

THE WORLD JUNIOR HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS

THE BIG BUSINESS OF WORLD JUNIOR HOCKEY

In recent days, ten countries wrapped up their given selection camps in preparation for this year's World Junior Hockey Championship tournament in British Columbia. Players that are fortunate enough to be selected by their countries will head west to take part in what has become one of the game's most popular hockey tournaments.

01 ECONOMIC IMPACT

In 2012, Alberta hosted the World Junior Championships and it continues to be one of the most successful events in tournament history. The 11-day tournament generated an estimated \$86.2 million in economic activity for the province of Alberta. Further reports estimated that the tournament made approximately \$22 million in profit. Last year, the city of Buffalo was selected to host the event, beating out competing cities St. Louis and Pittsburgh. Although revenue figures have not been released, the ticket sales and attendance totals are believed to be weak, leaving the city of Vancouver with the tall task of rejuvenating the annual tradition.

02 ATTENDANCE

The 2015 and 2017, World Junior Championships marked the first time that the tournament was held in two separate cities, in two NHL arenas. On both occasions, many believed that attendance records would be shattered by hockey-crazed fans in Toronto and Montreal. Theoretically, the locations were perfect, but with ticket prices reaching thousands of dollars, attendance figures dropped to an average of 12,000 and 8,500 fans per game, respectively. Last year, the IIHF stayed central, asking the hockey fans of Western New York and Southern Ontario for their support. The tournament generated its lowest attendance figures in North America since 2005, failing in comparison to the 2009 tournament in Ottawa, which still holds the tournament attendance record attracting a total of 453,000 fans.

03 OTHER REVENUES

In 2014, TSN signed a 10-year contract with Hockey Canada to lock up the television rights for the event. Although figures were not released, TSN highlighted that the 2011 gold medal game attracted 6.7-million viewers, making it the most watched event ever on cable television in Canada. Sponsorships for the event may prove to be the most lucrative. Major companies pour millions into tournament sponsorships, which include events such as the Sport Chek Selection Camp and head-to-toe Nike apparel the players are required to wear.

04 WHERE DOES IT ALL GO

Each year, a portion of tournament profits are used to support grassroots programs in the host communities and provinces. For instance, of the \$22 million in profit from the tournament in Calgary, a reported \$6 million was given to the CHL. Additional funds are given to the national programs of participating countries and IIHF. Even with the enormous profits and outstanding attendance, players competing in the tournament are not compensated for their participation.