



## NEWS RELEASE

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6/10/08

IFAF Media Contact: Michael Preston 001-781-363-0305  
mp@mprestonsports.com

### **DATES AND QUALIFYING FORMAT CONFIRMED FOR 2009 IFAF JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TO BE PLAYED IN CANTON, OHIO**

#### ***Canada Joins USA as Automatic Qualifier and is Awarded Tournament Top Seed***

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN – The International Federation of American Football (IFAF) Executive Committee announced from meetings in Scandinavia that the 2009 IFAF Junior World Championship (JWC) will be played from June 27 to July 5 in Canton, Ohio next summer.

Having announced the event last month, IFAF confirmed that the inaugural tournament will kick off on Saturday, June 27, 2009 at Canton's historic Fawcett Stadium, home of the NFL's annual Pro Football Hall of Fame Game, adjacent to the Hall of Fame. Games between the world's eight best high school-aged (19 and under) national teams will also be played on Wednesday, July 1 and Saturday, July 4, before the Championship Game is contested on Sunday, July 5.

Joining host nation the United States as an automatic qualifier will be Canada. The Canadians will hold the number one seed once all eight qualifiers are finalized and placed in the tournament bracket, with USA the number two seed.

"We felt that Canada's exceptional record in international junior competition during recent years warranted the top seed," explained IFAF President Tommy Wiking. "The United States is recognized as the home of the sport and is expected to be a strong contender for the championship. A truly nationally selected Team USA is a new concept that will be put into practice for the first time for this competition, so the committee felt the second seed should be awarded to the United States.

Canada's junior national team has consistently impressed on an international platform by winning the past three NFL Global Junior Championships held during Super Bowl week from 1997 to 2007 and were also champions in 2000.

If Mexico and Japan qualify for the 2009 IFAF Junior World Championship, they will take the third and fourth seeding respectively. Europe's three qualifiers will be ranked five through seven, followed by the Oceania representative in eighth spot. The committee based its ranking on previous international tournaments because the JWC will be the first such IFAF junior event to encompass nations from four continents.

Mexico will either join the United States as one of two qualifiers from the Pan American Federation of American Football (PAFAF), or will host the winner of playoffs between PAFAF nations from Central and South America who declare their participation before the IFAF qualification deadline of September 15.

Japan is expected to be the official representative from Asia, pending approval from the Japan American Football Association (JAFA) board of directors and provided Korea does not enter the qualifying stages before September 15.

Europe's three qualifiers will be determined on Sunday, July 20 in Sevilla, Spain, at the European Federation of American Football (EFAF) Junior Championship. The tournament champion, runner up and third place playoff winner from the eight-team competition that runs from July 12-20 will win the right to represent Europe in Canton. The three qualifiers will come from Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Russia, Spain or Sweden.

Oceania will know its representative when Australia hosts New Zealand on Saturday, January 24, 2009 in the nation's capital Canberra. The game will take place during the Australia Day weekend national holiday.

#### **About IFAF**

The International Federation of American Football (IFAF) unites 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 [www.ifaf.info](http://www.ifaf.info).

#### **About USA Football**

USA Football is the national governing body of America's favorite sport on youth and amateur levels. The independent non-profit hosts nearly 100 football training events per year which offer education for coaches and game officials, skill development for players and resources for youth league administrators. USA Football oversees and manages U.S. national teams and is the United States' delegate to IFAF. USA Football was endowed by the NFL and NFLPA in 2002 and is chaired by former U.S. Congressman and professional quarterback Jack Kemp. For more, visit [usafootball.com](http://usafootball.com).

#### **Editor's note**

Non-US media should direct all inquiries to IFAF media representative Michael Preston: 001-781-363-0305 / [MP@MPrestonSports.com](mailto:MP@MPrestonSports.com).

US-related media inquiries should be directed to Steve Alic of USA Football: 703/992-8325 (office), 703/371-6153 (cell) / [salic@usafootball.com](mailto:salic@usafootball.com).

Both are on USA East Coast Time.

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