

WORLD CLASS ICE HOCKEY



Ice hockey is the fastest team sport in the world. The IIHF World Championship delivers the best ice hockey action, thrilling television viewers and finding new audiences every year.

The biggest annual winter sports event

Every year, in April/May, the 16 best national ice hockey teams in the world come together to play 56 exciting games to establish the new World Champion of the sport. This is the biggest of all annual winter sports championships and it goes from strength to strength every year.

The 2009 IIHF World Championship in Switzerland saw a classic final between Russia and Canada, pitching the two greatest ice hockey nations against each other for the second year in succession. Russia defeated Canada 2-1 to win gold for the second year in a row.

Looking forward to 2010, the IIHF World Championship in Germany has an exciting record in its sights. The opening game on 7 May 2010 will take place in the Veltins-Arena of Gelsenkirchen, home of the football (soccer) Bundesliga club FC Schalke 04. The stadium will be transferred to a giant ice hockey arena with an overall capacity enhanced to 75,976 places. A full stadium would represent a new spectator world record for ice hockey.

Television quality enhanced

The IIHF and Infront are working together to provide broadcasters with a quality of pictures and level of support services that match the highest standards in sport today. In 2009, all games were produced in high definition television (HDTV) quality. The production used 20 cameras in each arena and for each game, including in goal and overhead centre circle cameras – giving more insights to this high-speed sport and thus making it more attractive to a wider following of viewers.

More coverage in more countries

The fact that the event took place in Europe, where most teams were in the right time zone for their fans, helped ensure very high levels of coverage. There were a record number of 209 broadcast partners in more than 100 territories, as well as the third highest cumulative audience figure in the history of the event, at 647.4 million. The 2009 IIHF World Championship was not only available in the core ice hockey markets but, from Andorra to Zimbabwe, the event was seen around the globe.

Infront's Broadcaster Servicing team supports contracted broadcasters both before and during the Championships, providing a first point of contact and the link between broadcasters and the production operation.

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Loyal sponsors a sign of strength

The IIHF World Championship is popular with sponsors, because it is the biggest annual winter sports event in the world and it always takes place at a good time of the year, with little competition from other events and thus an excellent time to get good television coverage. It has strong appeal to affluent commercial markets in Northern Europe, the USA and Canada and television audiences are also excellent in the new consumer markets in East and central Europe.

The impressive sponsor group – led by long-term partner Škoda as the Official Main Sponsor for the 17th year in succession – remains solidly loyal. Seven brands have been involved for 10 years or more: AJ, Bauhaus, Intersport, Konica Minolta, Nike, Tissot and Zepter. They have recently been joined by new, high-profile, blue-chip sponsors, including Boehringer Ingelheim, Henkel, Raiffeisen Bank, Ramirent and Zurich Group.

Infront's role

Infront has now been the exclusive marketing partner to the International Ice Hockey Federation since 1981, a unique and very special relationship which generates many benefits, including the opportunity to introduce innovations and improvements on a consistent basis.

Infront operated as a joint venture with the Swiss Ice Hockey Association (SIHA) in 2009; a template of how to make IIHF World Championship a resounding success. In 2010 a similar system will be used.

Infront's role is now a very wide one and includes not only marketing the commercial rights but an array of services for the event, including host broadcast production, a dedicated online broadcast service, B2B client servicing, graphic design and VIP hospitality. Around 300 Infront staff members and temporary specialists were in play during the two weeks of the 2009 event.

Upcoming Events

2010 IIHF World Championship

7 – 23 May in Cologne, Mannheim and Gelsenkirchen (GER)

2011 IIHF World Championship

30 Apr – 15 May in Bratislava and Kosice (SVK)

2012 IIHF World Championship

4 – 20 May in Helsinki (FIN) and Stockholm (SWE)

2013 IIHF World Championship

in Sweden and Finland

2014 IIHF World Championship

in Belarus

Infront is the exclusive commercial partner of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) and offers media and marketing rights for the IIHF World Championship and the Division 1.

