

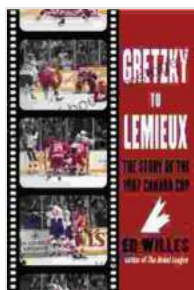
The Epic Saga of the 1987 Canada Cup: A Tale of Hockey Legends and National Pride



Prelude to the Tournament

The Canada Cup, a prestigious international hockey tournament, was established in 1976 to crown the world's top hockey nation. In 1987, the

third installment of the tournament was set to take place in Canada, a nation with an unparalleled passion for the sport. The anticipation for this event reached fever pitch, as hockey fans eagerly awaited the clash of the titans on the ice.



Gretzky to Lemieux: The Story of the 1987 Canada Cup

by Ed Willes

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 244 pages



Eight nations, representing the elite of international hockey, were invited to participate: Canada, the United States, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Finland, West Germany, and Italy. The tournament format featured two round-robin groups, followed by a knockout stage to determine the ultimate champion.

Group Stage Drama

The group stage provided thrilling battles and unexpected results. Canada, led by the legendary Wayne Gretzky, cruised through their group with an impressive record of 3-0-1. The Soviets, with their formidable Red Army contingent, also qualified for the semifinals after posting a 4-0-0 record.

The United States, despite boasting a star-studded roster, faltered in the round-robin stage and failed to advance. Czechoslovakia, a perennial hockey powerhouse, surprised many by topping the other group with a 3-1-2 record.

Semifinals and Final

In the semifinals, Canada faced off against Czechoslovakia in a rematch of the previous year's World Championship final. The Czechs gave Canada a tough challenge, but ultimately fell 3-2 in a nail-biting encounter.

The other semifinal pitted the Soviet Union against Sweden. The Soviets, known for their suffocating defense and overwhelming physicality, emerged victorious with a 5-2 triumph.

The stage was set for a thrilling final between Canada and the Soviet Union, a rivalry that had captivated hockey fans for decades. The two nations had met in numerous international tournaments, with the Soviets holding a slight edge.

The Final: A Night of Hockey History

The final game of the 1987 Canada Cup was a spectacle befitting the occasion. The legendary Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto was packed to the rafters with a sold-out crowd of 15,927, creating an electric atmosphere.

Canada, wearing their iconic red and white jerseys, took the early lead through a goal from Mario Lemieux. The Soviets responded quickly, tying the game through Vyacheslav Bykov. The teams traded blows throughout the first two periods, but neither could break the deadlock.

As the third period unfolded, the tension reached a fever pitch. Canada regained the lead through a power-play goal from Wayne Gretzky, assisted by Paul Coffey. However, the Soviets refused to yield, and Alexei Kasaton scored a dramatic equalizer with just over seven minutes remaining.

With the game seemingly destined for overtime, Canada's Steve Yzerman stepped up in a moment of brilliance. He intercepted a Soviet pass and raced down the ice, firing a wrist shot past goaltender Sergei Mylnikov with less than two minutes to spare.

The Maple Leaf Gardens erupted in a roar of triumph as Canada secured a hard-fought 6-5 victory over the mighty Soviet Union. The win marked Canada's first international hockey title since the 1976 Canada Cup, and it ignited a wave of national pride and celebration.

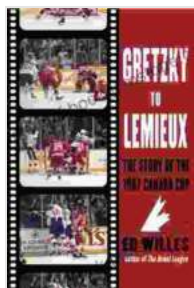
Legacy and Impact

The 1987 Canada Cup is widely regarded as one of the greatest hockey tournaments ever held. It showcased some of the most talented players in the world, and the intense rivalry between Canada and the Soviet Union captivated hockey fans worldwide.

The tournament also had a profound impact on Canadian society. It came at a time when the nation was struggling economically and facing international criticism for its role in the Persian Gulf War. The victory provided a much-needed boost to national morale and reignited a sense of unity among Canadians.

The 1987 Canada Cup remains a cherished memory for hockey fans around the world. It is a testament to the enduring power of sport to unite

people and inspire moments of greatness. The tournament's legacy continues to shape the game of hockey to this day.



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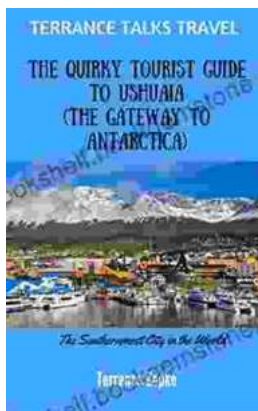
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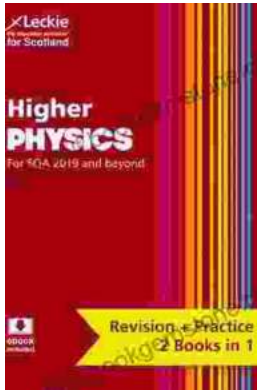
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