

Little Holiday on Ice

or

„How Jochen Schweizer changed my life“



Guess what? Hardly to believe but in fact true: Christmas Eve 2009 turned out to become a historical date in my sports life. That evening I was gifted with a voucher for Ice hockey training with the stars of EHC München, performing in the second Ice hockey league of Germany that time.

Doubtlessly, I was totally thrilled about this extraordinary present. I couldn't deny my nervousness and pretty much looked forward to February 10 at 7 p.m. when I had to show up in the well known and traditional Olympia Eishalle in Munich.

Beforehand, I badly needed to update my skating skills whilst practicing with the "Medientigers", a club specifically founded and tailored for interested sportsmen and women over 40 years in Freising, the famous cathedral town north of Munich. I was lucky to join this club for about 3 years in order to improve my deficits in terms of backwards skating. We regularly met every Thursday evening for 2 hours at our artificial ice-rink, where we were got valuable instructions from a 70 years old passionate man.

I shouldn't neglect the fact that I could enjoy a psychological advantage: since I took advantage of a summer ticket allowing me to 'glamorously' slide over the skating rink in Munich.

The next weeks I couldn't help sufficiently preparing for this overwhelming event in particular clarifying all essential organizational prerequisites.

The fundamental assumptions were as follows:

- Minimum age 16 years
- No health restrictions whatsoever
- Basic ability to move
- Own skating shoes, ski socks and functional underwear

Fortunately, I could use my full equipment including stick which I proudly carried on this evening.

The provided achievements are listed such as:

- Professional training including the total range of learning units
- Professional coach taking care of the applicants
- Penalty competition versus goalie
- Cap symbolizing the club of Munich
- Ticket for the next home game

Now time has come to start off for that unique happening;

I was accompanied by my wife and my oldest son, Tobias; he had already proved to be a passionate fan of my beloved club, the Straubing Tigers, which turned out to be a tough opponent for the EHC München throughout the season.

The video camera definitely guaranteed exciting and long lasting memories.

Apart from me there were 3 other guys gifted with nearly the same skating knowledge and experience on ice. Moritz in fact had already enjoyed the opportunity of joining a so called "VIP training" with the professional team of Munich.

Mentally, I felt safe and well – doubtlessly I was ready to game. Primarily, we were picked up in front of the player's entrance by our two professional coaches, Mr. Christian Winkler and Mr. Martin Hinterstocker, known of his bronze medal win during the Olympic

Games in 1976. Both coaches seemed to be very relaxed and looked forward to taking care of us. We had been provided a separate changing room, however, we were able to even spot some greetings from the professional players, who slowly finished their training before and went by our locker booth. Those magic moments even more incited our stimulus for the upcoming training. Nevertheless, getting dressed turned out to be a tough job as always trying to proceed as pragmatically as possible.

Before we luckily ended up with a special jersey which we were given for this event Pat Cortina, the head coach of EHC Munich stopped by and wished all the best to us. This was the “Dot on the I” – it was simply terrific.

Eventually, I was ready to walk through the “hall of fame” out to the rink. I was already wondering what kind of special units and tasks would expect us during this training.

Outside, my wife and my son waited for me near the entrance doors to the iced area to fix the first historical pictures for our family diary.



Don't I look pretty with that intense bluish jersey? There was in fact room for a personal cat walk; I couldn't deny that I loved this way of self presentation shortly before the big easy.

Upon strolling around a table with sophisticated looking technical equipment stroke my attention; I never believed that the heart frequencies of the players are going to be professionally evaluated during the training. Those devices really impressed me. All of a sudden, I detected Kevin Lavalée once performing for the Straubing

Tigers; we had a short lively discussion about the measurements and his former time in my home city before he headed for the cabin.

Now the excitement could be literally felt - only a few minutes away from entering the iced area, what a feeling...

Here we go – the starting “3” need to be officially presented with me as the first hero in blue right beside the green actor from the junior team. To be on the safe side I chose a full face protection due to my short sightedness.



At the beginning we were offered a briefing in terms of the overall procedure and the required attitude on ice. That way we got the necessary security regarding the following units, which were always commented and adequately improved. Apart from these welcomed short interruptions we had to intensively perform throughout the evening; sweat and tears made of luck were the logical outcome. On the contrary, sufficient bottles of water had been provided for us to balance the biological household.

The primary task was to warm up with all players from the junior team of Munich; the first rounds without puck and then including the decisive material, which had to be lead close to one's stick and then be scored into the empty goal. The ground rule was not to skate behind the goal; initially, I did not comply with it and got an appropriate advice from the coaches.

The next picture shows one of the coaches Mr. Martin Hinterstocker, who had so much expertise which was amazing. He even praised me upon acting out a specific unit.



The dynamic of the fastest team sport of the world is to be perceived on the following picture, when you focus upon the yellow dressed player skating along like a flash:



After the usual warm up session the coaches told us the next activities, which should consist of different specific tactical units. These tasks happened to be fairly difficult, since “the Jochen Schweizer group” had to be properly involved. In the end, I am sure we did a great job, in particular because the coaches acknowledged our performance once in a while.

Last but not least, the game plan had to be implemented accordingly in a real match 4 versus 4 players. During this rather intensive game we got a lot of shifts on the ice. I almost scored which would have been recognized appropriately. One of my colleagues in fact managed to shoot a goal. He felt like a real champion.

Unfortunately, time is flying when you are having fun; at 9 p.m. sharp the training was over, though penalty practicing was supposed to be on the agenda according to the voucher. Due to time constraints this couldn't be realized. Nevertheless, we had a great time and were happy to move our tired body to the locker room to get undressed again.

We said Farewell to the congenial coaching team and were finally rewarded with the promised cap and the well deserved ticket for the upcoming derby against the traditional rival from Riessersee.

This thrilling game happened to become a dramatic match ending with a 5:4 victory for Munich after Penalty. It was an awesome game which I happily enjoyed with two colleagues.

Now I could perceive an ice hockey game from a different perspective since I recently practiced on the same ice a week ago. Above all, I could critically analyze the professional goalie, whom I got to know then. In addition, I attentively observed Kevin Lavalle with his number 71 who was brilliant.

I felt like on cloud nine when I went home that night. At the same time I was wondering if and when I might be able to take part in an event with the VIP players of EHC Munich.

I seriously planned to realize this dream, but after surfing the net I figured out that Jochen Schweizer surprisingly did not offer this training any more. Maybe, this was due to the probability of getting injured too easily although the coaches assured us these special events have always been acted out carefully.

Nevertheless, I felt proud that I bravely mastered this extraordinary situation.