

= Calgary Tigers =

The Calgary Tigers , often nicknamed the Bengals , were an ice hockey team based in Calgary , Alberta , Canada from 1920 until 1927 as members of the Big Four League , Western Canada Hockey League and Prairie Hockey League . The Tigers were revived in 1932 , playing for a short @-@ lived four years in the North Western Hockey League . They played their games at the Victoria Arena .

Created ostensibly as an amateur team in hopes of competing for the Allan Cup , the Tigers helped form the Western Canada Hockey League in 1921 to become the first major professional team in Calgary . In 1924 , after winning both the league and Western Canadian championships , the Tigers became the first Calgary based club to compete for the Stanley Cup .

After succumbing to financial pressures in 1927 , the Tigers were briefly revived in the mid @-@ 1930s as a minor professional club . The Tigers competed a total of eleven seasons in four leagues , winning four championships during their existence . Five Tigers players would later gain election to the Hockey Hall of Fame .

= = History = =

= = = Big @-@ 4 League = = =

In 1919 , under the guidance of Alberta Amateur Hockey Association league president Allan McCaw , a new elite senior amateur league was established in Alberta with two teams each in Calgary and Edmonton . The Big @-@ 4 League 's intention was to compete for the Allan Cup , emblematic of Canada 's national senior championship . The Tigers were created in 1920 , along with the Canadians , to represent Calgary in the Big Four after the city 's two original teams , the Wanderers and Columbus Crew , withdrew following the league 's first season . The Tigers also faced the Edmonton Eskimos and Dominions who served as representatives of Alberta 's capital . The Calgary teams were hosted at the Victoria Arena , which had been converted into a hockey rink in 1918 .

While the Big @-@ 4 billed itself as an amateur circuit , it became known as a notorious example of a " shamateur " league , as amateur teams secretly employed professional players in an attempt to gain an upper hand on their competition . When the Big Four announced their intention to compete in the Allan Cup playdowns , the Pacific Coast Hockey Association sent a letter of protest to the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association demanding that the league be declared professional , thus ineligible to compete for the Allan Cup . The Big Four ultimately chose to withdraw from the AAHA , and operated as an independent league in 1920 ? 21 .

The Tigers ' inaugural game was played at home on December 29 , 1920 as 2 @, @ 500 fans saw them defeat the Edmonton Dominions 6 ? 1 on the strength of a goal and two assists by Gordon Fraser . Late in the season , the Canadians protested the use of goaltender Bill Tobin by the Edmonton Eskimos , arguing that he had not lived in Alberta long enough to be eligible per the league 's residency rules . Following a last minute change of one of the arbitrators , a three @-@ man panel denied the protest . The decision led the front @-@ running Tigers to refuse to play any series against the second @-@ place Eskimos for the league championship as the team felt the Canadians ' protest was improperly handled . Efforts to reach a compromise failed as the Edmonton clubs refused to allow the protest to be reconsidered , resulting in the collapse of the league on February 24 , 1921 .

The Tigers remained active despite the demise of the league , playing a series of exhibition games against the Saskatoon Crescents and a team from Moose Jaw . The Eskimos eventually agreed to face the Tigers without Tobin in an informal championship that was known as the Intercity Championship . The Tigers claimed the title on total @-@ goals as they defeated Edmonton 2 ? 0 in the first game at Calgary before dropping the second 2 ? 1 at Edmonton . The Tigers ended their season with a 2 ? 0 exhibition loss to the defending Stanley Cup champion Ottawa Senators , who

were touring the country as they travelled west to defend their title against the PCHA champion Vancouver Millionaires .

= = = Western Canada Hockey League = = =

The former Big Four teams joined with the Saskatoon Sheiks in forming a new professional league in 1921 that intended to compete against the National Hockey League and Pacific Coast Hockey Association . The Western Canada Hockey League was recognized as a major league and granted the right to compete for the Stanley Cup . Shortly before the inaugural season was set to begin , Calgary Canadians president Dr. C.E. Coleman and Tigers manager Eddie Poulin agreed amalgamate the two franchises under the Tigers name , allowing Calgary to present a unified front in the new league .

The Tigers played the first professional hockey game in Calgary on December 19 , 1921 , defeating the Regina Capitals 3 ? 2 before a crowd of 3 @, @ 000 fans . The Tigers , Eskimos and Capitals battled for first place in the league , each team holding the top spot numerous times throughout the season . The Tigers and Capitals finished tied for second , forcing a two @-@ game , total @-@ goals playoff to determine who would meet the Eskimos for the league championship . In the series , the Capitals defeated the Tigers 1 ? 0 in Calgary , while the two teams tied 1 ? 1 in Regina sending the Capitals through by a 2 ? 1 aggregate total .

Prior to the start of the 1922 ? 23 season , the Tigers faced the Stanley Cup champion Toronto St. Patricks in two exhibition games . They defeated the St. Pats 7 ? 5 in Calgary , and again 6 ? 2 in a game held in Winnipeg , Manitoba . The WCHL and PCHA adopted an interlocking schedule for this season , with the Tigers struggling against their pacific coast opposition , winning just two of six games . Calgary finished third in the standings , behind Edmonton and Regina , as former Tiger Barney Stanley scored the winning goal against Calgary in a 2 ? 1 victory by the Regina Capitals that eliminated Calgary from playoff contention . They ended the season with a 4 ? 0 exhibition victory over the NHL 's Ottawa Senators in a game described as one of the " most sensational " games ever held in Calgary .

The 1923 ? 24 season began with tragedy , as Tigers ' forward Foley Martin died of blood poisoning during the team 's season opening road trip to the pacific coast . The Tigers played on despite Martin 's death , winning two of three games against their PCHA rivals . The Tigers finished atop the league standings with 37 points . They met the Regina Capitals in the league championship in a two @-@ game , total goals series . After battling Regina to a 2 ? 2 draw in the Saskatchewan capital , the Tigers returned home to Calgary , capturing the championship on home ice in a 2 ? 0 victory . They then moved on to face the Vancouver Maroons of the PCHA in the best @-@ of @-@ three Western Canadian final . After dropping the first game in Vancouver , the Tigers came back to defeat the Maroons 6 ? 3 at home , and again 3 ? 1 at a neutral site game in Winnipeg , Manitoba . The victory earned the Tigers the right to play for the Stanley Cup , the first such opportunity for a Calgary @-@ based club .

Despite defeating the Maroons , the PCHA champions were not eliminated . Rather , the Tigers earned a bye into the finals , while Vancouver met the Montreal Canadiens in the semi @-@ final . The blue , blanc et rouge swept Vancouver in two games , setting the matchup for the 1924 Stanley Cup Finals where the Canadiens easily handled the Tigers . In the first game , played at Mount Royal Arena in Montreal , Canadiens rookie Howie Morenz recorded a hat trick as Montreal won 6 ? 1 . Due to poor ice conditions , the second game was moved to the Ottawa Auditorium in Ottawa . Led by goaltender Georges Vezina , Montreal won 3 ? 0 to sweep the series , and claim the Cup .

Calgary began the 1924 ? 25 season with a series of exhibition games in eastern Canada . They faced the St. Pats and Senators , proving to be a popular draw in the capital as Ottawa fans lined up for tickets for the pair of games played . Additionally , the Tigers negotiated to face the NHL 's expansion Montreal Maroons if the newly constructed Montreal Forum was ready in time . Those games did not come to pass . In WCHL league play , the Tigers once again finished the regular season in first place . Led by Oliver 's team leading 20 goals , the Tigers earned a bye into the WCHL championship . Their opponent was the Victoria Cougars , who moved over to the WCHL

following the collapse of the PCHA the previous summer . The Tigers were unable to earn a return trip to the Stanley Cup Finals , losing the two @-@ game total @-@ goals series 3 ? 1 . The Cougars went on to become the last non @-@ NHL team to win the Stanley Cup . The Tigers struggled throughout the 1925 ? 26 season , languishing in last place for most of the season until a 2 ? 0 victory over Victoria on the last day of the season moved Calgary one point ahead of Vancouver to end the season .

The financial pressures of trying to keep up with rapidly escalating salaries took its toll on the league . The prairie clubs , including the Tigers , were struggling under financial hardships while a mild winter of 1925 ? 26 reduced the quality of the natural ice at Victoria arena which , coupled with the team 's poor performance , reduced attendance . Manager Lloyd Turner confirmed on May 4 , 1926 that the Tigers were sold to the National Hockey League , along with the franchises in Edmonton , Regina , Victoria , Vancouver and Portland , and that the league had ceased operations . The six franchises were sold for \$ 300 @,@ 000 .

Turner immediately began efforts to form a new team and league that would operate as a " class B " league , one level below the NHL . Three weeks after the collapse of the Western League , the Tigers were reformed as a charter member of the five team Prairie Hockey League . The team struggled to attract fans in the Prairie League , and consequently announced late in the season that it would cease operations after one year . The Tigers were successful on the ice , however , as they finished atop the league standings and met the Saskatoon Sheiks in a best @-@ of @-@ three series for the league title . Calgary dropped the first game , 2 ? 1 in Saskatoon , but tied the series with a 2 ? 1 victory in Calgary on the strength of two goals in the last five minutes by Andy Aikenhead . The Tigers were then awarded the league championship after the Sheiks defaulted the third game , refusing to play in opposition to the referee assigned for the deciding game . As Prairie champions , the Tigers traveled east to face the Winnipeg Maroons for the western Canadian professional championship . Calgary won the first game , then were awarded the title after the Maroons were unable to play the second game when the American Hockey Association re @-@ scheduled their league playoff series and created a conflict . The Tigers ended their season with exhibition games in the United States before the team was disbanded .

= = = North Western Hockey League = = =

In 1932 , the Tigers were revived as a charter franchise of a reformed , minor @-@ professional , Western Canada Hockey League . They opened the season with a 1 ? 0 defeat in Edmonton on December 7 , 1932 in what was the first professional game for either city in six years , while a near capacity crowd of 4 @,@ 100 fans witnessed a 7 ? 0 victory by the Tigers over the Eskimos two nights later in Calgary . The Tigers finished the season in first place with on the strength of giving up the fewest goals against during the season , but struggled to attract fans . Attendance declined throughout the season to a low of just 560 for their victory over Saskatoon in early March that clinched the league 's top record . Overall , the team averaged 2 @,@ 270 fans per game . Having earned a bye to the championship series , the Tigers faced the Eskimos in a best @-@ of @-@ five series marred by poor ice caused unseasonably warm weather in both cities . Following a 1 ? 1 tie in the first game at Calgary , the league ordered the remaining games of the series be played in Edmonton due to the poor condition of the ice surface . The second game was also tied at 1 after bad ice in Edmonton forced it to be ended early . Two victories for the Eskimos pushed Calgary to the brink of elimination before the Tigers rebounded with a 5 ? 1 victory in the fifth game . The ties earlier in the series forced the teams to a sixth game that also went to overtime tied at 1 before the Eskimos scored to win the championship after four minutes of an extra period .

The league reformed as the North Western Hockey League following the season after the Saskatchewan clubs dropped out and were replaced with three teams on the Pacific Coast . Calgary again won the regular @-@ season title in 1933 ? 34 , advancing directly to the league championship , on the strength of a 12 ? 3 victory over the Vancouver Lions in the final game of the regular season . Dutch Gainor won the league scoring title with 43 points . Fearing a repeat of the previous season 's playoff disaster , the league ordered Calgary to play their championship series

against the Lions in Seattle and Vancouver as both cities had arenas capable of making artificial ice . The disadvantage did not affect the Tigers in the opening game of the series , a 5 ? 2 victory at Seattle . The teams traded victories in the next three contests , ending in a 2 ? 1 Vancouver win in the fourth game that tied the series at 2 wins apiece . Calgary won the championship with a 6 ? 1 victory before a Vancouver crowd of over 6 @, @ 000 fans .

The 1934 championship would prove to be the Tigers ' last hurrah , as the team fell to the bottom of the NWHL standings in 1934 ? 35 , winning only three games . They once again finished in last place in 1935 ? 36 and were embroiled in another disputer with Edmonton over the rights to a player as the Eskimos claimed they had gained the rights to Tony Savage from the Montreal Canadiens though he had already been sent to Calgary on loan . The Tigers issued an ultimatum to the league , threatening to disband for the season if Savage did not remain in Calgary . Savage ultimately remained with Calgary for the entire season .

1936 proved to be the final year for the Tigers , as the Great Depression and declining interest in professional hockey in favour of the senior game had threatened the team 's viability . After the Eskimos announced intentions to relocate to Victoria , British Columbia as part of a realignment of the league , Tigers ' manager Clair Manning contemplated relocating the franchise to Spokane , Washington . The team instead hoped to operate for another season in Calgary , but met its final demise after the NWHL reformed into the Pacific Coast Hockey League for 1936 ? 37 and denied the Tigers ' application to join the new league .

= = Season @-@ by @-@ season record = =