

NATIONAL YOUTH TEAM WIN GOLD



IHA's 2009 National U18 Youth Team took top honors by winning Gold at the IIHF 2009 World U18 Division III Group A Championship in Chinese Taipei in April going undefeated in all five games and promotion to Division II in 2010.

After being relegated in 2008 from Division II, the 2009 team had experience and depth far exceeding their competitors. Darge Wehebe from IHSA led the way with 27 points (17 goals & 10 assists) winning Best Forward for the Championship.

The 2010 team will be travelling to Kiev, Ukraine, for IIHF's 2010 Division II Group B Championship scheduled for 22 – 28 March 2010. Selection for the team will commence with IHA's 2009 Tange Championships scheduled for the 09 – 12 July 2009 in Newcastle.

Australia consistently participates in five World Championship categories: Open Senior Men Ice, Open Senior Women Ice, U20 Ice, U18 Ice and Open Senior Men's Inline.

■ National Senior Women's Team

Unfortunately for IHA's National Senior Women and U20 teams, hosts could not be found for their respective Division III Championships, resulting in the IIHF cancelling the championships and the teams not participating in 2009. The National Senior Women will further be affected as IIHF does not conduct World Championships for Division I and Lower during a Winter Olympic year, which in 2010 will be held in Vancouver, Canada.

■ National Senior Men's Team



In 2009, after winning Gold and promotion from Division II to Division I in 2008, IHA's National Senior Men's Team participated in Division I Group A in Vilnius, Lithuania.

Although our team came up short to remain in Division I, it was not due to lack of effort and courage as the greater majority of Division I teams have professional players on their rosters. This was aptly demonstrated by Team Kazakhstan who had eleven professional players, one of which was reputed to be on a \$5.2M salary in Russia's Professional League.

The loss of Greg Oddy, 2008 World Championship Best Forward, Team MVP and Top Point Scorer, due to a serious facial injury in the first game of the Championship, including injuries to four other players during the Championship, added to Australia's demise.

The 2010 Senior Men's Team will be travelling to Mexico City, for IIHF's 2010 Division II Group A Championship scheduled for 11 – 17 April 2010. Selection for the team commenced with the start of the 2009 AIHL season in April.

■ National U20 Junior Team

The 2010 U20 Junior Team will be travelling to Istanbul, Turkey for IIHF's 2010 Division III Championship scheduled for 04 – 10 January 2010. Selection for the team has commenced with those U20 players playing in the AIHL's 2009 season and will include players playing in their respective state Senior A Leagues and other local competitions.

■ National Senior Men's Inline Team

IHA's 2009 Senior Men's Inline Team recently participated at the IIHF 2009 World Inline Championships in Ingolstadt, Germany. The Championship is made up of 16 teams split into two divisions: Championship (Top 8) and Division I (next ranked 8 teams). Team Australia retained their placing in Division I. The 2010 Championships will be hosted in Karlstad, Sweden, scheduled for the 28 June – 04 July 2010.

The changes with excess baggage weight/items and airline bookings, has significantly increased the costs for attending World Championships. The IHA Board is actively pursuing initiatives towards reducing the costs such as a dedicated training camp either in Canada or Europe for all teams travelling to championships in Europe and centralised storage of training jerseys, socks, cover pants and associated team equipment in central Europe. Our friends in Slovenia have already offered to assist with storage.

The AOC is also seeking the same for all Australian sports who participate annually in world championships, Olympics and training centres, including contracting a sole flight booking and insurance agency.

IIHF Matters

■ World Championship Structure

There is currently a disparity with the World Championship structure at all levels. The top three teams in each group are far stronger than the bottom three, resulting in 'blow-out' scores and uneven competition between the top highest and three lowest ranked teams.

The IIHF World Championship Committee attempted to develop a proposed structure which was submitted at the May 2009 Annual Congress. The proposal was to retain the current top sixteen ranked countries in the current structure and only have additional championships for the next six ranked Division I countries. This was to be prevalent for all categories. The remaining ranked countries were compelled to Qualification on a regional basis.

The proposal was rejected outright by the majority of countries on the justification all countries would suffer severely financially as their grant subsidies from their Governments are totally dependent on their participation at World Championships. A Qualification Tournament does not carry the same recognition.

As a result to the rejection, the Member Countries were split into five workshops to voice their opinions to each of their Workshop Chairmen for the Committee's consideration. One of the common discussion threads from each group was the keen desire to change from the current linear to a vertical structure whereby the six highest ranked countries are in Group A and the next six lowest countries are in Group B in all Divisions and in all categories. This would ensure a more balanced competition between countries at all levels. It is yet to be determined if only the winner or top two winners will be promoted to the next group or Division.

The Committee's mandate now is to consider all points emanating from the workshops and present a draft proposed structure which is to include financial benefits at the Semi-Annual Congress in September. Although there is no firm target date for resolution, there is an expectation to have the new structure in place for the 2011 Championships.

■ International Player Transfers

In light of a number of transfer disputes in 2008, the IIHF has rewritten its International Transfer Regulations to enforce sanctions against players, associations and clubs that violate the transfer regulations and who allow players to play within their system without an approved International Transfer Card (ITC).

If a player goes to a league/team without an approved ITC, it will result in fines up to CHF 150,000 for Member National Associations, a ban on international transfers for up to 24 months, and a suspension of the player for up to three years.

In addition, by way of a member country's membership affiliation with the IIHF, member countries of the IIHF are compelled to recognise each other as being solely empowered to control ice hockey in their respective countries; and therefore they undertake that neither they nor any of their members will in way have relations with non-associated bodies or one of their members.

As a result, a number of the major hockey countries, including Australia, are strictly adhering to this compliance and are reporting any member player who may be participating without an ITC or in an unsanctioned league/competition. The sanctions against such players are extensive with some countries adopting 6 to 12 month suspensions.

IHA is compelled to adhere to this compliance as IHA's national teams, including player development, officiating and coaching programs are heavily dependent on IIHF's financial subsidies and resource support, and therefore has also adopted the same sanctions.

■ 2010 – 2014 Rule Changes

At the May Annual Congress meeting, the IIHF approved a handful of rule changes for the 2010 – 2014 Rule Book. The following changes were approved and will take effect after the 01st July 2009 in time for the 2010 Winter Olympics.

- No line change allowed after a team ices the puck.
- After a penalty has been called, the ensuing face-off will be in the defending zone of the penalised team.

- Face-offs can only be executed on the nine face-off spots. No 'imaginary' lines anymore.

In addition for effect after the 01st July 2010:

- If there is a penalty shot, the fouled player must take the shot. Currently, any player can take the shot.
- When there is a delayed penalty called against a shorthanded team and a goal is scored during the delayed penalty, the first penalty is terminated, but the delayed penalty is assessed.
- A match-penalty (with an ensuing one-game suspension) can be assessed to a team official on the bench.
- If a player loses his helmet during action, he must go to the bench. Currently, the player can readjust the helmet and continue playing.

IHA, if approved by the Board at the IHA 2009 Annual General Meeting, will be adopting these rules for the 2010 season.

■ IIHF's 2009 Development Camp

IHA has been an active participant with IIHF's "Partnership for Progress" Development Camps since their inception in 2002. The week long camps with over 200 players from around the world are held annually in Vierumaki, Finland, during the month of July and encompass programs for the development of players, coaches, managers and administrators. In recent years the camps alternate between male and female genders.

IHA selections are heavily based on members who actively participate in IHA's equivalent programs. Congratulations for the 2009 participants go to Dave Minson - IHWA (Team Leader & Learn-to-Play Program), Steven Lindsay - IHNSW (Coaching), John Harvey - IHNSW (Technical Coaching Director), Nathan Walker - IHNSW (Player), Cameron Todd - IHNSW (Player), Alex Otto - IHSA (Player) and Jonathan McPhail - IHACT (Player).

National Leagues

Currently, IHA sanctions two national leagues - the Australian Women's Ice Hockey League and the Australian Ice Hockey League.



Both Leagues are highly successful and are of prime importance to ice hockey in Australia and in furthering the development of senior male and female players at the 'elite' level. Access to their websites can be found on IHA's Website Links Folder.

IHA 2009 National Championships

IHA annually hosts eight distinct age category championships - Goodall Cup (AIHL Champions), Joan McKowen Memorial (Open Women), Brown Trophy (25 & Under), Syd Tange Trophy (18 & Under), Kurt DeFris (15 & Under), Phillip Ginsberg Trophy (13 & Under), John McCrae-Williamson (11 &

Under) and OiHAN (Old-timers). In addition IHA also sanctions the ACT Maple Leaf Cup, an Atoms Tournament, and on numerous occasions, Exhibition Series with visiting international teams.

The 2009 Joan McKowen Memorial was recently hosted by Ice Hockey Queensland in June with representative teams from Queensland, New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory and Victoria participating. Congratulations to Gold Medal Champions New South Wales who were undefeated in all their games.

The ensuing months will be extremely busy for the national championship program with some planned historic events taking place at the same time.

The dates and locations of the remaining championships are as follows:

- Kurt DeFris ~ 02 – 05 July 2009 in Adelaide, SA;
- Syd Tange ~ 09 – 12 July 2009 in Newcastle, NSW
- Atoms 11 & Under Tournament ~ 18 – 19 July 2009 in Canberra, ACT
- Brown Trophy & Ginsberg Trophy ~ 22 – 26 July 2009 in Adelaide, SA
- New Zealand Winter Games ~ 22 – 23 August 2009 in Dunedin, NZ
- AIHL Finals ~ 29 – 30 August 2009 in Newcastle, NSW
- McCrae-Williamson ~ 16 – 19 September 2009 in Melbourne VIC
- Goodall Cup Centenary & OiHAN ~ 27 – 31 October 2009 in Adelaide, SA



2009 will celebrate the Centenary of the Goodall Cup in Adelaide. Six Senior State Representative teams will kick off the celebrations in determining who will be the 2009 Goodall Cup Champions. The greater majority of players will have just completed their season in the Australian Ice Hockey League (AIHL) which will undoubtedly lead to a highly competitive event. The Cup has been re-designed to now include a gold medal band to accommodate the names of all the 2009 participants. It is fully expected all six state representative teams will be participating.

During the Goodall Cup series, OiHAN will also be conducting their annual October OiHAN Tournament. The itinerary will include fourteen Old-timers teams, who have a number of past Goodall Cup winning players and participants from around Australia, playing a series of games in the 35 & over, 45 & over, 55 & over and the "Elite" 60 & over.

Post the regular round of competition, the Goodall Cup Centenary Dinner will take place on Friday evening with an expected 450 some guests meeting at Adelaide's Aussie Rules Stadium, Football Park, for an evening of South Australia's world-class wines and cuisine. The semi and finals games for all categories will take place on Saturday and Sunday.

IHA Development Programs

IHA operates three comprehensive development programs: Player, Coaching and Officiating.

■ Player Development



IHA conducts three 7-day Player Development Camps for Midgets (18 – 16), Bantam (15 – 14) and Pee Wee (13 – 12). The camps are held annually during the first three weeks in January starting with the Midget Camp. On and off-ice instruction is provided by Australian and International coaches. The Hunter Ice Skating Stadium (HISS) is used for the ice sessions and Myuna Bay Rec & Sport for accommodation, meals and off-ice activities. Ground transport is provided by Port Stephens Coaches.

In an effort to retain affordable fees, IHA contributes in excess of \$20,000 to all four camps. Easton and Bauer also assist by sponsoring the jerseys and socks for the players. Not only does this assistance ensure affordable fees, it also ensures quality instruction which is vital to the participating player's development.

The National Women's Council also conducts a Girls Camp during April school holidays and the WIHL finals. The 2009 April Camp included two visiting international teams – a High School Team from Calgary, Alberta and a team from New Zealand and was a huge success in furthering the development of IHA's junior female players.



IHA and its member state associations are currently considering a proposal from Debbie Strome, IHA's Canadian Technical Skating Instructor, to remain in Australia after the January camps for the remainder of the 2010 season.

Debbie will be available to visit each state on a monthly basis to conduct clinics and assist with the state programs. This is an excellent opportunity for all state players and coaches to have access to Debbie's instruction and methods.

■ Coaching Development

IHA, with the assistance of IHA's Coaching Council, conducts three certified coaching accreditation programs: Level I, II and III and are registered with the ASC's Coaching Council in Canberra.



Level I is conducted annually for new coaches entering the system and to update current Level I coaches.

Level II was last held in January 2008 at a cost of some \$20,000 for 18 participants and one international instructor with plans currently underway for another in 2010 or 2011.

Level III was a 6-day in-depth advanced seminar course last held in January 2007 at a cost of some \$30,000 for 33 participants and two international instructors with plans to conduct another in 2011. The AOC contributed \$15,000 towards the overall course cost.

All programs are a four year accredited program with coaches able to retain their certification through the use of "Updating Points". Both Level II and III incorporate international instructors which are well received by the participants as this keeps them abreast with the ever changing systems employed in "today's" game.

The majority of courses are held post the commencement of the current season. The IHA Office, through the approval of the National Coaching Director, issues the status of all coaches to the member states annually at the start of the season so they are fully aware of expired certifications and to assist with planning future courses.



IHA's Coaching Council meets annually during the month of January to review the current program and set new objectives for the program.

■ Officiating Development

IHA accredits five levels of certification for on-ice officials: Linesperson, Level I, II, III & IV. All accredited officials are registered with the ASC's Officiating Council in Canberra.

The State Referee-in-Chiefs and IHA's National Referee-in-Chief conduct all courses prior to the next season to ensure opportunity for new officials entering the officiating fraternity and instruction for any

new rule changes. The certified participants are granted a "year bar" which indicates their certification for the bar's respective season.

IHA supplies all the on-ice officials for national championships and AIHL games. The cost for IHA's component (national championships, officiating fees, mentorship program, certification, administration, etc.) is some \$30,000 per annum.

IHA's Officiating Council meets annually during the month of January to review the current program, introduction of new rules and to set new objectives for the upcoming season.

Insurances

IHA carries five insurance policies: Directors & Officers, Public Liability, Sports Injury and Combined Business (assets against fire & theft).

Although IHA has enjoyed the same Sports Injury premiums for a number of years, three major claims totaling some \$87,000 in the past two seasons resulted in the 2009 premium being increased from \$55,000 to \$83,000. As a result, IHA has developed a stringent Risk Management Policy to identify those aspects of the sport which are considered as "High Risk" and to employ measures to mitigate the associated risks. The Risk Management matrix is now used in all IHA Board decisions to ensure all known associated risks with the decision are identified and managed to a minimum.

If the sport is to enjoy coverage at a reduced cost, it is every IHA member's duty and responsibility to do everything they can to minimise the risks associated with the sport (wearing of proper protective equipment, safety to the general public and spectators, adherence to regulations, policies and the rules of the game, etc.). Access to further information can be found on www.sportsnetaustralia.com or your IHA Member State Association.

New Zealand Winter Games (2009)



Australia has been invited to participate in New Zealand's 2009 Winter Games. The Winter Games is an elite, international winter sports competition that is planned to be held every two years, starting in 2009. In addition to ice hockey, the events feature alpine skiing, freestyle skiing, cross country skiing, snowboarding, figure skating, curling, and cross country skiing. They will also be hosting the Winter Triathlon and Natural Luge as demonstration sports for 2009.

All the events run over a 10 day period at various locations throughout Otago and the Southern Lakes District in New Zealand's South Island. The Winter Games NZ reaches beyond the competition element with a festival that includes music, adventure, food, excitement and culture. All events are to be fully televised by Sky TV and some live telecast.

Because of the timing of the invite and negotiations between IHA and the Winter Games Committee, IHA's efforts to supply a representative "All Australian Men's Team" failed to eventuate. The AIHL had already set their 2009 season games schedule, and therefore, AIHL member teams were not at liberty to change the schedule due to commitments with sponsors, ice venues and their import players.

As the Winter Games will be an important Trans-Tasman event in future, IHA and the Winter Games Committee reached agreement for an AIHL team to participate as the 2009 representative team of Australia. The justification was two-fold in both, the New Zealand Ice Hockey and Ice Hockey Australia Federations, ensuring ice hockey was included as a Winter Games event for 2009 and beyond, and to provide opportunity for the New Zealand Ice Hockey Federation to evaluate consideration for entering a New Zealand team into the AIHL in future.

IHA approached the Newcastle Northstars and Sydney Bears for consideration to reschedule the Newcastle Northstars Home and only remaining AIHL regular season game from the Winter Games weekend to the weekend prior. As a result the Newcastle Northstars agreed to be the primary team with available IHA National Senior Team Bear's players, and represent Australia at the Games.

In future, IHA, the AIHL and the Winter Games Committee will work in partnership well in advance of the Games to ensure IHA's National Senior Team players are available for future Winter Games.