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Best hockey teams in canada

Have you ever wondered if there are hockey leagues competing with the NHL in terms of talent, viewer base and fan base? Well, if you have, then this segment should be just for you. It is widely known that players from all over the world flock to the NHL for a chance to win the Lord Stanley’s Cup and play on the biggest possible hockey stage around North America. However, hockey is not a north American-only phenomenon as many European leagues such as SHL, KHL and Liiga show they are quite good at developing talented hockey players who can succeed at every level. Here’s a look at the 10 best hockey tournaments in the world. 10.) The Ontario Hockey League (OHL) Ontario Hockey League has a reputation, like QMJHL and WHL, for producing some great talent that has a significant impact at NHL level. Players like Bobby Orr, Wayne Gretzky, Eric Lindros and John Tavares all played in OHL and made their mark in the NHL. Robert Thomas of the Hamilton Bulldogs won the Wayne Gretzky 99 award as MVP of the OHL playoffs. (Aaron Bell/OHL Images) While OHL has a 68 game schedule for 20 teams, the league does a pretty good job of planning games that run mostly from Thursday to the weekend. Since the majority of players join OHL between the ages of 15-20, there may inevitably be some conflict over a person’s schedule. However, don’t be fooled by the fact that some of these kids still have to go to school and make room to constantly improve their hockey game. OHL always produces skilled players. While leagues like QMJHL have been known for producing attacking superstars, OHL seems to offer extremely comprehensive players. Although the three major youth hockey leagues differ in their respective styles, each league has continuously created a lot of talent for NHL teams across North America. 9.) NCAA Throughout the past decade, NCAA hockey has become a top development path for players to take to the NHL. As mentioned by collegehockeyinc in the promotional material from 2017: A record 314 former college players skating in the NHL in 2016-17, accounting for 32% of the league. That figure was only 20% at the beginning of the century. This unprecedented growth represents a shift in the way both players and teams are using the NCAA as a path to nhl reach. For teams, they can draft a promising but somewhat uncertain player who is heading to the NCAA to get up to four years of basically free growth. For players, they can earn a level and develop their game before reaching the AHL or NHL with a more physical and mature edge than their partners. When you look at it this way, it’s no surprise that so many players from around the world are using the NCAA as their route to professional hockey. Boston College Eagles celebrating after beating Ferris State Bulldogs in the final of Frozen 2012 2012 (Douglas Jones-American PRESSWIRE) There are too many former NCAA players currently in the NHL to start naming them all, but here are a few just to give an idea of the impact the league has been on over the past few years. This includes the like of Jonathan Toews, Jack Eichel, Nick Bjugstad, Johnny Gaudreau and Duncan Keith. With an already impressive and growing list of alumni, the future of hockey in the NCAA is bright, with both players and the NHL loving the results. 8.) The American Hockey League (AHL) The American Hockey League is often seen as the last stop for a prospect before an NHL call-up. The American Hockey League (AHL) makes the list because it’s usually the last stop for a growing prospect before they reach the NHL. Typically, NHL teams will decide whether a prospect is ready for the major leagues after they have completed a certain amount of international play or compete in a North American league. This allows many AHL teams to play host to some of the most talented young players in the world who are just on the cus top of breaking into the NHL. If not for the age limit that prevents people under the age of 20 from playing in the league, the AHL may have seen more quality players go through their arenas. With this rule in place, the AHL will always be a bit hamstrung about missing out on the best draft picks who just isn’t ready to take on NHL ice time as an 18 or 19-year-old, but can use a little more competition than what they’ve achieved in children. It’s not just players working their way through AHL either. Many NHL coaches make a stop along the way in the AHL to hone their craft, including the likes of Jon Cooper of the Tampa Bay Lightning and Mike Yeo of the St. Louis Blues. As of 2017-18, each NHL team has maintained links with an AHL team, including the newly minted Vegas Golden Knights. As the NHL continues to grow, the AHL will expand with them, providing quality and growth advice to upcoming NHL talent. 7.) Deutsche Eishockey Liga (DEL) DEL was founded in 1994-1995 and consists of teams from the first and second divisions of the Ice Hockey Bundesliga. Initially, the league experienced controversy when many teams were in debt and some clubs were forced to settle. Moreover, the ruling of the European Court of Justice allows players to move quite often between teams and the number of spectators has fallen into the new millennium. Former NHL defender Christian Ehrhoff ended his long professional career in his native Germany, playing for Kölner Haie in the Deutsche Eishockey Liga. (Photo by Andy Martin Jr) However, the league recovered when it experienced an influx of NHL players during the 2004-2005 NHL lock. The league also re-established the use of the relegation system as more emphasis would be placed on ice Hockey’s second division of the Bundesliga. Since the 2001-2002 season, by Eisbaren Berlin when they won 5 championships in 10 years. In recent years, EHC Red Bull Munchen have found their way to the top of the league, winning three consecutive championships. While DEL is still developing its footprint in the hockey landscape, it’s hard not to like German hockey. As we saw in the surprise race to win the Silver Medal at the 2018 Olympics, Germany is growing a strong and passionate fan base capable of competing with the best in the world. 6.) National League A (NLA) Based in Switzerland, National League A (NLA) is the top league of the two-level Swiss hockey league, with the other being the National League B. NLA had the best attendance figures for European hockey clubs in 2016-17, due in no small part to the SC Bern hockey club and its spacious home (capacity of 17,131), PostFinance-Arena, which averaged 16,399 spectators per game. The NLA consists of 12 teams that play a total of 50 games in a season, with the top eight teams qualifying for the playoffs. The last four teams in the standings are thrust into a consolation bracket of categories and top teams from National Championship B are given a chance to vie for NLA inclusion. Since 2000, the NLA has been largely dominated by three clubs, HC Davos, ZSC Lions and SC Bern, who have won at least five championships in the new millennium. With a highly competitive league and excellent attendance rate, the NLA shows that just like us in North America, swiss people love their hockey. Czech Extraliga is one of the most competitive professional ice hockey tournaments in Europe and is currently ranked by the IIHF as the third most powerful ice hockey tournament in Europe. The league was also founded in 1993 after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic has much to show in terms of its talent for contributing to the NHL. Players from the Czech Republic make their way to the NHL every year and many of those players have had a shot at playing in the Czech Extraliga. There are currently more than 50 Czechs in the National Hockey League and with players such as Thomas Hertl, Vladimir Sobotka and Pavel Zacha contributing to the NHL list, it is clear that the Czech Republic and Czech Extraliga have a strong for developing talented hockey players. Czech Extraliga has 4 more teams than the Slovak Extraliga, but the format of the tournament also adds interesting elements to the viewer. Only the top six teams made it to the playoffs, but the teams that finished in 7th – 10th place competed against each other for a chance to advance to the quarterfinals with one of the top six teams. For teams that finished 11th – 14th, those teams were forced to compete against each other, with the losers in the group facing the top teams from the Czech First Division. As the Czech Extraliga use the relegation/promotion system, the bottom team in The Extraliga will be relegated to the First League if they cannot beat the top seed from the following league. It’s no surprise that has offered outstanding play on a national level and it’s not a shock to fans that behind American and Canadian players, the Czech Republic is the third most national group in the NHL. 4.) Liiga Finland hockey league Liiga logo Finland’s top professional ice hockey tournament, Liiga, is considered by the IIHF to be the second strongest tournament across Europe. The popularity of hockey in Finland has skyrocketed and so has the country’s success at international level. For example, at the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia, Finland finished with a bronze medal, defeating the U.S. team in a 5-0 victory. Liiga has thrived since it took over hockey responsibility in Finland from SM-sarja in 1975. The viewer viewer, support and level of hockey in Finland has increased dramatically over the past three and a half decades and Liiga continues to stir up NHL-caliber talent. The Finnish league consists of 14 teams competing for one of ten playoff spots in about 60 regular-season games, with the top six teams automatically entering the quarterfinal stage. Czech Extraliga and Liiga used the same playoff form as the 7-10 seed competing against each other for a chance to meet one of the six quarterfinal finalists. Liiga also contributes a significant amount of talent to the NHL and some of Finland’s highest touted prospects such as Mikael Granlund and Teemu Pulkkinen, which are set to make their mark in the NHL one of these days. Talented NHLers such as Aleksander Barkov, Sami Vatanen and Rasmus Ristolainen are all liiga products and the future of the tournament is brighter than ever as long as it continues to produce such great talent. 3.) SHL (Swedish Hockey League) Swedish Hockey League logo Swedish Hockey League logo consists of 14 teams playing 52 matches. Like Czech Extraliga and Liiga, the Swedish Hockey League has a system that rewards a team with 3 points for a regulation win, 2 points for an overtime win, and 1 point for an overtime loss. Eight of the top 12 teams made it to the playoffs, but the format of the first playoff round was a bit of fun because the top three seeded teams could pick their opponents out of the bottom seeded teams for the first round. SHL also used a relegation and promotion system as the bottom seeded teams in the SHL pitted against the top teams in Sweden’s second tier league, HockeyAllsvenskan. The relegation battle series, known as Kvalserien, determines who will be relegated to the second division and who will be promoted to the Elite League. Sweden has experienced great hockey success as of late on an international level, winning gold at the 2012 World Youth Hockey Championships at the 2006 Winter Olympics. In addition to Saab, Volvo, ABBA, and Ikea, the Swedes have been making quite an impact on the NHL world as well. With the likes of Erik Karlsson, Victor Hedman and Daniel & Henrik Sedin, he has been a senior contributor. It’s no surprise why swedes have become a dominated in the hockey world over the past decade. 2.) Kontinental Hockey League (KHL) Kontinental Hockey League is considered the no. 2 professional hockey league in the world, with the KHL being considered the most powerful ice hockey league in Europe. Since its inception in 2008, the KHL has introduced 27 teams, with the top eight in each conference making the playoffs. The KHL playoff structure is quite similar to the NHL format, with the top two teams from each conference competing for the Gagarin Cup. What makes the KHL so exciting is that it keeps a wide range of players from different backgrounds and countries. Even when the main talent group comes from Russia, they still pull players from all over the world, including talented people like Canada and sometimes less expected in the world like the UK. This creates a really diverse player base, which can only be driven by the likes of the NHL in terms of quality and depth. This diversity is also seen in the position of khl teams. After their most recent expansion to China, there are now six franchises established outside Russia, with the potential of a franchise in London as well. While this is likely to create some mind-boggling travel plans, it is an impressive sought that should only help the league continue to grow in both scale and quality. 1.) National Hockey League (NHL) Many professional hockey players abroad and in North America see the NHL as the last and most important stop of their careers. Lucrative contracts, exposure to the media, and a chance to win hockey’s final prize, the Lord Stanley’s Cup, are among the factors driving some players to make it to the NHL stage. With 31 teams in the league, the NHL is certainly bigger in both depth and overall quality than the KHL and is said to be the best talent from around the world competing for a title. While some may argue that the NHL grants the most exposure to hockey players in North America, the Stanley Cup and its history are well known worldwide. Some of the most talented players to make an impact in the NHL have been growing overseas, but the NHL still stands unsymned in the pantheon of hockey leagues. With their recent successful expansion to Las Vegas and an expected 32 teams in Seattle, the NHL is not only growing but also looking for new markets in North America who are hungry for hockey. With everything in mind, it’s likely that the NHL will continue to be the top hockey league in the world for years to come. Honorable Mention 1.) The Western Hockey League (WHL) Western Hockey League is one of three members of the Canadian Hockey League (CHL) with 22 teams based in Canada and the western part of the United States. WHL was founded in 1967 and has become a dominated force in the development of young hockey players over the years. Since its inception, WHL has thrived, winning the Memorial Trophy 19 times, most recently Oil Kings in 2014. WHL has produced many players who have had a meaningful impact on the NHL since its inception in the 1960s. (Amy Irvin / The Hockey Writer) In terms of prospects, WHL has produced many excellent players over the years. Some of the best players currently in the NHL, including Carey Price, Shea Weber, Jamie Benn, Patrick Marleau Jordan Eberle and Ryan-Nugent Hopkins all found meaningful developments in WHL. In recent years, the league has also produced some of the top young goal players in the NHL. This includes current top defenders such as Matt Dumba, Morgan Rielly and Seth Jones. Slovak Extraliga was founded in 1993 after Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Although the Slovakian league was part of the Czech Extraliga before 1993, the split did well for both sides as the Czech Republic and Slovakia continued to produce quality NHL players. Some of the most notable Slovak players to have an influence on the NHL are Pavol Demitra, Zigmund Palffy, Marian Hossa, Marian Gaborik and Zdeno Chara. While the Slovakia tournament consists of only 10 teams, it has an interesting aspect that allows the Junior SlovakiaN under-20 team to play in a number of regular season matches. While the Slovak Youth Team (HK Orange 20) cannot compete in the playoffs and certain competitions, other teams in the league compete for one of eight playoff spots. Since its inception, the Slovak Extraliga has been largely dominated by two teams, HC Kosice and HC Slovan Bratislava, both of which won eight championships, equaling first place in the tournament’s history. 3.) Quebec Major Junior Hockey League (QMJHL) QMJHL, the third member of the CHL, has provided considerable talent to the NHL. NHL Hall of Famers like Mario Lemieux, Mike Bossy, and Patrick Roy all play in The Q and have spectacular careers in the NHL. In modern times, players like Sidney Crosby representing QMJHL alumni have had a significant impact on the NHL. Since 1969, QMJHL has represented a development channel for some of the top players in the NHL. (QMJHL/Photo Sotiropoulos) Of the three major youth hockey leagues, QMJHL is best known for producing players with tremendous offensive power. With recent alumni like Jonathan Drouin, Jonathan Huberdeau and Hart Trophy finalist Nathan MacKinnon tearing it up in the NHL, there’s no doubt The Q knows how to cherish some of the top attacking talent in the world. While some detractors may refer to QMJHL’s lack of defensive play, the league has won the Memorial Cup six times since 2000 and remains one of the most exciting tournaments for hockey in North America. U.s.a.

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