



## **REPORT - 2009 FIRS JUNIOR MEN WORLD INLINE HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP**

**VARESE, ITALY – JUNE 29 to JULY 4, 2009**

**By: GEORGE PICKARD – USARS Inline Hockey Committee Chairman**

Year 2009 was the third World Inline Hockey Championship for Junior Men since this event was upgraded from “World Cup” as it originated in 1996. Broader team participation by FIRS national federations is a sign that inline hockey under FIRS continues to grow around the world. This year the Junior World Championship was located in Varese, Italy, a city situated in the Alpine region, north of Milan. Since this area is primarily winter resort and escape from lower Italy’s summer heat, the hotels, restaurants and hockey rink venue are compact and easily accessible for foot traffic. Our hockey athletes enjoyed this because it meant that teams could more easily intermingle, improving social opportunities for this championship over venues held in larger cities. Ten national junior teams were participants, with Italy entering a junior team for the first time and France returning after last year’s absence. The entire field was very competitive, which bodes well for the future of our sport development. Last year’s world champion British junior team was absent from Italy due to financial difficulties encountered during this troubled world economy.

The FIRS Junior Division has an age restriction of 14 to 18 years of age. A player can not be 19 as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of competition. Because of this and the open trials format used each year, 10 of the 14 players were new and not on last year’s Team USA. The four “veterans” were: Marcus Rodgers, Joey Doran, Adam Green and Rees Bernot. The 2009 juniors were assigned a new coach, Ken Murchison, a former NHL player who now operates an inline hockey facility in Anaheim, California. Ken was ably assisted by Charles Sgrillo, a Philadelphia firefighter, who has for many years conducted inline hockey leagues along the eastern seaboard, and is a stalwart of USARS and AAU hockey at both the regional and national levels. Charlie also acted as team manager. The talented players comprising the new team were afforded very experienced guidance.

Only a single rink venue was available in Varese for the World Inline Hockey Championships, therefore, the Junior Men and Senior Women World Championship teams had to share the same rink and dates, beginning one week prior to the start of the Men’s World Championships in the same facility. With 16 participating Senior Men’s teams their number almost matched the combined total of the juniors and women. The event was hosted by the Italian roller sports federation of FIRS and the Varese competitions were situated in an ice arena converted to inline hockey by installation of a Czech manufactured “Stillmat” tile portable skating floor. This type of hockey floor has seen frequent use during previous World Championships and is one of two most favored by roller hockey players. The arena’s name was Palaghiaccio Albani, which offered spacious spectator seating and a large playing surface between the boards of 60 X 30 meters, in conformity with CIRILH standards.

After brief practice periods for each team on June 28, shortened somewhat by the need to share the facility with the women’s teams for practice purposes, the III Junior World Championship began on that same evening, following the opening ceremonies. In the first pool round-robin game, Italy the host country faced Colombia, and a victory was achieved for the home team by a score 5 – 3 over Colombia. The next morning

at 8:30 AM, the USA began its championship pursuit with its first test against neighboring Mexico and won easily by a score of 13 – 0. The other games on the 29<sup>th</sup> pretty much followed expectations, with the possible exception of the French team getting surprised 3 – 2 with a German victory. On Tuesday, June 30 it was Team USA's turn to face the Germans, which the USA won handily 9 – 2. The Italian team played Switzerland in the last game of the day, which created a whiz-bang of a game that ended in a draw 5 – 5. In their final game of pool play, the USA team defeated France 5 – 3 to win their pool undefeated and become a top seed into the medal round games. In the second pool, the Czech Republic was remained undefeated, but alas, the victorious Americans and Czechs were not destined to face off against each other in 2009 combat.

The score card from pool play evolved as follows:

**COUNTRY - POOL**

<b>A</b>	<b>GP</b>	<b>PTS</b>	<b>WON</b>	<b>LOST</b>	<b>TIE</b>	<b>GF</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>PLACE</b>
<b>Canada</b>	4	6	3	1	0	28	13	2
<b>Czech Republic</b>	4	8	4	0	0	33	6	1
<b>Colombia</b>	4	0	0	4	0	6	30	5
<b>Switzerland</b>	4	3	1	2	1	12	17	3
<b>Italy</b>	4	3	1	2	1	13	26	4

**COUNTRY - POOL**

<b>B</b>	<b>GP</b>	<b>PTS</b>	<b>WON</b>	<b>LOST</b>	<b>TIE</b>	<b>GF</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>PLACE</b>
<b>United States</b>	4	8	4	0	0	32	6	1
<b>Mexico</b>	4	0	0	4	0	1	36	5
<b>Germany</b>	4	6	3	1	0	17	13	2
<b>Australia</b>	4	2	1	3	0	15	15	4
<b>France</b>	4	4	2	2	0	15	10	3

**QUARTER-FINALS:** According to the standard FIRS formula, the eight teams that entered the medal round were paired for the Quarter-finals as follows: USA vs Italy; Czechs vs Australia; Germany vs the Swiss and Canada vs France. Opening the Quarter-finals, the USA dispatched Italy 4 – 1 with two goals in the first period by KC Groon and one each by teammates Eric Barney and Adam Green. The Czechs made short work of the Australians 9 – 2. The Swiss team took the measure of Germany 4 – 2. The Canadian goalie shut out France 4 – 0, closing out the first leg of the single elimination medal play. The losers in the Quarterfinals play each other for bragging rights to 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> places in the world championships. The winning teams were paired as follows: USA vs Canada and Czechs vs Swiss for the next afternoon's Semis.

**SEMI-FINALS:** The USA jumped out to a two goal lead early in the first period with goals by Jonathan Lucente and Dylan Rohar. This apparently aroused the Canadians because in the last half of the first period all the scoring belonged to them, as they drove in 4 unanswered goals, to take a 4 – 2 lead into the half time locker room. The Canadians were not finished being dominant, coming onto the rink in the second period and scoring a fifth goal inside of 30 seconds and still another 3 minutes later. American defenses had collapsed and the Canadian team now enjoyed a lead of 6 – 2, which they carried into final 3 minutes of the game. Then KC Groon broke the American log jam by scoring a goal at 37:54, making it a 6 – 3 game. Adding insult to injury, 12 seconds later Canadian Joshua Warne fired a 7<sup>th</sup> goal into the American cage to bring the tally to 7-3. The USA team continued its rally, when only a few seconds later American shooters Jacob Hickey and Sam Nixford each powered in goals at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour in an attempt to ward off American defeat. Alas the clock was their enemy, and when the bell rang and the dust settled, the final score still favored the Canadians 7 to 5 over the Americans.

In the Czech/Swiss semi-final game, Switzerland jumped out to an early lead by first period goals from Daniel Stadelmann and Cristoph Frei, then they apparently gave their offense the rest of the day off, because

it was the last that was heard from them. The Czechs scored three goals in the second half of the first period, with Jen Buchtele scoring twice and then a goal by Petr Zamorsky producing an interim tally of 3 – 2 in favor of the Czechs going into the half time locker room. The Czechs continued their onslaught against the Swiss with a score by Zdenek Okal and a second goal by Zamorsky. The teams left the field with a 5 to 2 advantage by the Czechs over the Swiss. The Gold Medal game would be decided the next day by the Czechs and Canadians. USA and Swiss are left to decide the Bronze medal recipient between them.

**THE FINALS:** In single elimination tournaments, the two losers in the semi-finals are the only competition victims given a second chance at winning a medal, but denied further hope for Silver or Gold. Team USA and Switzerland faced off against one another for the Bronze consolation prize. American Adam Green scored two first period goals, followed with two additional scores by teammate Dylan Rohar. In the interim, opposing player Alain Bahar put in the only Swiss goal of the game. The score was 4 – 1 at half time. In the second period, Joey Doran contributed a fifth goal for the USA side of the scoreboard, as the USA shut down the scoring of the Swiss, winning the Bronze medal 5 – 1.

In what appeared to be a version of trench warfare, the Canadians and the Czechs each drew two majors and two misconduct penalties apiece from the referees in the struggle for a Gold Medal. All the scoring in the game occurred late in the second period and all were originated by the Czechs inside a span of four minutes beginning at 27:33 of the game. Czech player Pavel Klhufek scored first, followed by Stanislav Husak and then Klhufek again. The game was pretty much penalty free until the final 3-1/2 minutes, when all thoughts of sportsmanship left the game while the referees dealt punishment for actions that produced no further scoring. The Czechs won the game 3 – 0 and the Gold medal. Canada took the Silver Medal.

### **2009 JUNIOR TEAM USA**

#18 Erik BARNEY – Marlton, NJ; #7 Rees BERNOT – Aurora, CO;  
#3 John Tyler BOVEE – Englewood, CO; #61 Joseph DORAN – Corona, CA;  
#26 Adam GREEN – Strongsville, OH; #71 Kaelin GROON – Aliso Viejo, CA;  
#15 Jacob HICKEY – San Jose, CA; #2 Bret KURTH – Owasso, OK;  
#5 Jonathan LUCENTE – Deptford, NJ; #12 Samuel NIXDORF – Brownstown, MI;  
#38 Dylan ROHAR – Wexford, PA; #14 Joshua WINTERS – Corona, CA;  
#29 Marcus ROGERS – Golden, CO; #41 Devon SHERWOOD – Arvada, CO  
COACH – Ken MURCHISON - Anaheim, CA;  
ASST COACH & MANAGER – Charles SGRILLO – Philadelphia, PA

### **2009 JUNIOR MEN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL RESULTS:**

**1. CZECH REPUBLIC – Gold; 2. CANADA – Silver; 3. USA – Bronze;  
4. Switzerland 5. Germany 6. Italy 7. France 8. Australia 9. Colombia  
10. Mexico**