

# Junior Development around the World

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# Junior Development around the World



*You don't have to empty the sea to catch a fish*

*Addressing the gradual depletion of the  
European development system*



# Junior Development around the World

## The NHL is important for Europeans and European Hockey

Aspiring players have a dream,  
they practice harder, chose hockey  
over other sports

The best Europeans should play  
in the NHL and everyone wishes them luck



MOLSON  
**CANADIAN.** TORONTO 2010  
**WORLD HOCKEY SUMMIT**



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## European hockey is important for the NHL

Since 1973, more than **900** Europeans have played in the NHL

Since 1980, there have been Europeans on every Stanley Cup winning team except 1993. Total: **91** Europeans have won **140** Cup titles.

Percentage of Europeans in the NHL 2009-10: **23.8** percent

**BUT:** The percentage of Top Category Players was even higher:

- Starting goalies: **53%**
- Top 4-Defensemen: **33.3%**
- Top 6-Forwards: **38.3%**

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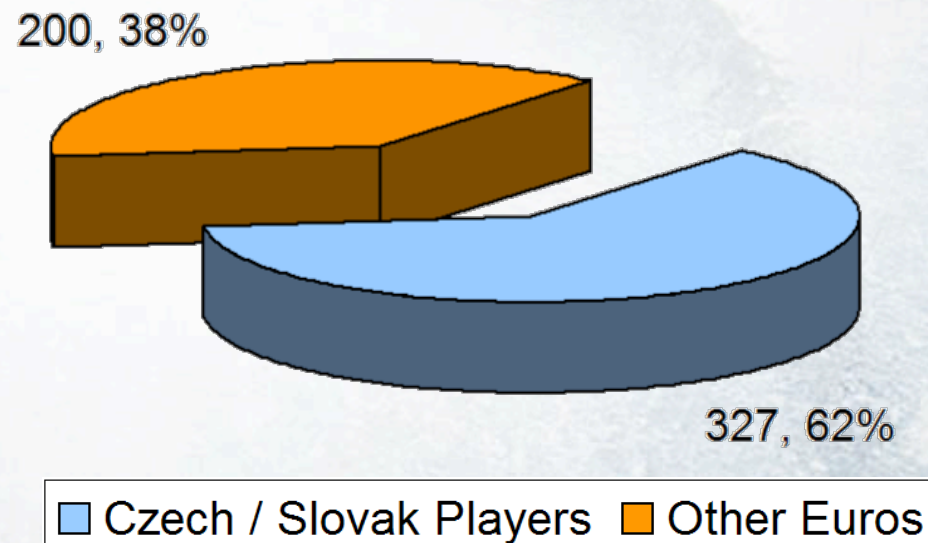
## A worrying trend

In the last 10-15 years, many Europeans who are not even established in Europe and therefore not NHL-ready sign with NHL-clubs

Mass migration of Europeans to CHL. Especially Czechs and Slovaks

Between 1997 and 2010 ca. **840** players have left Europe to play in the CHL. More than **500 (60%)** of them are Czechs and Slovaks

## CHL Import Drafts 1997 - 2005 527 European Drafts





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## A worrying trend

- ❖ Agents misinform young players and their families
- ❖ They withhold information about numbers reflecting the success rate of Europeans who take the CHL route

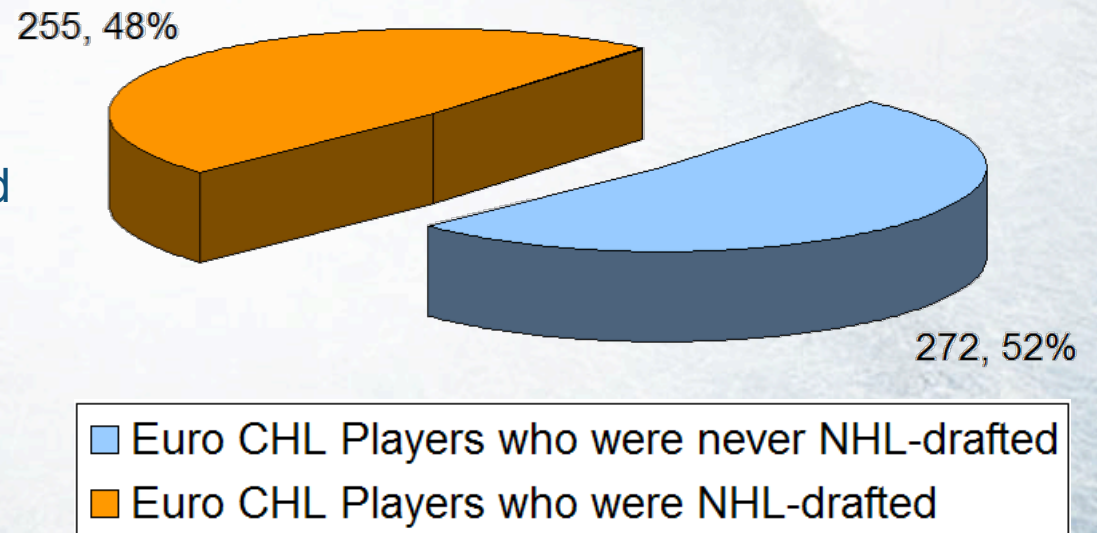
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“CHL exposure is  
the best way to get  
drafted”

At the same time 1997-2005:  
**803** Europeans get NHL-drafted  
**directly** from their European  
clubs.

**More than 50% do  
not get NHL-drafted**

CHL Import Drafts 1997 - 2005  
527 European Drafts



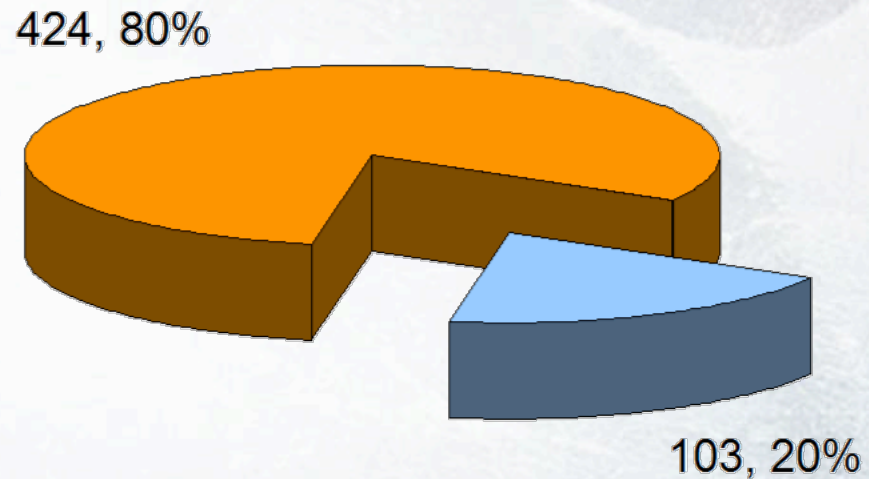


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“CHL play is the best  
way to become an  
NHLer”

80% of Euro CHLers  
never play one NHL  
game

CHL Import Drafts 1997 - 2005  
527 European Drafts



- Euro CHL Players who played in the NHL
- Euro CHL Players who never played in the NHL



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## A worrying trend

- ❖ Success rate (400 NHL games) among CHL Europeans is 4.2%.
- ❖ Our research shows 22 successful CHL Europeans out of 527.
- ❖ Agents do not pass on this kind of information to young players.
- ❖ Are agents aware of these numbers?

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## Impact on Czech and Slovak Hockey

- ❖ Depleted junior leagues in Europe have a very serious effect on the entire development system.

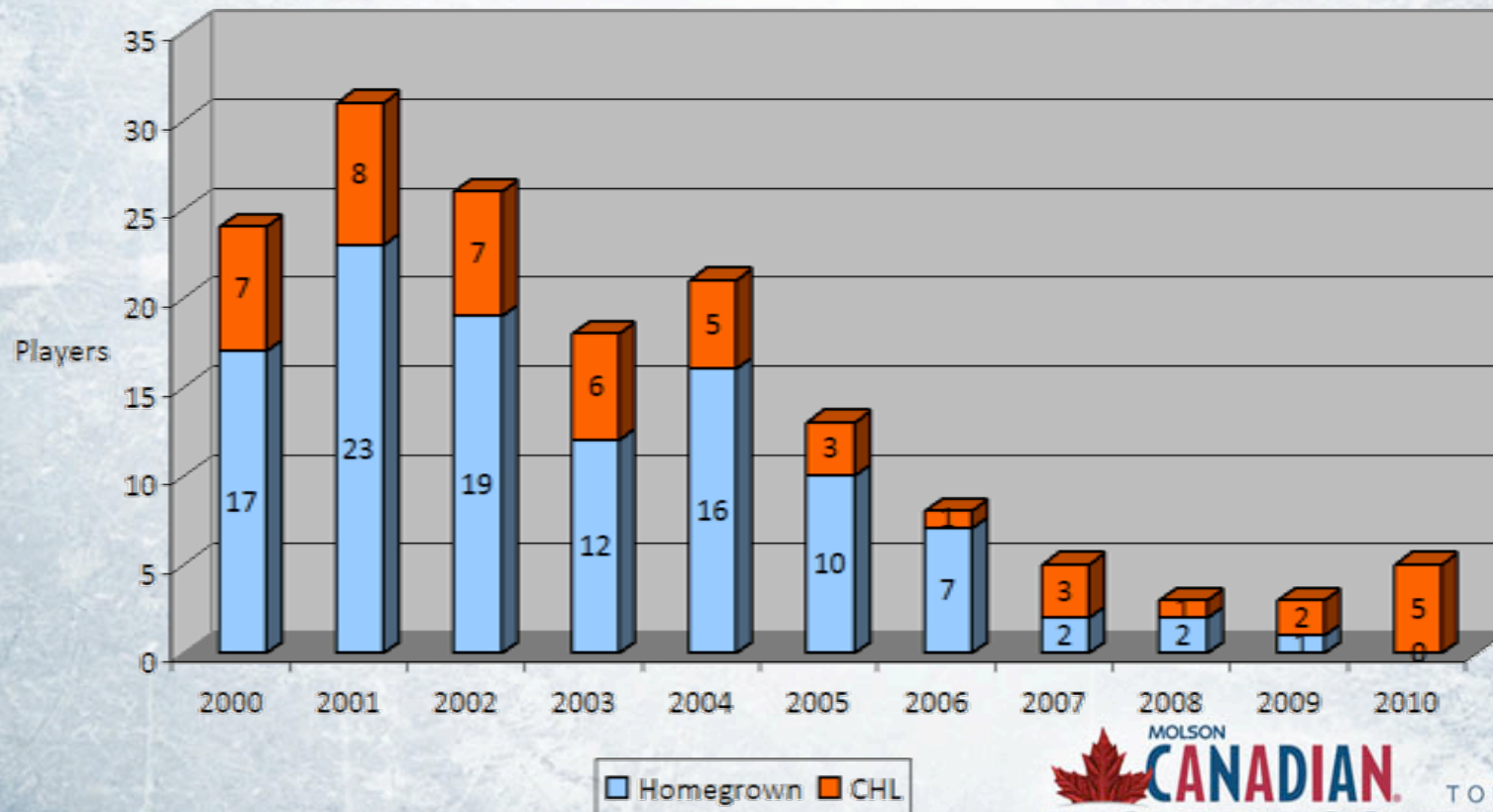
### ALSO:

- ❖ The less competitive environment in the junior leagues in CZE and SVK is directly reflected in the decline of CZE/SVK players in the NHL-draft
  - and consequently in the numbers of NHL players from those countries.



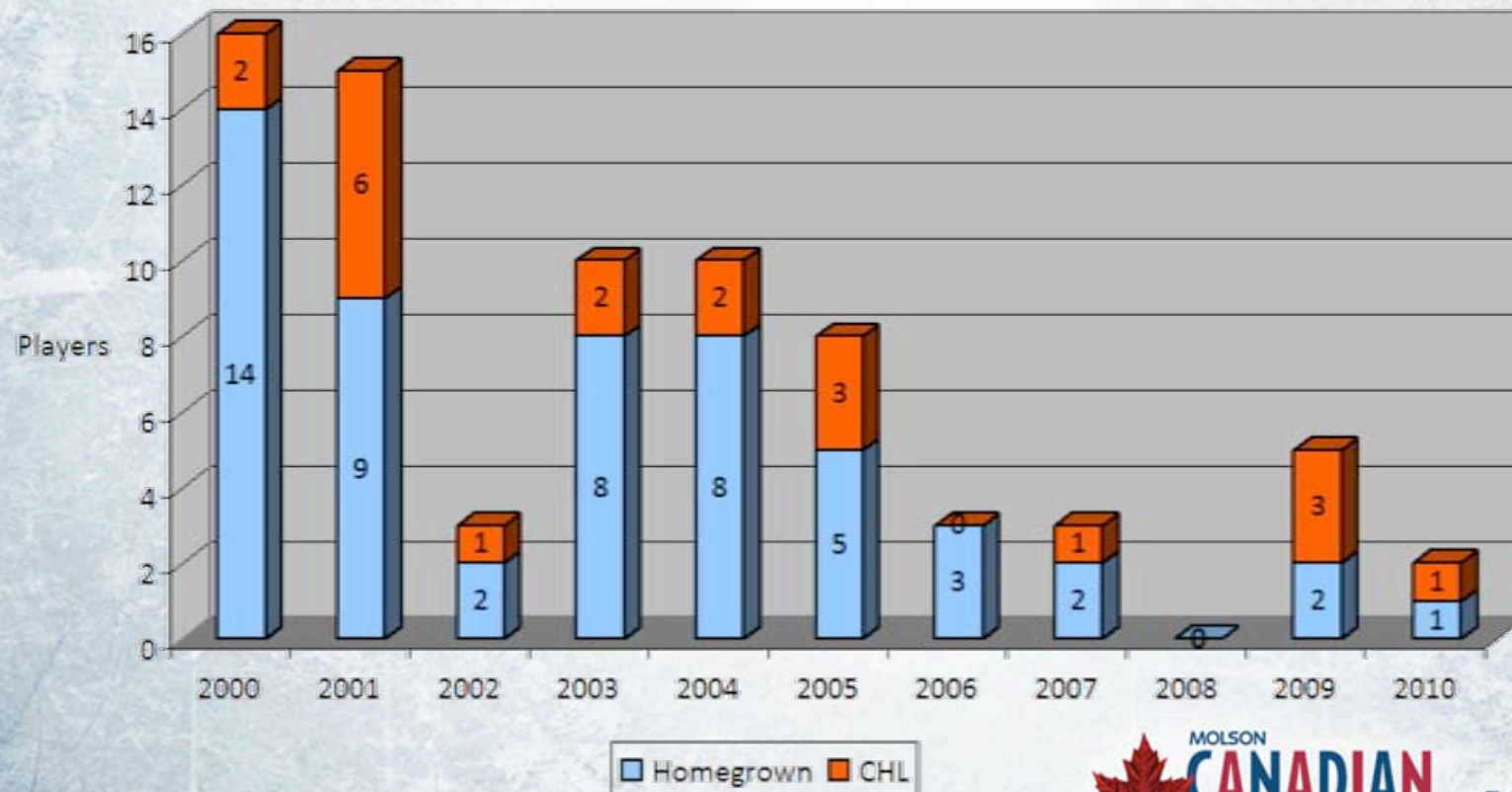
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## Czech Players Drafted to the NHL 2000-2010



# Junior Development around the World

## Slovak Players Drafted to the NHL 2000-2010

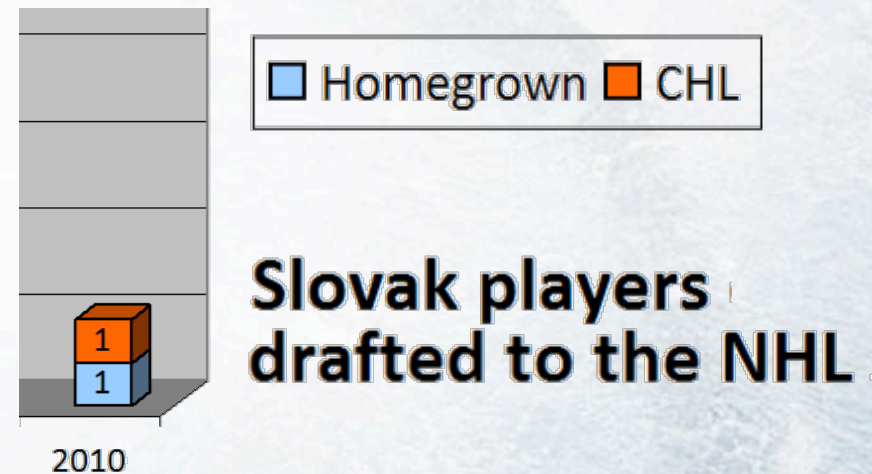
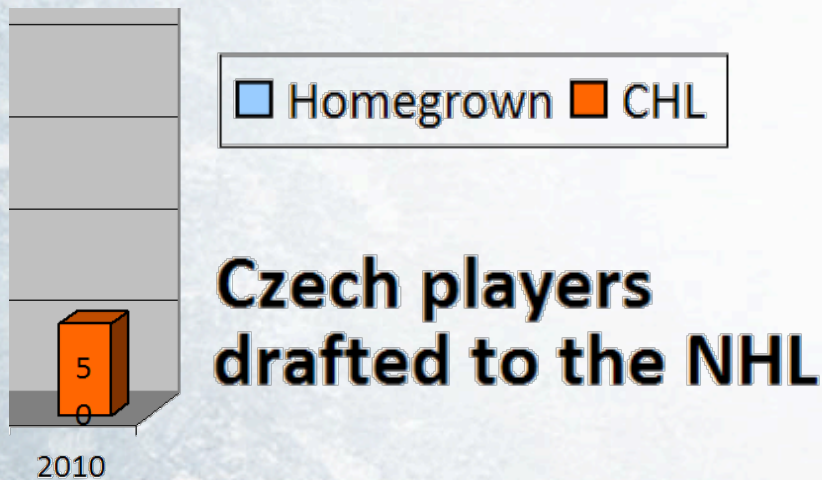




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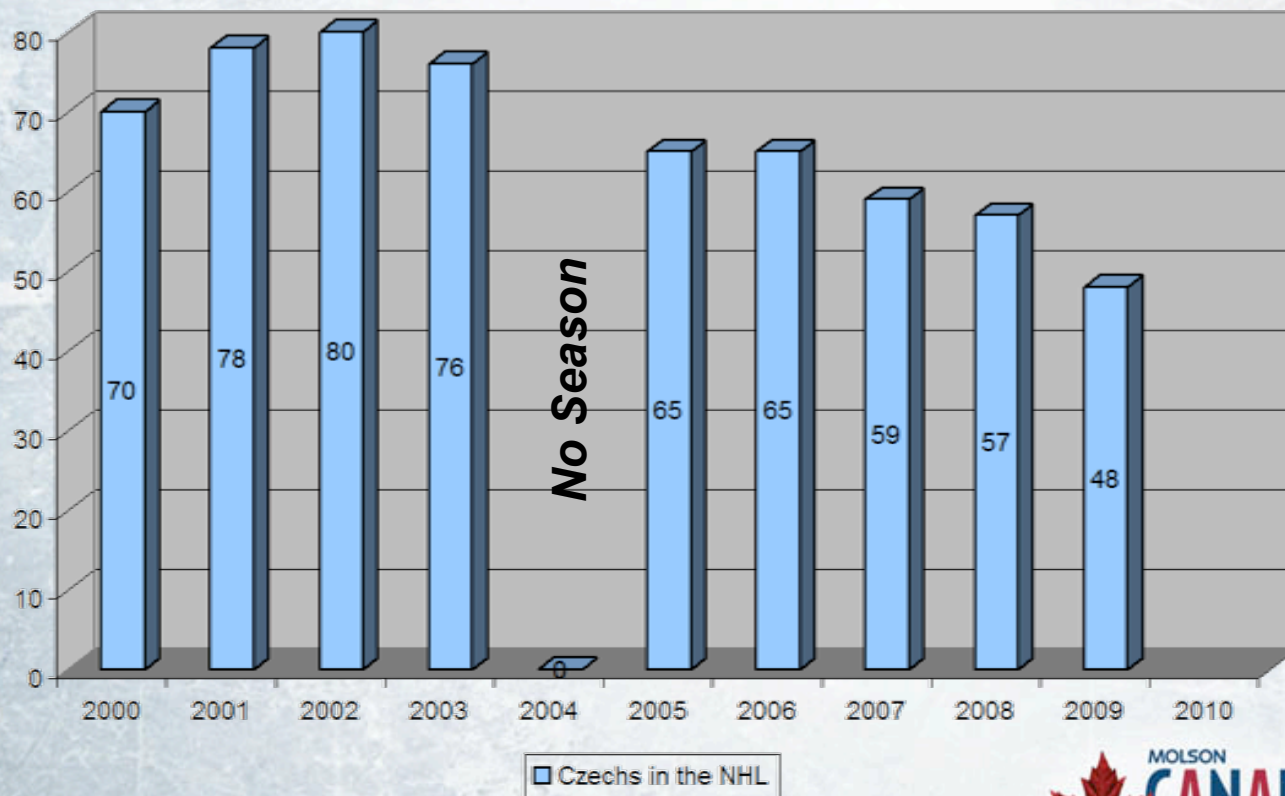
**NHL Draft 2010: Only 1 (!) homegrown CZE/SVK**

**NHL Draft 2000: 31 homegrown CZE/SVKs**



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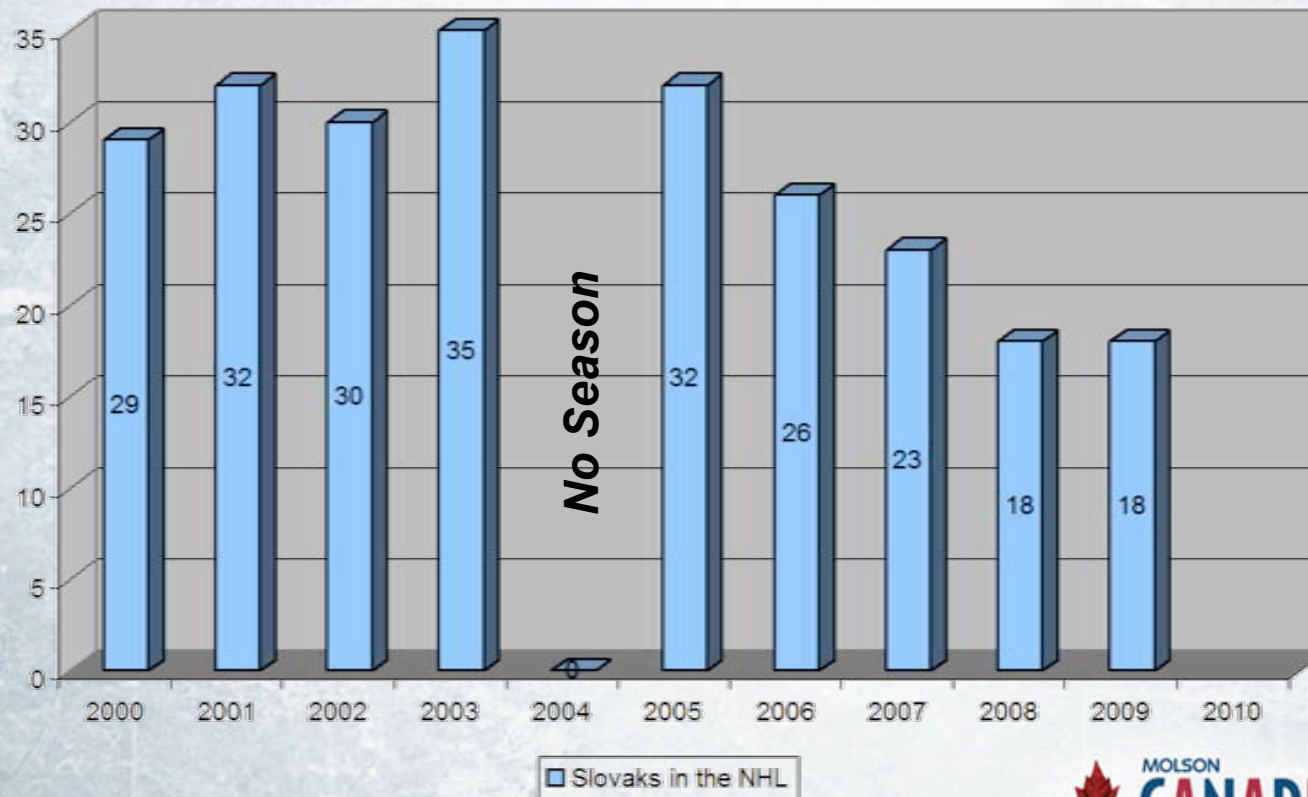
## Czech Players in the NHL 2000-2009





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## Slovak Players in the NHL 2000-2009



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## Impact on the NHL and International hockey

Not only the CZE and SVK hockey programs are losers. Hockey itself – and the NHL – are losers.

*The system is bare scraped – there are no more players like Jagr, Hossa, Gaborik, Hasek, Satan, Kaberle, Hejduk or Bondra.*





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## Effects of CHL mass migration

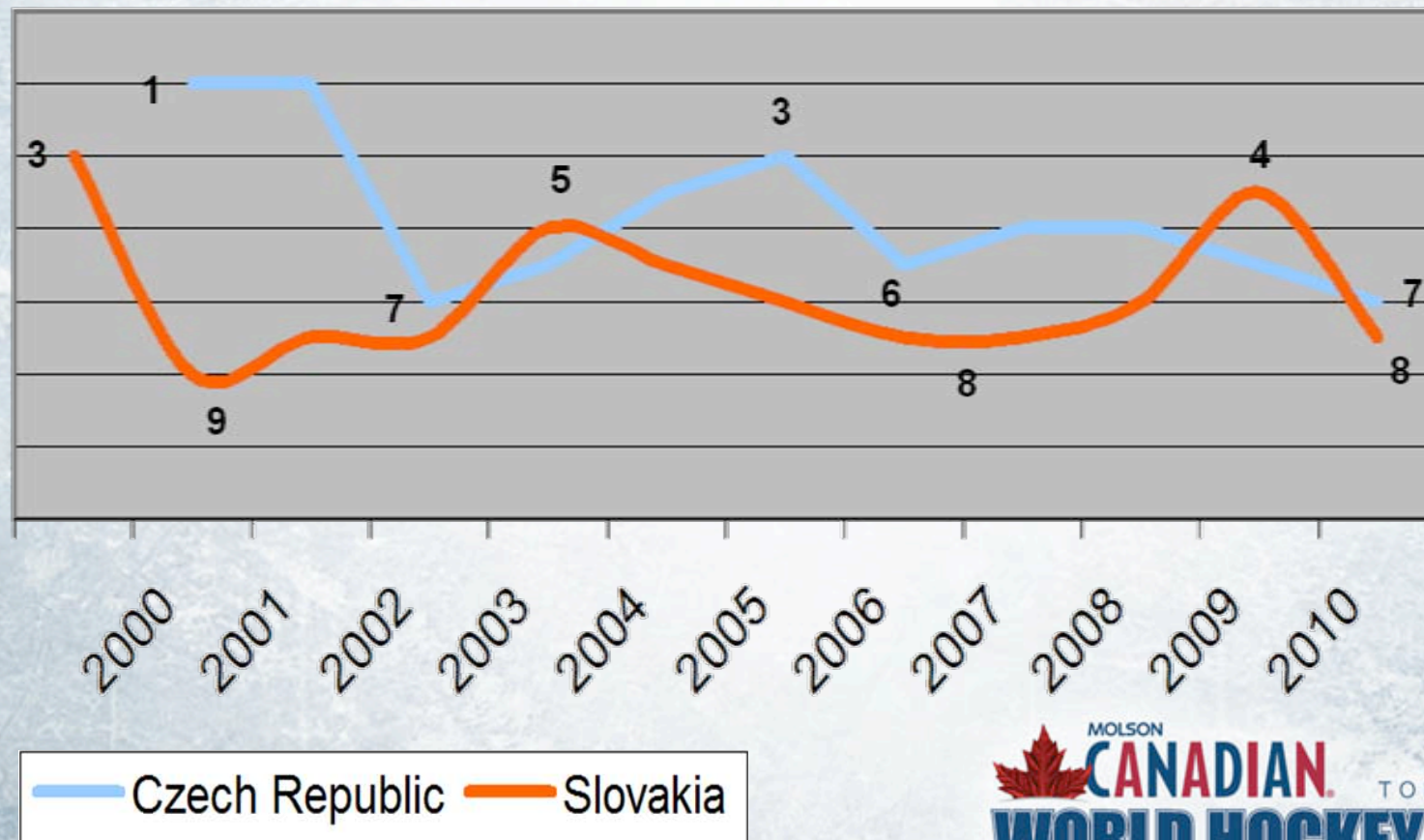
On players: Lesser success rate as pros. Less consistent careers. Longer development curve. Shorter NHL careers. Command less salary. Clearly below percentage of Euros who are NHL Top Category Performers.

On Czech and Slovak U20 national teams: Continuous performance decline since 1999.

**Players who break their line of development at home very often lose their national characteristics as they become hybrids – players with very few qualities that set them apart.**

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## Czech/Slovak U20 World Championship Results





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## You can't rush development

- ❖ Players who develop in their own environment until 21-23 (domestic league, national team experience) become better NHL players.
- ❖ IIHF Study 2006 (player scale 1-5; 621 players researched)
- ❖ “Patient Group“ (stay at home until NHL-ready) – Avg. Grade: **3.47**
- ❖ “CHL/AHL Group“ (At least 1 CHL season/100 AHL games) – Avg. Grade: **1.44**

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## Developing skill comes out of practice...

- ❖ Players who develop patiently, acquiring **10'000 hours of practice at home** have better NHL careers.

### *Example:*

- Magnus Pääjärvi-Svensson aquired **10.440** hours between age 6 and 19. After 3 pro seasons in Sweden, two U18 Worlds, three U20 Worlds, one IIHF Worlds (on All Star Team) he is probably NHL ready.



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## Developing skill comes out of patience...

*Because our team has been good over the years, we didn't have to rush anybody. The NHL is the toughest league in the world, both physically and mentally. And if you are not a man, if you are still a young player and still developing (and you are brought up too soon) this league will over time take your confidence away.*

Ken Holland, Detroit GM



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## The European NHL 1'000 Game Club

❖ 22 Players

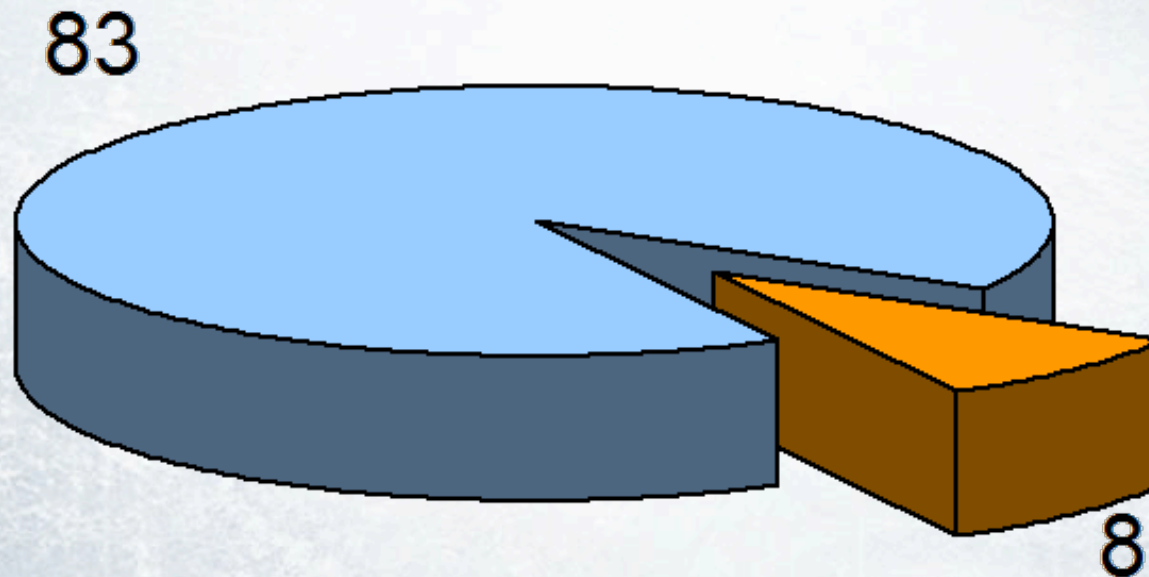
1000 NHL Games or more

❖ 0 CHL Games



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91 European Players have won  
140 Stanley Cup Titles



- Players with CHL experience (1+ seasons)
- Players without CHL experience

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## The Potential Gap

The goal can not be to “dip your toe”  
in the NHL at any cost

The goal must be to become a player  
who fulfills ones potential = minimum  
400 games in the NHL

Many of today’s NHL players have not  
reached their potential.



5

4

3

2

1



*Potential Gap*



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## European Demoralization

- ❖ *Why should millions be spent on development programs in Europe when the players leave for North America often before the age of 18 – and we are not even compensated?*

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## The Development Pool is Shrinking

- ❖ 85-90 percent of all Europeans in the NHL come from five nations:
  - ❖ SWE, CZE, RUS, FIN, SVK
    - Czech Republic and Slovakia: In trouble
    - Finland and Russia: Struggling
    - Sweden: Remain healthy
- ❖ A serious situation. Also to the NHL, if the League wants to maintain its quality and keep recruiting players who bring special qualities to the ice



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Long-term risks of Mass Migration

**FIN**

**RUS**

**SWE**

**CZE**

**SVK**

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## The Losers

If international hockey becomes less competitive and more predictable...

### Hockey Canada and IIHF

- ❖ The World Juniors (U20) lose in popularity due to a less competitive field. The domination of CAN/USA in both U20 and U18 clearly indicates the lack of development in Europe right now

### NHL and NHLPA

- ❖ The World Cup of Hockey becomes less competitive

### Everybody (mostly IIHF member federations)

- ❖ The Olympics and the World Championship become less competitive



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All Competitions Are Impacted



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*The **goal** must be to keep the development streams strong on both sides of the Atlantic by keeping the young players in their own federations and leagues until they are ready for NHL play.*