

## **„TIGERS ON CLOUD 9 – DEL ICEHOCKEY SEASON STARTED“**

What can be more inspiring and challenging for an underdog such as the Straubing Tigers than to prove that they have got the guts to pass their 1st year in Germany's first class league?

Time has finally come and the first weekend of season plays has already shown that the Tigers seem to be a serious opponent for the already old established teams in this elite club.

Ingolstadt, a booming city of Bavaria and once a runner up itself 4 years ago, turned out to be the first victim of a terrific and hilarious game at the Pulverturm stadium. The Tigers happened to be the more advantageous team in terms of speed, technical ability and strategic procedure.

Indeed, this historical victory has further incited the enthusiasm and passion of the entire region.

Another - obvious proof for an increasing attention and acknowledgement through the media - were two articles in the 'Welt am Sonntag' and 'SZ' illustrating the new career of Erich Kühnhackl as the former hero and captain of Germany's legendary national team and actual head coach of the Tigers.

From my point of view, this engagement of Mr Kühnhackl obviously reveals his inherent ambition for a sound job of his team, definitely aiming at a good and exemplary performance regarding physical and mental presence, sportsmanship/fair play and the ability to beat a few of the top teams once in a while.

That way the Tigers brand ought to be made well known all over the major cities performing in this premier league.

Due to new regulations the Tigers are enabled to spend at least 5 years without being endangered to leave the elite DEL club again. At first glance, this factual circumstance seems to be an ideal prerequisite for getting settled within this league; however, you should take into account that there is a lack of existential pressure being kicked off after each season: i.e. there are no real play-downs forcing the Tigers to invest maximum input and effort for eventual survival of the fittest.

So, how can you effectively guarantee that there is enough stimulus for the Tigers to bundle all energy in order to get the most out of it?

In fact, this will be – at least in my opinion – the tricky question for the next years. How can such a team reasonably cope with this new and unknown situation?

In the following, I will try to find possible solutions and ways of dealing with this juicy topic.

## **1. Set of minds – Priorities – Goals**

In retrospect to what the Tigers have already achieved in terms of historical dimensions, it is now fairly important to clarify which kind of realistic goals they need to be aware of for the upcoming 5 years.

Basically, they should – psychologically speaking – anchor their previous success as champion of the 2nd league in their minds.

Now the Tigers have to consider the prospective benefit for the city of Straubing and its geographical environment. Therefore, setting the right priorities will become a predominant factor for the team, given that there are sufficient financial assets which will allow to form a winning team with appropriate and affordable players.

I would suggest to focus upon a pragmatic and programmatic strategy regarding each single season in the DEL similar to a sophisticated medium term planning policy. It goes without saying that the necessary learning process is going to happen sooner or later whilst sticking to this philosophy no matter how difficult this adventure might be.

## **2. Financial support**

Money keeps the Tiger's world go round – as a matter of fact this financial aspect is supposed to play the vital role in the eyes of the Tiger.

Due to strict monetary bottlenecks and a tough budget to monitor the management will be forced to keep full attention to balanced accounts in particular regarding the obligation to pay back existing liabilities and urgent debts within a certain period of time.

However, every kind of donation is welcome! So, creativity and flexibility concerning a successful marketing strategy will be a crucial element of the Tiger's mind set as well. Nevertheless, the importance of the Major of Straubing as decision maker and administrative backbone mustn't be neglected in this respect, in particular when it comes to find additional potent investors that can further provide a satisfactory basis for working in the DEL.

### **3. Management by realistic objectives**

From my perspective, establishing a kind of Matrix-based organisation with specifically designed teams of equal rights and responsibilities but clearly structured tasks might be a sound alternative to achieve the goals in the end. It's up to a reasonable management to make sure that all relevant decisions are prepared carefully and wisely always paying attention to their immediate impact on the team and its environment; this will be mainly true with regard to an efficient purchasing policy of new players or contractual negotiations in general.

I believe it is essential that the entire staff has to stay grounded in spite of all new impressions shaking the Tiger's world right now. Exaggerations whatsoever won't be very helpful but might turn out into contra productive thinking.

Besides, maintaining suitable contact with the representatives of the Media is supposed to be another main requirement to be kept in mind throughout the years to come.

The fulfilment of specific conditions has to be taken into account, too. Therefore, a professional co-operation between the Tigers GmbH and the officials from the DEL needs to be considered.

### **4. Role model – Erich Kühnhackl**

When it became clear, that Erich Kühnhackl is going to be the new coach I already perceived the charismatic vibrations which will surely contribute to a promising season.

I think that a young team like the Tigers definitely needs such a powerful personality in terms of social acceptance and mutual respect. Although he doesn't yet have the necessary long-lasting experience as a trainer, I am pretty sure that he can compensate this deficiency with his character and the fact that he is a generic part of the region 'Lower Bavaria' which will also enhance the relationship with the fan-clubs.

According to an article in the 'Welt am Sonntag', a large American Automobile manufacturer which has recently become an investor for the DEL chose E. Kühnhackl as 'ambassador' of its proprietary articles.

This factual matter might as well be a considerable incentive for an exciting adventure in the premier league.

Anyway, let's see what happens and have your fingers crossed for the Tiger's first successful expedition to a new horizon!