

„PLAYING BY THE RULES“

Everything is set for another terrific season in the DEL

Reflecting the latest articles and news on the Tigers website I was thinking about jotting down some ideas. Upon having started to touch base with the Tiger's top scorer *Cam Severson* a few months ago I already feel being highly connected again with the upcoming season.

This feeling is also being supported by the fact that I was a happy witness of the latest inline hockey world championship taking place in Bavaria, respectively in Landshut and Passau in May, 2007. Though not even knowing about this happening due to rather poor marketing around the region (there was only an article in the local newspaper of Landshut with Markus Wolf from Iserlohn Roosters telling about his experience and expectations), I immediately grasped the chance to attend a few games there. My son was fairly enthusiastic again to accompany me, since he already proved to be very experienced with ice hockey games in Straubing during last season. Spontaneously, we went to see the opening game between Germany and the Czech Republic which turned out to be a real blast because of the final result: 10:0 victory for the German team, a score which I never expected due to prior prognosis in the print media. Honestly, I concluded from the history of ice hockey where those matches ended up differently.

Nevertheless, the crowd – consisting of nearly 4,000 fantastic spectators, more than ever being counted at an opening game during the last years– was terrifically thrilled and I decided to see more games during the following week. However, I had to wait for the weekend when the final matches took place hoping that the Germans would still be under the best 4 teams of the world. Fortunately, we had luck and planned to watch both of the finals: Eventually, Germany made it to the 3rd place beating Austria 6:3; the appearance of our geographical neighbour happened to be very surprising: indeed, they had a great match against Finland, one of the big favourites and only lost 4:5 in overtime. Due to this exhausting match they proved to be

pretty weak and tired one day after and therefore the Germans could easily win – a piece of cake!

For the German hockey team this meant to be a great success playing such exciting matches as host of the championships: due to these extraordinary circumstances the international official committee still ponders about the possibility to make up its decision for Germany as the host in the year of 2009/10 with the realistic chance of selecting the city of Landshut again.

It goes without saying that the final game between the northern countries of Finland and Sweden happened to be *the* highlight of that evening. This match definitely deserved the status of excellence in terms of quality, tension and entertainment. My son was extremely happy about this game, the crowd proved to be incredible which was mainly due to the fact that Finland shot a goal 1 second (!) before the end of the 4th quarter making it even and prolonging to overtime. This scene was unbelievable – all over the total stadium you could literally inhale these positive vibrations -, I never could watch such an intense closure of a match; maybe it's comparable to the opening game of the Tigers last season when you turned out to be the first hero of the city shooting the decisive goal against Ingolstadt. However this struggle was not rewarded in the long run, because Sweden shot the winning goal a few minutes after. So, the Finnish team was regarded the tragic hero – but they had won lots of new fans since they convinced the crowd through their way of performing not only during this last game. As a matter of fact, there was even one player of Finland who already performed at the Cannibals some years ago, thus being the “local darling” of the audience throughout the tournament.

One issue which struck my attention most whilst looking back to this inline hockey championship was the fact that the team of Germany consisted of numerous actors playing in different DEL teams. That way the players could take advantage of a grand opportunity to prepare for the season on ice; according to the newsletters provided throughout those games in the stadium even some players from the Tigers were supposed to participate: Tobias Abstreiter, Josef Menauer – unfortunately, none of those did actually play. Especially my son – Tobias – would have been glad to see the first one mentioned above. But that's the way the cookie obviously crumbles, there ain't no free lunch for everybody.

This description consequently leads me to the next question: what about you Cam – have you ever thought about attending the inline hockey terrain for the purpose of keeping in good shape?

Now back to earth again – I need to refer to the Tigers:

I happily recognised the official playing schedule published the very beginning of July, fostering my initial intentions to watch one of the prep games in SR.

I deliberately chose the match against the Lions of Zurich, since this game might be a real tough one, in particular because this time the officials managed to convince a well known international team as opponent. I personally look forward to seeing this challenging event, because I firmly believe in the Tigers inherent willingness to offer an emotional match as they always have ended up in front of their beloved and cheerful crowd. I would lie not being pretty curious about the delicious Tigers and their newly trained performance on local ice. These young and ambitious girls surely deserve a lot of credit for their engagement during the first season in the DEL.

Coincidentally, this game will take place whilst the famous “*Gäubodenvolksfest*” happens to be close to the Pulverturm. This way my friend’s family will join us to Straubing that day, strategically intertwining both seasonal highlights and make the best out of this day.

Last but not least, I appeal to the Tiger’s qualities which they have shown last season and which ought to be mandatory for the second excursion to the DEL world. As their head coach already pointed out, the 2nd year will be much more strenuous, mainly because the Tigers have to prove that they are strong enough to prevail amongst those top teams.

Good luck to all the Tigers – even to those who plan to become one due to their success story.