

In Russia, the series resumed on a high burst of dramatic good will. An amazing 2500 Canadians had flown to Moscow to watch. Forty little girls, all about twelve, came out and gave each player a bouquet. Jean Ratelle gave the first little girl a big smooch in return. The crowd cheered. There were, however, a few bouquets left over. Three of the Canadian players, Richard Martin, Vic Hadfield and Jocelyn Guevremont, who'd played little or none, decided to go home. And for the rest of the Canadians the flowers soon withered. They lost 5 to 4. The Russians had a two-game lead with only three games to go. After that, one more player split, Gilles Perreault.

The Canadians won the next, 3 to 2.

And the next, 4 to 3.

And they'd found a new star: Paul Henderson made the winning goal both times.

The last game was on September 28. The Russians took the lead and expanded it. They were leading 5 to 3 going into the last period. It seemed the ultimate disaster. But it was to be closer. Phil Esposito (who was the overall hero of the series) jammed one by Tretiak as the last period began.

Five to four is at least respectable.

The last period was half over. The Russians decided on a shrewd move. If they froze the score, they won. And equally important, they would win even if the Canadians made another

goal and got a tie — by international rules a tied series is resolved by adding up all the goals, and the Russians would have the edge. The Russians changed their style. Since the night in Montreal, they'd played a pressing, offensive game. Now they switched to defense. It was less shrewd than it seemed. The Canadians could concentrate on scoring. Cournoyer did. The score was tied. Even with the international goal-counting, Canada had avoided a total disgrace.

Phil Esposito had the puck, near the Russian net. He rolled a shot in on Tretiak and it rebounded out to Paul Henderson. Henderson shot it back and Tretiak saved. It rebounded again and Henderson slid it back, into the net. There were thirty-four seconds to go. They went. Canada won the game, 6 to 5; the series, 4 to 3. Sinden ran out on the ice yelling at the top of his lungs: "Never in doubt, was it fellas?"

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*Two fascinating accounts of the Canada-USSR series have been published: Hockey Showdown: The Canada-Russia Hockey Series, Coach Harry Sinden's inside story told in diary form (published by Doubleday in Toronto and New York); and Hockey Canada's volume, Twenty-seven Days in September, which captures all the excitement through color photographs. Text by John MacFarlane; photographs by Brian Pickell.*

