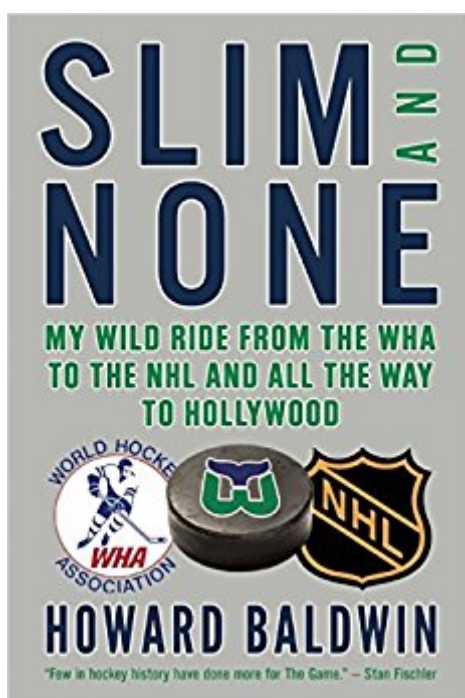


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# Slim And None: My Wild Ride From The WHA To The NHL And All The Way To Hollywood



## Synopsis

From his start as an owner in the World Hockey Association at the age of 28 ("slim and none" was a Boston sportswriter's assessment of Howard's chances when he was first awarded the New England Whalers franchise), to winning the Stanley Cup with the Pittsburgh Penguins and then on to Hollywood success, Howard Baldwin recounts his hugely entertaining life story. Baldwin has lived his life according to his belief that we should pursue our heart's desire. He never met a challenge he couldn't beat. From an entry level position in the ticket office of the Philadelphia Flyers to building his own World Hockey Association franchise, Howard has built an impressive reputation as a maverick in the world of professional hockey. As president of the WHA he led the merger with the NHL, and then later became a key figure in the expansion of North American hockey into Russia. He even moved successfully into the film industry, producing a number of outstanding films. Slim and None is a story of perseverance, persistence, and ultimately, personal fulfillment. Baldwin and Milton have crafted an intimate portrait of a life within hockey spanning from the rebellious 1970s to the tumultuous 1990s and beyond.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Howard Baldwin is a sports entrepreneur and film producer. He was founder of the New England Whalers, president of the World Hockey Association, and chairman of the Pittsburgh Penguins, and he is now CEO of Baldwin Entertainment. He lives in Hartford, CT. Steve Milton has been a sportswriter for 35 years. A National Newspaper Award finalist, a multiple Ontario Newspaper Award winner, and a Gemini Award finalist, Milton writes a daily column for "The Spectator." He lives in

Toronto.

Even though he was a good athlete through high school and college, Howard Baldwin never thought to have a sports career as a player – instead he wanted to own a team. He achieved that dream at the young age of 28 as one of the partners of the New England Whalers of the fledgling World Hockey Association. How he got there and what he did with the team, as well as his future endeavors are captured in this wonder memoir that is entertaining, informative and full of great memories for hockey fans. Baldwin doesn't spend too much time talking about his childhood or his college days. After his time in the Marines, he dives immediately into his sports career, becoming a ticket manager for the expansion Philadelphia Flyers in 1967. When Gary Davidson had an idea to create a rival hockey league in 1972, Baldwin convinced two other men to become the owners of the brand new New England Whalers franchise. The team was one of four WHA teams to join the NHL in 1979 as the Hartford Whalers – a merger (although for business reasons it was called an "expansion") between the two leagues in which Baldwin played a key role. How Baldwin and the Whalers got there and their years in the NHL makes for great reading. How the team and the entire WHA league was able to make deals with players, negotiate rent for arena time and yet still provide excellent hockey is covered throughout the book. It is clear that Baldwin is very passionate about the Whalers and the city of Hartford even after he sold his shares in 1989 and the subsequent move of the franchise to Raleigh in 1996. Life after the Whalers is discussed in depth as well in the same entertaining manner – Baldwin later moved to the West Coast after marrying his second wife Karen and was instrumental in making San Jose a viable NHL market. However, that led to a very brief tenure as an owner of the Minnesota North Stars. He went from Minnesota to Pittsburgh and was able to celebrate the Penguins' 1992 Stanley Cup championship with them. He also went on to become a successful movie producer with his wife, the most notable of his films being the hockey movie "Mystery, Alaska." Hockey fans will love the stories of the WHA and some of the wisecracks Baldwin makes. One of my favorites came during the discussion of the final season of the WHA, when it finished with six teams, only four of which would join the NHL. Baldwin stated that "the NHL had its Original Six and the WHA would have its Final Six." His relationships with people like Jack Kelley, whom he hired from Boston University to become the first Whalers coach and GM, are told with reverence. It is clear that he feels that he should do right to people who help him or work for him and it is really no surprise he became such a successful team owner. This was one of the few memoirs that I read in one sitting because I was riveted to the book's hockey stories and Baldwin's writing

that was easy to read. It was entertaining, insightful and a book that is highly recommended for hockey fans. People who have fond memories of the Hartford Whalers will especially love this book.

Having followed the Whalers during their WHA days I found this book to be very enlightening. I respect all of the efforts of Mr Baldwin in keeping the WHA alive and later joining the NHL. My only complaints about the book are:-I would like to hear more about Harry Neale's tenure as Whaler coach and why the Whalers let him go to the NHL one year before the merger. Harry rebuilt the Whalers into winners after years of mediocracy into an aggressive team, like his previous team, the Minn Fighting Saints.-Also, there was a rift between the players and Bill Dineen, who took over after Harry Neale. This resulted in several Whaler regulars; Brad Selwood, Jack Carlson and Bill Butters, leaving the team. This was not covered in the book-Why did the Whalers replace Jack Kelley with Larry Pleau? Larry was a fine player but a terrible GM (as mentioned in Mark Howe's recent autobiography).

Great book and great story but I am a bit biased. Howard Baldwin gave me my start in the business world and for that I will be forever grateful. I worked for him back in the days of 'The Whale' in the WHA a terrific league full of great characters and this is highlighted in the book. What a time and much of this book was news to me even though I lived through the times. Great stories and I do remember the collapse of the Hartford Civic Center roof and the mad 36 hour scramble to find a place to play and then re seat all of the season ticket holders into comparable seats in a new arena. Yes, it was crazy. Howard is special and this book is special and a special story. This is a must read for any hockey fan but especially one who wants a glimpse of the behind the scenes of hockey or any professional sport. It is my hope that Howard will find his rightful place in the Hockey Hall of Fame. He is one of the builders of the game as we know it today.

This is a well written easy to read book from a man who became a fortunate improbable pioneering builder in the world of hockey. His stories were exactly what the historian that lives in me needed to fill the voids and wonders that existed on building the WHA and life in the Eastern Hockey League. Howard is a man born unprivileged and lacking some components that many would possess to be a sports executive but his story of how his perseverance and how the planets can line up for any of us to achieve our dreams is inspiring. His common sense approach to the sports world gives someone like myself interested in the business of sport a good lesson on how things have evolved into how they are. Howard himself has done so much for hockey that his current absence from the

Hockey Hall of Fame is a crime.

I'm a diehard Whalers fan and had always wanted to know how it all came together. Now I do and it's better than I expected. I tore through this book in record time. Best part was the way he landed a WHA franchise and the behind the scenes stories involving NHL ownership. But this is not just for Whalers fans but also fans of the WHA, Philly, Pens, 70s/80s/90s hockey, behind the scenes, and sports business. Plus film. I wish he'd write another - I think there are more stories he could dig up.

Excellent history of WHA from the New England Whaler perspective. I knew of Baldwin's ownership of various teams and involvement in hockey, but I have no idea of the journey he took and the value he created in the game we know and love today. If you are a WHA fan, a Whaler fan, a Penguin fan, or are passionate about hockey then this book is for you.

What a great book! Such an interesting life this guy has lived. They need to make a movie about it now while the characters are still around.

Any hockey fan should find it an enlightening read.

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