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Mike Marson



Mike Marson was the second Black player to ever play in the NHL when he suited up for the Washington Capitals in 1974. . The Capitals helped break down racial obstacles in the league, selecting Marson with their second pick in the 1974 entry draft. He was the first African-American to take the ice since Willie O'Ree - who broke the league's color barrier - left the NHL in 1961.

Mike was just a teenager when he joined the Capitals and wasn't allowed the proper time to develop - suiting up right away for the squad. His best year was his rookie season when he notched 16 goals and 12 assists, fourth on the team in scoring. But

statistics couldn't illustrate the incredibly high expectations the 19-year-old was expected to live up to.

Teammate Yvon Labre spoke about his time as Marson's roommate on the road: "I remember they had cameras set up in hotel lobbies just interviewing him about [being the second African-American NHLer]," he said. "To me, he handled it pretty well. Mike was very mature for his age. I don't know if it affected his play or not. Mike could skate and handle himself with anybody in the league."

Marson was traded to Los Angeles where he spent his last NHL season in 1979-80.

In his post-NHL career, Mike developed a style of Karate he calls Mars-Zen-Do Karate. He is currently a 5th Degree Blackbelt in Shotokan Karate. Mike has worked with many top NHL and Junior prospects to develop their confidence in their ability to defend against the more aggressive players in the leagues where they play. He also prepares them mentally for the leagues where they aspire to play.

Marson has worked with players such as Rick Nash of the Columbus Blue Jackets and Ryan O'Marah, member of the 2007 Canadian Junior Gold Medal Hockey Team.



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