

= Philadelphia Flyers ? Ottawa Senators brawl =

The Flyers ? Senators brawl was a National Hockey League (NHL) regular season game between the Philadelphia Flyers and the Ottawa Senators that resulted in a league record for penalty minutes . The game was played on March 5 , 2004 , at the Wachovia Center , the home arena of the Flyers . Philadelphia won the game by the score 5 ? 3 . In all , 419 minutes were assessed , passing the previous NHL record of 406 . The 213 minutes assessed against Philadelphia was also a record , as was the number of penalty minutes in the third period .

The events were precipitated by an incident in the previous meeting between the two teams , when Ottawa 's Martin Havlat had swung his stick at Mark Recchi 's head . Just under two minutes before the end of the game , enforcers Donald Brashear of the Flyers and Rob Ray of the Senators engaged in a fight . As they skated off to the penalty box , Brashear became involved in another scrap , and the rest of the players on the ice for each team , including goaltenders Robert Esche and Patrick Lalime began to fight . On both of the next two face @-@ offs to restart the game , further fights occurred . The first of these angered the Flyers management , who believed that the fights were deliberately unbalanced against their players .

On the third restart after the initial fight , the crowd booed when a fight did not immediately ensue , but in less than 30 seconds , two more fights had broken out . The final fight occurred directly after the fourth face @-@ off , involving Jason Spezza and Patrick Sharp . Spezza and Brashear were assessed for the most penalty minutes in the game , receiving 35 and 34 , respectively . At the start of the 2005 ? 06 season , the NHL introduced a rule that punished anyone instigating a fight in the final five minutes of a game with a one @-@ game suspension , in order to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future .

= = Background = =

In each of the previous two seasons , the Philadelphia Flyers and the Ottawa Senators had met in the Stanley Cup playoffs , and on each occasion the Senators had eliminated the Flyers . The Flyers had not beaten the Senators in their previous five contests , going 0 ? 3 ? 2 .

When the two sides met in late @-@ February , a week before the brawl game , during the third period , Flyers winger Mark Recchi was following Martin Havlat of the Senators when he crossed into the Philadelphia defensive zone . As this happened , Recchi hooked Havlat , causing both of the players to collide and fall into the boards . When Havlat got up from the ice , angered by Recchi 's hook , he took his stick above him and slashed Recchi , hitting him in the face .

Havlat was given a five @-@ minute major penalty for attempting to injure Recchi , along with a game misconduct penalty . He was later given a two @-@ game suspension by the NHL due to the incident . He was forced to give up US \$ 36 @,@ 585 @.@ 36 of his salary as he had already been suspended for kicking Eric Cairns of the New York Islanders earlier in the season .

Revenge was mentioned after the game by Flyers Head Coach Ken Hitchcock . During a post @-@ game interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) , he commented that " someday , someone 's going to make him eat his lunch . This is something , in my opinion , that the players should take care of . " Recchi also mentioned revenge , not specifically from the Flyers , during an interview with the CBC . " It doesn 't surprise me coming from this guy . He 's that type of player . He 's done it before . It might not come from our team . But he better protect himself , " said Recchi .

= = Game summary = =

Despite having what Rob Maaddi of the Associated Press described as " bad blood " between them , the first period of the game passed without serious incident . Chris Neil opened the scoring for Ottawa just over four minutes into the period , but the Flyers then took the lead when Claude Lapointe and Mark Recchi scored 30 seconds apart . Danny Markov added a third for Philadelphia to give them a two @-@ goal lead . The only penalty assessed in the period was for holding against

Philadelphia 's Tony Amonte .

Both teams scored a goal each in the second and third periods . In the second period , an early tripping penalty against Ottawa 's Mike Fisher put the Flyers on the power play , during which Kim Johnsson extended Philadelphia 's lead to 4 ? 1 . Ottawa received another penalty less than a minute later , which sent Todd Simpson to the penalty box for holding . A Flyers penalty against Radovan Somik for slashing Martin Havlat resulted in a power play goal for the Senators ' Zdeno Chara , closing the score to a two @-@ goal gap once again . Fisher subsequently received his second penalty of the game , for high @-@ sticking .

The third period began with Alexei Zhamnov notching the Flyers ' fifth goal of the game to make it 5 ? 2 . Shortly thereafter , the game started to become more heated ; Zhamnov and Daniel Alfredsson were assessed coincidental minors for roughing nine minutes into the period , and three minutes later Bryan Smolinski and Mark Greig were similarly penalized . Simpson returned to the box soon after , for slashing Michal Handzus , but Philadelphia 's power play when cut short when they received a penalty for having too many men on the ice .

With 1 : 45 left in the third period , Flyers ' enforcer Donald Brashear hit Rob Ray , an enforcer for the Senators , from behind , instigating a fight between the pair . When he was asked after the game why he started the fight , Brashear replied with his own question : " Did you see the last game ? " His reply was interpreted as being a reference to Havlat 's slashing penalty against Recchi . Brashear was generally considered to win the fight , with Tim Panaccio of The Philadelphia Inquirer claiming that Brashear " destroyed Rob Ray . " The fight left Ray bloodied , and as Brashear was being escorted off the ice by the linesman , he exchanged blows with both Brian Pothier and Todd Simpson . Philadelphia 's Patrick Sharp attempted to restrain Simpson , who then pushed Sharp to the ice and started throwing punches at him . Markov intervened , and fought Simpson . At the same time , Branko Radivojevic and Shaun Van Allen had paired off for a fight , and Ottawa 's goaltender , Patrick Lalime , skated the length of the ice to fight fellow goaltender Robert Esche ; both received penalties for leaving their crease as well as fighting majors .

The game restarted with two new goaltenders and the Senators on the power play , but within three seconds , the fighting started again ? Ottawa 's Chris Neil poked Radovan Somik with his stick , and the pair started scrapping . At the same time , Zdeno Chara started a fight with the Flyers ' Mattias Timander , for which the former received an instigator penalty . Both fights angered Philadelphia Head Coach Ken Hitchcock , who claimed that , " Their tough guy [Rob Ray] got beat up and then their next two lines fought guys who don 't fight . " Flyer General Manager Bob Clarke was also critical , saying , " I understand Rob Ray fighting Donald Brashear . That 's okay . [...] But don 't go after guys who don 't know how to defend themselves like Somik and Timander . " As Chara had been ejected from the game , his penalty was served by Martin Havlat , who had been placed there to protect him from any possible attempts at retribution . Chara 's penalty meant that at the next restart , the teams were back to even strength , with four players each . Immediately after the ensuing face @-@ off , Michal Handzus and Mike Fisher took part in the seventh fight of the game .

There were no fights straight after the next restart , which resulted in booing from the crowd . Within 24 seconds of that restart , the crowd had their way ; Mark Recchi hit Wade Redden , who immediately launched himself into a fight with John LeClair . While those two fought , Recchi and Bryan Smolinski engaged in a second fight in the middle of the rink . LeClair received an additional penalty for holding , placing the Senators on the power play . At the next face @-@ off , a fight once again broke out straight away , between Jason Spezza and Patrick Sharp . Spezza received a fighting major , a misconduct and double game misconduct , totalling 35 penalty minutes , the most of any player in the game .

The rest of the game proceeded without any fights ; the Flyers only had four players left on their bench , while the Senators had two . The Senators tallied the final goal of the game with 13 seconds remaining , with Peter Bondra scoring on the power play to make the final score 5 ? 3 . At the end of the game , it took the officials 90 minutes to allocate all the penalties that had been given to the two sides . The two teams combined for 419 penalty minutes , an NHL record , breaking the previous total of 406 in a 1981 game between the Boston Bruins and the Minnesota North Stars . Philadelphia 's 213 penalty minutes was also a new League record , as were the 409 minutes

assessed in the third period . Interviewed after the game , Mike Fisher of Ottawa said that the Senators " knew [they] had to fight back . [They] had to stand up for each other . "

= = Aftermath = =

The media drew comparisons between the game and the " Broad Street Bullies " era of the Philadelphia Flyers in the 1970s , when they played very aggressive hockey with numerous fights . At the conclusion of the game Bobby Clarke , Philadelphia 's general manager , attempted to enter the Senators ' dressing room to confront their head coach , Jacques Martin , but was restrained by a colleague . Clarke said that he would not have hit Martin , but that he had wanted to challenge Martin about the unbalanced fight pairings . Clarke subsequently lodged a complaint with league supervisor Claude Loiselle . The only player to receive a fine or suspension as a result of the game was Danny Markov , who got a statutory one @-@ game ban for collecting his third game misconduct of the season .

Philadelphia @-@ based Comcast SportsNet (CSN) , which had aired the game live , described it as an " instant classic , " replayed the game the following Wednesday (March 10) . The replayed received a Nielsen rating of 1 @.@ 0 , a higher figure than most telecasts involving the Philadelphia Flyers . League officials from the NHL were unhappy with the replay being shown , as they perceived the game to tarnish the League 's image , and they requested that CSN not replay the game again .

The Flyers and the Senators met once more during the season , and despite some claims from Bobby Clarke that Philadelphia would seek further revenge , there were only six minor penalties assessed in the match , which the Senators won 3 ? 1 . Ottawa defenceman Zdeno Chara explained that " both teams were really focusing on the two points . We weren 't going to risk that by fighting . " Both teams qualified for the 2004 playoffs ; Ottawa were eliminated in the first @-@ round by the Toronto Maple Leafs , while Philadelphia defeated the New Jersey Devils and Maple Leafs to reach the Eastern Conference Finals , but were then beaten by the eventual Stanley Cup champions , the Tampa Bay Lightning .

The brawl , along with an incident between the Vancouver Canucks ' Todd Bertuzzi and Steve Moore of the Colorado Avalanche , (in which Bertuzzi hit Moore from behind , breaking his neck , in retaliation for a hit by Moore on one of Bertuzzi 's team @-@ mates a month earlier) , brought the issue of violence in ice hockey into focus . Particular attention was given to retaliation ; when Brashear was interviewed on the subject of the Bertuzzi incident , he defended such on @-@ ice revenge , and suggested that Bertuzzi should not receive a suspension , because " all they have to do is go after him when he comes back . " That mindset echoed the comments made by Ken Hitchcock and Mark Recchi about Martin Havlat , and Sam Donnellon of the Philadelphia Daily News suggested that it was prevailing opinion amongst all the players in the League . He suggested that rather than wanting stricter penalties to clamp down on dangerous play , (which he advocated) , the players believed that removing the penalty for instigating a fight , and allowing players to therefore get their retribution by that means , would have the same effect . Mike Heika of The Dallas Morning News also believed that the league should be stricter in handing out fines and suspensions , suggesting that Hitchcock should possibly have been penalised for his revenge comments , and that if Havlat had received a lengthier ban for his actions , the brawl between the Flyers and Senators may not have happened .

The 2004 ? 05 NHL season was cancelled because of a labour dispute , but upon the League 's return for the 2005 ? 06 season , a rule was added which meant that any player being assessed for an instigator penalty in the last five minutes of a match would receive an automatic one @-@ game ban , and the player 's head coach could also be fined . This was designed to avoid situations such as happened in game between the Flyers and Senators , and addressed the fact that physical play tended to increase towards the end of a game , particularly when the result was not in question .

= = Boxscore = =

Number in parentheses represents the player 's total in goals or assists to that point of the season

= = Team rosters = =

= = = Scratches = = =

Ottawa Senators : Curtis Leschyshyn , Radek Bonk , Anton Volchenkov , Vaclav Varada , Todd White , Shane Hnidy

Philadelphia Flyers : Keith Primeau , Marcus Ragnarsson , Todd Fedoruk , Dennis Seidenberg , Eric Desjardins , Jeremy Roenick

= = = Officials = = =

Referees : Marc Joannette , Dan Marouelli

Linesmen : Jonny Murray , Tim Nowak