

Collection #  
P 0897

## **INDIANAPOLIS RACERS COLORING BOOK, 1976-1977**

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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 OVC Graphics folder
COLLECTION DATES:	1976-1977
PROVENANCE:	
RESTRICTIONS:	None
COPYRIGHT:	
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	None
RELATED HOLDINGS:	Indianapolis Racers (Hockey Team). <i>Racers Magazine</i> . General Collection: GV848 .I52
ACCESSION NUMBER:	2016.0253
NOTES:	

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

The World Hockey Association (WHA) was founded by John Weissert and Dick Tinkham, the original owners of the Indiana Pacers, in September 1973 as a direct competitor to the National Hockey League (NHL). Additionally, Weissert and Tinkham were the first owners of the Indianapolis Racers.

The Indianapolis Racers debut season (1974-75) was not a great one. Turnover was high that first season, along with a streak of thirteen losses. Weissert and Tinkham quickly sold the team to Paul Deneau mid-season in 1974 and their head coach, John Wilson, left to coach the Detroit Stags. The Racers would not see significant improvement in their win-loss ratio until the 1976-77 season with coach Jacques Demers. However, the Racers earned a loyal fanbase between 1974 and 1978 that secured their record for highest percentage of game attendance.

The two hockey organizations, World Hockey Association (WHA) and National Hockey League (NHL), began discussions for a merger in 1973. More commonly known as the 1979 NHL Expansion, the two organizations agreed to merge at the end of the 1978-79 season to resolve financial tensions both sides were experiencing. It was decided that select teams from WHA cities would be incorporated into the NHL to allow them to finish the 1978-79 season.

Nelson Skalbania knew Indianapolis would not be one of the four cities chosen for the incorporation into the NHL but wanted his league to finish out the season. In what was called both a lucrative move and act of desperation, Skalbania signed up-and-coming hockey prodigy Wayne Gretzky to a personal contract with the intentions to rebuild the Racers' glory and the WHA's finances. Because the National Hockey League had strict regulations against signing players younger than twenty, this solidified the decision not to include Indianapolis in the 1979 NHL Expansion or later negotiations, and guaranteed the league's financial situation would not improve. Gretzky played just eight games for the Racers; his contract was sold to the Edmonton Oilers in November 1978 for \$850,000. Skalbania and the Indianapolis Racers folded mid-season in December 1978.

The best-known players from the Racers were Wayne Gretzky, Mark Messier, Pat Stapleton, Dave Keon, Michel Dion, and Kim Clackson. Their best-known coaches were Jacques Demers (1975-76 to 1976-77) and Pat Stapleton (1978-79).

Sources:

"1979 NHL expansion." Wikipedia. October 1, 2024.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1979\\_NHL\\_expansion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1979_NHL_expansion)

Surgent, Scott. "Indianapolis Racers, 1974-75 to 1978-9 (partial)." The Complete World Hockey Association. Last Revised July 21, 2024.

<https://www.surgent.net/wha/team/indianapolis.html>

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of the original coloring book *Indianapolis Racers GIANT Coloring Book: 36 Action Pages* published by Young & Associates, Inc. and illustrated by William L. Verrill, Jr. in 1976. The thirty-six pages are depictions of various moments throughout the Racers' history as well as portraits of the coach and players for the 1976-77 season. Three of the pages were colored by the previous owner of the book. The remaining thirty-three pages are colorless. The back cover of the book has advertisements encouraging viewers to join the Indianapolis Racers Booster Club and support the Indianapolis Youth Hockey Association.

## **VISUAL MATERIALS**

### **CONTENTS**

Indianapolis Racers Coloring Book, 1976-1977

### **CONTAINER**

OVC Graphics:  
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