

# Roni Nuttunen

## 1. What were your expectations before the 10th World Championship?

Only expectation was to have fun.

## 2. Who did you regard as being the top-5 favourites of the Open Category?

Impossible question. I can only guess who could be in top5: Hans, me, Wallén, AZ, Turon

## 3. Did you expect Sweden to win back the Team Category?

No, I thought before WC that we have the strongest team but then in play-offs our team started to be too nervous to win.

## 4. How would you describe the other top teams?

Swedes have more experience than others. They all can play well even though Russian audience is yelling =). Russian is a technique team, many young players. Czech almost surprised Sweden. They can really enjoy playing table hockey.

## 5. How would you describe these players?

**Roni Nuttunen:** can read other players quite well, enjoys defending

**Alexei Zakharov:** nice, cool, effective attack, real gentleman

**Hans Österman:** calm, tactic player, who has the best centermoves, no doubt

**Finn Fries:** nice shots, it's hard to win guy who keep puck over 4 min in the game, of course he obey rules,

**Lukas Turon:** middle Europe's hope. Very good and equal in all sides on the game.

**Ahti Lampi:** fast player, left wing fast and effective

**Lars Fridell:** suck suck suck, just kidding, he belongs to the best players when he really have fun.

**Stefan Edwall:** attacking player, never boring play against him

**Daniel Wallén:** unlucky in WCh, mental playing good

**Edgars Caics:** technique, loves audience

## 6. What is your overall impression of the World Championships 2007?

Organizing went well even though there was little bit delay. It's a big city and hard to move so everybody understand if the schedule delays. I am glad from victory and congratulate everyone in play-offs.

## 7. What do you expect from the future World Championships?

Tournament place would be easy to go and near of that place restaurants. Games have to be fixed very carefully.

## 8. What is most important in order to develop table hockey worldwide?

Media, organizing tournaments to new players, it's important to every people know that table hockey is played in tournaments, it isn't just a Christmas gift

## 9. What are the plans for your own future table hockey carrier?

I think next season is little bit more quiet than last season. I'm still playing big tournaments.

## 10. Will you participate in WC 2009 in Hungary?

Yes, of course

# Hans Österman

## 1. What were your expectations before the 10th World Championship?

I was anticipating a huge and impressive event. In some ways it was, but on many occasions I was disappointed. The organizers cared too much about prestige (largest cup, largest venue, etc) and unnecessary security measures than really important issues like transportation, a working time schedule and good food opportunities. It would have been much better to play in the same hotel as where the players were accommodated (lex Zürich 2003) than to play in an outskirt luxury skating arena with no audience, no real restaurants and delayed buses. It is a real shame that we both Saturday and Sunday had to play until midnight.

## 2. Who did you regard as being the top-5 favourites of the Open Category?

Roni Nuttunen, Edgars Caics, Daniel Wallén, Stefan Edwall and myself.

## 3. Did you expect Sweden to win back the Team Category?

Yes, I actually did. In the past Swedish team golds have always been evident. For the same reason: until Riga 2005 the Swedish team has never really cared that much about the team competition. Now, after our loss to Finland two years ago, the situation was different. The main focus for many of the Swedish players was to take back that title. We really cared.

## 4. How would you describe the other top teams?

**Czech:** the most impressive team. None of their players, except Turon, really belongs to the upper elite, but put them together and they are deadly. Really good team spirit, really noisy (in a positive way) and really nice guys.

**Russia:** The Zaharov brothers are of course really strong, but since Yanis Galuzo often gets too nervous and the older players, Titov and Petrov, are a bit behind the top level, I was not expecting Russia to win. Therefore I am really impressed that they almost made it to the final. In the future, with Miloradov and maybe Voksoboynikov as certain squad members, they can be a real threat.

**Latvia:** Caics and Silis cannot do everything themselves. But Latvia has many coming men. Could be a medalist in Hungary.

**Finland:** Always humble, nice and sportsmanlike. Big hand for their acceptance of the video goal. Finland is an amazing team, headed by the junior stars Nuttunen and Lampi. KIT is experienced and the Oulu players Käsmä and Ala-Aho are both impressive competitors. Next time Finland will be even harder to beat.

## 5. How would you describe these players?

**Roni Nuttunen:** No words needed. Talented Roni is the best for the moment. Understands the game like almost nobody else, has an amazing score percentage and is gifted with a strong head. Roni was born a winner.

**Alexey Zaharov:** maybe the best trained player ever. Plays like a machine and has no real weaknesses, maybe just lacking a bit of defence.

**Hans Österman and Finn Fries:** still going quite strong. But for how long can we last? We are both getting older. On the other hand, that goes for the table tennis legend Jan-Owe Waldner aswell.

**Lukas Turon:** amazing that he has become that strong by only playing against other Czechs. With a better defence and some mental guts Lukas can be a hard challenger for Roni.

**Ahti Lampi:** a fantastic player. Practices more than anyone for the moment and could be described as a Finnish version of Stefan Edwall. Scores from everywhere, all the time, in high speed. Needs more experience, some self confidence and better tactical skills to be number one. In my opinion he is the one to beat Roni Nuttunen in the future, if he only realizes that it is possible. Kill your ghosts, Ahti!

**Lars Fridell:** never underestimate the power of a pure winner. Lars really knows how to win and loves to be the underdog. Maybe getting a bit too old and lacking some motivation, but when he plays at his best, he is almost unbeatable.

**Stefan Edwall:** the highest top level of all players in the world, ever. The problem is that he rarely shows it. Some bad circumstances and Stefan can easily lose his power. But it is no coincidence that Roni Nuttunen says: "Stefan winning is up to himself."

**Daniel Wallén:** lacking both talent and technique he has shown the world that good defence, strange shots and a winner mentality bigger than Peter Forsberg's, can be more than enough to be the best. Daniel had been practicing too much basics before Moscow and therefore lost his natural, and winning, game style. But his tears after the Swedish team gold is already a modern classic.

**Edgars Caics:** "Boyt boyt, che, che!" Funny, noisy, guy with huge self confidence and a powerful game style. A big disappointment that he was out of top 16. Should lower his pace and add some more tactics to his game.

#### **6. What is your overall impression of the World Championships 2007?**

Sorry to say, but in my opinion the WC in Moscow was a big disappointment. Of course the venue and environment was impressive, but it was all overshadowed by the problems mentioned in question 1. The main focus for a WC organizer must be that the players easily can get from the hotel to the venue, that the schedule is on time, that the players can get appropriate food and that sportsmanship is granted. Unfortunately it seems like the Russians cared too much about other things, like prize money, unneeded luxury, huge cups, drum orchestras and pop stars.

But the most annoying problem was the unsportsmanlike behaviour of both the audience and some of the organizers during the individual play off. The way that the audience, under supervision of Mikhail Margolis, disturbed and harassed Finn Fries (and Bjarne Axelsen, when he was appointed as neutral dropper) during the semifinal, is nothing less than a big scandal. Cheering for your favourite player is one thing, that is good for our sport and something the Russians normally do quite well! But this was something else and I know that Finn Fries felt really bad afterwards.

In addition I can mention a situation during the quarter final AZ-Fridell. One of the organizers, standing inside the perimeter, was screaming for Alexey during the game. When Petter Bengtsson asked him if this was an appropriate behaviour for a referee, the organizer threatened to kill him.

I strongly demand that ITHF takes measures in these issues, both to learn the Russians a lesson and to safeguard that the situation does not repeat itself in the future. Either we need the existing rules to be followed (which the Russian organizers obviously did not) or maybe we even need new, clearer, rules.

#### **7. What do you expect from the future World Championships?**

Everything that failed in Moscow must not repeat. And we do not need any prize money. An honour is more than enough to make this sport "for real".

#### **8. What is most important in order to develop table hockey worldwide?**

The possibility to arrange tournaments. And a website with recorded top games, maybe that is something for ITHF to think about? There are already amazing Russian DVDs, monthly released. Maybe they can be published on the internet, for paying subscribers?

#### **9. What are the plans for your own future table hockey career?**

I will of course continue to play, hopefully I can also remain one of the top players with a realistic chance of winning big tournaments. But my time is inevitably running out. Being a hard working family father of two is not ideal for your table hockey career, to put it mildly.

#### **10. Will you participate in WC 2009 in Hungary?**

I do hope so!

# Lukas Turon

## 1. What were your expectations before the 10th World Championship?

My expectation, which I managed to fulfill, was to finish in the top five in the open category.

## 2. Who did you regard as being the top-5 favourites of the Open Category?

I considered Nuttunen, Osterman, Caics, Alexei Zakharov and Wallén to be the favourites.

## 3. Did you expect Sweden to win back the Team Category?

No, I thought that the Finns would win the Team Category.

## 4. How would you describe the other top teams?

**SWE:** a team packed with experience, they've got very experienced players.

**FIN:** the team has got a lot of young players which is crucial for the future of the team. I think that gradually, the Finns will be the best team in the world, eventually the second, if I count on the Czech team being the best :-D

**RUS:** our traditional rival in the fight for the bronze medal, a very well balanced team. The Zakh. brothers always earn plenty of points but the rest of the team are even, they don't have any significant weak points.

## 5. How would you describe these players?

**Roni Nuttunen:** I don't know what to say about him. He is a wizard, an outstanding player; he can read the game real well plus he can surprise you with an unexpected move, he plays tactically, relies on his defense which is excellent, and then he suddenly attacks. When attacking, he plays around with the puck but if you stop paying attention for a glimpse of time he can change his rhythm and score quickly.

**Alexei Zakharov:** this player can play very attractive hockey. You can play very offensively against him some of the games can even have a very wild result. His moves are very precise both on the left and right.

**Hans Österman:** a player with very good defensive and grand one-on-ones, he plays tactically, he doesn't rush anywhere which makes him the player he is. He can read his opponent's play well.

**Finn Fries:** I haven't played many matches against him, so it is not easy to assess him, but he definitely belongs among the top players,

**Ahti Lampi:** a young player, looks really cool while playing, and is very difficult to beat on a day when everything turns out right for him. His offensive and defense are well balanced,

**Lars Fridell:** difficult to talk about his strong points, as I haven't played many matches against him.

**Stefan Edwall:** a player with good and patient play, can't judge more than that from the few matches we've had

**Daniel Wallén:** his offensive is very good, he's a lot of moves from which he scores and belongs among the most experienced

**Edgars Caics:** outstanding one-on-ones, he can pass from the the left wing to the center and score in enormous speed. When he is in trouble he gets a little unsteady, but other than that he is an excellent player

## 6. What is your overall impression of the World Championships 2007?

I liked the Chmps a lot, even though the timing was delayed. It also wasn't great to play just one match followed by a two- or three-match break in the groups. That meant that you lose your pace. Other than this it was one of the best tournaments I've been to.

## 7. What do you expect from the future World Championships?

I expect the next Champs to be like Moscow, just the playing schedule could run smoother.

**8. What is most important in order to develop table hockey worldwide?**

A lot of beginner players stop coming to the tournaments and quit. They lose by a big difference which discourages them from coming again. I think that every beginner should grow to love this game, learn from the better, and practice a lot.

**9. What are the plans for your own future table hockey carrier?**

I wanna play as long as I can and enjoy it, but I haven't put that much thinking into this. Maybe I'll start losing and quit :-D So far I have loads of time and the family stands behind me, so no problem.

**10. Will you participate in WC 2009 in Hungary?**

Well, I hope to qualify and would like to come.

# Stefan Edwall

## 1. What were your expectations before the 10th World Championship?

My expectations were very high, mostly because the Russians promised the best tournament ever played.

## 2. Who did you regard as being the top-5 favourites of the Open Category?

Nuttunen, Österman, Zakharov, Cais, Wallen

## 3. Did you expect Sweden to win back the Team Category?

Yes, but we knew that it would be very difficult to win. This was probably the last time that Sweden could win because almost all the players are old boys!

## 4. How would you describe the other top teams?

Finland is without doubt the next World champions, Russia has 4 very good players but they need to get 1 or 2 more top players to be able to beat Finland in the future same goes for Latvia they have 2 or 3 good players but they need 2 or 3 more to become world champions in the team competition. The Czechs are already a great team and I think they can be the biggest competition for Finland in the future.

## 5. How would you describe these players?

**Roni Nuttunen:** unbelievable player, the best since Lindahl

**Alexei Zakharov:** very good technics – strong in play offs

**Hans Österman:** the smartest player in the world

**Finn Fries:** also very smart player, but not a winner in his mind

**Lukas Turon:** already one of the best, if he plays more in Sweden/Finland he will be top 5 next year.

**Ahti Lampi:** Ahti will be top 10 next year, but I'm not sure if he is a winner in his mind!?

**Lars Fridell:** he is like Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, if he has a great day he is one of the best but if not he can be very easy to beat.

**Stefan Edwall:** I don't comment my self!!

**Daniel Wallén:** very smart and strong in play offs

**Edgars Caics:** a very talented player who is and will be one of the best in the world.

## 6. What is your overall impression of the World Championships 2007?

Overall I am very disappointed about a lot of things, Of course it was one of the best ever venues and the prizes were amazing for a table hockey tournament but the Russians forgot about details like a good place for food in the area and the schedules for playing was terrible with big delays to follow. So in the few days I spent in Moscow I didn't eat a proper dinner and the hours of sleep was reduced to a minimum. How is it possible for a 36 year old man to compete with 20 years younger players under these conditions? Venue and money is not enough to make the best ever tournament, It's just as important to make the participants of the tournament to feel good!

## 7. What do you expect from the future World Championships?

I just hope that future world championship countries will keep in mind that the small details are just as important as the venue and the prizes!

## 8. What is most important in order to develop table hockey worldwide?

To try to get a big sponsor for ITHF and keep on trying to make great and interesting tournaments. To get new players to be interested in table hockey and keep playing and training I believe that we will need money as prizes in our big tournaments like in Moscow.

**9. What is the plans for your own future table hockey carrier?**

I will keep on playing and try to win some veteran titles in a few years!

**10. Will you participate in WC 2009 in Hungary?**

Yes if I qualify

# Edgars Caics

## 1. What were your expectations before the 10<sup>th</sup> World Championship?

To be in top-3 in juniors, to get in semi, or at least in top-8 in open , to be higher than I was ranked before tournament, and to be in top 5 in teams.

## 2. Who did you regard as being the top-5 favourites of the Open Category?

Roni, Hans, Finn, Edgars, Daniel/Alexei

## 3. Did you expect Sweden to win back the Team Category?

Hard question, I thought that chances were 50-50 Finland- Sweden. Before the final, I would say Sweden, because they were really a team, cheering and acting like a team. They were all in the game, but I did not see it in Finnish team.

## 4. How would you describe the other top teams?

Sweden, Finland – the best teams to fight for the gold. Russia playing at home is always dangerous, Czech Republic – if they play well from the first tour than they can beat every team. Latvia – still have to improve its game to fight for more than 5. place. Norwegians players have to go to more foreign tournaments to hope for more than 5-6 place.

## 5. How would you describe these players?

**Roni Nuttonen:** playing pretty well 😊 he was the best player last season.

**Alexei Zakharov:** has started to think more while playing lately, but still has to improve his defense, because its not so good.

**Hans Österman:** can do a lot of moves, but mostly is doing one to one, very smart player.

**Finn Fries:** holding the puck a lot, and is hard to beat him if you are playing without a puck a lot.

**Lukas Turon:** fun playing with him, has just a few moves, but those are great.

**Ahti Lampi:** fast and nice player, but has to improve his defence

**Lars Fridell:** top10 player, but to make something more has to train.

**Stefan Edwall:** if it is his day, he can beat everyone. Player who I like to play most, because it is always fast, interesting and a lot of scores in our games.

**Daniel Wallén:** trying to score from every place of the field.

**Edgars Caics:** can play much better than he did in Moscow. Playing to get fun. 😊

## 6. What is your overall impression of the World Championships 2007?

Everything was nice: arena, prizes, but, however, the most important thing, the schedule was not like it had to be, too many delays, and free games which caused bad things like losing your game.

## 7. What do you expect from the future World Championships?

To have nice time and see all the best players.

## 8. What is most important in order to develop table hockey worldwide?

We have to convince other people that table hockey is really a kind of sport, not just a fun game to play with your children. Of course money is important to develop it, but I think that players will not be so kind anymore and it will cause a lot of problems.

## 9. What are the plans for your own future table hockey carrier?

Hope to continue playing, but right now I don't want to see table hockey for some time, want to relax, and do some other sports like beach volley, football and enjoy the summer..

## 10. Will you participate in WC 2009 in Hungary?

Hope I will, if I will get into the team! 😊



Also I would like to welcome players to European Championship in Riga in 2008!! 😊