

Before 1994: The Story of the 1978-79 New York Rangers



Before the 1994 Stanley Cup victory that etched their names in hockey history, the New York Rangers experienced another unforgettable season in 1978-79. Led by a talented roster and a charismatic coach, the team captivated fans with their exciting brand of hockey and made a deep run in the playoffs.

Key Players

- **Dave Maloney:** The heart and soul of the team, Maloney was a dynamic centerman who led the Rangers in scoring with 31 goals and 60 points.
- **Ron Duguay:** A speedy winger with a knack for scoring big goals, Duguay emerged as a rising star with 25 goals and 55 points.
- **Phil Esposito:** A future Hall of Famer, Esposito joined the Rangers late in the season and provided a veteran presence and leadership.
- **John Davidson:** A steady and reliable goaltender, Davidson backstopped the Rangers to success with a 2.94 goals-against average and .902 save percentage.
- **Don Cherry:** The fiery coach who instilled a "win at all costs" mentality in his players.

Memorable Moments

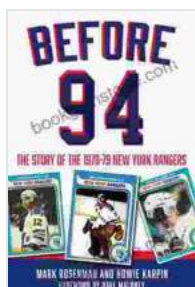
- **The "Miracle on 34th Street":** In a thrilling playoff series against the Philadelphia Flyers, the Rangers rallied from a 3-0 deficit to win Game 7 at Madison Square Garden.
- **The "Cherry Pie":** Coach Don Cherry's post-game victory celebrations became legendary, featuring players getting "cherry pies" in the face from Cherry.
- **The "Esposito Trade":** The acquisition of Phil Esposito from the Boston Bruins added experience and scoring punch to the Rangers' lineup.
- **The "Pratt's Pratfall":** In Game 4 of the Stanley Cup Finals against the Montreal Canadiens, defenseman Tracy Pratt had a hilarious fall

on the ice that became a memorable moment.

Impact on the Legacy of the Rangers

- **Revived the Passion:** The 1978-79 season re-energized the Rangers fan base, bringing excitement and hope back to Madison Square Garden.
- **Laid the Foundation:** Although the Rangers fell short of the Stanley Cup that year, the team laid the groundwork for future success with a young and talented core.
- **Established a Winning Culture:** Coach Don Cherry's "win at all costs" mentality became a hallmark of the Rangers' identity, setting the stage for future Stanley Cup victories.
- **Created Iconic Moments:** The "Miracle on 34th Street" and the "Cherry Pie" celebrations became iconic moments in Rangers history, forever etched in the minds of fans.

The 1978-79 New York Rangers season may not have ended with a Stanley Cup victory, but it remains an unforgettable chapter in the franchise's rich history. With its cast of colorful characters, dramatic moments, and lasting impact, this team laid the foundation for future success and cemented its place in the hearts of Rangers fans forever.



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by Mark Rosenman

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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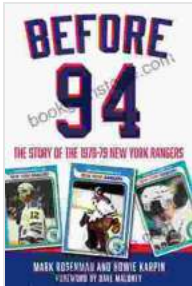
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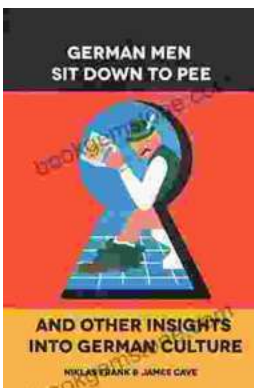
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