

Stouffville Sun-Tribune
SPORTS

Whistle blower happy with call to worlds

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Stouffville's Matt Traub will work as a linesman at the IIHF playdowns in Slovenia in April.

When Matt Traub receives a telephone call from Hockey Canada, it's welcomed.

Such was the case recently when the 27-year-old Stouffville resident answered a call from the national office, asking if he can take the time from his sales job at Nestle Canada to officiate a tournament.

Not just one in North America, as his past resume includes working in two Memorial Cup championships, a world under-17 championship and a world junior tourney.

This time, it's Ljubljana, Slovenia. Traub will work as a linesman in the International Ice Hockey Federation World Championship division one, Group A playdowns from April 15 to 21.

The competition will involve host Slovenia, Ukraine, Japan, Hungary, Austria and Great Britain taking part in a round-robin format with the winner moving up to compete in the 2013 IIHF World Championships against the likes of Canada, Russia, Sweden, Finland, Czech Republic and other traditional powerhouses.

In receiving the good tidings from Hockey Canada, Traub acknowledged it caught him by surprise.

"It's always a great call to get," he said. "It's nice to know you're in good standing with Hockey Canada. It's always an honour."

In his seventh season as a linesman in the Ontario Hockey League, Traub said working an IIHF event this year was extra special. Of the officials chosen by Hockey Canada to work IIHF events this season, he was only one of three from the OHL.

WORLD JUNIORS, MEMORIAL CUP

The call came from being involved in Hockey Canada's Program of Excellence in which he was in a stream of officials that was identified to work such competitions.

It certainly helped that Traub worked the IIHF World Junior Championships two years ago and the under-17s five years ago in Regina.

The IIHF had officiating supervisors who assessed his work at the tourneys.

As well, he said supervising officials from the Canadian Hockey League also evaluated his performance during league

and postseason play. That included his work in last spring's Memorial Cup play-downs in Mississauga and three years ago when Kitchener hosted the same event.

"It's a progression from there to go to higher championships," he said.

To work the upcoming championships, Traub said it ranks right up there with what he's done in his officiating career.

"But it's hard to rank them since each one is different in their own way," he said.

While Traub is excited to be working the upcoming championships along with what he's currently doing in the OHL and some American Hockey League games, he still has some personal objectives he would like to reach in his profession.

Among them, he said, is to do an IIHF World Championship.

"And I would like to continue to succeed in working in the OHL and AHL," he added.

As for making it to the big time in the National Hockey League, Traub knows it's a tough road to make it to the top.

"There's a lot of good linesmen out there. It's not easy," he said. "But it would be nice."

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