



HOCKEY CANADA

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CAMROSE, ALBERTA TO HOST 2008 WORLD JUNIOR A CHALLENGE

CALGARY, AB – Hockey Canada, in partnership with the Canadian Junior A Hockey League (CJAHL), announced on Thursday that Camrose, AB will be the host city for the 2008 World Junior A Challenge, November 2-9, 2008.

All 13 games of the 2008 World Junior A Challenge will take place at EnCana Arena in the Edgeworth Centre, home of the Alberta Junior Hockey League's Camrose Kodiaks. It will mark the first time in the three-year history of the event that the entire tournament will be played out of one venue – the 2006 World Junior A Challenge was hosted by Yorkton and Humboldt, SK, while the 2007 event was split between Trail and Nelson, BC. In addition to all 13 games, the EnCana Arena will be the site for the Challenge's Opening Ceremonies, which will feature a live concert on November 1.

The 2008 World Junior A Challenge will follow the same format as previous years – two Canadian entries will be joined by four international teams. Canada West, Russia and Belarus will compete in Group A, while Canada East, the USA and Germany will make up Group B. The group winners will receive an automatic bye to the semi-finals, while the second and third place teams will crossover for the quarterfinals.

"Hockey Canada is very excited to collaborate with the CJAHL on another World Junior A Challenge," said Hockey Canada president Bob Nicholson. "Canada's Junior A leagues have continued to develop world class players, and this event will showcase that talent."

"On behalf of the Camrose host committee we are extremely excited and proud to be hosting the 2008 World Junior A Challenge this November," said Glen Vinet, who will chair the host committee along with Kevin Gurr. "We believe that the community's rich hockey history coupled with a brand new, world-class facility will set the stage for a very successful international hockey tournament."

"It's an honour for Hockey Alberta to partner with such great supporters of the game and to be a part of such a prestigious event here in our province. Hockey Alberta looks forward to welcoming exceptional Junior A athletes to the province of Alberta in November," says Terry Ledingham, president of Hockey Alberta.

"The CJAHL is very excited to be a part of the World Junior A Challenge for the third consecutive season," says CJAHL chairman Paul Lake. "This event has shown tremendous growth through the past couple of years, and we are very optimistic that the community of Camrose will continue this path of success in 2008."

"We are very proud that the AJHL will act as the host league for this tremendous event," said AJHL president Craig Cripps. "I know the great Junior A hockey fans in Camrose will fully embrace this event, and will strive to raise the World Junior A Challenge to the next level. The brand new Edgeworth Centre is a tremendous facility, which will serve as a fantastic home for this event next November."

The Kodiaks have been one of the biggest suppliers to Canada West's back-to-back gold medals in 2006 and 2007, led by head coach/general manager Boris Rybalka, who has been behind the bench for both of Canada West's victories. In 2006, goaltender Keanan Boomer and defenseman Evan Oberg were members of the gold medalists, while goaltender Allen York, defenseman Andrew Macwilliam and forwards Joe Colborne and Mike Connolly – who was named tournament MVP – were on the 2007 roster.

TICKETS

Tickets for the 2008 World Junior A Challenge will go on sale beginning at 10:00 a.m. MT on Friday, February 22, 2008 through Ticketmaster (www.ticketmaster.ca). Three ticket packages are available:

1st Star Package (\$499) – tickets to all 13 games, as well as the Opening Ceremonies and concert; the package also includes complimentary food, a souvenir tournament program, game sheets and stats and full bar service

2nd Star Package (\$249) – tickets to all 13 games, as well as the Opening Ceremonies and concert

3rd Star Package (\$199) – tickets to all 13 games

For more information on the 2008 World Junior A Challenge, visit www.hockeycanada.ca/wjac, or contact the Host Committee Chairs:

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