

Canada Cup tournament in 1976, Canada announced its intention of returning to international hockey under conditions that would allow professional players to take part, not only in Team Canada, but in the teams of all other nations that had players in the North American professional leagues. Team Canada 77, composed of players selected from NHL and WHA teams that had been eliminated from playoff competition*, travelled to Vienna to take part in the World Hockey Championships in April of 1977. After an absence of seven years, Canada had formally returned to international competition.

Team Canada 1972 and 1974

Years of negotiation between hockey officials of the Soviet Union and Canada culminated in September 1972 in an agreement that a series of eight games would be played between Canadian professionals from the National Hockey League and the amateur world champions from the U.S.S.R. The Canadians, who were ill-prepared for the first half of the series, lost the first game in Montreal, won the second in Toronto, tied the third in Winnipeg and lost the fourth in Vancouver.

Accompanied by nearly 3,000 devoted fans, Team Canada went on to defeat the Soviet team in Moscow,

thereby regaining some of the prestige lost during the Canadian half of the series.

In 1974, the newly-formed World Hockey Association, with a group of players far better prepared physically and psychologically than the 1972 Team Canada, took up the challenge of the Soviet Union to play a second series of eight games. This time the Soviet team defeated the Canadian "selects" fairly easily.

Canada Cup — the best against the best

In September 1976, for the first time, Canada selected a national team from its best available players to compete against the U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Finland and the United States. Hockey fans everywhere will long remember the excellent play and spirited competition of the Canada Cup, and Canadians look forward to a regular renewal of the series among the world's greatest national teams to take place alongside the yearly World Hockey Championships.

World Hockey Championships 1977-78

In April 1977, Canada returned to the annual World Hockey Championships. The Canadian team was made up of players chosen from teams eliminated from further Stanley Cup and Avco Cup play. Team Canada 77 finished in fourth place in this eight-

*The NHL and WHA championships were being held at approximately the same time.