelop more areas of the hockey world."

This year's most notable addition to the Development Camp agenda was the inclusion of various Presidents and General Secretaries from Member National Associations. The 29 chiefs arrived in Finland midway through the camp and were amazed to see the atmosphere fully underway with players, coaches and officials fully involved in their daily schedules. The presidents and general secretaries didn't have much time to awe at the bustling environment as they were also soon part of the busy Vierumaki schedule.

For each participant, the Vierumaki experience is a little different. The 145, 15 year-old players from the many nations that attend were split up onto eight teams. Those teams did virtually everything together during the week: eat, play, practice, condition and of course, spend free time.

■■■ Then there were the adult participants, who were kept busy with a variety of schedules. For the officials, there were on-ice practices, followed by classroom lectures, and calling the afternoon games at the double ice-sheet facility at Vierumaki. The coaches were also on a similar program, splitting their time between their teams and the classroom, where they learned the latest techniques from the hand-picked instructors and mentors.

The Learn to Play Instructors had an extra duty, each day following their classroom sessions, they would run practices with local Finnish youth players. With so many different schedules to keep track of, the camp often resembled an ant farm with everyone going in different directions, but with the same common goal.

And that goal, of course, was the further development of ice hockey all around the globe. It is the ultimate hope of the IIHF that each participant from Vierumaki will take what they learned back to their home nation and



ALL THE COLORS IN THE RAINBOW... and virtually every nation in the hockey family gathered for the group photo at the

spread the word. But each lesson may be a little different. A Mexican player may take home a new skill to show his teammates, while a Danish coach might have picked up a new drill or two. Of course the lessons go both ways, perhaps a North American player can take home a lesson of tolerance for developing hockey nations while a Referee Instructor from Europe might have learned a better way to teach local officials.

■■■ The Finnish Ice Hockey Association and Vierumaki were once again the perfect hosts. The site offers the ideal development experience with sporting activities everywhere campers went. The Finns also bring a vast hosting and hockey experience to the camp after holding the Development Camp for the last three consecutive years, in addition to being one of the 'Big Seven' hockey nations that developing countries can look to as a role model. And of course, participants were introduced to the unique parts of Finnish culture including saunas, lakes, fish and late sunsets.

At the end of the camp, it was all the lessons, both on and off the ice that the participants will remember -- and that will have a ripple effect across the hockey community as they return home to share their Vierumaki experience.

a week in Vierumaki



Photo: JANI RAJAMAKI

2005 IIHF Development Camp in Finland. More than 400 participants from 45 nations took part in the week-long event.

No ice, no problem

■■■ One of the most challenging parts of developing hockey around the world is the lack of ice and arenas which is one of the reasons that off-ice conditioning, drills and skills were emphasized at this year's Development Camp.

At all times of the days, coaches could be seen out on the fields surrounding the ice area putting their teams through a variety of drills meant to enhance both conditioning and skills.

"The off-ice drills are extremely important at a camp like this," said Darryl Easson IIHF Youth Development Manager. "We need to find things that every player can easily do when he gets home and because of the lack of ice time for some players, these drills are perfect."

■■■ Most of the drills the players went through needed nothing more than a stick and perhaps a tennis ball. Many of the drills players could do on their own in their spare time, while others they could do with their entire teams back home. Either way, the off-ice training opened up an entire new world of options for both the players and coaches at the Development Camp when they return home.



OFF ICE: Players find new goals away from the ice.

Coaching Degree Students Going Global

■■■ Three years ago, the International Ice Hockey Federation, along with Vierumaki Sports Institute decided to offer the first-ever Coaching Degree Program. And three classes of students later, the program continues to grow and improve.

This year, the program expanded even further as the class of third-year students were given the option of finding their work placement through the IIHF. The work placement is essentially a year-long internship where the students find coaching jobs or other placements in hockey.

But with the new twist this season, the IIHF reached out to its member national associations to see if any developing hockey nations would like to have the expertise of a Vierumaki student for a year. The response was overwhelming as the nations lined up for the students. In turn, the students were able to pick opportunities that fit their ambitions.

Thus far, there are five students that have found a match with the work placement. Adam Sollitt will be based in Mexico this season, while Taemin Lee is helping out all over the Asian region. One student, Anna Eskola is working at the IIHF headquarters in Zurich working with the Women's hockey program. Other work locations include Australia and Hungary.

The degree program is a 3.5 year full-time undergraduate program, which mainly focuses on coaching with the principle objective being for students to gain an internationally recognised qualification that will allow them to work as head coaches, coaches and sports instructors.

The first two years of the studies are based in Vierumäki. While the work placement makes up the final part of the degree. Before the IIHF got into the work placement picture, students traditionally went back to their native nations, or stayed in Finland for their work placements, but now the students are looking forward to their exotic work placements.

"Getting involved in the work placement phase of the degree program is a win-win situation for everyone," says Dave Fitzpatrick IIHF Sport Director. "We have nations that have such a deep desire to improve their local programs, but without the manpower to do so, while we also had students that wanted to put their skills to good use. It simply makes sense to bring the two together."

So far the early returns from the globe trotters has been positive. Adam Sollitt, a native of Canada who is working in Mexico, is being exposed to a whole other side of the sport that he never saw in Canada. The same goes for Anna Eskola, who is getting her first glimpse into the administrative side of hockey at the IIHF.

These students, along with the previous classes of students are the trailblazers of the Coaching Degree Program. And thanks to their willingness to take a risk both on a previously untested program and a newly untested placement program the game of hockey is a stronger sport.

For information on applying to the IIHF Coaching Degree Program, please visit the Vierumaki website at: www.vierumaki.fi

OFFICIATING NEWS

Referee Exchange Program ready for second year

■■■ Like the Rolling Stones, the International Ice Hockey Federation is sending its top European referees on tour.

For the second season, 14 of the best European officials will take part in the IIHF Referee Exchange Program. The program sends referees from the top seven European hockey nations (according to the IIHF World Ranking) to officiate games in each other's countries.



ANDERSSON - SWE

Like last season, this year's program will include two referees from each of the seven nations, for a total of 14 men. Of the 14 officials participating this season, eight are veterans from last year's tour including: Milan Minar, Timo Favorin, Richard Schutz, Vyacheslav Bulanov, Peter Jonak, Thomas Andersson, Danny Kurmann and Brent Reiber. The high number of returnees shows not only the popularity of the program, but also the benefit.



■■■ The idea behind the exchange is to allow the top IIHF officials the chance to call games in another professional league setting. This not only gives them the experience of skating in a different atmosphere among an entirely new group of players, it also allows them to learn what rules are emphasized in other countries and what level of officiating is expected.



Veteran Danny Kurmann from Switzerland commented, "Switzerland is a smaller country, you see a lot of the same players year in and year out. The program opened a whole new door and introduced a lot of us to a different style of game."

It is hoped that this introduction will give the game officials a better idea of the varying styles of play

from nation to nation and ultimately lead to more consistent officiating across borders.

The nations that are taking part in the exchange program include Russia, Finland, Sweden, Slovakia, Switzerland, Germany and the Czech Republic. Those nations' top professional leagues have opened their doors to the Referee Exchange Program.

■■■ Typically, each participating referee will call 12 games during the season, or about two per month. The referee will travel into a country for a weekend series, calling a game in one city on a Friday night and in another city later in the weekend. The program is designed to allow the referees to see as many teams as possible in any given nation, so rarely will the referee officiate the same team twice.

While in the foreign countries, the participants will be on the ice with local linesmen. The linesmen not only help the referees learn the ropes of the league games quickly, but can also prove to be valuable translators. On hand in each nation, there are also Referee Supervisors, who will evaluate each game according to the local standards.

In total there are seven referee supervisors taking part in the program, one from each of the participating nations.

■■■ Last year, both the players and journalists reacted well to the referee exchange program, noting that it not only gave the officials a glimpse of the game in a different nation, but also the players an idea of what standards are upheld in other nations.

It will be a busy season for the 14 officials taking part in the program. The 14 officials will have called a total of 152 games by the end of the year. Each referee will oversee about 12 games in the six foreign nations, but as the old saying goes, 'a rolling stone gathers no moss'. And these stones will surely be sharper on the ice come World Championships from their European tour during the season.



VINNEBORG - SWE



SINDLER - CZE



SCHUTZ - GER



REICHERT - GER



JONAK - SVK



KONC - SVK



KURMANN - SUI



MINAR - CZE



POLYAKOV - RUS



RANTALA - FIN



REIBER - SUI

New rules will keep rulers busy: Goaltender equipment to be downsized next season

■■■ One of the biggest decisions made at the 2005 IIHF Semi-Annual Congress was to decrease the overall size of goaltender equipment at all IIHF sanctioned events.

The change is one that was also recently implemented in the NHL in an effort, among other things, to increase scoring. In general, the size of the goaltender equipment will be reduced by around 10 percent.

New Goaltender Measurement Standards

Blocking Glove

New Length: 38.1 cm
New Width: 20.32 cm

Old Length: 41 cm
Old Width: 21 cm

Leg Guards:

New Width: 28 cm

Old Width: 30.5 cm

Catching Glove:

New Perimeter: 114.3 cm
New Length: 46 cm
Maximum outside dimensions
Width of wristcuff: 10.16 cm

■■■ The new goalkeeper equipment measurements will effect the leg guards, catching glove and blocking glove.

The new measurements will apply for all IIHF Top Pool and Div. I World Championships, at the start of the 2006-2007 season. The Div. II and Div. III levels have a two-year grace period for the down-sizing of the equipment.

Blocking glove:

The maximum outside dimensions of the protective padding, forming part of the blocking glove, shall NOT exceed:

Length: 38.1 cm (old length: 41 cm)

Width: 20.32 cm (old width: 21 cm)

Catching glove:

The maximum outside dimensions of the catching glove shall NOT exceed: 20.32 cm in length in any part of the wrist cuff which must be 10.16 cm in width (height).

Distance from the heel along the pocket to the top of the T-trap shall be no more than 46 cm (old distance 48 cm). The perimeter of the catching glove shall not exceed 114.3 cm. (old perimeter 122 cm).

Leg guards:

The leg guards shall not exceed 28 cm in width when on the leg of the goalkeeper (old maximum width: 30.5 cm).

Aprons or plate covering the space between the ice and the bottom of the leg guards in front of the skates is NOT permitted.

For the 2006 Olympic Winter Games, goaltenders coming from the NHL will have the choice of staying with the current down-sized NHL equipment or to "upgrade" to current IIHF sized equipment since the new sizes do not take effect until the 2006-07 season.

All in the logo-family

The brand new look of the IIHF and its championships



Top Division Events



Lower Division Events



Club Competitions



From Turin to Riga to Vancouver: hockey tickets are red hot

- ❑ 2006 Olympics in Turin
- ❑ 2006 IIHF World U20 Championship in Vancouver
- ❑ 2006 IIHF World Championship in Riga

Ticket sales for these three major IIHF events are impressive.

■■■ With five months to go to the Opening Ceremonies of the XX Olympic Winter Games in Turin (February 10-26, 2006), ice hockey tickets are the hottest commodity among the 15 Olympic winter sports. So far, the men's and women's hockey events account for 28 percent of all Olympic tickets sold for Turin 2006.

Counting all 15 Olympic winter sports in Turin, 460.000 tickets are already sold which amounts to more than 56 percent of all available tickets.

Over 100.000 tickets have been sold for men's hockey games alone. The most requested games are the men's Gold Medal Game (February 26) and the men's preliminary round games USA-Sweden (February 19) and USA-Russia (February 21).

All available tickets from the first sales phase (February 10 – September 1, 2005) for those games are sold out, but the next sales phase for the general public started on September 27 and new availabilities were released.

The hockey games will be played at the 12,300-seat Palasport Olympico (venue for all Gold & Bronze medal games, as well as for all semi-finals) and at the 6.000-seat Torino Esposizioni.

Go to www.torino2006.org/tickets for more ticket and general information.

■■■ Also the ticket sales for the 70th IIHF World Championship in Riga, Latvia (May 5-21, 2006) are advancing with impressive speed. The host organizing committee of Latvia 2006 could, as of August 15, not accept any more ticket requests for any of the scheduled Latvian games or for the Gold Medal Game on May 21 at the 10,325-seat ArenaRiga as the requests far exceeded the number of available tickets.

Go to www.ihwc2006.lv for more ticket and general information.

■■■ All 21-game ticket packages for the games in Vancouver at the 2006 IIHF World U20 Championship were sold out as of the end of September, with single game tickets possibly going on sale in December. There are tickets left for games in Kamloops and Kelowna. Go to: www.hockeycanada.ca/e/teams/mens/junior/2006

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP		
2006	LATVIA, Riga	05-21.05.06
2007	RUSSIA, Moscow & St Petersburg	TBA
2008	CANADA, Quebec City & Halifax	TBA
2009	SWITZERLAND, Zurich & Berne	TBA
2010	GERMANY, Cologne & Mannheim	TBA
2011	APPLICANTS: SVK, SWE	TBA
IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group A		
2006	FRANCE, Amiens	24-30.04.06
IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group B		
2006	ESTONIA, Tallinn	23-29.04.06
IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group A		
2006	BULGARIA, Sofia	27.03-02.04.06
IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group B		
2006	NEW ZEALAND, Auckland	03-09.04.06
IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III		
2006	ICELAND, Reykjavik	22-28.04.06
IIHF WORLD WOMEN CHAMPIONSHIP		
2007	APPLICANT: CAN	TBA
2008	APPLICANTS: CHN	TBA
IIHF WORLD WOMEN CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I		
2007	TBA	TBA
IIHF WORLD WOMEN CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II		
2007	TBA	TBA
IIHF WORLD WOMEN CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III		
2007	TBA	TBA
IIHF WORLD WOMEN CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION IV		
2007	TBA	TBA
IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP		
2006	CANADA, Vancouver, Kelowna & Kamloops	26.12.05-05.01.06
2007	SWEDEN, Leksand & Mora	26.12.06-05.01.07
2008	APPLICANTS: BLR, CZE	TBA
2009	CANADA	TBA
2012	CANADA	TBA
IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group A		
2006	SLOVENIA, Bled	11-17.12.05
IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group B		
2006	BELARUS, Minsk	12-18.12.05
IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group A		
2006	ROMANIA, Bucharest	12-18.12.05
IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group B		
2006	SERBIA & MONTENEGRO, Belgrade	10-16.01.06
IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III		
2006	LITHUANIA, Kaunas	03-09.01.06
IIHF WORLD U20 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III QUALIFICATION		
2007	APPLICANTS	TBA
IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP		
2006	SWEDEN, Halmstad & Ängelholm	12-22.04.06
2007	FINLAND, Tampere & Nokia	19-29.04.07
IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group A		
2006	HUNGARY, Miskolc	03-09.04.06
IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION I, Group B		
2006	LATVIA, Riga	02-08.04.06
IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group A		
2006	ITALY, Merano	02.08.04.06
IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION II, Group B		
2006	LITHUANIA, Elektrenai & Kaunas	19-25.03.06
IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III		
2006	ISRAEL, Metula	13-20.03.06
IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION III QUALIFICATION		
2006	APPLICANTS	TBA

OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES

2006 ITALY, Turin 10-26.02.06
2010 CANADA, Vancouver February 2010
IIHF IN-LINE CHAMPIONSHIPS
IIHF IN-LINE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
2005 FINLAND, Kuopio 09-16.07.05
2006 HUNGARY, TBA 10-16.07.06

IIHF CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS

2006 IIHF EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS CUP (ECC)
RUSSIA, St Petersburg
05-08.01.06
2006 IIHF EUROPEAN WOMEN CHAMPIONS CUP
Preliminary Round (GER, EST & HUN)
14-16.10.05
Final (SWE)
02-04.12.05
2006 IIHF CONTINENTAL CUP
First Round (ROM & TUR)
23-25.09.05
Second Round (BLR, FRA & POL)
14-16.10.05
Third Round (SLO)
18-20.11.05
Final (HUN)
13-15.01.06

NATIONAL TEAM BREAKS

2005/2006 Season
1st International Break - August 29 to September 4, 2005
2nd International Break - November 7 to 13, 2005
3rd International Break - December 12 to 18, 2005
4th International Break - February 6 to 12, 2006
2006/2007 Season
1st International Break - August 28 to September 3, 2006
2nd International Break - November 6 to 12, 2006
3rd International Break - December 11 to 17, 2006
4th International Break - February 5 to 11, 2007

OTHER INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

IIHF WORLD OLDTIMERS FESTIVAL
2006 FINLAND, Helsinki
12-16.04.06
2007 SWEDEN, Gothenburg
15-22.04.07
2008 CANADA, TBA
TBA
OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES TEST EVENTS
2005 ITALY, Turin, Women's Tournament
07-12.11.05
2005 ITALY, Turin, Men's Tournament
09-12.11.05

CONGRESSES

IIHF SEMI-ANNUAL CONGRESS
2005 PORTUGAL, Vilamoura
15-17.09.05
IIHF ANNUAL CONGRESS
2006 LATVIA, Riga
18-20.05.06
2007 RUSSIA, TBA
TBA
2009 SWITZERLAND, TBA
TBA

IIHF ANNUAL & GENERAL CONGRESS
2008 FRANCE, Paris
29.05-03.06.08



OLD MAN WINTER?: American Chris Chelios could bring a whole new meaning to the term 'veteran' if he is named to the 2006 U.S. Olympic team. The 2006 games would be Chelios' fourth and would come 22 years after he made his Olympic debut in 1984.

Nordic Vikings conquer the Far East as Asian league expands globally

■■■ National club hockey is getting more and more international.

The Asian Ice Hockey League is expanding with a team from Sweden which will be based in Beijing, China. The Nordic Vikings are as much a sports as it is a business venture.

"Obviously, from the business perspective we want the hockey team to help us to reach out to the Chinese market but we are also keen on improving the state of Chinese hockey," said Per-Erik Holmstrom, the Swedish businessman who is the CEO of the Nordic Vikings project.

■■■ The Nordic Vikings were officially accepted to the AIHL during the league's Annual General Meeting on September 2 as Holmstrom also was named to the league's Executive Committee. Another Swedish part owner of the Nordic Vikings, Owe Andersson, was named to the league board.

The AGM in Beijing, China was attended by IIHF President René Fasel and IIHF General Secretary Jan-Ake Edvinsson.

"All the work that has been done by all teams indicates that it will be a very interesting coming season in Asia," said René Fasel.

The official strategy and idea behind this unique venture is based on the links between the interest from the IIHF and the Chinese Ice

Hockey Association to improve the game in the Far East and the opportunity to use the overflow of hockey skill in the Nordic region.

"With this team we have today a potential to reach 30 million people," says Holmstrom. "With improved infrastructure we will be able to reach 100 million."

■■■ The team, which will enjoy a budget of 1.5 million USD in its first year, will have 18 players from Nordic countries (12 Swedes, a couple of Finns, one Dane, one Norwegian and one player from Iceland) and six Chinese players. Finn Jarmo Jamalainen will be the coach while Swedish-Japanese Shin Yahata-Larsson will assume the role as GM for this highly multicultural team.

The Swedish born Yahata-Larsson has represented Japan in the IIHF World Championship as well as the Olympics.

■■■ The Nordic Vikings will use Beijing as their home base and will compete with the two other Chinese clubs, Harbin and Quiqihar, in the AIHL. The league, with teams from China, Japan and Korea, will operate with nine clubs during the 05-06-season. Kokudo Tokyo were the winners of the inaugural Asian Ice Hockey League in 04-05.

Related links:

www.nordicvikings.com

www.alhockey.com (Asian League site)



Photo: Nordic Vikings News Service

TEAM GLOBAL: It's a Swedish owned team, playing in the Asian league, based in Beijing, China and the players are from Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway, Iceland and China while the General Manager is Japanese. Here, the Nordic Vikings pose for the first official team photo with the Great Wall of China in the background.

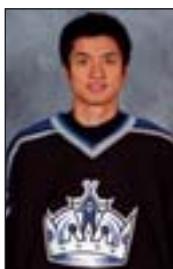


Photo: LA Kings

KING: Yutaka Fukufuji could be the first Japanese in the NHL.

... but Japan's top goalie Fukufuji is taking the opposite route

■■■ There is definitely potential in Asian ice hockey. As the Asian Ice Hockey League draws interest from Scandinavian investors (story above), the players from Far East are being scouted by some of the best clubs in the world. Japan's 22-year old goaltender Yutaka Fukufuji was signed by the NHL Los Angeles Kings this past summer and will compete for a starting job.

"My goal is to play in the NHL," Fukufuji said at the news conference in August when the Kings announced the signing. "I know it will be tough

but I am ready for rookie camp and I am looking forward to taking on my rivals."

■■■ Fukufuji was selected by the Kings in the 2004 NHL Entry Draft and played with the Bakersfield Condors of the East Coast Hockey League in 2004-05 where he recorded 27 wins, three shutouts and 2.48 goals-against average while helping the team to the playoffs.

The talented goaltender has graduated through the Japanese national team program, having

represented his country in the IIHF U18, U20 and men's senior world championships.

■■■ Fukufuji was only 19-years old when he was named to Japan's national team for the 2001 IIHF World Championship in Germany. He was also part of the team in Sweden 2002 and in the Czech Republic 2004, where Fukufuji for the first time assumed the role of starting goaltender in the national team.

A Japanese born and trained player has never played in the NHL.

The cream of the referee crop: Assignments for top championships

Olympic Winter Games (Women)

Anu Hirvonen	FIN
Stephanie Normand	CAN
Daniel Howard	USA
Katerina Ivicicova	CZE
Bianca Walter	GER
Arina Ustinova	RUS
Joy Tottman	GBR
<i>Linesmen</i>	
Marina Konstantinova	RUS
Johanna Suban	FIN
Jana Zitkova	CZE
Kim Robichaud	CAN
Julie Piacentini	USA
Marte Hove	NOR
Clara Quagliato	CZE
Annikka Floden	SWE
Michaela Kiefer	GER
Ilse Robben	NED
Sanna Mattila	FIN
Anne Sophie Boniface	FRA

(note men's Olympic assignments on pg 2)

IIHF World Championship

Chris Savage	CAN
Milan Minar	CZE
Ricahrd Schutz	GER
Rick Looker	USA
Alexander Poliakov	RUS
Brent Reiber	SUI
Peter Jonak	SVK
Ulf Ronnmark	SWE
Dave Hansen	USA
Jari Levonen	FIN
<i>Linesmen</i>	
Andrei Vasko	BLR
Dean Lashowski	CAN
Roman Pouzar	CZE
Ronni Jakobsen	DEN
Mikko Kekäläinen	FIN
Lars Schroeter	GER
Luca Zatta	ITA
Ansis Eglitis	LAT
Pal Garsjo	NOR
Yuriy Oskirkko	RUS
Ales Lesnjak	SLO

Tobias Wehrli

Milan Novak	SVK
Leo Takula	SWE
Joseph Ross	USA

Ivan Dediouila Georg Jablukov Miroslav Valach

BLR
GER
SVK

IIHF World U20 Championship

Guy Pellerin	CAN
Rafail Kadyrov	RUS
Jyri Ronn	FIN
Marcus Vinnerborg	SWE
Brian Thul	USA
Frank Awizus	GER
Milan Minar	CZE
Ole Stian Hansen	NOR
Rob Matsuoka	CAN
<i>Linesmen</i>	
Sylvan Losier	CAN
Jeff MacDonald	CAN
Konstantin Gordenko	RUS
Frederik Ulriksson	SWE
Juha Kautto	FIN
Steve Glines	USA
Frantisek Kalivoda	CZE

IIHF U18 World U18 Championship

Craig Hansen	USA
Derek Zalaski	CAN
Soren Persson	SWE
Alexey Ravodin	RUS
Nadir Mandioni	SUI
Sami Partanen	FIN
Juraj Konc	SVK
<i>Linesmen</i>	
Peter Feola	USA
Kelly Balabera	CAN
Per Svensson	SWE
Konstantin Olenin	RUS
Jozef Tvrdon	SVK
Antti Orelma	FIN
Juri Gebauer	CZE
Anders Karlberg	SWE
Olav Espedal	NOR
Andreas Kovert	GER



Photo: Courtesy of HC Davos

A COACH AND HIS PEOPLE: Arno Del Curto has reached a cult-status in the alpine small-town of Davos (pop. slightly over 10,000). So when Arno salutes the fans from the balcony after yet another victory (top), the crowd goes into a frenzy. Although Del Curto often stands among the players on the bench (right), there is no doubt who is the man in charge at HC Davos. The success talk is going into its 10th year.

ARNO DEL CURTO

Born: July 23, 1956 in St. Moritz, Switzerland

- Coach of reigning Swiss champion and Spengler Cup winner HC Davos since 1996-1997. 2005-2006 will be his 10th consecutive season with the club.
- Led HC Davos to national championships in 2002 and 2005. Playoff finalist in 1998 and 2003.
- Led HC Davos to three Spengler Cup wins and to seven finals.
- Del Curto has currently the longest coaching streak in all of the top national leagues in Europe and North America.
- Will lead HC Davos in the 2006 IIHF European Champions Cup.



Arno Del Curto - on his way to a perfect 10

By Szymon Szemberg, IIHF

■■ In a business where coaches are sometimes happy to stay two years with the same club, Arno Del Curto, 49, is in his tenth consecutive hockey season at HC Davos. In these days, it's a truly unique feat. In fact, in the top eight national leagues in the hockey world today there is no one who can match this.

Arno's tenth season behind the bench of the historic club with an unprecedented 27 Swiss national championships will be like none of the previous ones. Apart from trying to defend the national title and win the prestigious Spengler Cup, Arno's Army will compete among the six best club teams in Europe in the IIHF European Champions Cup in St. Petersburg, January 5-8 in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Davos will be in a pool with last year's finalist Kärpät Oulu from Finland and Swedish champion Frölunda Indians, while Dynamo Moscow, Moeller-Pardubice and Slovan Bratislava team up in the other pool.

"I said it back in April that this is my number one goal this season - to win the European Champions Cup," says Arno who has coached Davos to two Swiss championships, four finals and three Spengler Cup victories.

■■ Although del Curto probably wouldn't admit it, his and the club's debut in the competition that determines which is the best club in Europe, comes one year late. As a result of the NHL lockout, del Curto had the privilege of coaching Joe Thornton, Rick Nash and Niklas Hagman during the 04-05 campaign.

Not since the days of Fribourg-Gotteron in the 90s with Russian superstars Slava Bykov and Andrei Khomutov, has a Swiss team had such a star-appeal.

"It was a fantastic year," said del Curto. "We were like a traveling rock band all season. Wherever we went on

a road trip fans and media where expecting us like rock stars. Now it's back to normal where we probably will play a more team oriented game."

■■ When he is asked how he can survive a decade in one club in a business where coaches are fired left and right, he replies with "ask the players and managers". Del Curto likes to talk about his team and players, less about his achievements but he obviously realizes that ten years with the same team on a top level is something remarkable.

The main reason for staying successful and in one place is that del Curto is being del Curto. Playing a role is not Arno's game.

"I can learn the hockey part from others but the players know that the person will always be me," says Arno. "The players know that I don't need any publicity. If we win they are the stars. If we lose I accept the blame. I am known to be tough, but I am tough because I want to make the players and the team better."

■■ Arno admits though that he can "read" people -- probably better than most -- and that he understands body language.

"I can sense feelings, I see in player's face in what state he is in and I see if a player's shoulders are hanging. In that situation, a coach has to act."

Before this season Arno had an offer to take over IFK Helsinki, one of the most storied clubs in the Finnish league.

"I asked the players and the president and they both said I can't leave. So I stayed."

To survive in this competitive environment like he has

done, del Curto probably has to be different and he certainly is. How about this:

□ He negotiated the contracts with Joe Thornton, Rick Nash and Niklas Hagman by himself. "Why not, English soccer coaches like Arsene Wenger and Alex Ferguson do it. Why shouldn't I?"



□ He goes to England once or twice a year to watch soccer and rest his head from hockey. "I like Liverpool and Arsenal and I am fascinated by the power, the tempo and the passion you meet when you go there. I like both clubs but when they play each other I go with Arsenal."

□ He relaxes by playing the piano. "I wish I had the time to play more".

□ He doesn't carry a cell phone, nor does he use email. "For me it's a matter of quality of life. This year I had to borrow my son's cell phone during a hectic transfer period, but now that all players are signed I gave it back to him."

His aura will definitely get another boost if leads HC Davos through a successful IIHF European Champions Cup in January.

"We are really looking forward to it and it would be a great achievement for Swiss hockey if we did well in St. Petersburg," says Arno. "We are not afraid of the opposition. For quite some years now we have been playing against the best European clubs in pre-season and in the Spengler Cup. The only thing that bothers me is the tight schedule. The ECC starts only five days after the Spengler Cup final. It can be tough."

■■ For a coach who has so many quirks, nothing that awaits him this season, including the Spengler Cup and the ECC in a two week span, will seem out of the ordinary.