

# High 5's at Mega Ice

By Keith Fong



Asia's largest Ice Hockey tournament will once again take centre stage at Hong Kong's first and only international sized ice rink, Mega Ice, located on the 10th Floor of MegaBox in Kowloon Bay. The 2009 Mega Ice Hockey 5's will be split across two weekends with the Youth Divisions, catering to ages ranging from 5 to 12, playing from April 28 to May 2, while the Adult Divisions will play from May 5-9.

The competition this year is expected to be as fierce as ever. In the International A division, the highest tier of the competition, The Hong Kong Tigers are looking to defend their title success from 2008, but to do so they will need to fend off a determined team from Beijing, which is expected to include a number of former China National team players. In the International B division, defending champs Hkgfm will be challenged by

a team from Germany and a number of squads with a Canadian flavour. Canadian passport holders appear on the rosters of the Hackers, the Macao Gweilos and also the Toronto Warriors, who had a solid showing at last year's meet. They will also bring a women's team to challenge the WIHO team from Hong Kong in the Women's Division. The Asian Division is expected to see the return of holders, Tokyo Egoists, as they square off against a revamped Sam Wai Hitmen side.

As is the case every year, the Youth Divisions are as big a draw as the older divisions, and sure to bring the crowd to its feet. The stars of tomorrow will be eager to put on a fantastic show, not just to please the parents, but for their growing legions of screaming fans. There will be four youth divisions competing, starting with the Atoms, ranging from 5-6 years old, up to the Pee Wees (11-12). All of the local Hong Kong clubs, including the Penguins Hockey Club, the HK Typhoons, Bears Hockey Club, AMC and D'Bees will be well represented at the event. The HK teams can also expect to face challengers from overseas, with



teams from Beijing and Singapore likely to make an appearance.

What makes the Hong Kong Hockey 5's such a popular event is the fact that it is one of the most competitive tournaments in the region. It has the most teams, the most fun and most importantly, a steady flow of beer to quench the thirst of the crowd. Last year's event saw a record number of 65 teams attend the tournament. Certainly, having one of the best ice rinks in Asia has also proved an irresistible draw for many. Managed by Rink Management Group Ltd., a subsidiary of Kerry Properties Ltd, the Mega Ice rink has a fantastic ice surface, real hockey boards and glass, bringing that all-pro feel to proceedings, which helps lure teams back year after year, as well as attracting new ones. Also worth a mention is the 30-meter high window behind the players' benches, which mesmerizes everyone with its stunning view of the Hong Kong harbour.

On the ice, organizers have flown in four internationally-recognized referees to officiate the tournament. Hailing from Vancouver and, in one case, from Finland, they will be keeping a watchful eye on the players and yes, their parents too, to ensure fair play wins out. Making a return appearance at the Hockey 5's, Referee-in-Chief Dan Pavich says, "We are ecstatic to be part of the best tournament in Asia."

Sadly, this year's tournament will also be the final year for Tom Barnes, one of the pioneers of Ice Hockey in Hong Kong. Barnes organized the first ever Ice Hockey tournament here 15 years ago and has been instrumental in the development of the sport, not only in Hong Kong, but throughout South East Asia. His dedication and hard work by promoting and organizing the local leagues and tournaments should be well recognized. If there was a Hockey Hall of Fame in Hong Kong today, Barnes would be the first to be voted in. Barnes and his family will be returning to the USA after the tournament. "It's been a great ride

and we will surely miss all the wonderful people that we've met here. Having the opportunity to play and promote hockey has been one of my many highlights here," says Tom.

The 2009 Mega Ice Hockey 5's tournament is for everyone! It's not just for the players, their families and friends but also for those that are hockey fans or those that are just curious to find out what this event and hockey is all about. There will be a number of extra activities and events on offer, including the ever-popular Skills Competition, with Fastest Skater, Hardest Shot and the Breakaway contests all up for grabs to quench that competitive urge among the fans. There is no admission fee and games are played throughout the day. Don't miss any of the action - come and watch the 5's!

For more information check out [www.megaice.com.hk](http://www.megaice.com.hk) under the tournament section.

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