

# Interview



Photo: Private

## Atso Ahonen

Outstanding. Without a doubt you have to characterize Atso Ahonen, Goalkeeper of the Finnish national side and national champion Helsinki Outsiders, with this word. After two bronze medals at the last World and European Championships it should be a little bit more this time. In an interview with [EWH2014.com](http://EWH2014.com) he talks about his expectations of WC 2014, his way to a top goalie and which effects the new classification system could have.

[WC 2014 is getting closer, the tension increases. Mr. Ahonen, are you looking forward to this event and what is your expectation concerning the organization?](#)

*Atso Ahonen: I'm really looking forward to this great event. These are my second World Championships. This is the ultimate best and toughest competition in this sport.*

*I'm looking forward to see all the facilities that the organization has provided for us athletes. And what I've seen in social media, the organization is doing awesome job. I have no doubt that these World Championships will be nothing but a great, rememberable event.*

[EWH2014.com: Finland will face European Championships runners-up Belgium, host Germany and Italy in group A. What was your first thought about that drawing and what do you think now?](#)

*Atso Ahonen: At first I couldn't believe it. It sounded like a joke, so many medalists in the same group. Germany is the reigning World Champion, Belgium came second on the last European Championships. We've been third in last EC and WC. And Italy's always tough competitor. It's really a group of death. Every single match is so important. But you know what? That actually motivates both me and the whole Team Finland. There's no single "easy" game, you have to compete on the top level whole time. It gives us strength.*

EWH2014.com: You won the bronze medal at the last World and European Championships. What is the goal of the Finnish Team at WC 2014?

*Atso Ahonen: In sports you always want to go higher and do better than last time. That is our goal too. There's no reason to deny it. As a team we want to win gold. I think that's obvious. But it doesn't come easy and there's a long and hard way to it. But I think we've got a chance.*

EWH2014.com: Two Years ago you became the best T-Stick player at the EC 2014 and most of the experts think you're the best goalkeeper in world at this time. How does your training look like and what sets you apart?

*Atso Ahonen: Being selected as the best T-Stick player at EC 2012 was of course a great honor and personal milestone for me. My training looks good. I've just gotten brand new sports wheelchair which helps my playing to be even better than before. I think there are couple of things that has helped me to where I am now. First is the fact that I'm actually the only goalkeeper in our national team. This means that I'm in goal in every single practice. I get to train a lot of different situations and I don't have to share my training time with anyone else. I also like to imagine certain situations beforehand and go through in my head on how I should play in them.*

*I've been playing with T-Stick since 2008. Since the beginning I've also liked to talk a lot on the field. I see things differently from my point so I like to shout and advice our players on what I see and what I think they should do. Since I have also played as a forward in international games (EC 2005) I think I have some clue on how forwards should sometimes play. I try to help my team in every possible way.*

EWH2014.com: Everyone is talking about the new classification system. Do you think it's introduction has a deep impact to the game and which nations could benefit from this? Will it help Finland to move forward?

*Atso Ahonen: Of course it has big impact on the game. I don't think it's necessarily a bad thing though. Suddenly there are many variations on how to play the game and get success. I think a few nations could benefit from classification system. Finland being one of those nations. I think that also Belgium benefits quite a lot from it. It will be interesting to see how much the game actually changes. I think it will be as entertaining as before. We'll see new stars, especially T-Stick-players.*

EWH2014.com: Last question: Who is going to win this tournament?

*Atso Ahonen: There are so many good countries but I wouldn't be honest with myself and everyone else if I didn't think that Finland's going to win this tournament. So I'll say Finland.*



Atso Ahonen kills a penalty shot at the semifinals of WC 2010 in Italy (Photo: Wolfram Wroz)