

Claude Ruel, former Montreal Canadiens coach, dies at 76

Sherbrooke, Que. native led team to 3 division titles, 1 Stanley Cup

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 09, 2015 9:37 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 09, 2015 12:31 PM ET

Claude Ruel, who served as Montreal Canadiens' coach from 1968 to 1971, and again from 1979 to 1981, has died at age 76.

Ruel was found dead in a residential building's elevator in the Montreal suburb of Longueuil, the Quebec coroner's office confirmed. The cause of his death isn't yet known.

The Sherbrooke, Que. native was a promising prospect before his career was cut short when he was struck in the eye by a puck.

After working as a scout and director of player development, Ruel succeeded Toe Blake as coach on the eve of the 1968-69 season.

The Canadiens went on to maintain the best record in the NHL and win the Stanley Cup in his first year behind the bench.

After narrowly missing the playoffs in 1969-70 and seeing the team struggle the following year, Ruel resigned.

He took over again during the 1979-80 season as a replacement for Bernie Geoffrion and led the Canadiens to first-place finishes in the Norris Division in consecutive seasons.

But he was unable to get the team beyond the second round of the playoffs in either year, and Ruel was replaced by Bob Berry at the end of the 1980-81 season.

Many former Canadiens players, including Norris Trophy winning defencemen Larry Robinson and Rod Langway, credit Ruel with helping them develop their skills to become NHL players.

"Claude would come two weeks before camp and work us out on the ice," Robinson said in a recent interview.

"A lot of it was movement, getting the puck, passing the puck, receiving the puck, shooting the puck.

"He had a way of creating mobility. Most of the guys on our defence could skate and could move around with the puck."

Ruel coached 305 NHL games and had a record of 172-82-51.

The Canadiens have also recently mourned the death of legendary captain Jean Beliveau on Dec. 2 and forward Gilles Tremblay in November

with files from Canadian Press

Explore CBC

CBC Home

TV

Radio

News

Sports

Music

Kids

Local

Documentaries

Comedy

Books

Parents

Aboriginal

Weather

CBC Connects

Digital Archives

Games

Contests

Site Map

Stay Connected

Mobile

[RSS](#)

[Podcasts](#)

[Newsletters & Alerts](#)

Services and Information

[Corporate Info](#)

[Public Appearances](#)

[Commercial Services](#)

[Reuse & Permission](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[CBC Shop](#)

[Help](#)

[Contact Us](#)

CBC  **Radio-Canada**

©2015 CBC/Radio-Canada. All rights reserved

[Visitez Radio-Canada.ca](#)
