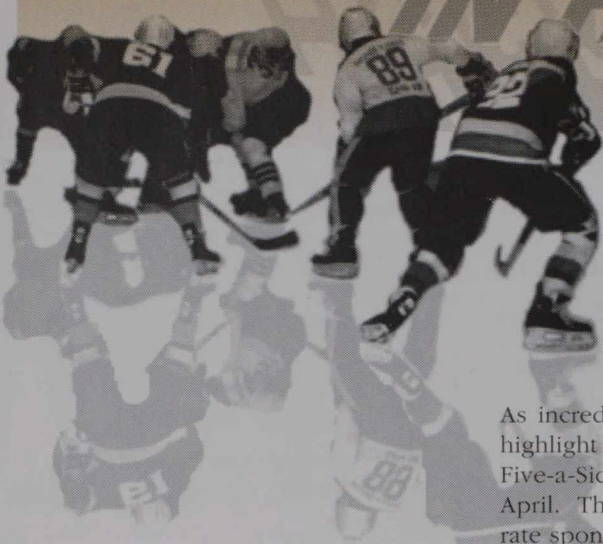


# HOCKEY NIGHT IN HONG KONG



## FIVE-A-SIDE

As incredible as the road trips are, the highlight of the season is the Hong Kong Five-a-Side Ice Hockey tournament in April. The 1993 tournament had corporate sponsors such as the Royal Bank of Canada, Credit Lyonnais Securities, CTS (HK) Corporation Ltd., Pacific Bell Prop-

Apart from hockey, the Can-Am Association is also a bastion of international commerce. After the team finishes its roughhousing on the ice, boys suddenly become men upon entering the domain of the locker room. Discussions between many of the (admittedly less gifted) players have led to multi-thousand dollar deals in such diverse fields as investment banking, manufacturing, textiles, nightclubs, computers, smuggling and hockey cards.

STORY BY SLOAN GAON

PHOTOS BY MARK ALESSIO

**M**onday nights are "Hockey Night in Hong Kong" as grown men lace up their skates and take to the ice at Tai Koo Shing's City Plaza.

"Ice hockey in Hong Kong - you must be kidding!" This is a rather typical response to playing a sport not typically suited to the sweltering heat of Hong Kong. Nevertheless, dozens of players of various nationalities don the pads weekly to indulge in a sport not known for its gentlemanly etiquette.

Soon after those first few rough and tumble sessions on the ice in 1983, the sweaty group, including attorneys, bankers, pilots, architects and Zamboni mechanics, established the Can-Am Ice Hockey Association. With a missionary-like fervour often associated with grown men fascinated by a kid's sport, the organization today numbers some 60 Gretzky wanna-bees and trains year-round in Hong Kong for the November to April schedule at City Plaza's indoor rink.

The Can-Am club typically seeks out the best competition in the Pacific Rim by travelling to the likes of Thailand, China and Korea where it plays United Nations Command, U.S. army and Korean university club teams. Aging veterans on the squad, with faltering memories or perhaps outright disdain for factual accuracy, repetitively regale uninterested listeners with variations on the story of how in 1985 they rallied in the 12th period of overtime, knee-deep in slush, to defeat the Thai national team.



Members of the Can-Am Ice Hockey Association lace up skates and don pads for their weekly games.

erties, RBC Dominion Securities, CIS Insurance Brokerage Ltd., Paperchase Communications and the Stroh Brewery. This patronage has opened the door for an annual international tournament to complement the Rugby Sevens.

Besides earning recognition in Hong Kong for the Five-a-Side tournament, the organization has gained some stature in the mother country through "human interest" coverage from the CBC. Moreover, the organization has managed to tap the ranks of the National Hockey League. Can-Am Association President Shane "Lord Stanley" Weir pulled strings with hall-of-famer and former linemate Serge Savard to wrangle 12 authentic Montreal Canadiens sweaters for use and abuse by the Hong Kong club.

## BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME

This deep infection with the sport of hockey has even led the Canadian members of the organization to initiate plans for a new ice skating rink and adjoining Canadian Community centre. With the support of its members, the organization is hoping its efforts will complement the new Canadian International School which is slated for completion in 1996-97.

The Community Centre hopes to provide a much needed facility to the Hong Kong landscape. The proposed 5,000-6,000-seat capacity facility plans to be a host to many community-based sporting events outside the scope of ice hockey. The rink itself is expected to be used by the International School, community mem-