

= Bill Cook =

William Osmer Xavier Cook ( October 9 , 1895 ? May 5 , 1986 ) was a Canadian professional ice hockey right winger who played for the Saskatoon Crescents of the Western Canada Hockey League ( WCHL ) and the New York Rangers of the National Hockey League ( NHL ) . A prolific scorer , Cook led the WCHL in goals twice and the NHL three times . He was named an all @-@ star seven times between the two leagues . Known as " The Original Ranger " , Cook was the first captain of the New York Rangers , scored the first goal in franchise history and led the team to two Stanley Cup championships .

Turning to coaching following his playing career , Cook led the Cleveland Barons to two Calder Cup championships and the Minneapolis Millers to a United States Hockey League championship . He coached the New York Rangers during the 1951 ? 52 NHL season until his retirement in 1953 . Cook was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1952 and Canada 's Sports Hall of Fame in 1975 .

= = Early life = =

Cook was born on October 9 , 1895 , in Brantford , Ontario . He was a middle child of a large family , and the eldest of three sons , preceding his brothers Frederick ( " Bun " ) and Alexander ( " Bud " ) . The family moved to Kingston , Ontario , where he learned to skate on the Rideau Canal . He joined the Kingston Frontenacs ' junior hockey team in 1913 and played for two seasons before his career was interrupted by the First World War .

He volunteered to join the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1915 , and served with the Canadian Field Artillery for nearly two years in France and another at the Belgian front . Cook participated in several engagements , including at Ypres , the Somme , Vimy Ridge and Hill 70 . He then fought into 1919 in Siberia as part of the allied intervention in the Russian Civil War .

Upon his return from the war , Cook rejoined the Frontenacs for one season before joining the Sault Ste . Marie Greyhounds in 1920 . He led the Northern Ontario Hockey Association ( NOHA ) in both goals , 12 , and points , 19 , while the Greyhounds won the NOHA championship . He won the scoring title again in 1921 ? 22 with 20 goals and 28 points .

= = Playing career = =

= = = Saskatoon Crescents = = =

Spurning offers from National Hockey League ( NHL ) teams to turn professional in the eastern league , Cook moved to Saskatchewan where he had been granted land for his service in the war . The Calgary Tigers of the Western Canada Hockey League ( WCHL ) attempted to recruit him for the 1922 ? 23 season but failed to sign him . Instead , he joined the Saskatoon Crescents . He recorded 25 points in 30 games in his first professional season .

Returning to Saskatoon in 1923 ? 24 , Cook led the WCHL with 26 goals and 40 points . He was named the all @-@ star right wing for the first of three consecutive seasons . He scored 22 goals in 1924 ? 25 . The WCHL rebranded itself the Western Hockey League ( WHL ) and the Crescents became the Sheiks in 1925 ? 26 . Cook again led in both goals and points with 31 and 44 respectively , and had become known as the best right wing in hockey .

= = = New York Rangers = = =

The WHL had run into financial difficulty in its final seasons , and after 1926 , ceased operations . The Montreal Maroons intended to sign both Cook and his brother Bun to join their team for the 1926 ? 27 NHL season . While the team 's manager waited in Montreal to meet the brothers , Conn Smythe , manager of the newly formed New York Rangers , travelled to Winnipeg to reach the pair

first . Smythe signed both Cook brothers for \$ 12 @, @ 000 . Bill Cook was officially the first player signed by the Rangers , and was named the team 's first captain . The Cook brothers joined Frank Boucher to form the " Bread Line " , one of the early NHL 's most prolific scoring lines .

The Rangers made their NHL debut on November 16 , 1926 , against the Maroons . Cook scored the franchise 's first goal , which also stood up as the winner , in a 1 ? 0 victory . Appearing in 44 games , he led the league in both goals , 33 , and points , 37 . He finished as the runner @-@ up to Herb Gardiner of the Montreal Canadiens for the Hart Trophy as the NHL 's most valuable player . The Rangers finished first in the American Division , but were eliminated by the Boston Bruins in the playoffs . Cook recorded 24 points in 1927 ? 28 , the seventh highest total in the league . The Rangers again qualified for the playoffs , where they defeated the Pittsburgh Pirates , Boston Bruins and Montreal Maroons to win the franchise 's first Stanley Cup championship . The Bread Line scored every Rangers goal in the 1928 Stanley Cup Finals .

Twenty @-@ three points in 1928 ? 29 again placed Cook seventh in the league . The Rangers defeated the New York Americans to reach the 1929 Stanley Cup Finals , but were defeated by the Montreal Canadiens . Cook led the Rangers and finished fourth in league scoring in 1929 ? 30 and 1930 ? 31 with 59 and 42 points respectively . In 1931 , he was named to the NHL 's inaugural All @-@ Star Team at right wing . It was the first of four consecutive appearances ; he was placed on the first team in 1931 , 1932 and 1933 , and on the second team in 1934 . Cook 's 34 goals in 1931 ? 32 tied Charlie Conacher for the league lead . The Rangers won the American Division title , and after defeating the Canadians , faced Conacher 's Toronto Maple Leafs in the 1932 Stanley Cup Final . Toronto swept the series with three consecutive victories .

Cook was again the top scorer in 1932 ? 33 , leading the NHL in both goals , 28 , and points , 50 . At 36 years , 5 months old , Cook was the oldest player in NHL history to win a scoring title until 2013 when Martin St. Louis of the Tampa Bay Lightning led the NHL in scoring at the age of 39 . The Rangers reached the 1933 Stanley Cup Finals against the Toronto Maple Leafs . Cook scored the winning goal in the second game , then scored the championship winning goal , in overtime , in the fourth game . It was the first overtime power play goal in NHL playoff history . The trophy was not available on the night the Rangers won , leading the series to become known as the " Forgotten Cup " . Cook accepted the Stanley Cup on behalf of his team in November of that year , seven months after the Rangers victory .

After scoring only 13 goals in 1933 ? 34 , Cook improved to 20 goals in 1934 ? 35 . In a 7 ? 5 victory over the Maple Leafs on January 29 , 1935 , the Bread line scored four goals and five assists to reach a combined 1 @, @ 000 points as a unit over their nine seasons together . The Bread Line was broken up in 1935 ? 36 when Bun was forced out of the Rangers lineup by illness . Bill Cook scored just seven goals that season , and at the age of 40 , scored one goal in 21 games before retiring as a player during the 1936 ? 37 season .

= = Coaching career = =

Turning to coaching , Cook took over as the manager of the Cleveland Barons in the International @-@ American Hockey League ( IAHl ) in the 1937 ? 38 season . He inherited a team that had struggled the season before and led it to a respectable season , winning 34 of 50 games played combined between the regular season and playoffs . Cook was pressed into service as a player as a result of injuries . His team was able to dress only 10 of 17 players in the deciding game of the Barons ' playoff series against the Syracuse Stars . Cook played a regular shift in the game , but the Barons lost , 3 ? 2 , in the fourth overtime period .

The Barons finished fifth overall in the IAHl standings in 1938 ? 39 , but defeated the Springfield Indians and Providence Reds to reach the league championship series against the Philadelphia Ramblers . They won the best @-@ of @-@ five championship three games to one to claim the Calder Cup . Cook coached the Barons to a second Calder Cup in 1940 ? 41 , defeating the Hershey Bears in the final . Cook remained behind the Barons ' bench until the conclusion of the 1942 ? 43 American Hockey League ( AHL ) season . He then turned coaching duties over to his brother Bun , but remained the team 's general manager .

Cook left the Barons to join the Minneapolis Millers of the United States Hockey League ( USHL ) in 1947 . He coached the team for three seasons , leading the team to the Paul W. Loudon Trophy as league champions in 1949 ? 50 . He moved on to coach the Denver Falcons , also of the USHL , in 1950 ? 51 then the Saskatoon Quakers of the Pacific Coast Hockey League ( PHCL ) the following season . Cook left the Quakers midway through the season when asked by Frank Boucher , general manager of the New York Rangers , to return to the NHL club as its head coach . He coached the final 47 games of the Rangers ' 1951 ? 52 season , winning 17 , losing 22 and tying 8 . He remained behind the Rangers bench in 1952 ? 53 , but the Rangers missed the playoffs after winning only 17 of 70 games . Cook was replaced as coach following the season as Boucher named himself head coach . Cook then retired from hockey .

= = Legacy = =

A prolific scorer , Cook scored 317 goals and 508 points in 591 games in his 15 year professional career . Known as " The Original Ranger " , he led the team in goals six times . He was regarded as being the greatest right wing in the game 's history when he retired , an opinion former teammate Frank Boucher retained many years later : " Bill was the finest all @-@ round player in Ranger history . And he 's my choice as the best right winger hockey ever knew ? despite the fact that others disagree and give their votes to Rocket Richard or Gordie Howe . I say Cook topped them both . " Cook was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1952 , and Canada 's Sports Hall of Fame in 1975 .

A popular former Ranger , Cook participated in the closing of the old Madison Square Garden and the opening of the new facility in 1968 . In recognition of his scoring the first Rangers goal in the old Garden , he was asked to " score " the first goal in the new facility as part of the opening ceremony for the new . In 1986 , he was presented with the Rangers ' Alumni Association award , the first former Ranger to receive the award through a vote of alumni membership . The Hockey News ranked Cook as the 44th greatest player in NHL history , and highest Ranger on the list , in its 1998 book The Top 100 NHL Players of All Time .

= = Personal life = =

Accepting a land grant from the federal government , Cook settled in Saskatchewan following the First World War , taking a half section of land adjacent to a similar holding of his brother Bun 's . He established his farm near Lac Vert , hunted and played baseball during hockey off @-@ seasons . He later returned to Kingston , Ontario , where he continued to farm and was nearly killed when one of his bulls gored him . Cook was married and had three children . He died of cancer in Kingston on May 5 , 1986 .

= = Career statistics = =

= = = Playing career = = =

= = = NHL Coaching career = = =