

THE IIHF 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

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Story #56

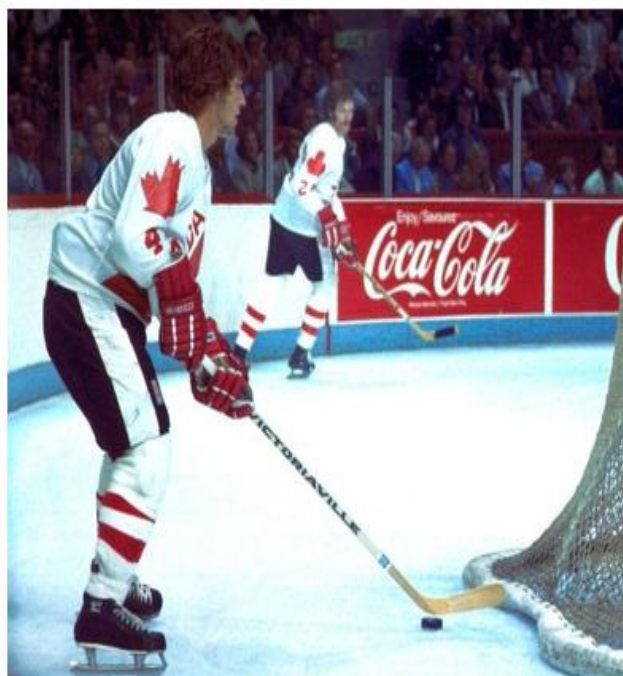
BOBBY ORR NAMED MVP OF FIRST CANADA CUP AFTER PLAYING ON ONE GOOD LEG

September 15, 1976

"What if" and "maybe" could change pretty much every great moment in sports, no more so than when applied to the great Bobby Orr and the 1972 Summit Series. Orr was in his prime in 1972, but by the time Team Canada convened at Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto in August, Orr's knee was still tender from an off season operation he had to endure soon after leading his Boston Bruins to their second Stanley Cup in three years in April. Team player that he was, Orr went to camp and skated lightly, but doctors told him there was no way he could test his knee in serious practice situations or under the duress of games. Still, he remained with the team until it returned home from Europe, victorious, at the end of September.



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Bobby Orr in his only international outing for his country. Despite playing with one good knee, he was named MVP of the 1976 Canada Cup. Photo: HHoF

By the time Orr got a chance to represent his country at the 1976 Canada Cup, his extraordinary career was virtually over. His knee, ravaged by operations every summer, was virtually without cartilage. He had played only ten games with the Bruins the previous season before requiring more surgery and rehabilitation, but Orr refused to allow injury to prevent him from playing in the inaugural Canada Cup, the first best-on-best featuring Canada and Europe. In his first game, an 11-2 win over Finland, Orr had three assists. The next game, a 4-2 win over USA, Orr recorded two more assists, and in his team's 4-0 win over Sweden he had another assist.

In the first game of the best-of-three finals against Czechoslovakia, an impressive 6-0 win for Canada, Orr scored two goals including a sensational rush down the right wing finishing with a high backhand to the near side over the glove of Vladimir Dzurilla. It was an awe-inspiring rush that ended with an almost impossible shot. After Canada's dramatic win two nights later, Orr, who led Canada with nine points, was named the tournament MVP.

Orr's knee permitted him to play just 26 more NHL games over the next three years before he was forced to retire, the greatest defenceman in the world forced to the press box a decade before his time. But his career ended with a heroic performance in the 1976 Canada Cup that will forever remain a part of the game's history.

About the Top 100 Stories

As part of the IIHF's 100th anniversary celebrations, www.IIHF.com is featuring the 100 top international hockey stories from the past century (1908-2008). Starting now and continuing through the 2008 IIHF World Championships in Canada, we will bring you approximately three stories a week counting down from Number 100 to Number 11.

The Final Top 10 Countdown will be one of the highlights of the IIHF's Centennial Gala Evening in Quebec City on May 17, the day prior to the Gold Medal Game of the 2008 World Championship.

These are the criteria for inclusion on this list: First, the story has to have had a considerable influence on international hockey. Second, it has to have had either a major immediate impact or a long-lasting significance on the game. Third, although it doesn't necessarily have to be about top players, the story does have to pertain to the highest level of play, notably Olympics, World Championships, and the like. The story can be about a single moment — a goal, a great save, a referee's call — or about an historic event of longer duration — a game, series, tournament, or rule change.

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