

# ISBHF President's Message: Reflections on 2016 & Looking Ahead - [George Gortsos](#)

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## Dear ISBHF Members,

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This year, close to 45 National & Top club teams took in our events in 2016 in Banff, Canada, Sheffield, United Kingdom and Heilbronn, Germany. Well those are some great locations for our players, coaches and referees to experience. And I know for those that attended it was a lasting effect on all.

The ISBHF has one great event in its calendar that we are working on. But this major event in 2017 has also given us a chance to work on our fundamentals. We have new ISBHF Board members, we have created new committees to specifically look at strategic items we think are key. Just like a great hockey team does and it is a dynamic team moving forward!

For me a couple committees stand out in prominence. We have the Sport Accord committee which is working specifically with moving ball hockey forward into Olympic recognition. Key to ball hockey's future.

We also have created a strong Marketing Committee which is looking at things like improving our website, social media presence, and working with our Facebook team and how we reach players of today and tomorrow.

We also have a newly engaged Discipline committee that is totally separate and created in fairness with people who are not linked to our ISBHF BOD. This is important to keep the integrity and honor of players and officials should they ever cross the line. And thankfully this has not been a much-used committee, but we do have very capable people ready to work on any issue that may arise.

Finally we have our Technical and Financial arms that keep the fundamentals of our sport going. Just very important to the day to day and game by game operation of our sport. Keeping the rules of our game up to date, moving with changes in hockey, and of course financially keeping us on budget and in line with our future targets.

I close with Pardubice and our Czech Hosts. For sure the most important Committee of 2017. We are hoping to hit at least 20 Men's teams and 7 Ladies teams minimally. For us it signals that this will be a large event of over 700 players and even more fans will congregate in early June 2017. They will be hosts to us all and I am confident they will rise to the challenge along with the region to leave a lasting legacy on us all. Just like all ISBHF events that we have been hosting for over 20 years with great success!



## ISBHF FUTURE TOURNAMENTS -> 2017 & 2018!

- **Men's & Women's WC** – In 2017, at least 20 Men's & 7 Women's Teams are expected in the Czech Republic from June 1-10. Upwards of 700 players will descend upon Pardubice for the premier Championship on the ISBHF circuit!
- **World Junior Championships** - A terrific U20, U18 & U16 junior championship was hosted in Sheffield this past July, and we hope our first ever U20 girls will become a reality at the next World Junior Championship in 2018.
- **World Master's - Men's & Women's** - These are our veteran players aged 35+ Women's / 40+ Men's. These players are established and love a destination; one where they can enjoy the game & the time after. This event is growing and could see 18-25 National teams attend in 2018.
- **Caribbean Cup** - Last played in the Cayman Islands. We anticipate another bid in the Caribbean for 2018. This was a well enjoyed event in 2014. Usually this event is between 5-8 teams.
- **Asian Championship** – The inaugural ISBHF Asian Championship was recently played in Hong Kong November 11-12<sup>th</sup> with Team Korea outlasting Hong Kong in a thrilling final. The sequel championship is scheduled for Hong Kong in 2018.
- **World Club Championships** – ISBHF is preparing to host a World Club Championship in 2018. This event is usually between 8 to 15 teams, and is for top club teams from our International family. Typically, teams from North America, Europe, and Scandinavia compete at this event.

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- The ISBHF unites national street hockey, ball hockey, and dek hockey associations for competitions, development, and promotion of the sport.
- The ISBHF aims to take part in a worldwide "hockey renaissance" and develop a global strategy in part with the International Ice Hockey Federation.
- The ISBHF is registered as a non-profit organization. It is officially recognized as the governing body of the sport by the International Ice Hockey Federation, with many of its member nations officially recognized by their federal sport agencies.

Want to get involved?  
Contact a representative today!

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# ISBHF Asia Championship: *What a prelude to many host championships to come!*



What an inaugural Asia championship!

The Hong Kong Islander Organization deserve tremendous recognition & praise for a world class hosted Asia Championship this past November 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> in Hong Kong.

From the venue, being open-air and covered, to the well-matched six teams taking part, the host organizers demonstrated experience and dedication to a tournament well-executed from start to finish.

"Various regional tournaments are a mainstay on the Asia circuit each year, including the Mekong Cup in Thailand, the Canton Cup in Hong Kong and the Yamato Cup in Tokyo; however, this was the first championship fully sanctioned by the ISBHF, which has made a successful jump into the Asia region within the past 12 months," said newly appointed ISBHF Asia Representative, Colin Gennoe, also captain of the dark horse Team Korea 1 entering the tournament.

Six teams from various regions in Asia descended upon the 4 on 4 venue on November 11<sup>th</sup>:

- Hong Kong (hosts)
- Macau
- Team China
- Team Thailand
- Team Korea 1 & 2

Long-time Hong Kong Islander player, board member and former GM of an Islander team that has represented at the World Championships, Jeff Wall, explained that Hong Kong had "originated out of players getting together for pick-up on a small island near Hong Kong in 2001. From there, ball hockey began to flourish when the current venue in downtown Hong Kong became available to us." Wall went on to mention that Hong Kong had experienced success at several regional tournaments in the 2000's, before making its first appearance at the World Championships in 2009. Despite the placing that year, Hong Kong has continued to successfully represent in the B pool of the World's since, mainly due to the productive work by current GM, Matt Lui, who has melded players with Hong Kong heritage with the foreigners that are a mainstay in Hong Kong with the Islanders.

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The tournament got off to an exciting start on Friday, Nov 11<sup>th</sup> with the two teams from Korea clashing at 2:30pm. Korea 2 got out to an early 2-0 lead and despite the scare, Korea 1 used a big

2<sup>nd</sup> period to pull away by a final score of 7-5.

Team China featured strong goaltending in the tournament, with former OHL goalie Jason Awalt standing tall throughout. Team China would eventually take the bronze medal game against Macau.

The Thai Stix organization, host of the long-running Mekong Cup in Thailand since 1995, also sent a strong delegation to Hong Kong. They played Korea 1 effectively in their round robin match to a shootout, and would eventually fall to the Korea 2 team in the 5<sup>th</sup> place match.

On day 2 of the Championship at 11am, host Hong Kong met their long-awaited rivals, Korea 1 and despite Korea maintaining possession throughout the majority of the game, HK would take advantage of their opportunities and systematically defeat Korea in a 5-1 victory.

Both Hong Kong and Korea 1 would cruise to victory in their semi-finals against Macau and China respectively, setting up the final that had been anticipated coming into the tournament. And what a script it was: Hong Kong's experience and home rink advantage versus an athletic, very fast and talented Korea team.

Despite Korea getting out a quick 2-0 lead, Hong Kong would show veteran composure and eventually tie the game in the 2<sup>nd</sup> period. Both teams demonstrated sound play through the neutral zone and fierce battles along the boards, with Korea pulling away in the 3<sup>rd</sup> period for a final score of 7-3.

"We have such admiration and respect for the Hong Kong organization," Korea captain Colin Gennoe would say after the game. "This team is highly skilled and they showed their experience out there pushing us to a level of play that we have not reached before. We've seen them play at World's since '09 and have really modelled our goals after their successes. There was a lot of emotion on the floor and a testament to the respect that both clubs have for each other."

Korea now has its sights set on representing its nation for the first time at the World Championships in the Czech Republic next June.

The next ISBHF Asia Championship is scheduled for November, 2018 with now greater participation anticipated for the sequel.



Hockey is without a doubt quite a physical game. The pushing and shoving, the testosterone-drenched air, the jeering and cheering crowd - all of these can do a number on a player's ego, form, and mental frame. It is not surprising, therefore, that even top ball hockey players at times develop cold feet, anxiety or even morbid-like fear a few days or weeks before an important tournament.

According to leading sport psychology gurus, a solid pregame routine incorporated into an existing or new tournament preparation drill can do a lot to help the players relax and maintain their form even in the face of a duel where they are generally considered the underdogs.

Here a few mental strategies that can help you, your teammates or players ( if you are the coach ) fight pregame anxiety before an important match. These strategies not only attributable to hockey, but can be used to develop and coach some of the strongest athletes on the planet.

### 1. Conquer Your Mind

It is as simple as that, really. Your mind, as an independent faculty, has the potential to influence how the rest of the body reacts. It all starts in your head - the fear, anxiety, wavering confidence etc. That also explains why the most successful athletes and players in the history of sports possess a higher-than-average mental ability to block out negative, self-defeating thoughts that can easily deteriorate one's form. Have it at the back of your mind that every self-defeatist thought that you entertain is battling for your attention with positive, constructive energy. A player who spends a lot of time wondering whether or not they are going to win a game has already lost even before the starting whistle goes off.

### 2. Focus on Your Abilities

Possessing a laser-like focus in ball hockey is simply a matter of trusting your preparation and God-given abilities. There's no denying that in the few days or hours leading up to a big game you're going to be tempted to focus on straightening up your flaws and weaknesses. And that's where many will go wrong. The problem with that is while it hard enough to be extra good at one or two things, we are wired to think of the numerous flaws and weaknesses that can rattle our form. Trying to 'fix' your weak parts just before a game instead on brushing up your strengths is playing a loser's game which you're almost guaranteed you're going to lose.

### 3. Learn How to Stay Composed and Calm Right from the Training Drill and Locker Room.

Even the best professional players in the world have the tendency to get super frustrated and upset with their teammates during tough fixtures. And while this may stem from having unrealistic expectations and overestimating one's ability, studies show that such a streak begins right from the training ground. Elite players ( and former star players who are now coaches ) will rarely be patient with their teammates either during game play or in training sessions. In a bid to push their team harder to win an upcoming tournament, they will seldom let small mistakes slip even when it is evident that it is just a minor slip.

Unfortunately, this has a negative psychological impact rather than the positive encouraging vibe that it is meant to impart to the players. It has been observed time and again that if you scold your players or team mates too harshly even before the actual game, you will be actually breaking down their inner fight instead of fanning the competitive fire in them. Confidence starts from within and not without. Learn how to remain composed and patient even when they are not in their best shape whether in the field or during a training drill.

### 4. Sharpen Alpha-like Confidence

Whether you're talking about individual or team play, it is considered better to err on the side of over-confidence than on low or no confidence at all. Ball hockey, unlike other modern-day sports, is a contact game. You'll be faced head-on with adversity; there's no escaping this. You might be physically gifted by if you don't prepare yourself well mentally for the aggression and counter-aggression in the field, then you can bet that you won't see the end of the first round.

Here's the thing. Nobody is born naturally confident. We all have the inherent tendency to underestimate our abilities and strength. It is simply nature's way of ensuring self-preservation, but it is not entirely impossible to overcome this. Train your mind to see the brighter side of your performance and watch your confidence soar to unimaginable levels.

