

= History of the National Hockey League ( 1917 ? 42 ) =

The National Hockey League ( NHL ) was founded in 1917 following the demise of its predecessor league , the National Hockey Association ( NHA ) . In an effort to remove Eddie Livingstone as owner of the Toronto Blueshirts , a majority of the NHA franchises ( the Montreal Canadiens , Montreal Wanderers , Ottawa Senators and Quebec Bulldogs ) suspended the NHA and formed the new NHL . Quebec , while a member , did not operate in the NHL for the first two years . Instead the owners of the Toronto Arena Gardens operated a new Toronto franchise . While the NHL was intended as a temporary measure , the continuing dispute with Livingstone led to the four NHA owners meeting and making the suspension of the NHA permanent one year later .

The NHL 's first quarter @-@ century saw the league compete against two rival major leagues , the Pacific Coast Hockey Association and Western Canada Hockey League , for players and the Stanley Cup . The NHL first expanded into the United States in 1924 with the founding of the Boston Bruins , and by 1926 consisted of ten teams in Ontario , Quebec , the Great Lakes region , and the Northeastern United States . At the same time , the NHL emerged as the only major league and the sole competitor for the Stanley Cup .

The game itself continued to evolve during this time . Numerous innovations to the rules and equipment were put forward as the NHL sought to improve the flow of the game and make the sport more fan @-@ friendly . The NHL played with six men to a side rather than the traditional seven , and was among the first leagues to allow goaltenders to leave their feet to make saves . The NHL 's footprint spread across Canada as Foster Hewitt 's radio broadcasts were heard coast @-@ to @-@ coast starting in 1933 .

The Montreal Forum and Maple Leaf Gardens were built , and each played host to All @-@ Star benefit games held to raise money to support Ace Bailey and the family of Howie Morenz in Toronto and Montreal , respectively . Both players ' careers had ended due to an on @-@ ice incident , with Morenz eventually dying , a month after he sustained his initial injury . These early NHL All @-@ Star games would lead to the annual All @-@ Star games which continue today .

The Great Depression and World War II reduced the league to six teams by 1942 . Founding team Ottawa , and expansion teams New York Americans , Montreal Maroons and Pittsburgh Pirates / Philadelphia Quakers passed from the scene . Expansion team Detroit Falcons declared bankruptcy in 1932 and only survived through a merger with the Chicago Shamrocks of the American Hockey League and the pockets of prosperous owner James Norris to become the Detroit Red Wings . Desperate conditions in Montreal meant that the city nearly lost both of its teams in the 1930s ; the Canadiens nearly moved to Cleveland , but survived due to its stronger fan support . The six teams left standing in 1942 ( the Boston Bruins , Chicago Black Hawks , Detroit Red Wings , Montreal Canadiens , New York Rangers and Toronto Maple Leafs ) are known today as the " Original Six " .

= = Background = =

The first attempts to regulate competitive ice hockey matches came in the late 1880s . Before then , teams competed in tournaments and infrequent challenge contests that prevailed in the Canadian sports world at the time . In 1887 , four clubs from Montreal ( the Montreals , the Crystals , the Victorias , and McGill University ) and the Ottawa HC ) formed the Amateur Hockey Association of Canada ( AHAC ) and developed a structured schedule . Lord Stanley donated the Stanley Cup and appointed Sheriff John Sweetland and Philip Dansken Ross as its trustees ; they chose to award it to the best team in the AHAC , or to any pre @-@ approved team that won it in a challenge . Since the Cup carried an air of nobility , its prestige greatly benefited the AHAC .

The coordination and regularized schedule that the AHAC brought helped commercialize amateur ice hockey , which ran against the spirit of the prevailing amateur ethic . As the importance of winning grew , AHAC clubs began recruiting players from outside , and the disparity in skill between teams of the AHAC and those of other leagues became clearer . Since team owners in the AHAC wanted to defend the Stanley Cup and maintain the organization 's honour , and rink owners wanted senior hockey as their marquee attraction , AHAC clubs became increasingly reluctant about

admitting new teams into the league and the senior series . When the relatively weak Ottawa Capitals joined in 1898 , the five original clubs withdrew from the AHAC to form the new Canadian Amateur Hockey League ( CAHL ) . In 1903 , four new teams created the Federal Amateur Hockey League ( FAHL ) , and in 1904 , the International Hockey League ( IHL ) , based in both Sault Ste . Maries , the Upper Peninsula of Michigan , and Pennsylvania , was created as the first fully professional league . The IHL 's ability to pay salaries caused an " Athletic War " that drained amateur clubs of top players , most noticeably in the Ontario Hockey Association ( OHA ) .

By the 1905 ? 06 season , several of the FAHL and CAHL markets were overcrowded ; Montreal alone had seven clubs . To solve the problem , the leagues merged into the new Eastern Canada Amateur Hockey Association ( ECAHA ) , which kept four of the Montreal clubs . The new league mixed paid and amateur players in its rosters , which led to the demise of the IHL . With the IHL gone , teams from Toronto , Berlin ( now Kitchener ) , Brantford , and Guelph filled the void with the Ontario Professional Hockey League ( OPHL ) . Bidding wars for players led many ECAHA teams to lose money , and before the 1907 ? 08 season , the Montreal Victorias and the Montreal HC left . The ECAHA dropped " Amateur " from its name for the 1909 season , and on November 25 , it folded . Ottawa HC , Quebec HC , and the Montreal Shamrocks founded the Canadian Hockey Association ( CHA ) , and the league later admitted the Montreal Le National and All @-@ Montreal HC . Rejected CHA applicants formed the National Hockey Association ( NHA ) .

When compared to the CHA , the geographical distances between NHA teams were much greater ; however , the NHA 's financial backers were more notable businessmen . These businessmen applied financial principles similar to those of early baseball , and the leagues quickly entered a bitter bidding war over players . In particular , after being rejected from the CHA , Renfrew aggressively pursued any players that the CHA 's Ottawa club wanted . Montreal became a notable battleground as the NHA established two franchises , including the modern @-@ day Montreal Canadiens . With its significantly wealthier backers , the NHA easily recruited the top players , leaving the CHA teams , except Ottawa , relatively mediocre . Ottawa regularly trounced its opponents , and league attendance and interest dropped . The CHA 's final season lasted eight games , and the league folded in 1910 , as its Ottawa and Montreal clubs joined the NHA .

= = Founding = =

In the 1916 ? 17 season , the NHA was facing numerous problems . The Quebec Bulldogs were in financial difficulty , while the league 's most popular team , the Toronto 228th Battalion , was called away to fight in World War I . Several of the league 's team owners were growing frustrated with Toronto Blueshirts owner Eddie Livingstone , with whom they had been having problems since 1915 . Prior to the start of the season , the owners of the Montreal teams , Sam Lichtenhein of the Wanderers and George Kennedy of the Canadiens , threatened to drop the Blueshirts from the league over a player dispute Livingstone was having with the 228th Battalion . Livingstone was also in a dispute with the Ottawa Senators over the rights to Cy Denneny , while Kennedy and Livingstone had a mutual dislike that occasionally threatened to come to blows at league meetings .

The remaining owners used the loss of the 228th Battalion as a reason to eliminate the Blueshirts on February 11 , 1917 . The Montreal teams led a motion to reduce the NHA to four teams by removing the Blueshirts , ignoring Livingstone 's attempts to create a revamped five @-@ team schedule . Livingstone was promised that his players would be returned to him after the season . The dispersal of the Blueshirts ' players , organized by league secretary Frank Calder , was described by the Toronto Mail and Empire as a " raid of the Toronto players " . At the same meeting , the league adopted a motion commanding Livingstone sell the Blueshirts by June 1 .

By November 1917 , with the sale of Livingstone 's Blueshirts still not completed , the remaining owners , realizing they were powerless under the NHA constitution to forcibly eject Livingstone , decided to suspend the NHA and form a new league without Livingstone . On November 26 , 1917 , following several meetings of the NHA owners throughout the month , the National Hockey League was created at the Windsor Hotel in Montreal . The new league was represented by Lichtenhein 's Wanderers , Kennedy 's Canadiens , Tommy Gorman on behalf of the Senators , and Mike Quinn of

the Bulldogs . A new team in Toronto , under the control of the Toronto Arena Company , completed the five @-@ team league . The NHL adopted the NHA 's constitution and named Calder its first president . Quebec retained membership in the NHL , but did not operate that season , so their players were dispersed by draft among the other teams .

= = = Minutes of the first meeting = = =

At a meeting of representatives of hockey clubs held at the Windsor Hotel , Montreal , November 22nd , 1917 [ , ] the following present [ , ] G.W. Kendall , S.E. Lichtenhein , T.P. Gorman , M.J. Quinn and Frank Calder , it was explained by the last named that in view of the suspension of operations by the National Hockey Association of Canada Limited , he had called the meeting at the suggestion of the Quebec Hockey Club to ascertain if some steps could not be taken to perpetuate the game of Hockey .

Frank Calder was elected to the Chair and a discussion ensued after which it was moved by T.P. Gorman , seconded by G.W. Kendall [ : ] " That the Canadien , Wanderer , Ottawa and Quebec Hockey Clubs unite to comprise the National Hockey League " . The motion was carried .

It was then moved by M.J. Quinn seconded by G.W. Kendall that : " This League agrees to operate under the rules and conditions governing the game of hockey prescribed by the National Hockey Association of Canada Limited " . The motion was carried .

At this stage , Mr. W.E. Northey , representing the Toronto Arena Company asked to be admitted to the meeting and was admitted . Mr. Northey explained that he was empowered by the interests he represented to say that in the event of a league being formed to contain four clubs , the Toronto Arena desired to enter a team in the competition .

Upon this assurance M.J. Quinn on behalf of Quebec Hockey Club declared the latter willing to withdraw provided a suitable arrangement could be made regarding players then the property of the Quebec Hockey Club .

After discussion it was unanimously agreed that the Quebec players be taken over by the league at a cost of \$ 700 ( Seven Hundred Dollars ) of which amount 50 % should be paid to the Quebec Hockey Club by the club winning the championship , 30 % by the second club and 20 % by the third club in the race ....

The meeting then proceeded to the election of officers . The following directors were elected S.E. Lichtenhein ( Wanderers ) , Martin Rosenthal ( Ottawa ) , G.W. Kendall ( Canadiens ) and a director to be named by the Toronto club .

M.J. Quinn was elected Honorary President with power to vote on matters pertaining to the general welfare of the league .

Frank Calder was elected President and Secretary @-@ Treasurer at a salary of \$ 800 ( Eight Hundred Dollars ) on the understanding that there could be no appeal from his decisions ....

The NHL was intended to be a temporary league , as the owners hoped to remove Livingstone from Toronto , then return to the NHA in 1918 ? 19 . Livingstone had other ideas , filing lawsuits against the new league , the owners and the players in an attempt to keep his team operating . Nonetheless , the NHL began play three weeks after it was created , with the first games held on December 19 in Ottawa and Montreal .

= = Early years = =

The NHL 's first superstar was " Phantom " Joe Malone . A two @-@ time NHA scoring champion , Malone scored five goals for the Montreal Canadiens in a 7 ? 4 victory over the Ottawa Senators on the NHL 's opening night . Malone went on to record a league @-@ leading 44 goals in 20 games in 1917 ? 18 . He again led the NHL in scoring in 1919 ? 20 , scoring 39 goals in 24 games with Quebec . During that season , on January 20 , 1920 , Malone scored seven goals in one game against the Toronto St. Patricks , a record that still stands today . Malone was elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1950 .

The first goal in NHL history was scored by Dave Ritchie of the Montreal Wanderers one minute

into a 10 ? 9 win over Toronto , which was the only victory the Wanderers recorded in the NHL . On January 2 , 1918 , a fire destroyed the Montreal Arena , home to both the Wanderers and the Canadiens . While the Canadiens relocated to the 3 @, @ 000 @-@ seat Jubilee Arena , Lichtenhein chose to withdraw the Wanderers , citing the lack of available players due to the war . The NHL continued on as a three @-@ team league until Quebec returned to it in 1919 .

In its first years , the NHL continued the NHA 's split season format . The first @-@ half champion Canadiens fell to the second @-@ half champion Toronto team in the 1918 playoffs for the O 'Brien Cup by a combined score of 10 ? 7 in a two @-@ game , total goals series . The victory gave Toronto the right to face the Pacific Coast Hockey Association 's champion , the Vancouver Millionaires , in the Stanley Cup final . The Torontos defeated Vancouver to become the first NHL team to win the Cup .

The Canadiens won the NHL championship over the Senators in 1918 ? 19 , and traveled west to meet the PCHA 's champion , the Seattle Metropolitans . The series is best remembered for its cancellation with the series tied at two wins , two losses , and a tie ( 2 ? 2 ? 1 ) due to the Spanish flu pandemic . Several players from both teams became ill , prompting health officials in Seattle to cancel the sixth , and deciding , game . Canadiens defenceman Joe Hall died as a result of the flu on April 5 , 1919 .

Meanwhile , defending champions Toronto finished in last place in both halves of the 1918 ? 19 season . On February 20 , 1919 , Toronto informed the league that it was withdrawing from competition . The NHL avoided being reduced to two teams for 1919 ? 20 when the team was reorganized as the Toronto St. Patricks . The Quebec franchise also returned , ( known for the season as the Quebec Athletic Club ) increasing the league to four teams . The Quebec club posted a 4 ? 20 record in 1919 ? 20 , despite the return of Malone . It was the franchise 's final season in Quebec City , relocating to Hamilton , Ontario , in 1920 to become the Hamilton Tigers .

Throughout , Livingstone continued to try to revive the NHA , convening league meetings on September 20 and December 11 , 1918 , which representatives of the Canadiens , Senators and Wanderers determined to close out the expired league for good .

= = = Competition with the WCHL = = =

Beginning in 1921 , the NHL faced competition from a third major league , the prairie @-@ based Western Canada Hockey League ( WCHL ) . With three leagues competing for talent , ice hockey players were among the highest @-@ paid athletes in North America . They commanded salaries equivalent to the top Major League Baseball players of the era . The WCHL only survived for six seasons , merging with the PCHA in 1924 , but challenged the NHL for the Stanley Cup four times . In the 1923 Stanley Cup Finals , the Senators defeated the Edmonton Eskimos after eliminating the PCHA 's Vancouver Millionaires . In 1924 , the Canadiens defeated the PCHA 's Millionaires and the WCHL 's Calgary Tigers on the strength of two shutouts by Georges Vezina and a strong offensive showing by rookie forward Howie Morenz .

In 1924 ? 25 , the Hamilton Tigers finished first in the NHL after four consecutive last @-@ place finishes . While the Canadiens and St. Patricks prepared to play in a semi @-@ final playoff round , the Tigers ' players , upset that the team had turned a sizable profit despite claiming financial difficulty , went on strike to demand a C \$ 200 playoff bonus each . Threatened with fines , suspension and a possible lawsuit by league president Frank Calder , the players , led by Billy Burch and Shorty Green , held firm . Calder then suspended the entire team and declared Montreal the NHL champions after they defeated Toronto in the semi @-@ final .

The Canadiens faced the Victoria Cougars , then of the WCHL , in the 1925 Stanley Cup Finals . Victoria defeated Montreal three games to one in the best @-@ of @-@ five final . In doing so , they became the last non @-@ NHL team to win the Stanley Cup . The WCHL ceased operations one year later , with its assets purchased by the NHL for \$ 300 @, @ 000 . The rights to the Tigers ' players , meanwhile , were purchased for \$ 75 @, @ 000 by New York mobster Bill Dwyer to stock his expansion New York Americans . The Americans began play in 1925 , replacing the Tigers .

= = 1920s expansion = =

The NHL grew to six teams in 1924 , adding a second team in Montreal , the Maroons , and the first American team , the Boston Bruins . The Bruins were purchased by Charles Adams , a grocery store financier who first developed an interest in hockey during the Stanley Cup playoffs , paying \$ 15 @, @ 000 for the team . The Maroons were created to replace the Wanderers and to appeal to the English population of Montreal . The first NHL game played in the United States was a 2 ? 1 Bruins victory over the Maroons at the Boston Arena on December 1 , 1924 , at an ice hockey venue which still exists today , and is used in the 21st century for American college hockey and other indoor collegiate sports .

The Montreal Forum , which in later decades became synonymous with the Canadiens , was built in 1924 to house the Maroons . The Canadiens did not move into the Forum until two years later . The Forum hosted its first Stanley Cup final in its second year , as the Maroons defeated the WCHL 's Victoria Cougars in the 1926 Stanley Cup Finals , the last time a non @-@ NHL team competed for the Cup .

The New York Americans began play in 1925 along with the NHL 's third American @-@ based team , the Pittsburgh Pirates . Three more teams were added for the 1926 ? 27 season . Tex Rickard , operator of the then @-@ new , 1925 @-@ completed Madison Square Garden , had reluctantly allowed the Americans into his arena the year before . However , the Americans were so popular in New York he felt his arena could support a second team . As a result , the New York Rangers were granted to Rickard on May 15 , 1926 . In November of that year , the league announced that the cities of Detroit and Chicago would get teams . Detroit purchased the assets of the Victoria Cougars to stock the expansion Detroit Cougars . The players of the Portland Rosebuds were sold to coffee tycoon Frederic McLaughlin for his new Chicago Black Hawks team . The three new franchises brought the NHL to ten teams .

The Rangers reached the 1928 Stanley Cup Finals , in just their second season , against the Maroons . Lorne Chabot was injured early in the second game of the series , leaving the Rangers without a goaltender . As the Maroons were unwilling to allow the Rangers to substitute a goaltender watching from the Montreal Forum stands , Rangers coach Lester Patrick was forced into goal himself . A defenceman during his playing days , the 44 @-@ year @-@ old Patrick allowed only one goal on 19 shots as the Rangers won the game in overtime , 2 ? 1 . The Rangers signed New York Americans goaltender Joe Miller the next day , and went on to capture the Stanley Cup in five games .

= = Conn Smythe and the Toronto Maple Leafs = =

= = = Livingstone 's court battles = = =

Throughout the NHL 's first decade , Eddie Livingstone continued to press his claim to the Toronto franchise in court . On October 18 , 1923 , the Supreme Court of Ontario awarded Livingstone \$ 100 @, @ 000 in damages . St. Patricks owner Charlie Querrie made numerous attempts to prevent Livingstone from collecting on his awards . In 1923 , he transferred the ownership of his team to his wife , Ida , making her the first female owner in ice hockey history . The \$ 100 @, @ 000 award was later reduced to \$ 10 @, @ 000 by the Ontario Court of Appeal , causing Livingstone to appeal to the highest court in the British Empire , the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London , England ; the court denied his claim .

Despite the reduced awards , the Querries found the pressures of meeting their obligations to Livingstone too great and , as a result , placed the St. Patricks up for sale in 1927 . On February 14 , 1927 , the St. Patricks were sold to a group represented by Conn Smythe for \$ 160 @, @ 000 despite a potentially greater offer from a Philadelphia @-@ based group . Among the first moves Smythe made was to rename his team the Toronto Maple Leafs .

When Smythe bought the Leafs , he promised that the team would win the Stanley Cup within five

years . To that end , Smythe wanted to bring in a star player to help his team . In 1930 , with the Senators struggling financially due to the Great Depression , they put King Clancy up for sale . Smythe 's partners could only offer \$ 25 @, @ 000 for Ottawa 's defensive star , one @-@ half of Ottawa 's asking price . In an attempt to raise money , Smythe entered a thoroughbred racing horse he owned , Rare Jewel , in the Coronation Futurity Stakes at odds of 106 ? 1 . Rare Jewel won the race , earning Smythe over \$ 15 @, @ 000 . Smythe then acquired Clancy for \$ 35 @, @ 000 and two players worth \$ 15 @, @ 000 , which was an unprecedented price to pay for one player . It was also the only race Rare Jewel ever won .

= = = " Smythe 's Folly " = = =

Smythe also envisioned building a new shrine for his team . He described it as " a place where people can go in evening clothes , if they want to come there for a party or dinner ... a place that people can be proud to bring their wives or girlfriends to " . Smythe purchased a piece of land at the corner of Church and Carlton Streets from the Eaton 's department store chain for \$ 350 @, @ 000 . Skeptics argued that Smythe would never get the arena built , nor fill it , as the Depression was in full swing . They referred to the arena plan as " Smythe 's Folly " . To help fund the arena , the Leafs convinced construction workers to accept 20 % of their wages in shares in the arena . Just 4 ½ months after breaking ground , Maple Leaf Gardens opened on November 12 , 1931 . Many in the sold @-@ out crowd of over 13 @, @ 000 wore evening clothes in response to Smythe 's stated goal in building the arena . In 1932 , five years after Smythe 's promise , the Leafs won the Stanley Cup in three games over the Rangers .

Maple Leaf Gardens also featured the famous " gondola " , a broadcast booth specially constructed for Foster Hewitt . Hewitt began broadcasting hockey games in 1923 on CFCA , a radio station owned by his father , W. A. Hewitt . It was an assignment he initially did not want . Smythe supported the broadcast of Leafs games in contrast of other team owners , who feared that airing games on the radio would cut into gate receipts . By 1931 , Hewitt had established himself as the voice of hockey in Canada with his famous catchphrase : " he shoots , he scores ! " On January 1 , 1933 , Leafs ' broadcasts were first heard across Canada on 20 stations of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission ( today the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation ) . Hewitt 's broadcasts quickly attracted audiences of over one million listeners . The broadcasts were a precursor to Hockey Night in Canada , a Saturday night tradition that continues today .

= = = Ace Bailey benefit game = = =

On December 13 , 1933 , Bruins defenceman Eddie Shore , in a daze following what he thought was a check by Toronto 's Ace Bailey , charged the latter player from behind , flipping Bailey into the air and causing him to suffer a severe skull fracture after he landed on his head . The check was so vicious that Bailey was given the last rites before being transported to the hospital in Boston . Neurosurgeons operated throughout the night to save his life ; however , Bailey 's prognosis was so grim that morning papers printed his death notice . Bailey survived , but he never played professionally again . Shore ultimately served a 16 @-@ game suspension for the hit , and avoided being charged with manslaughter had Bailey died .

To raise money for Bailey 's recovery , Maple Leaf Gardens hosted the Ace Bailey All @-@ Star Benefit Game on February 14 , 1934 . The Maple Leafs defeated an all @-@ star team of players from the rest of the league 7 ? 3 while raising over \$ 20 @, @ 000 . Prior to the game , the Leafs announced that no Toronto player would ever wear Bailey 's # 6 again , marking the first time in NHL history that a team retired a player 's jersey number . Before the game , each player came out and shook Bailey 's hand as they received their all @-@ star jersey . The last player to do so was Eddie Shore . The crowd , which had fallen silent as Shore approached , erupted into loud cheering as Bailey extended his hand towards his attacker . Elmer Ferguson described the moment as " the most completely dramatic event I ever saw in hockey " .

= = Great Depression = =

While Smythe was building Maple Leaf Gardens , several other teams were facing financial difficulty . At the end of the 1929 ? 30 season , the Pittsburgh Pirates were US \$ 400 @, @ 000 in debt and relocated to Philadelphia , to become the Philadelphia Quakers . The Quakers lasted only one season before suspending operations in 1931 , along with the Ottawa Senators . The Quakers never returned , but Ottawa resumed operations in 1932 ? 33 . The Senators continued to struggle , and despite a promise by Calder in 1934 that the Senators would never leave " hockey 's birthplace of Canada " , the team was nonetheless transferred south to become the St. Louis Eagles . The Eagles played only one year in St. Louis before asking for permission to suspend operations . The league refused , and instead bought and dissolved the team . The Eagles ' players were dispersed amongst the remaining teams . It was announced that the NHL would be an eight @-@ team league in 1935 ? 36 .

That summer , the Canadiens ' franchise was for sale , after posting losses of \$ 60 @, @ 000 over the previous two seasons . Over forty thousand families and 150 @, @ 000 individuals were receiving social assistance in Montreal . Owners Leo Dandurand and Joseph Cattarinich held negotiations with A. C. Sutphin to sell the club and move it to Cleveland . Just before the season , a syndicate of local Montreal businessmen , led by Maurice Forget and Ernest Savard , stepped forward to buy the club and prevent the transfer .

= = = Howie Morenz = = =

At the same time , the league reduced its salary cap to \$ 62 @, @ 500 per team , and \$ 7 @, @ 000 per player . Several well @-@ paid star players were traded as teams attempted to fit under the cap . The biggest name was Montreal 's Howie Morenz , a three @-@ time Hart Trophy winner , two @-@ time scoring leader and the face of the Canadiens organization . Drawing only 2 @, @ 000 fans per game in an arena that held 10 @, @ 000 , Canadiens owner Léo Dandurand sent his star to the Black Hawks . The Montreal fans voiced their opinion of the deal by giving Morenz a standing ovation when he scored against the Canadiens on the last day of the 1935 season . Less than two seasons later , Morenz was traded back to Montreal after a brief time playing for the Rangers .

On January 28 , 1937 , Morenz 's skate caught on the ice while he was being checked by Chicago 's Earl Seibert ; he broke his leg in four places . On March 8 , Morenz died of a coronary embolism . Morenz 's teammate Aurèle Joliat had a different explanation of his death : " Howie loved to play hockey more than anyone ever loved anything , and when he realized that he would never play again , he couldn 't live with it . I think Howie died of a broken heart . " On the day of his funeral , 50 @, @ 000 people filed past Morenz 's casket at centre ice of the Montreal Forum to pay their last respects to the man the media called " the Babe Ruth of hockey " . A benefit game held in November 1937 raised \$ 20 @, @ 000 for Morenz 's family as the NHL All @-@ Stars defeated the Montreal Canadiens 6 ? 5 . Morenz was one of the first players elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame when it was created in 1945 .

= = = Chicago 's " All @-@ American " team = = =

In the mid @-@ 1930s , Black Hawks owner and staunch American nationalist Frederic McLaughlin commanded his general manager to compile a team of only American players . At the time , Taffy Abel was the only American @-@ born player who was a regular player in the league . The Black Hawks hired Major League Baseball umpire Bill Stewart to be the first American coach in NHL history . They were led in goal by Minnesotan Mike Karakas , one of eight Americans on the 14 @-@ man roster . The 1937 ? 38 Black Hawks " All @-@ American " team won only 14 of 48 games , finishing third in the American division . In the playoffs , however , the Hawks upset the Canadiens and the Americans to reach the Stanley Cup Final against the heavily favoured Maple Leafs .

In the first game of the final , the Hawks were forced to use minor @-@ league goaltender Alfie Moore after Karakas suffered a broken toe . Moore led the Hawks to a 3 ? 1 victory before being

ruled ineligible to play the rest of the series by the NHL . After Chicago lost game two , Karakas returned wearing a steel @-@ toed boot and led the Hawks to victories in games three and four , and the Stanley Cup . The 1938 Black Hawks remain the only team in NHL history to win the Stanley Cup despite a losing regular @-@ season record .

= = = Six @-@ team league = = =

In the 1942 Stanley Cup Finals , the heavily favoured Maple Leafs initially found themselves unable to counter the fifth @-@ place Red Wings ' strategy of firing the puck into the offensive zone then chasing after it , losing the first three games of the final as a result . Jack Adams ' " dump @-@ and @-@ chase " tactic led Leafs goaltender Turk Broda to declare the Wings " unbeatable " . Toronto rebounded , however , winning the final four games , and the Stanley Cup . The 1942 Leafs remain the only team in NHL history to come back from a 3 ? 0 deficit to win a championship series .

In financial difficulty , and unable to compete with the Canadiens for fan support in Montreal , the Maroons suspended operations prior to the 1938 ? 39 season after being denied permission to relocate to St. Louis . Six Maroons players were transferred to the Canadiens while three were sold to the Black Hawks . The Americans , also struggling in New York and under the control of the league , were turned over to Red Dutton in 1940 with orders to improve the club 's finances . By 1942 , 90 players had left the NHL for active duty during World War II . Continuing to struggle financially , and due to a lack of players , the Americans were suspended prior to the 1942 ? 43 season . Thus began what became known as the " Original Six " era of the National Hockey League .

= = Rules and innovations = =

The 1920s saw numerous rule innovations as the sport evolved . The Ottawa Senators won three Stanley Cups in the early 1920s using strong defence , and the goaltending of Clint Benedict , who recorded a record five shutouts in a 24 @-@ game season in 1921 . The Senators employed a strategy where they kept both defencemen and a forward in their own zone at all times after they gained a lead . After the Senators ' third championship in 1924 , Frank Calder made it illegal for more than two players to be in their defensive zone if the puck was not .

Defence continued to dominate the game , however , as in 1928 ? 29 , the league averaged less than three goals per game . Canadiens goaltender George Hainsworth set what remains a league record with 22 shutouts in only 44 games . As a result , the league allowed the use of the forward pass in all zones beginning in 1929 . Previously , forward passing was allowed only in the defensive and neutral zones . The change saw offence rise to 6 @. @ 9 goals per game over the first third of the season as players began to park themselves on their opponent 's goal crease . The league responded by introducing the offside rule early in the 1929 ? 30 season , barring offensive players from entering their opponent 's zone before the puck . Despite this , Cooney Weiland , Dit Clapper and Howie Morenz all broke the 40 @-@ goal mark , the first players to do so since Joe Malone scored 44 in the NHL 's first season .

Boston Bruins governor , Charles Adams had long disliked the defensive tactic of shooting the puck the length of the ice ( " icing " ) to relieve pressure . After the New York Americans iced the puck 61 times in a 3 ? 2 win in Boston during the 1936 ? 37 season , Adams promised that he would see to it that the Bruins played a similar style in New York . True to his word , the Bruins iced the puck 87 times in a 0 ? 0 tie at Madison Square Garden . The NHL introduced the icing rule the following season , calling for a faceoff in the offending team 's defensive zone after each infraction .

Benedict became the first goaltender to wear facial protection during a game , as he donned a leather mask to protect a broken nose on January 20 , 1930 . The mask obscured Benedict 's vision , and he abandoned it shortly after . Later that season , Benedict was again hit by a puck , effectively ending his NHL career . It was not the first attempt at changing how goaltenders played their position . When the NHL was formed , the league abandoned the rule forbidding goaltenders from leaving their feet to make a save . While the NHA imposed a \$ 2 fine every time a goalie left his



feet , Calder dismissed the idea for the NHL . He was quoted as saying : " as far as I 'm concerned , they can stand on their head if they choose to " . The phrase became , and remains today , a popular way to describe a goaltender who plays a great game .

Art Ross was an early innovator of the game . He designed rounded goal nets that became the league standard , replacing the old square @-@ backed nets . He also successfully argued for using synthetic rubber pucks rather than real rubber . Some of Ross ' inventions did not catch on , however . Ross invented a puck with rounded edges that was rejected after goaltenders complained about their erratic behaviour on the ice . He also created a two @-@ piece hockey stick that had a metal shaft and replaceable wooden blades . The idea did not catch on at the time , but was a forerunner to modern composite sticks used today .

= = Timeline = =

#### Notes

Toronto Maple Leafs known as the St. Patricks 1919 ? 1927

Detroit Red Wings known as the Cougars 1926 ? 1930 and Falcons 1930 ? 1932

New York Americans known as the Brooklyn Americans 1941 ? 1942

" SC " denotes won Stanley Cup