

= Ching Johnson =

Ivan Wilfred " Ching " Johnson (December 7 , 1898 ? June 16 , 1979) was a Canadian professional ice hockey defenceman who played for the New York Rangers and New York Americans in the National Hockey League (NHL) . He was an original member of the Rangers and was part of two Stanley Cup championship winning teams . He was named to the NHL 's post @-@ season all @-@ star team four times and played in the Ace Bailey Benefit Game , the first all @-@ star game in league history .

A veteran of World War I , Johnson did not begin playing competitive hockey until he was in his 20s and was nearly 30 when he first broke into the NHL . Regarded as one of the hardest bodycheckers to ever play the game , he was a fan favourite and went on to play 436 games with the Rangers and Americans before spending his final seasons in the minor leagues as a player , coach and official . Johnson was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1958 , and is also a member of the Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame and Museum and the Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame .

= = Early life = =

Johnson was born in Winnipeg , Manitoba on December 7 , 1898 . He was an accomplished football and lacrosse player in his youth . He joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1916 and fought for three years in the trenches of France as part of a mortar outfit . Johnson returned to Winnipeg following the war and worked for an electric light company . He first played competitive hockey in 1919 when he joined the Winnipeg Monarchs of the Winnipeg Senior Hockey League . He played two seasons with the Monarchs before moving to Eveleth , Minnesota where he joined the local team to play three seasons in the United States Amateur Hockey Association (USAHA) . He then played three seasons in Minneapolis , concluding in 1925 ? 26 with the Minneapolis Millers . He was named a league all @-@ star on defence in both 1924 and 1926 .

First nicknamed " Ivan the Terrible " , Johnson later earned the nickname " Ching " when fans of the defencemen would shout " Ching , Ching Chinaman " to support him . Though he was of Irish descent , he was called " Chinaman " , then " Chink " and finally " Ching " as he was considered to have an Asian looking face . His physical style of defence made him immensely popular with fans , and he was often seen with a wide grin any time he made or received contact during a game .

= = National Hockey League career = =

It was from Minneapolis that Johnson was recruited , along with his defensive partner Taffy Abel , to play for the newly formed New York Rangers . Offered the position at the age of 28 , Johnson insisted on a three @-@ year contract as he believed it would be the only one he would get . He made his NHL debut in the Rangers opening game on November 16 , 1926 in a 1 ? 0 victory over the Montreal Maroons . A rugged and physical defenceman , Johnson appeared in only 27 of the Rangers ' 44 games as he suffered a broken collar bone early in the season , but still finished second on the Rangers with 66 penalties in minutes . In 1927 ? 28 , his total of 146 penalty minutes led the team and was second in the NHL to Eddie Shore 's 165 . He added a career high 10 goals , and helped the Rangers win their first Stanley Cup . Additionally , he was voted by the fans as the most valuable player of either New York team .

Johnson was lost to the Rangers early in the 1928 ? 29 season when he suffered a broken ankle during a December game against the Maroons . A couple days after his injury , he had to be rescued when a fire threatened the Montreal hospital he was convalescing at . Johnson missed virtually the entire regular season with the injury , but returned in time for the 1929 playoffs , and was credited with improving the Rangers ' play as they reached the final against the Boston Bruins .

His contract having expired following the season , Johnson was a hold @-@ out when the Rangers opened their training camp prior to the 1929 ? 30 NHL season as the team was reluctant to meet his demands for increased pay . When the impasse dragged into November , he threatened to quit the game altogether , before finally agreeing to a new three @-@ year deal . He appeared in 30 games

for the Rangers that season , but again missed significant time , this time suffering a broken jaw . Again , Johnson returned in time for the playoffs , but was forced to wear a steel mask to protect his face .

Johnson remained healthy in 1930 ? 31 , appearing in 44 games and was named to the league 's Second All @-@ Star Team on defence . In addition to being named to the First All @-@ Star Team in 1931 ? 32 , Johnson finished just one vote behind Howie Morenz for the Hart Trophy as the league 's most valuable player . He was again named to the First All @-@ Star Team in 1932 ? 33 and led the Rangers to their second Stanley Cup ; his defensive play was credited as being key to the team 's success .

In 1933 ? 34 , Johnson earned his fourth consecutive post @-@ season all @-@ star nod , on the second team . He also participated in the first all @-@ star game in NHL history as the league held a benefit game to raise money for Toronto 's Ace Bailey , whose career was ended by a violent hit early in the season . Johnson contemplated retirement following that season as he again found himself in a dispute with the Rangers on a new contract , but signed prior to the season 's start . His season was again reduced by injury in 1934 ? 35 but he returned in time for the playoffs .

Prior to the 1936 ? 37 season , the Rangers signed Johnson to serve as the defensive coach while he continued to play . He appeared in 35 games but scored no points . Seeing little playing time , and having an offer to coach a minor league team , Johnson requested that the Rangers give him his outright release following the season . Believing that he had become too slow to play , the team agreed . He subsequently signed with the New York Americans , with whom he played one final NHL season in 1937 ? 38 .

= = Post @-@ NHL career = =

At age 40 , Johnson returned to the Minneapolis Millers as a player @-@ coach for the 1938 ? 39 season . He quickly became the American Hockey Association 's most popular star as large crowds attended games he participated in , and was named an AHA all @-@ star in 1939 . He served in the dual role for two years before resigning in 1940 . Johnson then coached for a time in California , before returning east to coach the Washington Lions of the American Hockey League . He also served as an official in the Eastern Hockey League . During one game in 1944 in which he was working as a linesman , Johnson forgot he was no longer playing and threw a bodycheck on a player . When asked after the game about the incident , he stated it was " instinct " that led him to throw the hit .

In recognition of his career , Johnson was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame as a player in 1958 . He was also inducted into the Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame and Museum in 1994 , and is an honoured member of the Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame . The latter hall named him to province 's all @-@ century second all @-@ star team .

After leaving hockey , Johnson worked construction in Washington , D.C. , and later retired to the nearby community of Silver Spring , Maryland . He and his wife Ellen had two children : Geraldine and James . He had four grandchildren and one great @-@ grandchild at the time of his death in 1979 .

= = Career statistics = =