

# The Rise of the National Hockey League

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This paper charted the rise of the professional National Hockey League to pre-eminence among Canadian sports organizations. In 1919, the NHL was a small, unstable enterprise, with operations confined to Quebec and southern Ontario. Its four member clubs had to compete fiercely with amateur and other professional leagues for the best players. Their games were overshadowed by those of the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association. By the mid-1930s, the NHL enjoyed uncontested access to the best amateur and professional players throughout North America. Through the auspices of CBC radio's Hockey Night in Canada, NHL hockey became the best known form of sport in Canada. But while it effectively integrated Canadian activity in this popular sport, it did so in a way which was highly continentalist. The paper argued that it was a combination of shrewd entrepreneurship and greater capitalization, in the context of a rapidly expanding market for spectator sports, which gave the NHL its domination.