



**ANOTHER GOLD MEDAL FOR THE USA MEN'S TEAM AT THE  
XVI - FIRS MEN'S INLINE HOCKEY WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP  
BEROUN, CZECH REPUBLIC - JULY 12 THRU 17, 2010**

**Reported by George Pickard, Chairman -USA Roller Sports Inline Hockey Committee  
from commentary provided by Czech Roller Sports and other submitted photographs.**

In defense of their World Inline Hockey Championship, the men on TEAM USA trekked to the Czech Republic this past summer and to the small town of Beroun which is just Southwest of Prague. It was here where the sixteenth annual world inline hockey championships was to be hosted for the International Federation of Roller Sports (FIRS). This was only the second time the Czech Inline Hockey Federation has hosted the world championships, a very popular and successful event held in 2003 at Pisek. The 14 men's national teams that participated came excited for the experience of playing for the world championship in the Czech Republic, widely recognized as one of the world centers for hockey prowess.

Veteran USA Team captain **Greg Thompson** commented, "Anytime you have 6 new players on a team you go into the tournament not knowing what to expect. All of the new guys on our team gelled well and adapted to the international style of play. EVERYONE on our team battled hard to accomplish our goal, another World Championship. We definitely hit a couple of speed bumps on our road (like a loss to the French in the round robin) but we all came together and fought through it. The loss just made our team closer and stronger, which helped us in route to the 2010 World Championship. We cleaned up some of the stuff that we were doing wrong, played a smarter game, won our face offs and coach Thuss did a great job at adjusting our game plan. The Czech federation did a wonderful job in organizing the event and it was a pleasure to be part of this world championship again."

The 2010 USA Men Team consisted of goalies 30 Michael Urbano and 40 Dustin Brown; 89 Gregg Thompson was named Captain, with 26 Dustin Roux and 14 Pete Messina, as Alternate Captains, all of whom were veterans of previous world competitions. Filling out the 14 man team roster was 21 Jonathan Mosenson, 61 Eric Keene, 23 Kelly Spain, 71 Charles Sgrillo, 88 Travis Fudge, 37 Josh Laricchia, 96 Jose Cadiz Jr., 19 Jimmy Redstreak and 7 Ryan Bond. The team coach was Charles Thuss; team manager was John Roux and trainer was Patric Steidle.

On Day 1 of the Pool Play, there were no real surprises, with most of the seeded teams slipping comfortably past their opponents, including the USA team over Colombia 10 - 0. The day's main struggle was the French team against Swiss team, which ended in a 4 - 4 tie. The Swiss jumped off to a 3 - 0 lead over the French during the first period. The French came back with determination to tie up the final score 4-4, helped by along by Swiss errors, likely flustered by

the Gallic onslaught after the break. The French had come to play and it was a wake-up call for the Swiss. On Day 2 of Pool Play, the highlights were the hard fought tie of Germany versus Mexico 2 - 2 and the USA loss to France 1 - 2. Neither team scored in the first period. The French piled up two scores in the second period on power plays, with the USA team shooting themselves in the foot with a total of 9 penalties, including a game misconduct for roughing on Mosenson. This created a necessity for Team USA to conduct a prayer meeting afterward, to reorganize their game strategy, since the referees were apparently not buying into their earlier approach.

On the final day of Pool Play, the Italians faced Spain, with Spain being the better team from the start, getting on the scoreboard in the second minute of the game. The early goal charged up the Spanish team, which scored again 4 minutes later, bring a 2 - 0 lead over Italy into the half time locker room. In the second period the picture was totally different. Italian players suddenly were fighting for their life, because the outcome of this game decided which of the two teams would advance to the Quarter Finals. The Italians scored two unanswered goals which tied the game up 2 - 2. With 8 minutes remaining, Italian Stefano Frigo scored the final goal of the game, creating a win for Italy 3 - 2 over a dejected Spain that had controlled the game in the first half. In their final pool game, the USA played a surprisingly strong game against the Swiss Team, taking a 4 - 2 lead going into the half-time break. The USA team tried to help their rivals by incurring 4 penalties during the first period to 1 for the Swiss. Being behind going into the second period seemed to whip the Swiss players into a frenzy, being assigned 10 penalties in the second half, including a game misconduct on Dominik Brauchli for high sticking and abuse of an official. The USA Team scored twice more in the second period, holding the Swiss scoreless and completing the game with a 6 - 2 victory. Italy and USA will face each other in the Quarter Final, which initiates single elimination play.

The Swiss rebounded from their drubbing by USA and beat Canada 6 to 5 in their Quarter Final, thus removing Canada from a medal position. Canada had been in the lead 3 - 2 after the first period. Beginning the second half, in 18 seconds the Swiss evened the score. About 6 minutes later the Swiss scored again to take the lead. Canada scored 2 successive goals taking the lead again with 5 minutes to play. Daniel Rubin scored for Switzerland in the final 2 minutes, tying the game at 5 all and taking the game into overtime. Tobias Mausli at 4:11 of overtime scored the winning goal.

Team USA played Italy in the Quarter Final, being the clear favorite after comfortably winning their last Pool Play game against Switzerland 6-2, while Italy had to chase after their decisive Pool Play game with Spain after being down 2 -0 in the first period. The USA team's performance in the first half was disappointing, and an aggressive Italian goal 5 minutes into the first period by Italian player Mantese, assisted by Comencini, worked to take the lead throughout that period. Italian goalkeeper Thomas Commisso was another star of the period, making some tremendous saves to keep the Italian goal cage unscathed. Five minutes into the second half, near the end of a power play, Ryan Bond put an accurate shot past the Italian goalie to even the score 1 - 1, the first score for USA after 25 minutes of play. Five minutes later, Travis Fudge released a hard slap-shot rocketed past Commisso's pad to capture the lead and the USA finished out the game with a 2 - 1 victory. USA goalie Dustin Brown was the other hero of the game, not allowing another goal in the last 35 minutes of play, albeit Italy was given a power play via a

USA penalty three minutes before the end of the game. The Italian coach pulled the goalie in the last minute, but goalie Brown and his defenders held on to secure a semifinal spot for Team USA. "Italy was close to victory when they were leading. During the half-time we had to calm down, we knew that we can score goals. Our problem are penalties, so we have to improve it," said Ryan Bond of Team USA.

Because France and Switzerland had already met in a Pool Play game where nobody celebrated because it ended in a 4 - 4 tie, there was great tension on both sides of the puck as they entered their Semi-Final game as opponents once again. Swiss player Dominik Brauchli scored what was to be the winning goal during a power play in the second minute of the game. The back and forth conduct of the game seemed balanced, but French players couldn't find a way to score and often let Swiss players breakaway to score. Swiss speedster Diego Schwarzenbach scored on two clear breakaways and ultimately scored 4 goals in this game. It was astonishing to remember that in their first game during Pool play, the French outscored the Swiss 3 - 0 in the first period and became the reverse in their second game. French misery continued into the second period with French scoring continuing to be rebuffed by Swiss goalie Mike Shocker, while establishing a shutout. Final score Switzerland 7 - France 0. The Swiss move on to the Gold Medal game.

Team USA faced off against the at home national Czech team in the other Semi-Final. The Czech team entered this game undefeated in these Championships, handily dispatching all opponents. Playing before a hugely partisan home country crowd, the 2010 USA team, with their irregular game performances so far, obviously had their work cut out for them if they were to retain the Gold Medal. However, history was not important when both teams lined up on the rink of Beroun stadium for a clash that was played in searing heat of more than 86 degrees Fahrenheit. And it was Team USA, who started to assert their authority almost immediately when Messina finished a quick break to take an early lead. Czechs fought back two minutes later when Rachunek scored from a rebound his own shot deflected off the back boards. This was the last time Czech Republic was even in score. Shortly after, two Czech players were sent to a penalty box at the same time and USA made the most of it, Messina and then Fudge taking the score 3 to 1. The home crowd went into shock, while still in the first half of the first period, Laricchia scored and then Fudge sent his second goal to the back of the Czech cage.

Czech player Vozdecky managed to score late in the first half, but the 5 to 2 score was earned and brought despair to the sticks of Czech players. Balazs's shot over the crossbar of open net early in the second half was the last real chance for Czech Republic to get back into the game. With the home team taking more risks, USA used their opportunities to make the margin in score even greater. Fudge completed his hat-trick, Sgrillo and Cadiz added other goals and Czech player Sinagl's goal late in the game was the source of only small joy for his team. By then, the winner of this game was long decided. Team USA Assistant Captain **Pete Messina** said "We knew that we had to play a better game than yesterday because the Czechs are really a good team. Plus, they have the advantage of home atmosphere. It helped a lot that we made an effort to stay out of the penalty box." Final score was USA 8 and Czech Republic 3. USA faces Switzerland again for the Gold Medal.

On the next day, the Bronze Medal for the FIRS 2010 World Inline Hockey Championship was decided handily in favor of the Czech Republic. The Czechs jumped out to a 4 to 0 lead in the

first period of their game against Team France. In the second period the Czechs advanced to a 5 to 0 lead, with France finally breaking the ice with two quick goals late in the second period, however, all too late creating a final result of Czech 5 - France 2.

**GOLD MEDAL GAME - USA VERSUS SWITZERLAND** The final game started with a quick goal by Pete Messina, assisted by Greg Thompson, a little more than one minute into the period. But the outcome of the game was not assured during the first period. The Swiss threatened often and they created a lot of opportunities to score, but failed to do so. The USA team controlled the puck most of the time and 12 minutes into the first period Jonathan Mosenson added a second USA goal after a terrific combination, which again involved Messina. The Swiss continued to make shots on goal but were completely thwarted during the first period that ended 2 - 0 in favor of USA.

In the second half Team USA decided the game very soon. After nice attempts by Thompson, Cadiz, Laricchia and Roux, a third goal was scored for USA by Jimmy Redstreak, assisted by Dustin Roux. During a power play, Roux increased the lead 4 - 0, assisted by Josh Laricchia. Swiss hopes for gold were getting destroyed. Halfway through the second period, Julian Walker scored the only Swiss goal. Messina with five minutes remaining scored his second goal of the game on an assist from Fudge. A minute later Messina sent the puck to Greg Thompson and the American captain symbolically closed the game's scoring with the sixth goal for Team USA. Thus Team USA became the 2010 FIRS In-line Hockey World Champion for the third consecutive year. Team USA reigned in Düsseldorf, Germany 2008; Varese, Italy in 2009 and now in 2010 in Beroun, Czech Republic they have attained number 3, the Golden Hat Trick.

Many of the USA players felt this experience to be a journey in a fairytale. Problems were experienced at the beginning, but at the end was the sweet reward. "I am really proud what we as a team performed here," said USA Coach **Charles Thuss**, who didn't hide his feelings after the game. Neither did his players, **Travis Fudge**, who states "It is really great. We have expected that after our Czech game for the Semi-Finals the USA team would have zero fans in the stadium, but Czech people were great and so is the sport atmosphere too."

If you are impressed with the Gold Medal game score of 6-1 for Team USA, **Michael Urbano** shows an equally great respect for the game of the Swiss. "Team Switzerland played really good, they had a fast and big team. We came out, played our game and we controlled the puck and in that was the way I started to believe in Gold, after our third goal." Urbano himself was a major part of the victory. He was one of the key players of the team. He stopped a lot of Swiss opportunities, sometimes aided by considerable luck. "It was my job and the job of my defensive team to not let the puck go to the net. When the goal post was ringing, my heart always stopped, but afterward really happy that it wasn't a goal," laughs Urbano, star of the American nets.

"Team USA didn't waltz through this tournament. The biggest problems occurred in the Round Robin pool play, when they lost the game to Team France 1-2. It was a wakeup call for Team USA, which they responded to. The loss of a game came at just the right time for us, in pool play it does not do as much harm, and we played much more cohesive as a team afterward," continued Urbano.

But the world champions also experienced big trouble with Team Italy in the Quarter Finals. USA trailed after the first period 0 - 1, but they worked it out. "You can't afford to lose a game in the Quarter Finals, because at that point you are essentially out of the tournament," said **Coach Thuss**. "We had to change some lines, but we prevailed. After that we came together as a team, and we found renewed strength. During the week, we grew better and better," the coach noted with satisfaction.

Team USA very calmly celebrated retention of the World Championship Gold Medal. Everyone was expecting a big party, but it was really handled quietly. **Coach Thuss** explains, "Winning the Gold is the thing that people in United States were expecting and we just made it happen. I have to tell you, that we are very proud of what we have done. We are a really young team, some players don't know what it is yet. This is my 4th tournament and I know that after some time, they will realize what we accomplished."

**Keith Noll**, who directs the USA Roller Sport/AAU domestic inline hockey programs in the United States, is an Executive Board member of the FIRS Committee for Roller Inline Hockey, and in that capacity participated in CIRILH administration of the 2010 World Championships in Beroun. Keith, also a member of the USA Roller Sports Inline Hockey Committee, and has himself hosted numerous international hockey tournaments in the United States, including the 2006 World Inline Hockey Championships in Detroit, and knows a thing or two about the trials and tribulations of keeping major events like these flowing smoothly to benefit of both players and spectators. With such personal credentials, Keith commented on the Beroun championships, "The Czech Roller Sports Federation did a remarkable job organizing this two week event for both men and women's national teams. This was a memorable experience for all who participated, in terms of the facilities and hospitality extended to those who journeyed from around the world to assemble in Beroun for the highlight event on the annual inline hockey calendar. The Czechs are proven to be great sportsmen and should be proud of what they have achieved this year. Every visitor will depart the Czech Republic with wonderful memories of a great hockey event and of the people who brought about this experience."

**Michael Urbano** was chosen as a member of Men's World Championship **All Star Team** and he also received an award for as The **Best Goalkeeper** for the World Championships.

**Travis Fudge** was chosen as a member of the Men's World Championship **All Star Team** and he was recipient of the **Most Valuable Player Award**.

#### **USA SENIOR MEN WIN 3RD STRAIGHT WORLD INLINE HOCKEY GOLD MEDAL AT XVI WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP – 2010 BEROUN, CZECH REPUBLIC**

**Gold Medal – United States of America**

**Silver Medal – Switzerland**

**Bronze Medal – Czech Republic**

Other placements:

4. France, 5. Italy, 6. Canada,  
7. Germany, 8. Mexico, 9. Spain,  
10. Australia, 11. Great Britain, 12. Colombia,  
13. Argentina, 14. Venezuela