
Play for Play's Sake: The Break-Away of the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association from the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada

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On December 15, 1936 the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association informed the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada that it was terminating its articles of agreement effective January 15, 1937. It was an event that fundamentally changed the future courses of both organizations. The CAHA would no longer be in direct competition with professional hockey but rather used its organization to develop player talent for the National Hockey League. The Amateur Athletic Union of Canada no longer could claim preeminent status as the governing body of amateur sport in Canada. From 1937 until 1970 when it voted itself out of existence it acted as a shelter for newly developing sports like fencing and gymnastics.

The events leading up to the incident were marked by the stubborn refusal of AAU officials to recognize the severe difficulties that amateur hockey in Canada faced in the early

to mid 1930s. The raids by professional operators and by the British and Americans created a “brain drain” of player talent. The CAHA watched its funds dwindle from a healthy surplus of \$50,000 in 1930 to \$5,000 by 1936.

By establishing agreements with the British Ice Hockey Association and the American amateur officials and with the NHD the CAHA started on the road to recovery. As soon as they received assurance that their new stance on amateurism would not affect their international eligibility CAHA officials saw no reason for continuing their relations with the AAU of C.