

# **SEEDING AND FIRST ROUND OPPONENTS ANNOUNCED FOR 2009 IFAF JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TO BE PLAYED AT PRO FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME**

**Top-Ranked Canada Faces New Zealand; Host United States Kicks Off Against France; European Champion Germany Takes On Japan; Final Qualifier Mexico Will Meet Sweden**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2009, PARIS, FRANCE – The International Federation of American Football (IFAF) has announced the seeding that determines the first round opponents for teams participating at the inaugural 2009 IFAF Junior World Championship. Eight nations representing four continents will compete at Fawcett Stadium at the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio, from June 27 to July 5.

IFAF confirmed that **Canada** holds the number one seed and host the **United States** will be ranked number two. **Mexico** will hold the third seed and **Japan** will be ranked fourth. The seeding will keep those four nations apart during the first round of competition, which kicks off in Canton on Saturday, June 27.

Reigning European junior champion **Germany** is ranked fifth, followed by continental neighbors **Sweden** in the sixth slot and **France** in seventh, while Oceania representative **New Zealand** is the eighth seed.

“The seeding is determined by three main factors and we feel the eight competing nations have been fairly allocated their ranking,” said IFAF President **TOMMY WIKING**. “The IFAF Executive Committee considered each country’s performance in previous international junior competition, the size of a country’s domestic junior American football program and the number of years that program has been in place.

“We felt that Canada’s exceptional record in international junior competition during recent years warranted the top seed. The United States is recognized as the home of the sport and has a strong junior program with the biggest number of youngsters playing the game nationwide.

“Mexico and Japan have both been successful on the international stage, while the order of the three EFAF (European Federation of American Football) teams reflects their placing at the European Junior Championship last summer. As a newcomer to this level of competition, New Zealand has been allocated the eighth seed.”

The schedule for the first round pairs Canada with New Zealand, the United States against France, Mexico with Sweden and Japan against Germany in games to be played on Saturday, June 27. The tournament bracket gives the winners of those opening games an opportunity to play for the junior world championship as they will advance to the semi finals, while those teams that lose in the opening round will compete for a fifth place finish overall.

The winner of the Canada-New Zealand clash will face either Japan or Germany in one semi final on Wednesday, July 1. The nation that emerges victorious from the United States and France will take on either Mexico or Sweden in the other semi final on the same day. The consolation rounds will follow the same pairings and will feature the defeated teams on July 1. Fifth and seventh place and the Bronze Medal will be determined in three games on Saturday, July 4, before the Championship Game is played on Sunday, July 5. Kickoff times and the full event schedule will be announced during the build up to the tournament.

## **2009 IFAF Junior World Championship team information**

**Canada** - Head coach **GLEN CONSTANTIN**, the head coach of Laval University, will oversee tryouts in eastern, western and central locations across Canada. Players will be invited to camps in Calgary, Alberta (west), Hamilton, Ontario (central) and Montreal, Quebec (east). From those camps, a total of 60 players will attend a final selection camp in Ontario in June and Team Canada will travel directly to

Canton, Ohio from there.

**United States** - All 50 state high school athletic associations and the District of Columbia have been invited to nominate at least 10 players to compose a talent pool from which head coach **CHUCK KYLE**, of St Ignatius High School in Cleveland, OH, and Team USA's coaching staff will select its roster in spring 2009.

**Mexico** - Led by **ERNESTO ALFARO DEL VILLAR**, who is the head coach of the 2007 Liga Mayor university conference champion Burros Blancos from the Instituto Politécnico Nacional, Mexico selected players based in Mexico and those living outside the nation's borders who qualify through nationality for the squad that defeated Panama 26-0. Further practices will be held at Campo de I.P.N. Zacatenco and Campo de Buhos in Casco de Santo Tomas.

**Japan** - Under Osaka Sangyo University Junior & Senior High School head coach **TAKAO YAMAZAKI**, players selected from two tryouts will take part in a training camp at Ritsumeikan University from February 27 to March 4. Team Japan will prepare by playing against a visiting American all-star team in the second annual Global Challenge Bowl on Saturday, March 21 in Kawasaki.

**Germany** - The reigning European junior champion has a unique coaching structure in place with offensive coordinator **MAX VON GARNIER** and defensive coordinator **ANDREAS REICHEL** coaching under the guidance of Director of Top Sport for Youth **PETER SPRINGWALD**. The system worked to great effect in Sevilla, Spain, in the summer of 2008 as Germany defeated Finland, Denmark, Austria and Sweden to win the European crown.

**Sweden** - Head coach **JAN JENMERT** believes he will benefit from retaining the majority of his young squad that suffered a narrow 9-6 loss to Germany in the 2008 European Junior Championship final. Jenmert offered an interesting insight into his team's preparations when speaking at the AFCA Convention in Nashville in January, detailing some unorthodox practice methods for during the week of a tournament.

**France** - France will hold the first of three one-week training camps from February 23-28 in Amiens before playing an exhibition contest against the Dutch junior national squad. Head coach **OLIVIER MORET** has enlisted the help of **SEBASTIEN SEJEAN**, a former member of France's junior national team and graduate of the Football Academy of Amiens, who hopes to inspire the 58 players invited to camp by talking about his time as a member of the St Louis Rams practice squad.

**New Zealand** - Representing Oceania for the first time in international competition, the *Ironblacks* will be led by head coach **MICHAEL MAU'U**, who guided his team to a 12-7 qualifying win over rival Australia in Canberra in January. New Zealand will delight the Canton crowd with a pregame traditional Maori dance called the *Haka*, which is performed by all its international teams.

#### **2009 IFAF Junior World Championship seeding:**

1. Canada, 2. United States, 3. Mexico, 4. Japan, 5. Germany, 6. Sweden, 7. France, 8. New Zealand

Football fans wishing to **travel to Canton, Ohio** to enjoy the spectacle of eight nations competing at the 2009 IFAF Junior World Championship can take advantage of a full travel package service offered by **Sports Travel & Tours**. Full details and prices are available at: [://www.usafootball.com/jwc/tickets](http://www.usafootball.com/jwc/tickets).

#### **About IFAF**

The International Federation of American Football (IFAF) unites more than 50 countries on five continents through a burgeoning international sport. With national football federations in existence for more than 70 years, IFAF was created in 1998 to organize and further develop the game through international cooperation and global competition. Having conducted Senior World Championships (players aged 20 and older) since 1999 in Europe and Asia, Summer 2009 in Canton, Ohio, represents the first IFAF Junior World Championship (19 years and younger). The IFAF office is located near Paris, France. For more, visit [ifaf.info](http://ifaf.info) < [://www.ifaf.info](http://www.ifaf.info) > .

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