



IFF Central Board Meeting

December 7, 2018

Prague, Czech Republic

## **USA Events**

### **Coaching News**

With an eye on future WFCs and the World Games in Birmingham in 2021, USA floorball has contracted with a Swedish coach to help grow the sport in the USA.

*Joel Olofsson is based in Helsingborg, Sweden, where he works for the Swedish club FC Helsingborg and has experience coaching on the highest as well as youth level. He has also been the head coach for the MU19 U.S. team for several years. He sees no issues in heading up both national teams and in fact sees many benefits.*

*"I don't see it as a challenge but as an opportunity to get more players ready to become men's team players. We can prepare players for the men's team already when they are on the U19 team. Both teams will share a common foundation and play structure making the transition from U19 to the men's team smoother," Joel Olofsson continues.*

*Beyond changing head coach, there will also be some additional changes as well. The player selection process is being reviewed with the goal of selecting more U.S. based players for future championships.*

*"I hope to recruit and train more U.S.-based players and make them ambassadors for the game in their home clubs and communities. This will hopefully show new generations that with hard work and dedication, they can become a player on the U.S. national team."*

This direction is one that will lead to greater success for the growth of floorball in the USA. Mr. Olofsson correctly points out that the selection of USA based players for international championships is key to create young ambassadors who will take a leadership role in their American communities.

### **Referee News**

In November, the Golden Gate Cup was played in San Jose California. Once again staff from Sweden was called upon to ensure that the refereeing during the game was of the highest caliber.

*USA Floorball hosted the second referee clinic for the year, and we were very lucky to have it run by SSL referee Thomas Andersson as well as Arash Sohrevardi who both came all the way from Sweden at the clinic. Thomas was also able to referee the tournament and mentor the US based referee group, helping us raise the level of refereeing here in the US.*

As with coaching, USA Floorball has made a strong commitment to giving floorball a strong foundation to build on.

*Note: (Canada is pleased with this development.)*

## Canada Events

### Expansion in the East

While Ontario has traditionally been the center of floorball in Canada, both the east and west ends of the country have seen recent successes. Nova Scotia has seen a big lift in interest in the sport due to the tireless efforts of Mr. McNeil, leader of the LOC for the U-19 Men's WFC in Halifax. He has personally introduced floorball to many schools and hockey clubs in the Halifax area. In addition, New Brunswick (next door neighbour) has been active for number of years now.

Within Nova Scotia, a new league has been established, led by a Canadian with strong roots in Australia. His interest in the sport was sparked in Perth, Western Australia, where his family was very active in floorball. When the family returned to Canada, he was a key figure in starting a floorball league in his home town of Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

With all this activity in the Canadian Maritime provinces, it is not surprising that a tournament was held for the first time in Nova Scotia.

*"The inaugural valley floorball tournament wound up Saturday, June 2nd with 75 players spread over 3 junior (u14), 3 senior (u18), 2 adult and 2 mini teams. An equal number of supporters were cheering on the teams, which added to the atmosphere. It was great to see the amount of enthusiasm both on and off the court"*

Meanwhile, in Canada, 5,800 kilometers to the West of Halifax...

(about the same distance between Luleå in Northern Sweden and Damascus, Syria)

### Expansion in the West

After many years and many floorball demonstrations at all levels of both public and private schools, the largest school district in Vancouver has asked for help from the Vancouver floorball community to help them establish a program in the elementary schools. This is very significant as up until now, the school administration in Vancouver has been very reluctant to introduce the sport in to schools.

Just as significant was a recent floorball tournament organized at the University of British Columbia. For many years, ball hockey had been the dominant stick and ball game in Canada. It still is in most places but at the University, interest in ball hockey was in decline. The administration looked for an alternative sport and they discovered floorball on YouTube.

The university contacted our Vancouver floorball community and we assisted them in organizing the tournament. The University has a large international student body and the fact that the tournament was attended by many Asian players experienced in floorball was noticed by the University management. More events are sure to follow.

Going back 5,700 kilometers to the east...

### Halifax 2019 U-19 WFC

Mr. McNeil has done a very good job of pulling together all the items that will make for a very successful tournament. This has been accomplished in spite of the sport being just about invisible in Nova Scotia a few years ago. Tournaments such as this are critical to the growth of the sport in Canada.

Mr. McNeil has been working hard to ensure that there is significant attendance at the event from local schools. He has also made arrangements for low cost accommodations for any offshore team supporters.

In conclusion, I see that floorball in the USA and Canada is making steady progress forward.

Respectfully,

Ron Spence

Floorball Canada