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REFERENCE

ICE HOCKEY - CANADA'S MOST POPULAR SPORT

The first game of ice hockey was played in Canada shortly before the start of this century. Although there is some controversy as to where this historic game was played, and who participated in it, there is no question of the sport's popularity among Canadians. Today, more than 260,000 Canadians play hockey in organized leagues, where adults and boys as young as six years of age find skilled coaching and well-matched competition.

The game is played by two teams on skates. The players move a cylindrical piece of hard rubber (the puck), approximately one inch thick and three inches in diameter, along the surface of an ice-covered playing arena (the rink) by means of a bladed stick.

Description

The object of the game is to score goals by driving or shooting the puck with the hockey-stick into the opposing team's goal area, which is defended by a goaltender. If the puck is not stopped by the goaltender, one goal is counted for the attacking team. The team generally consists of from 15 to 20 players, six of whom may be on the ice at any time as the playing team. The members of the playing team are alternated throughout the game, though the goaltender usually plays the entire game without substitution. The game is one hour in length and is divided into three playing periods of 20 minutes, with intervening rest periods.

Besides giving many Canadians hours of recreation and exercise, hockey provides entertainment as a spectator sport. Each week thousands of people attend games in their home cities and towns, and millions regularly watch professional hockey on television.

Professional leagues

The foremost professional hockey league is the National Hockey League, which, in spite of its name, is international in scope. At present there are 18 teams in the league, three in Canada and 15 in the United States. The Canadian teams are the Montreal Canadians, the Toronto Maple Leafs and the Vancouver Canucks. The U.S. teams are the Boston Bruins, New York Rangers, New York Islanders, Chicago Black Hawks, Detroit Red Wings, California Golden Seals, Los Angeles Kings, Philadelphia Flyers, Pittsburg Penguins, St. Louis Blues, Minnesota North Stars, Buffalo Sabres, Washington Capitals, Kansas City Scouts and Atlanta Flames.

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