



CANADA

# REFERENCE PAPERS

INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 114

## 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 impact upon 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 area by means of a bladed stick.

### Description of Game

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 goal-tender. If the puck is not stopped by the goal-tender, one goal is counted for the attacking team. A team generally consists of some 15 to 20 players, six of whom may be on the ice at any given time as the playing team. The members of the playing team are alternated throughout the game, though the goal-tender 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 six teams in the league, two from Canada and four from the United States. The Canadian teams are the Montreal Canadiens and the Toronto Maple Leafs, whose home arenas have spectator capacities of 15,700 and 15,000 respectively. The U.S. teams are the Boston Bruins, the Chicago Black Hawks, the Detroit Red Wings and the New York Rangers.

National Hockey League teams play a 70-game schedule extending from early October to late March, and culminating in a four-team playoff. The symbol of professional hockey supremacy is the Stanley Cup, donated in 1893 by Lord Stanley of Preston during his term as Governor General of Canada.

Professional hockey is also played in three other North American Leagues - the American League, the Western Hockey League and the Central Professional Hockey League. Canada has only two teams in these leagues, the Quebec Aces of Quebec City in the American League and the Vancouver Canucks in the Western League. With few exceptions, however, professional hockey players are Canadian-born. Canadians generally take an intense interest in the fortunes of all professional teams, no matter where "home ice" may be situated.

## Amateur Leagues

Canada's top amateur trophy is the Allan Cup, emblematic of senior hockey supremacy in Canada since 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 Maple Leaf Gardens, 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 OHA (Ontario Hockey Association) Memorial Cup, emblematic of Canadian junior hockey supremacy. This cup was donated in 1919 as a memorial to the many Canadian hockey players who served their country in the First World War. The Memorial Cup competition is for junior teams with players of 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.

## CAHA

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 (players aged 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 public figures, including the Prime Minister of Canada, have all contributed to the success of this national institution.

With thousands of boys donning hockey skates for the first time, the national association has expanded its coach-training programme. Assisted by the Canadian Government's Fitness and Amateur Sports Directorate, the CAHA has inaugurated amateur hockey leadership "clinics" at several Canadian universities. From these practical seminars, new coaches or coaches with new skills return to their work at the local level. Another pressing problem -- that of ice facilities -- is being met through government aid for winter-works projects, and may be eased further as communities plan new sports centres to celebrate Canada's centennial year in 1967.

## International Competition

Hockey has made great strides internationally since the first recognized world hockey competition took place at Antwerp in connection with the 1920 Winter Olympic Games. The Canadian Amateur Hockey Association has each year (with one or two notable exceptions, such as the Winter Olympics in Moscow in 1957, at which Canada was not represented) provided the Canadian representative. In that time, club teams (as distinct from national "all-star" teams) have won 19 world championships and six Olympic hockey titles for Canada. In addition, Canada has, since 1945, sent many amateur teams on exhibition tours through such countries as Japan, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, and East and West Germany.

In the last few years, the calibre of hockey in other countries has so improved that Canada now feels justified in moving into the all-star classification, rather than sending a strengthened club team into world competition. The experiment with a national team started with the IX Winter Olympic Games at Innsbruck in 1964, at which Canada was represented by a group of young Canadians, mostly university students, between the ages of 19 and 27. The improvement in European teams was dramatically shown by a three-way tie for second place among Canada, Czechoslovakia and Sweden. When the goal averages were calculated, Canada, for the first time in history, failed to win an Olympic hockey medal.

International Rules and Style of Play

International hockey, under the rules of the International Ice Hockey Federation, is largely the same game as Canadian hockey; indeed, the IIHF rules were originally adopted, with a few exceptions, from the Canadian game. One of the more noticeable exceptions is the prohibition of the aggressive style of body contact allowed in the Canadian game.

There is also a difference between the size of the ice surface used in international competition and that used in Canadian hockey. Though rink surfaces are generally about the same length (60 metres), the Canadian surfaces are only about 26 metres wide, compared to 30 metres for international rinks. This wider ice surface tends to "open up" the international game; it places more emphasis on speed, and less on "body checking" and individual puck control.

Despite these differences, Canadians' interest in international hockey has increased steadily in recent years. Tours by top European teams, sponsored by the CAHA, have brought home to thousands of Canadians the fact that their sport has been adopted by many other countries -- and that the student is fast approaching the calibre of the master. Their national game, in fact, has truly become an international game.

RP/A

International Union for the Protection of Intellectual Property

The Convention, which was signed in Paris in 1886, is the first international treaty which has been concluded for the purpose of securing uniformity of law in matters of intellectual property. It is the basis of the present system of international protection of intellectual property.

The Convention provides for the protection of literary, artistic, scientific and industrial inventions. It also provides for the protection of the rights of authors and inventors. The Convention is the basis of the present system of international protection of intellectual property.

The Convention provides for the protection of literary, artistic, scientific and industrial inventions. It also provides for the protection of the rights of authors and inventors. The Convention is the basis of the present system of international protection of intellectual property.