

= Ice hockey at the Olympic Games =

Ice hockey tournaments have been staged at the Olympic Games since 1920 . The men 's tournament was introduced at the 1920 Summer Olympics and was transferred permanently to the Winter Olympic Games program in 1924 , in France . The women 's tournament was first held at the 1998 Winter Olympics . The Olympic Games were originally intended for amateur athletes until 1988 , and the National Hockey League (NHL) did not allow its players to compete until 1998 . From 1924 to 1988 , the tournament started with a round @-@ robin series of games and ended with the medal round . Medals were awarded based on points accumulated during that round . The games of the tournament follow the rules of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) , which differ slightly from the rules used in the NHL . The tournament follows the World Anti @-@ Doping Agency 's (WADA) rules on performance @-@ enhancing drugs and the IIHF maintains a Registered Testing Pool , a list of top players who are subjected to random in @-@ competition and out @-@ of @-@ competition drug tests . Several players have tested positive for banned substances since the 1972 Winter Olympics .

In the men 's tournament , Canada was the most successful team of the first three decades , winning six of seven gold medals . Czechoslovakia , Sweden and the United States were also competitive during this period and won multiple medals . Between 1920 and 1968 , the Olympic hockey tournament was also counted as the Ice Hockey World Championship for that year . The Soviet Union first participated in 1956 and overtook Canada as the dominant international team , winning seven of the nine tournaments in which they participated . The United States won gold medals in 1960 and in 1980 , which included their " Miracle on Ice " upset of the Soviet Union . Canada went 50 years without a gold medal , before winning one in 2002 , and following it with back @-@ to @-@ back wins in 2010 and 2014 . Other nations to win gold include Great Britain in 1936 , the Unified Team in 1992 , Sweden in 1994 and 2006 and the Czech Republic in 1998 . Other medal @-@ winning nations include Switzerland , Germany , Finland and Russia .

In 1986 , the International Olympic Committee (IOC) voted to allow all athletes to compete in Olympic Games starting in 1988 . The NHL was initially reluctant to allow its players to compete because the Olympics are held in the middle of the NHL season , and the league would have to halt play if many of its players participated . However , NHL players were allowed to compete starting in 1998 . The format of the tournament was adjusted to accommodate the NHL schedule ; a preliminary round was played without NHL players or the top six teams ? Canada , the Czech Republic , Finland , Russia , Sweden and the United States ? followed by a final round which included them . The tournament format was changed again in 2006 ; every team played five preliminary games with the full use of NHL players .

In July 1992 , the IOC voted to approve women 's hockey as an Olympic event ; it was first held at the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano . The Nagano Organizing Committee was hesitant to include the event because of the additional costs of staging the tournament , but an agreement was reached that limited the field to six teams , and ensured that no additional facilities would be built . The Canadian and American teams have dominated the event , typically losing only to each other . The United States won the first tournament in 1998 , while Canada won in 2002 , 2006 , 2010 and 2014 .

= = Inception as an Olympic sport = =

The first Olympic ice hockey tournament took place at the 1920 Summer Olympics in Antwerp , Belgium . At the time , organised international ice hockey was still relatively new . The International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) , the sport 's governing body , was created on May 15 , 1908 , under the name Ligue Internationale de Hockey sur Glace . At the 1914 Olympic Congress in Paris , ice hockey was added to the list of optional sports that Olympics organisers could include . The decision to include ice hockey for the 1920 Summer Olympics was made in January , three months before the start of the Games . Several occurrences led to the sport 's inclusion in the programme . Five European nations had committed to participating in the tournament and the managers of Antwerp 's

Palais de Glace stadium refused to allow the building to be used for figure skating unless ice hockey was included . The IIHF considers the 1920 tournament to be the first Ice Hockey World Championship . From then on , the two events occurred concurrently , and every Olympic tournament until 1968 is counted as the World Championship . The Olympic Games were originally intended for amateur athletes , so the players of the National Hockey League (NHL) and other professional leagues were not allowed to play .

The first Winter Olympic Games were held in 1924 in Chamonix , France . Chapter 1 , article 6 , of the 2007 edition of the Olympic Charter defines winter sports as " sports which are practised on snow or ice " . Ice hockey and figure skating were permanently integrated in the Winter Olympics programme . The IOC made the Winter Games a permanent fixture and they were held the same year as the Summer Games until 1992 . Following that , further Winter Games have been held on the third year of each Olympiad .

= = Events = =

= = = Men 's tournament = = =

= = = = 1920 Summer Olympics = = = =

The men 's tournament held at the 1920 Summer Olympics was organised by a committee that included future IIHF president Paul Loicq . The tournament used the Bergvall System , in which three rounds were played . The first round was an elimination tournament that determined the gold medal winner . The second round consisted of the teams that were defeated by the gold medal winner ; the winner of that round was awarded the silver medal . The final round was played between teams that had lost to the gold or silver medal winners ; the winner of that round received the bronze medal .

The tournament was played from April 23 to April 29 and seven teams participated : Canada , Czechoslovakia , the United States , Switzerland , Sweden , France and Belgium . Canada chose to send the Allan Cup @-@ winning Winnipeg Falcons . The Americans began a tournament to determine their representative team but abandoned it , deciding instead to send an all @-@ star team that included four Canadian @-@ born players . The Swedish team consisted of mostly bandy players , many of whom had only started playing hockey in preparation for the tournament . Canada won all three of the team 's games in the first round and won the gold medal , defeating Sweden in the final and outscoring opponents 27 ? 1 . In the two subsequent rounds , the United States and Czechoslovakia won the silver and bronze medals respectively . The Bergvall System was criticised , especially in Sweden , because the Swedish team had to play six games (winning three) while the bronze medal winning Czech team only had to play three (winning one) . Erik Bergvall , the creator of the system , stated that it was used incorrectly and that a tournament of all of the losing teams from the first round should have been played for the silver medal . Because of these criticisms , the Bergvall System was not used again for ice hockey .

= = = = 1924 ? 1952 = = = =

In 1924 , the tournament was played in a round @-@ robin format , consisting of a preliminary round and a medal round . The medals were awarded based on win ? loss records during the medal round . This format was used until 1988 , although the number of teams and games played varied slightly . The Toronto Granites , representing Canada , became one of the dominant hockey teams in Olympic history , outscoring opponents 110 ? 3 , led by Harry Watson , who scored 36 goals . The United States won silver and Great Britain won bronze . Watson 's 36 goals remains the tournament record for career goals . He also set the record for career points with 36 (assists were not counted at the time) , which stood until 2010 .

Eleven teams participated in the 1928 Winter Olympics in St. Moritz , Switzerland . The Canadian team was given a bye to the medal round and won all of its games by a combined score of 38 ? 0 . The Swedish and Swiss teams won their first medals ? silver and bronze respectively ? and a German team participated for the first time , finishing ninth . At the 1932 Winter Olympics , Canada won gold in a tournament that consisted of four teams that played each other twice . Germany won bronze , the nation 's first medal in the sport .

Two days before the 1936 Winter Olympics in Garmisch @-@ Partenkirchen , Germany , Canadian officials protested that two players on the British team ? James Foster and Alex Archer ? had played in Canada but transferred without permission to play for clubs in the English National League . The IIHF agreed with Canada , but Great Britain threatened to withdraw the team if the two were barred from competing . To avoid a conflict , Canada withdrew the protest shortly before the Games began . The tournament consisted of four groups and fifteen teams . Great Britain became the first non @-@ Canadian team to win gold ; Canada won silver and the United States bronze . World War II forced the cancellation of the 1940 and 1944 Winter Olympics .

During the run @-@ up to the 1948 Winter Olympics in St. Moritz , Switzerland , a conflict broke out between two American ice hockey bodies , the American Hockey Association (AHA) and the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) . The AAU , which had run amateur hockey in the United States since 1930 , was expelled by the IIHF in 1947 when it refused to support a team composed of players from the AHA . The AAU stated that the AHA players were " openly paid salaries " ; at the time , the Olympics were strictly for amateur players . The Swiss Olympic Organizing Committee (SOOC) had accepted the AHA 's application , but Avery Brundage of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) threatened to withdraw the entire American team if the AHA participated in the Olympics . The IIHF countered by threatening to withdraw hockey from the Games if the AHA were banned . The IOC suggested that both American teams be banned but the SOOC rejected this proposal . The IOC decided to switch hockey to an unofficial event but relented when a compromise was reached . The AHA team was allowed to compete but would not be considered an official participant or allowed to win a medal . The AHA team finished fourth in the standings . Both Czechoslovakia and Canada won seven games and tied when they played each other . The gold medal winner was determined by goal difference : Canada won the gold because it had an average of 13 @.@ 8 goals per game compared to Czechoslovakia 's average of 4 @.@ 3 . Czechoslovakia 's team was quickly improving ; it won the 1947 and 1949 World Championships .

At the 1952 Winter Olympics in Oslo , Norway , the gold medal was won by Canada 's team for the second consecutive Games . It would be the last time that a Canadian team would win a gold medal in hockey for 50 years . The United States won silver and Sweden won bronze . A team from Finland competed for the first time .

=== 1956 ? 1976 ===

The Soviet Union competed in its first World Championship in 1954 , defeating Canada and winning the gold medal . At the 1956 Winter Olympics in Cortina d 'Ampezzo , Italy , the Soviet team went undefeated and won its first gold medal . Canada 's team lost to the Soviets and the United States in the medal round , winning the bronze . The 1960 Winter Olympics , in Squaw Valley , United States , saw the first , and to date only , team from Australia compete in the tournament . Canada , the Soviet Union , Czechoslovakia and Sweden were the top four teams heading into the Games , but were all defeated by the American team , which won all seven games en route to its first Olympic gold medal . Canada won the silver medal and the Soviet Union won the bronze .

At the 1964 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck , Austria , the Soviet team won all seven of its games , earning the gold medal . Canada finished the tournament with five wins and two losses , putting the team in a three @-@ way tie for second place with Sweden and Czechoslovakia . Before 1964 , the tie @-@ breaking procedure was based on goal difference in games against teams in the medal round ; under that system , Canada would have placed third ahead of the Czechoslovakian team . During the tournament the procedure was changed to take all games into consideration , which meant that the Canadians finished fourth . At the time , the Olympics counted as the World

Championships ; under their (unchanged) rules , Canada should have received bronze for the World Championships .

Soviet domination continued at the 1968 Winter Olympics held in Grenoble , France , as the team won its third gold medal . Czechoslovakia and Canada won the silver and bronze medals . It was the last time that the Olympics were counted as the World Championships . In 1970 , Canada withdrew from international ice hockey competition following a dispute over the use of professional players , and the team did not participate in the 1972 or 1976 Winter Olympics . Led by goaltender Vladislav Tretiak and forwards Valeri Kharlamov , Alexander Yakushev , Vladimir Petrov and Boris Mikhailov , the Soviet team won gold at both the 1972 Games in Sapporo , Japan and 1976 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck , Austria . In 1971 , the United States finished last at the World Championships and was relegated to Pool B. The team qualified for the 1972 Olympics and won silver , making it the first Pool B team to win an Olympic medal . Czechoslovakia won the bronze medal in 1972 . In 1976 , Czechoslovakia won the silver and West Germany won bronze . Along with Canada , the Swedish team did not participate in the 1976 tournament in protest at their inability to use professional players .

== == 1980 : The " Miracle on Ice " == ==

The Winter Olympics returned to Lake Placid , New York in 1980 . Twelve teams participated in the tournament , including Canada for the first time since 1968 . The Soviet Union entered the tournament as favourites and were considered natural rivals with the American team due to the Cold War . The Americans , coached by Herb Brooks and consisting mainly of college students , tied Sweden and scored an upset win over Czechoslovakia in the preliminary round . They advanced to the medal round along with Sweden , Finland and the Soviet Union .

The February 22 medal @-@ round game between the Soviet Union and the United States became famously known as the " Miracle on Ice . " The Soviets took a 2 ? 1 lead , but the Americans tied the game with one second left in the first period . In the second period , Soviet goaltender Vladislav Tretiak was replaced by Vladimir Myshkin . The Soviets regained the lead early in the second period . However , the Americans kept the game close due to the goaltending of Jim Craig . In the third period , the Americans scored two goals , including the game winner by captain Mike Eruzione with exactly 10 minutes left to give the Americans a 4 ? 3 lead . Craig withstood another series of Soviet shots to preserve the win . In the final seconds of the game , American Broadcasting Company sportscaster Al Michaels delivered his famous line : " Do you believe in miracles ? Yes ! "

The final rankings were based on points accumulated in matches against the other teams in the medal round . Despite the common misconception that the Americans won gold the night they beat the Soviets , this did not occur until February 24 when they defeated Finland 4 ? 2 and finished the tournament undefeated . The Soviets finished with silver ; Sweden won the bronze . In 2008 , the IIHF picked the Miracle on Ice as the top international hockey story of the past 100 years .

== == 1984 ? 1994 == ==

At the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo , Yugoslavia , the Soviet Union won its sixth gold medal . Czechoslovakia and Sweden won the silver and bronze medals . The 1988 Winter Olympics were held in Calgary , Alberta , Canada , where the Soviet team captured its seventh and final gold medal . The Soviets ' last Olympic game was a loss to Finland . The Finnish team was not considered a serious medal contender ? it had competed in the World Championships since 1939 and had not won a single medal . However , Finland upset the Soviets 2 ? 1 and won silver . The IIHF decided to change the tournament format because in several cases , the gold medal winner had been decided before the final day of play . During a congress in 1990 , the IIHF introduced a playoff system . The new system was used at the 1992 Winter Olympics in Albertville , France . Preliminary round @-@ robin games were held and followed by an eight @-@ team cup @-@ system style medal round that culminated in a gold medal game .

Before 1989 , players who lived in the Soviet Union , Czechoslovakia , and other nations behind the

Iron Curtain were not allowed to leave and play in the NHL . Soviet officials agreed to allow players to leave following the 1989 World Championships . Many of the Soviet Union 's top players left to play in the NHL , including the entire " Green Unit " ? Igor Larionov , Viacheslav Fetisov , Vladimir Krutov , Sergei Makarov and Alexei Kasatonov . The Soviet Union dissolved in December 1991 . Nine former Soviet states became part of the IIHF and started competing internationally , including Belarus , Kazakhstan , Latvia and Ukraine . At the 1992 Olympics , Armenia , Belarus , Kazakhstan , Russia , Ukraine and Uzbekistan competed as one entity , known as the Unified Team . In the final , the Unified Team defeated Canada to win gold while Czechoslovakia won the bronze .

Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in January 1993 . The IIHF recognized the Czech Republic as the successor to Czechoslovakia , allowing the team to retain its position in the top World Championship division , while Slovakia started in the lowest division (Pool C) in 1994 and was forced to work its way up . Both nations competed in the tournament at the 1994 Winter Olympics , as did Russia . Slovakia and Finland both finished the preliminary round undefeated . Slovakia lost their medal round quarter @-@ final game to Russia , who later lost to Finland in the bronze medal game . In the gold medal game between Sweden and Canada , both teams finished regulation and overtime play with a 2 ? 2 tie . In the resulting shootout , the first in Olympic competition , both nations scored two goals , which resulted in a sudden death shootout . Peter Forsberg of Sweden scored one of the most famous goals in Olympic history by faking a forehand shot , then sliding a one @-@ handed backhand shot past goaltender Corey Hirsch . Canada 's final shooter Paul Kariya 's shot was saved by Tommy Salo and Sweden won the game and its first gold medal .

===== 1998 ? 2014 =====

In 1995 , an agreement to allow NHL players to participate in Olympics was reached between the IOC , IIHF , NHL , and National Hockey League Players ' Association (NHLPA) . The format of the 1998 tournament was adjusted to accommodate the NHL 's schedule . On February 7 , a preliminary round without NHL players or the " Big Six " teams (Canada , the Czech Republic , Finland , Russia , Sweden and the United States) began . The NHL had games on that day , but then halted play for the next 17 days to allow participating players to fly to Japan and recover from fatigue . The tournament format drew criticism for not allowing all teams the full use of their NHL players during the entire event . The top six teams were given a bye to the final round and began play on February 13 . Canada , considered a pre @-@ tournament favourite , was upset in the semi @-@ final round by the Czech Republic and then lost the bronze medal game to Finland . Led by goaltender Dominik Ha?ek , the Czech team defeated Russia , who defeated them previously in the round robin , winning its first gold medal in the sport . During the tournament , Pavel Bure set an Olympic Record for Goals in a Game with 5 against Finland in the Semifinals . Swedish player Ulf Samuelsson was discovered to have applied for American citizenship . Under Swedish law at the time , when one acquires a foreign passport , their citizenship is annulled . Samuelsson was ejected after having played the first game against Belarus , although Sweden kept their points from the win . The Czech National Olympic Committee felt that Sweden should lose the points and filed a protest with the Court of Arbitration for Sport , which was rejected . Following the tournament , NHL commissioner Gary Bettman commented that it " was what we had predicted and hoped for from a pure hockey perspective , [it was] a wonderful tournament " .

The same tournament format was used at the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City , United States . The NHL 's Olympic break did not start until the second week of the Games . Because the Olympics were in the United States , where the majority of NHL teams are located , teams participating in the preliminary tournament were allowed to use NHL players who were not obligated to play with their NHL club . Slovakia was particularly affected by the inability to use all of its NHL players , and the team failed to advance to the final round . Three months later , Slovakia won gold at the 2002 World Championships . Finnish centre Raimo Helminen became the first ice hockey player to compete in six tournaments . In the quarter @-@ finals , Belarus defeated Sweden in one of the biggest upsets since the Miracle on Ice . The team advanced to the bronze medal game , but

lost to Russia . The Canadian team rebounded from a disappointing first round and defeated the American team in the gold medal game , winning their first gold medal in 50 years .

The tournament format was adjusted for 2006 . The NHL went on hiatus for the duration of the games , allowing all players to compete . The number of teams was lowered to 12 ; the top six teams did not get a bye and played five preliminary round games . Sweden won the gold medal over Finland and the Czech Republic won the bronze medal . Three months later , Sweden won the 2006 World Championships and became the first team to win the Olympic and World Championship gold in the same year .

The 2010 Winter Olympics were held in Vancouver , Canada , the first time since NHL players were allowed to compete that the Olympics were held in a city with an NHL team . For the first time , Olympic games were played on a narrower NHL @-@ sized ice rink , measuring 61 metres x 26 metres (200 ft x 85 ft) , instead of the international size of 61 m x 30 @.@ 5 m (200 ft x 100 ft) . This change saved an expected \$ 10 million (CAD) in construction costs and allowed more spectators to attend games . Games were played at the UBC Winter Sports Centre and Rogers Arena (then GM Place at the time) , which was renamed Canada Hockey Place during the event because corporate sponsorship is not allowed for an Olympic venue . Twelve teams qualified for the men 's event and were split into three groups of four teams . At the NHL 's request , the number of preliminary games was lowered to three . Following the completion of the preliminary round , all teams were ranked 1 through 12 based on points . The top four ranked teams received byes to the quarter @-@ finals , and the other eight teams played for the remaining four positions . Following that , the final eight teams competed in a playoff .

Teemu Selänne of Finland scored his 37th point , breaking the record of 36 first set by Canadian Harry Watson in 1924 and later tied by Vlastimil Bubník of Czechoslovakia , and Valeri Kharlamov of the Soviet Union . Slovakia made the final four for the first time , but lost the bronze medal game to Finland . In the gold medal game , Canada and the United States ended regulation play with a 2 ? 2 tie , making it only the second Olympic gold medal match to go into overtime . Canadian player Sidney Crosby scored the winning goal 7 : 40 into overtime play to give Canada its eighth gold medal in men 's hockey .

The 2014 Winter Olympics were held in Sochi , Russia , and retained the same game format used in Vancouver 2010 , while returning to the larger international @-@ sized ice rinks . Slovenia participated for the first time , upsetting Slovakia in the round robin before losing to Sweden in the quarterfinals , for its best finish in any international tournament . Latvia upset Switzerland in the qualification playoffs , also making it to the Olympic quarterfinals for the first time , where they were narrowly defeated by Canada . Host nation Russia , considered a pre @-@ tournament favourite , lost 3 ? 1 in the quarterfinals to Finland and finished 5th . Entering the semi @-@ finals undefeated after outscoring opponents 20 ? 6 , the United States lost to Canada 1 ? 0 , then lost the bronze medal game against Finland 5 ? 0 . Teemu Selänne scored six more points in the tournament , was named tournament MVP and boosted his modern @-@ era Olympic career record for points to 43 (24 goals , 19 assists) . At the age of 43 , he also set records as both the oldest Olympic goal @-@ scorer and oldest Olympic ice hockey medal winner . Canada defeated Sweden 3 ? 0 to win its ninth Olympic gold medal . The team did not trail at any point over the course of the tournament , and became the first back @-@ to @-@ back gold medal winner since the start of NHL participation in 1998 , as well as the first team to go undefeated since 1984 .

== = Women 's tournament == =

== = Addition to the programme == =

At the 99th IOC Session in July 1992 , the IOC voted to approve women 's hockey as an Olympic event beginning with the 1998 Winter Olympics as part of their effort to increase the number of female athletes at the Olympics . Women 's hockey had not been in the programme when Nagano , Japan had won the right to host the Olympics , and the decision required approval by the Nagano

Winter Olympic Organizing Committee (NAOOC) . The NAOOC was initially hesitant to include the event because of the additional costs of staging the tournament and because they felt their team , which had failed to qualify for that year 's World Championships , could not be competitive . According to Glynis Peters , the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association 's (CAHA) head of female hockey , " the Japanese would have to finance an entirely new sports operation to bring their team up to Olympic standards in six years , which they were also really reluctant to do . " In November 1992 , the NWOOC and IOC Coordination Committee reached an agreement to include a women 's ice hockey tournament in the programme . Part of the agreement was that the tournament would be limited to six teams , and no additional facilities would be built . The CAHA also agreed to help build and train the Japanese team so that it could be more competitive . The IOC had agreed that if the NAOOC had not approved the event , it would be held at the 2002 Winter Olympics . The format of the first tournament was similar to the men 's : preliminary round @-@ robin games followed by a medal round playoff .

== = 1998 ? 2014 == = =

Before 1998 , women 's hockey had been dominated by Canada . Canadian teams had won every World Championship up to that point ; however , by 1997 , the American team had improved and was evenly matched with Canada . In thirteen games played between the two teams in 1997 , Canada won seven and the United States won six . The 1998 Olympic tournament also included teams from Finland , Sweden , China and host Japan . Canada and the United States dominated the round @-@ robin portion . In their head @-@ to @-@ head match , the United States overcame a 4 ? 1 deficit to win 7 ? 4 . The two teams met in the final , which the United States won 3 ? 1 to become the third ice hockey team to win Olympic gold .

For the 2002 Winter Olympics , the number of teams was increased to eight and Russia , Germany and Kazakhstan qualified for the first time . The Canadian and American teams went undefeated in the first round and semi @-@ finals , setting up a gold medal rematch that the Canadian team won 3 ? 2 . Following the game , members of the Canadian team accused the Americans of stomping on a Canadian flag in their dressing room , although an investigation later proved the rumour false . The Swedish team won the bronze medal over Finland , the nation 's first in women 's ice hockey .

In 2006 , Italy and Switzerland participated for the first time . The Italian team , at the time ranked 17th in the world , had qualified because Italy was the host nation . They were outscored 32 ? 1 in three games and IIHF president René Fasel declared his intention to make future tournaments more competitive and not allow host nations to automatically qualify . The Canadian team started the tournament by outscoring opponents 36 ? 1 over three games . American defenceman Angela Ruggiero accused the team of running up the score and warned that the event 's Olympic status could be called into question due to a perceived lack of competitive teams . In response , René Fasel stated that other women 's teams were improving and that there was similar dominance in the early years of the men 's tournament but the sport continued to grow . He added , " I promise you that it won 't take the [Swedish] women 64 years to win " ? in reference to the Swedish men 's team inability to defeat Canada in Olympic play until 1984 (the Swedish women 's team defeated Canada for the first time at the 2008 4 Nations Cup) .

In its semi @-@ final game , the American team was upset by Sweden , marking the first time that it had lost to an opponent other than Canada . The upset drew comparisons to the Miracle on Ice from 1980 . In the medal games , Canada defeated Sweden to claim its second consecutive gold medal , while the Americans beat Finland to win the bronze .

In 2010 , eight teams participated , including Slovakia for the first time . The Canadian and American teams outscored opponents in the preliminary round by 41 ? 2 and 31 ? 1 margins , respectively . This brought on more criticism about uneven competition . IOC president Jacques Rogge said , " There is a discrepancy there , everyone agrees with that . This is maybe the investment period in women 's ice hockey . I would personally give them more time to grow but there must be a period of improvement . We cannot continue without improvement . " Swedish team coach Peter Elander said it is hard for other nations to compete because of a lack of funding and a

smaller pool of players to choose from . He said , " The finances for all teams have to be the same If you want to have a close tournament in Sochi (for the 2014 Olympics) , have (comparable) national programs in all countries . " Some critics suggested that a mercy rule be implemented to prevent such lopsided scores . René Fasel said the IIHF would consider adding one . Chinese team coach Hannu Saintula , whose team was defeated 12 ? 1 by the Americans , and American coach Mark Johnson , did not favor the idea .

In the gold medal game , Canada defeated the United States 2 ? 0 to win their third consecutive gold . The Finnish team won the bronze medal , their first since 1998 .

At the 2014 Winter Olympics , Canada defeated the United States 3 @-@ 2 , as Marie @-@ Philip Poulin scored at 8 : 10 of overtime to win their fourth consecutive gold , rebounding from a two @-@ goal deficit . With the win , Canadians Hayley Wickenheiser , Jayna Hefford and Caroline Ouellette became the first athletes to win four ice hockey gold medals . They also joined Soviet biathlete Alexander Tikhonov and German speedskater Claudia Pechstein as the only athletes to win gold medals in four straight Winter Olympics . In the bronze medal game Switzerland beat Sweden 4 ? 3 to win their first women 's medal .

= = Rules = =

= = = Qualification = = =

Since 1976 , 12 teams have participated in the men 's tournament , except in 1998 and 2002 , when the number was raised to 14 . The number of teams has ranged from 4 (in 1932) to 16 (in 1964) . After the NHL allowed its players to compete at the 1998 Winter Olympics , the " Big Six " teams (Canada , the Czech Republic , Finland , Russia , Sweden and the United States) were given automatic qualification and byes to the final round . The number of teams was increased to 14 so that a preliminary round @-@ robin tournament consisting of eight teams could be held . The top two teams from the preliminary round (Belarus and Kazakhstan) joined the " Big Six " in the finals . A similar system was used in 2002 . For the following tournament , the number of teams was lowered to 12 so that all teams played fewer games . Qualification for the men 's tournament at the 2010 Winter Olympics was structured around the 2008 IIHF World Ranking . Twelve spots were made available for teams . The top nine teams in the World Ranking after the 2008 Men 's World Ice Hockey Championships received automatic berths . Teams ranked 19th through 30th played in a first qualification round in November 2008 . The top three teams from the round advanced to the second qualification round , joined by teams ranked 10th through 18th . The top three teams from this round advanced to the Olympic tournament .

The women 's tournament uses a similar qualification format . The top six teams in the IIHF Women 's World Ranking after the 2008 Women 's World Ice Hockey Championships received automatic berths . Teams ranked 13th and below were divided into two groups for a first qualification round in September 2008 . The two group winners advanced to the second qualification round , where the teams ranked seventh through twelfth joined them .

= = = Players = = =

= = = = Eligibility = = = =

The IIHF lists the following requirements for a player to be eligible to play in international tournaments :

" Each player must be under the jurisdiction of an IIHF member national association . "

" Each player must be a citizen of the country he / she represents . "

If a player who has never played in an IIHF competition changes their citizenship , they must participate in national competitions in their new country for at least two consecutive years and have

an international transfer card (ITC) . If a player who has previously played in an IIHF tournament wishes to change their national team , they must have played in their new country for four years . A player can only do this once . The original IOC rules stated that an athlete that had already played for one nation could not later change nations under any circumstances .

= = = Use of professional players = = =

Pierre de Coubertin , founder of the IOC , was influenced by the ethos of the aristocracy as exemplified in the English public schools . The public schools subscribed to the belief that sport formed an important part of education and there was a prevailing concept of fairness in which practicing or training was considered cheating . As class structure evolved through the 20th century , the definition of the amateur athlete as an aristocratic gentleman became outdated . The advent of the state @-@ sponsored " full @-@ time amateur athlete " of the Eastern Bloc countries further eroded the ideology of the pure amateur , as it put the self @-@ financed amateurs of the Western countries at a disadvantage . The Soviet Union entered teams of athletes who were all nominally students , soldiers , or working in a profession , but many of whom were in reality paid by the state to train on a full @-@ time basis . Nevertheless , the IOC held to the traditional rules regarding amateurism .

Near the end of the 1960s , the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association (CAHA) felt their amateur players could no longer be competitive against the Soviet team 's full @-@ time athletes and the other constantly improving European teams . They pushed for the ability to use players from professional leagues but met opposition from the IIHF and IOC . Avery Brundage , president of the IOC from 1952 to 1972 , was opposed to the idea of amateur and professional players competing together . At the IIHF Congress in 1969 , the IIHF decided to allow Canada to use nine non @-@ NHL professional hockey players at the 1970 World Championships in Montreal and Winnipeg , Canada . The decision was reversed in January 1970 after Brundage said that ice hockey 's status as an Olympic sport would be in jeopardy if the change was made . In response , Canada withdrew from international ice hockey competition and officials stated that they would not return until " open competition " was instituted . Günther Sabetzki became president of the IIHF in 1975 and helped to resolve the dispute with the CAHA . In 1976 , the IIHF agreed to allow " open competition " between all players in the World Championships . However , NHL players were still not allowed to play in the Olympics , because of the unwillingness of the NHL to take a break mid @-@ season and the IOC 's amateur @-@ only policy .

Before the 1984 Winter Olympics , a dispute formed over what made a player a professional . The IOC had adopted a rule that made any player who had signed an NHL contract but played less than ten games in the league eligible . However , the United States Olympic Committee maintained that any player contracted with an NHL team was a professional and therefore not eligible to play . The IOC held an emergency meeting that ruled NHL @-@ contracted players were eligible , as long as they had not played in any NHL games . This made five players on Olympic rosters ? one Austrian , two Italians and two Canadians ? ineligible . Players who had played in other professional leagues ? such as the World Hockey Association ? were allowed to play . Canadian hockey official Alan Eagleson stated that the rule was only applied to the NHL and that professionally contracted players in European leagues were still considered amateurs . Murray Costello of the CAHA suggested that a Canadian withdrawal was possible . In 1986 , the IOC voted to allow all athletes to compete in Olympic Games starting in 1988 , but let the individual sport federations decide if they wanted to allow professionals .

= = = NHL participation = = =

The NHL decided not to allow all players to participate in 1988 , 1992 or 1994 because the Winter Olympics typically occur in February , during the league 's regular season . To allow participation , the NHL would have been forced to take a break in its schedule .

In 1992 , National Basketball Association (NBA) players participated in the 1992 Summer

Olympics . The American " Dream Team " dominated the tournament , and NHL commissioner Gary Bettman (an NBA executive in 1992) commented that the " [NBA] ' s worldwide awareness grew dramatically " . He hoped that NHL participation would " get exposure like the world has never seen for hockey " . The typical NBA season is held in the winter and spring , so the Summer Olympics do not conflict with the regular season schedule . Bettman " floated a concept of moving hockey to the Summer Games " , but this was rejected because of the Olympic Charter . In March 1995 , Bettman , René Fasel , IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch and NHLPA executive director Bob Goodenow met in Geneva , Switzerland . They reached an agreement that allowed NHL players to participate in the Olympics , starting with the 1998 Games in Nagano , Japan . The deal was officially announced by the NHL on October 2 , 1995 . Bettman said : " We 're doing this to build the game of hockey , pure and simple , we think whatever benefits are recouped , it will end up making this game bigger , stronger and healthier . "

The 2004 ? 05 NHL season was locked out and eventually cancelled because of a labour dispute between the league and its players . In January 2005 , Bettman commented that he was hesitant to allow league participation in the Olympics because he did not like the idea of stopping play mid @-@ season after the cancellation of the previous season . The lockout was resolved in July 2005 and the newly negotiated NHL Collective Bargaining Agreement allowed league participation in the 2006 and 2010 Winter Olympics . Some NHL team owners were against their players participating in the tournament because of concerns about injury or exhaustion . Philadelphia Flyers owner Ed Snider commented that " I 'm a believer in the Olympics and I think it 's good for the NHL to participate , having said that , the people who participate should be the ones who are absolutely healthy . " Some NHL players used the break as an opportunity to rest and did not participate in the tournament , and several players were injured during the Olympics and were forced to miss NHL games . Bettman said that several format changes were being discussed so that the tournament would be " a little easier for everybody " .

It was originally thought that for NHL participating in the 2014 Winter Olympics a deal would have to be negotiated between the NHL and NHLPA in the Collective Bargaining Agreement . In January 2013 , the NHL and NHLPA agreed on a new Collective Bargaining Agreement . However , the decision on NHL participation at the Olympics was later announced on 19 July 2013 . As part of the deal , the NHL will go on break for 17 days during the Olympics and will send 13 on @-@ ice officials to help with the Games . NHL management was hesitant to commit to the tournament ; Bettman argued the Olympic break is a " strain on the players , on the schedule and on fans " , adding that " the benefits we get tend to be greater when the Olympics are in North America than when they 're in distant time zones . " According to Bettman , most of the NHL team owners agree with his position , and feel that the league does not receive enough benefits to justify the schedule break and risk of player injuries . René Fasel wants NHL participation and vowed that he would " work day and night to have NHL players in Sochi " . At an October 2008 press conference , then @-@ NHLPA executive director Paul Kelly stated that the players want to return to the Olympics and would try to include the ability in the next agreement . Russian NHL players Alexander Ovechkin and Evgeni Malkin stated that they want to participate in the tournament and would do so without the permission of the NHL , if necessary . Paul Kelly also believes that the NHL 's strained relationship with the Ice Hockey Federation of Russia and the Kontinental Hockey League (KHL) could affect participation . In a 2009 interview , KHL president Alexander Medvedev claimed that the unwillingness of NHL officials to immediately commit to the Sochi Games was " an instrument of pressure " to force a transfer agreement between the two leagues . As part of the agreement for the 2014 Games , the International Olympic Committee had to pay around \$ 8 million to insure NHLers playing in Sochi , a price tag that was a major sticking point during negotiations with the NHL , NHLPA , and IIHF , making this a one @-@ time deal that may make participating in the 2018 Games unlikely .

== = Game rules == =

At the first tournament in 1920 , there were many differences from the modern game : games were

played outdoors on natural ice , forward passes were not allowed , the rink (which had been intended to be used only for figure skating) was 56 m × 18 m (165 ft × 58 @. @ 5 ft) and two 20 @-@ minute periods were played . Each team had seven players on the ice , the extra position being the rover . Following the tournament , the IIHF held a congress and decided to adopt the Canadian rules ? six men per side and three periods of play .

The tournaments follow the rules used by the IIHF . At the 1969 IIHF Congress , officials voted to allow body @-@ checking in all three zones in a rink similar to the NHL . Before that , body @-@ checking was only allowed in the defending zone in international hockey . Several other rule changes were implemented in the early 1970s : players were required to wear helmets starting in 1970 , and goaltender masks became mandatory in 1972 . In 1992 , the IIHF switched to using a playoff system to determine medalists and decided that tie games in the medal round would be decided in a shootout . In 1998 , the IIHF passed a rule that allowed two @-@ line passes . Before then , the neutral zone trap had slowed the game down and reduced scoring .

The current IIHF rules differ slightly from the rules used in the NHL . One difference between NHL and IIHF rules is standard rink dimensions : the NHL rink is narrower , measuring 61 m × 26 m (200 ft × 85 ft) , instead of the international size of 61 m × 30 @. @ 5 m (200 ft × 100 ft) The larger international size allows for a faster and less physical style of play . Another rule difference between the NHL and the IIHF rules concerns how icing is called . In the NHL , a linesman stops play due to icing if a defending player (other than the goaltender) is not behind an attacking player in the race to the end @-@ zone faceoff dots in his defensive zone , in contrast to the IIHF rules in which play is stopped the moment the puck crosses the goal line . The NHL and IIHF also differ in penalty rules . The NHL calls five @-@ minute major penalties for more dangerous infractions of the rules , such as fighting , in addition to the minor and double minor penalties called in IIHF games . This is in contrast to the IIHF rule , by which players who fight are ejected from the game . Beginning with the 2005 ? 06 season , the NHL instituted several new rules . Some were already used by the IIHF , such as the shootout and the two @-@ line pass . Others were not picked up by the IIHF , such as those requiring smaller goaltender equipment and the addition of the goaltender trapezoid to the rink . However , the IIHF did agree to follow the NHL 's zero @-@ tolerance policy on obstruction and required referees to call more hooking , holding , and interference penalties .

Each team is allowed to have between 15 and 20 skaters (forwards and defencemen) and two or three goaltenders , all of whom must be citizens of the nation they play for .

One of the conditions of the NHL 's participation in the Olympics is to include regular NHL referees and linesmen in the tournament , despite the fact that they are American or Canadian , and thus gives the perception of American or Canadian bias in the officiating .

= = = Banned substances = = =

The IIHF follows the World Anti @-@ Doping Agency 's (WADA) regulations on performance @-@ enhancing drugs . The IIHF maintains a Registered Testing Pool , a list of top players who are subjected to random in @-@ competition and out @-@ of @-@ competition drug tests . According to the WADA , a positive in @-@ competition test results in disqualification of the player and a suspension that varies based on the number of offences . When a player tests positive , the rest of their team is subjected to testing ; another positive test can result in a disqualification of the entire team . In 2001 , the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) pushed for American NHL players who were potential Olympians to be subject to random drug tests . The USOC requires all Olympic @-@ bound athletes to be randomly tested by the United States Anti @-@ Doping Agency , but had exempted NHL players in 1998 . The NHL preferred a more uniform method , in which all players would undergo the same number of tests from the WADA . An agreement was reached that the WADA would start testing players after the NHL playoffs were finished .

In late 2005 , two NHL players who had been listed as potential Olympians failed drug tests administered by the WADA . American Bryan Berard , who had competed in the 1998 Winter Olympics , tested positive for 19 @-@ Norandrosterone . Canadian José Théodore failed a drug test because he was taking Propecia , a hair loss medication that contains the non @-@ performance

@-@ enhancing drug Finasteride . Both players received two @-@ year bans from international competition , although neither had made their team 's final roster .

= = Statistics = =

= = = Participating nations = = =

Key
Men
Women

= = = Medal winners = = =

Men
Women

= = = Medal table = = =