

A second major professional hockey league – the World Hockey Association – was formed in 1971. Eleven teams took part in the 80-game schedule for the season. Today the WHA comprises the following teams: Canada – Quebec City *Nordiques*, Winnipeg *Jets* and Edmonton *Oilers*; United States – New England *Whalers* (Hartford, Connecticut), Indianapolis *Racers*, Birmingham *Bulls* and Cincinnati *Stingers*.

The WHA trophy, the Avco Cup, was won by the Winnipeg *Jets* in the 1977-1978 season.

Professional hockey is also played in three other North American leagues – the American Hockey League, the Western Hockey League and the Central Professional Hockey League. Canada has only one team in these leagues – the Halifax *Voyagers* of the American Hockey League. With few exceptions, however, professional hockey players are Canadian-born. Canadians generally take an immense interest in the fortunes of all professional teams, no matter where “home ice” may be.

Amateur leagues

Canada’s top amateur trophy, the Allan Cup, was first awarded in 1908. Each spring Canada’s various senior leagues declare winners and those from each province compete in the national senior finals for this coveted trophy. Though played in smaller arenas than the Montreal Forum or

Toronto’s Maple Leaf Gardens, the Allan Cup finals often set attendance marks of nearly 50,000 for the entire playoff series.

Equal in prestige to the Allan Cup is the Memorial Cup, which is awarded to the best Canadian junior hockey team. This trophy was donated in 1919 as a memorial to the many Canadian hockey players who had served in the First World War. Memorial Cup competition is for junior teams with players 19 and 20 years of age, a group that includes practically all the professional “stars of tomorrow”. The national playoffs attract large numbers of spectators, the record being a total of over 100,000 for a seven-game series.

The Canadian Amateur Hockey Association, which stimulates interest and encourages ability in hockey throughout Canada, does not provide for national competition below the junior level. CAHA branches stage provincial championships for *juveniles* (16 and 17), *midgets* (14 and 15), and *bantams* (12 and 13). Intermediate divisions for adults, and junior classes below Memorial Cup calibre, have their own championships.

One reason for an upsurge of interest in hockey is the annual “Minor-Hockey Week in Canada”, held under the auspices of the CAHA and its branches. National publicity, thousands of community “minor-hockey nights”, and the support of