Every December, the best young hockey players in the world gather to take part in one of the most prestigious and exciting hockey tournaments in the world (and my personal favourite) – the World Junior Hockey Championships. Legends are born, just ask “Double Dion” Phaneuf. Unheralded players steal the spotlight, like Swiss goaltender Reto Berra. Looking back through the past years there are a lot big names, as well as big busts. This article covers some of the junior stars from the obscure hockey nations that have entered the tournament over the years.

**1995 - Alexander Serikow (Germany).** Serikow sounds more like a figure skating move than a hockey player, but Alexander was a standout at the 1995 tournament. With 11 points he was the highest-scoring non-Canadian in the entire tournament. Serikow went on to play 13 straight seasons in the DEL, scoring 20 goals in his best offensive season (2002-2003). He currently plays for Bietigheim Steelers of the tier-two league in Germany. His career highlight was a 1999 DEL All-Star Game appearance.

**1995 - Igor Karpenko (Ukraine).** Karpenko was drafted in the 8th round by Anaheim in 1995. The closest he got to the NHL was spot duty with the Saint John Flames of the AHL. He most recently played for Ukraine at the 2007 World Championships. He made the 1995 Tournament All-Star team with a goals-against-average of 6.00, so he must have played well.

**1996 – Florian Keller (Germany).** Keller, skating on a line with Marco Sturm, was tied with Jarome Iginla for the tournament points lead with 12. I searched his name on the internet and found a Florian Keller who won the Gold for Germany's Field Hockey team at the 2008 Olympics, and I thought I had a cool story about a two-sport athlete on my hands. Turns out that Florian is a more common name than I thought, and this Florian has been in the DEL, skating for the Sinupret Ice Tigers. Besides being an Ice Tiger, Florian has also been a Polar Bear and a Star Bull in his career.

**1997 - Rastislav Pavlikovsky (Slovakia).** Ottawa selected Pavlikovsky in the 9th round in 1998, but the closest he got to the NHL was a brief AHL career with Cincinnati and Philadelphia between 1998 and 2000. He has bounced around between Sweden, Finland, and Switzerland, and he currently plays in the KHL for Novosibirsk Siber. At the 1997 tournament he was tied for second in scoring with Tommi Kallio of Finland and Erik Rasmussen of the USA with nine points, one behind American Mike York.

**1997 - Mark Streit (Switzerland).** By far the best player on this list, Streit ahs developed into a star offensive defenseman in the NHL. Last off-season he left Montreal for Long Island, and to the surprise of many his production hasn't fallen off at all. The once-scary Montreal power play has missed Streit's creativity and speed, and he has been the best and most consistent Islander all season. Streit starred at the 1997 tournament for the surprising Swiss, who went 3-2-1. Streit has gone on to captain Switzerland at the 2006 Olympics, where it defeated both Canada and the Czech Republic.