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## When the NHL Invaded Japan

The Washington Capitals,  
the Kansas City Scouts and  
the Coca-Cola Bottlers' Cup,  
1975–1976

**STEVE CURRIER**

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When the NHL announced in early 1976 that its two worst teams, the Washington Capitals and Kansas City Scouts, would travel to Japan for a four-game exhibition series dubbed the Coca-Cola Bottlers' Cup, fans and media were baffled. The Capitals and the Scouts were both expansion teams, with a combined 46 wins, 236 losses and 38 ties in their first two seasons—stats made more dismal when considering seven of those wins were against each other. Yet lagging so hopelessly behind the rest of the NHL, they were perfect for a one-off event on the other side of the globe. The series was an eye-opening success. Players skated on an Olympic swimming pool ringed with rickety boards hung with fishing nets that boomeranged pucks into their faces, as curious Japanese fans gasped at the gap-toothed Canadians wrestling on the ice. Filled with rare photos and player recollections, this book tells the story of how two league doormats became hockey heroes half-way around the world.

**Steve Currier** teaches French as a second language, is a member of the Society for International Hockey Research and the moderator of the tribute site [GoldenSealsHockey.com](http://GoldenSealsHockey.com). He lives in Ottawa, Ontario.

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