

= History of the National Hockey League (1942 ? 67) =

The Original Six era of the National Hockey League (NHL) began in 1942 with the demise of the Brooklyn Americans , reducing the league to six teams : Boston Bruins , Chicago Black Hawks , Detroit Red Wings , Montreal Canadiens , New York Rangers , and Toronto Maple Leafs . This structure remained stable for a quarter century ; the era ended in 1967 when the NHL doubled in size adding six expansion teams .

The Stanley Cup , was the de facto championship since 1926 , becoming the de jure championship in 1947 , when the NHL completed a deal with the Stanley Cup trustees to gain control of the Cup . Toronto and Montreal evidenced dynasties , as the Maple Leafs won the Stanley Cup nine times from 1942 onwards , while the Canadiens won ten times , including five consecutive titles between 1956 and 1960 . The 1967 championship is the last Maple Leafs title to date .

Remarkably , Maurice Richard became the first player to score 50 goals in a season in 1944 ? 45 . In 1955 , Richard was suspended for assaulting a linesman , leading to the Richard Riot . Gordie Howe made his debut in 1946 , retiring 32 years later as the NHL 's all @-@ time leader in both goals and points . Willie O 'Ree broke the NHL 's colour barrier when he dressed for the Bruins in 1958 .

The NHL continued to develop throughout the era . In 1943 , in an attempt to ' open up ' the game , the league introduced the centre @-@ ice red line allowing players for the first time to pass out of their defensive zone . In 1959 , Jacques Plante became the first goaltender to regularly wear a face mask for protection . Off the ice , the business of hockey was changing as well . The first amateur draft was held in 1963 as part of efforts to balance talent distribution within the league . The National Hockey League Players Association was formed in 1967 , ten years after Ted Lindsay 's attempts at unionization failed .

= = Background = =

In the 1930s and early 1940s , both the Great Depression and World War II were detrimental to the NHL . Although the league peaked at ten teams between 1926 and 1931 , financial pressures led to the demise of several of these . In 1930 , the Pittsburgh Pirates relocated to become the Philadelphia Quakers before folding in 1931 . In 1934 , the Ottawa Senators became the St. Louis Eagles , and likewise ceased operations after one year in their new market . The Montreal Maroons suspended operations in 1937 as the Montreal market was unable to support two teams . The New York Americans , renamed the Brooklyn Americans , suspended operations in 1942 , citing financial difficulty , and a lack of players due to the war . By the 1942 ? 43 season , the league was reduced to six teams .

There was also change at the top ; in February 1943 , league President Frank Calder collapsed during a meeting , dying shortly after . After receiving assurances from the league the Brooklyn franchise he operated would resume play after the war , Red Dutton agreed to take over as president . When the other team owners reneged on this promise in 1946 , Dutton resigned as league president . In 1946 , with Dutton 's recommendation , Clarence Campbell was named president of the NHL . Campbell remained until retirement in 1977 . Campbell 's tenure matched the league 's stability . For the first 21 years of his presidency , the same six teams competed for the Stanley Cup ; that period has been called the " golden age of hockey " . The NHL featured increasingly intense rivalries coupled with rule innovations that opened up the game .

= = Post @-@ war period = =

World War II extensively ravaged the rosters of many teams ; by the 1943 ? 44 season teams battled each other for players . In need of a goaltender , the Bruins won a fight with the Canadiens over the services of Bert Gardiner . Meanwhile , the Rangers were forced to lend forward Phil Watson to the Canadiens in exchange for two players , as Watson was required in Montreal for a war job , and refused permission to play in New York .

With only five returning players from the previous season , Rangers general manager Lester Patrick suggested suspension of his team 's play for the duration of the war . Patrick was otherwise persuaded ; however , the Rangers managed only six wins in a 50 @-@ game schedule , giving up 310 goals that year . The Rangers were so desperate for players that 42 @-@ year @-@ old coach Frank Boucher made a brief comeback , recording four goals and ten assists in 15 games . That year the Canadiens dominated the league , finishing with a 38 ? 5 ? 7 record . Five losses remains a league record for the fewest in one season ; the Canadiens did not lose a game on home ice . Their 1944 Stanley Cup victory was the team 's first in 14 seasons . The Canadiens again dominated the 1944 ? 45 , finishing with a 38 ? 8 ? 4 record . They were defeated in the playoffs by the underdog Maple Leafs , who eventually won the Cup .

NHL teams exclusively competed for the Stanley Cup following the 1926 demise of the Western Hockey League . Though rejected by Cup trustees for various reasons , in the intervening years other teams , and leagues , attempted to challenge for the Cup . In 1947 , the NHL reached an agreement with trustees P. D. Ross and Cooper Smeaton to grant Cup control to the NHL , thereby allowing the league to reject challenges from other leagues . The last such challenge came in 1953 , from the Cleveland Barons of the American Hockey League ; it was rejected , as the AHL was not considered of equivalent calibre to the NHL , which was a condition of the NHL 's ' deal ' with trustees .

The Hockey Hall of Fame was established in 1943 under the leadership of James T. Sutherland , a former President of the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association (CAHA) . The Hall of Fame was established as a joint venture between the NHL and the CAHA , in Kingston , Ontario , considered by Sutherland the birthplace of hockey . Originally called the " International Hockey Hall of Fame " , its mandate was to honor great hockey players and to raise funds for a permanent location . The first eleven honored members were inducted on April 30 , 1945 . Not until 1961 did the Hockey Hall of Fame establish a permanent home at Exhibition Place in Toronto .

On October 13 , 1947 , to raise money for the newly created NHL Pension Society , the first official All @-@ Star Game took place at Toronto 's Maple Leaf Gardens . The NHL All @-@ Stars defeated the Toronto Maple Leafs 4 ? 3 and raised C \$ 25 @, @ 000 for the pension fund . The All @-@ Star Game remains an annual tradition .

= = = " Rocket " Richard = = =

The 1940s Canadiens were led by the " Punch line " of Elmer Lach , Toe Blake and Maurice " Rocket " Richard . In 1944 ? 45 , Lach , Richard and Blake finished first , second and third in the NHL 's scoring race with 80 , 73 and 67 points , respectively . Richard became a media and fan focus with attempts to score 50 goals in a 50 @-@ game season , a feat no other player had accomplished in league history . During that season , in a 9 ? 1 victory over Detroit on December 28 , 1944 , Richard set a single @-@ game scoring record , scoring five goals and three assists . Later scoring his 45th goal in his 42nd game , he broke Joe Malone 's goal scoring record . Opposing teams did all they could to prevent him from reaching the 50 @-@ goal mark : he was slashed , elbowed and held , as no team wanted to be known for giving up the 50th goal . Despite the opposition 's efforts , in Boston at 17 : 45 of the third period of Montreal 's final game of the season , Richard scored his 50th goal . Until Mike Bossy in 1980 ? 81 , no other player scored 50 goals in 50 games .

In March 1955 , Richard was suspended for the remainder of the season , including the playoffs , after receiving a match penalty for slashing Boston 's Hal Laycoe then punching a linesman who attempted to intervene . The suspension created a wave of anger towards Campbell , who was warned not to attend a scheduled game in Montreal after receiving numerous death threats , mainly from French @-@ Canadians accusing him of anti @-@ French bias . Dismissing the warnings , Campbell attended the March 17 game , as planned . His presence was interpreted by many fans as provocation ; he was booed , and pelted with eggs and fruit ; an hour into the game , a fan lobbed a tear @-@ gas bomb in Campbell 's direction ; firefighters decided to clear the building . A riot ensued outside the Forum as disenchanting fans leaving the Forum were met by a growing mob of

angry demonstrators ; the hostile crowd overwhelmed 250 police officers on the scene . Seventy people were arrested , another 37 people were injured ; fifty stores were looted , and \$ 100 @,@ 000 in property damage was reported , in what became known as l 'affaire Richard , or the Richard Riot .

The following day , Richard went on Montreal radio to ask fans to cease rioting , and instead support the Canadiens in the playoffs ; he offered to take his punishment then come back the following year to win the Cup . While the Canadiens were eliminated in the 1955 Stanley Cup Finals , Richard led Montreal to the 1956 Stanley Cup . The incident highlighted the growing cultural gap between French Quebec and English Canada ; the riot is often characterized as an early manifestation of Quebec 's Quiet Revolution . Campbell 's decision to suspend Richard was widely supported by fans outside of Quebec . Some , including Detroit 's Ted Lindsay , said the suspension did not go far enough and argued Richard , a man who had paid more fines than any other player in league history , should have been banned for life .

On October 19 , 1957 , Richard became the first player to score 500 career goals . He retired in 1960 , as an eight @-@ time Stanley Cup champion , as well as the NHL 's all @-@ time leading scorer , with 544 goals . In 1961 , the league waived the customary three @-@ year waiting period ; Richard was elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame .

= = = Hockey Night in Canada = = =

In the fall of 1951 , in an attempt to determine whether it a suitable medium for broadcasting hockey games , Conn Smythe watched special television feeds of Maple Leaf games . Television already had detractors within the NHL , especially Campbell who declared it " the greatest menace of the entertainment world " . In 1952 , even though only 10 % of Canadians owned a television set , the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) began televising games . On November 1 , 1952 , Hockey Night in Canada was first broadcast on television , with Foster Hewitt calling the action between the Leafs and Bruins at Maple Leaf Gardens . The broadcasts quickly became the highest @-@ rated show on Canadian television . The broadcast came three weeks after Montreal radio host René Lecavalier presented a French @-@ language telecast of the Montreal Canadiens ' opener against Chicago , marking the beginning of La Soirée du hockey , which Radio @-@ Canada , the French arm of the CBC , broadcast until 2004 . On that same night , Danny Gallivan made his debut as the English language play @-@ by @-@ play announcer for the Canadiens .

While Campbell feared televised hockey would cause people to stop attending games in person , Smythe felt the opposite . " There 'll be thousands of people seeing hockey as played by the pros for the first time . They 'll be sold on it because it 's a great game , and they won 't be satisfied to stay [at home] but will turn out to the rinks . " As an experiment in the 1956 ? 57 season , CBS first broadcast hockey games in the United States . Amazed with the initial popularity of the broadcasts , it inaugurated a 21 @-@ game package of games the following year . The NHL itself adapted to become viewer @-@ friendly . In 1949 , to make the puck easier to see , the league mandated the ice surface painted white . In 1951 , so each team was distinguishable on black and white television , the League required home teams wear colored jerseys , and the road teams wear white . For the same reason , teams painted the centre red line in a checkered pattern to set it apart from the solid blue lines .

= = Dynasties = =

= = = Toronto Maple Leafs = = =

In the 1951 Stanley Cup Finals , in the only final in NHL history when all games were decided in overtime , the Maple Leafs defeated the Canadiens four games to one . After dashing from his defensive position , despite an earlier warning from Smythe not to take unnecessary chances , Leafs ' defenceman Bill Barilko hammered the Cup @-@ winning goal past Montreal goaltender

Gerry McNeil . The goal completed Toronto 's fourth Stanley Cup championship in five seasons , making Barilko a national hero . Four months later , Barilko and a friend disappeared in Northern Ontario , where they had flown on a fishing trip . Barilko 's disappearance became front page news across Canada ; a massive search failed to locate the missing plane . Barilko 's remains were not found until 1962 , the first year the Maple Leafs won the Cup since Barilko 's overtime winner eleven years previous . Barilko 's disappearance was immortalized 40 years later by Canadian rock band The Tragically Hip in their 1992 song " Fifty Mission Cap " .

By 1962 , the disappearance of Bill Barilko and the Maple Leafs ' subsequent failure to win the Stanley Cup led Toronto fans to believe a curse was upon the team . The Leafs won the 1962 championship shortly before Barilko 's remains were discovered . In 1963 , they repeated as champions . In 1964 , the Leafs again played for the Stanley Cup against the Red Wings . In the third period of game six , trailing the series 3 ? 2 , Maple Leafs ' defenceman Bobby Baun suffered a broken ankle from a Gordie Howe slap shot . Despite the injury , Baun returned with his ankle taped up to score the winning goal in overtime . Baun also played the seventh game as the Maple Leafs defeated the Red Wings to win their third consecutive title .

= = = Detroit Red Wings = = =

Beginning in 1948 ? 49 , the Red Wings went on to win seven consecutive regular season titles - a feat no other team has accomplished . During that time , the Wings won four Stanley Cups . During the 1952 Stanley Cup Finals the Legend of the Octopus was created . For the fourth game of the finals , brothers Pete and Jerry Cusimano brought a dead octopus to the Detroit Olympia . At the time , they reasoned the eight tentacles of an octopus represented the eight wins required to win the Stanley Cup . The Wings had won seven consecutive playoff games , and the brothers hoped the octopus would inspire Detroit to an eighth victory . The tradition was born , as Detroit handily defeated Montreal 3 ? 0 .

During this time , the Wings were led by Gordie Howe . In 1943 , at the age of 15 , Howe was invited to the Rangers player camp in Winnipeg ; but quickly became homesick and failed to favorably impress the Rangers coaches . The next season the Red Wings invited him to their camp , where coach Jack Adams called him " the best prospect I 've seen in 20 years . " Two years later , at the age of 18 , Howe debuted in the NHL for Detroit . On March 28 , 1950 , during a playoff game against the Leafs , Howe was nearly killed as he mistimed an attempted check on Toronto 's Ted Kennedy , causing him to slam head first into the boards . Rushed to hospital , doctors drilled a hole into Howe 's skull to relieve pressure on his brain . Despite fears he would never play again , " Mr. Hockey " recovered to start the following season , then won his first of four consecutive scoring titles in 1950 ? 51 . Howe was 52 years old when he retired from professional hockey .

= = = Montreal Canadiens = = =

In three consecutive seasons between 1954 and 1956 , the Red Wings faced the Canadiens in the Stanley Cup Finals . Detroit won the first two match @-@ ups , however , Montreal captured the 1956 Stanley Cup , ending one dynasty and starting another . Subsequently , the Canadiens won five consecutive championships between 1956 and 1960 , a feat no other team has duplicated .

In 1953 , the Canadiens signed Jean Beliveau ; a well @-@ anticipated prospect in the NHL for years . Because his Quebec Senior Hockey League team , the Quebec Aces , matched any contract offer the Canadiens made , Beliveau repeatedly refused to turn professional with Montreal . Ultimately , Montreal bought the entire league outright , along with the rights to all players , and turned it professional . Beliveau finally signed with Montreal for \$ 105 @,@ 000 over five years and a \$ 20 @,@ 000 bonus , an unprecedented contract for a rookie . Playing for Montreal , Beliveau went on to win ten Stanley Cups .

Led by Richard and Beliveau , the 1950s Canadiens had overwhelming offensive ability ; to slow their offence the NHL amended its rules . To illustrate , the 1955 ? 56 Canadiens frequently scored multiple goals during the same two @-@ minute powerplay . In one game against Boston , during a

penalty , Beliveau scored three goals in 44 seconds . For the following season , the league instituted a rule permitting a player serving a minor penalty to return to the ice when a goal was scored against his team .

= = Breaking the colour barrier = =

On January 18 , 1958 , by joining the Bruins as an ' injury call @-@ up ' for a game in Montreal , Willie O 'Ree became the first black player in the NHL . Playing only two games with the Bruins in the 1957 ? 58 season , O 'Ree returned in 1960 ? 61 , playing another 43 games with Boston . Although he only played 45 NHL games , scoring four goals , he earned the label the " Jackie Robinson of hockey " .

Throughout the season , O 'Ree faced blatant racism from opponents , remarking " people just wanted a piece of me , maybe because they thought I was different , so I had to defend myself . I wasn 't going to be run out of any rink . " He endured racial slurs from fans in each of Chicago , Detroit and New York , though the taunts were largely absent in Montreal and Toronto . O 'Ree was supported by his teammates and Boston fans . He stated " they were mean to me in places like Detroit and New York , too . But never in Boston . I 'll never forget how my teammates there took care of me ? men like Johnny Bucyk , Doug Mohns , Charlie Burns and Don McKenney . They accepted me totally . All of them had class . " In 1961 , O 'Ree was traded to Montreal but was unable to crack the Canadiens ' line @-@ up . Playing over 20 minor league seasons , O 'Ree twice won the Western Hockey League 's scoring title : in 1964 , with the Los Angeles Blades , and in 1969 , with the San Diego Gulls .

O 'Ree 's breakthrough came several years after another black player , Herb Carnegie was denied the same opportunity . In 1938 ? 39 , playing junior hockey with the Ontario Hockey Association 's Toronto Rangers , during a practice Carnegie was pulled aside by his coach and told " See that man sitting in the blues ? That 's Conn Smythe , owner of the Toronto Maple Leafs . He says he 'd take you tomorrow if he could turn you white . " Stung by the comments , Carnegie resolved to excel at the game . He was offered a tryout with the Rangers in 1950 , then a spot on their lowest minor league team . " They told me that if I signed with the Rangers and went to New Haven , I would make international headlines . I told them my family couldn 't eat headlines . That was probably when the Rangers decided to forget about me . "

= = " Norris House League " = =

During the 1960s , it was often joked " NHL " stood for " Norris House League " because the Norris family held interests in several league teams . James D. Norris was co @-@ owner of the Black Hawks along with Arthur Wirtz ; his brother Bruce inherited ownership of the Red Wings . James D. Norris was also the largest shareholder in Madison Square Garden , giving him control over the Rangers .

The Black Hawks qualified for the playoffs only once between 1949 and 1957 . The team 's fortunes turned in 1958 ? 59 , following the acquisition of Ted Lindsay and Glenn Hall from Detroit . Making the playoffs , the Black Hawks lost to Montreal in the semi @-@ finals in 1959 and 1960 , before capturing their first championship in 23 years , in the 1961 Stanley Cup Finals . Chicago next won the Cup 49 years later in the 2009 @-@ 10 season .

The Hawks ' resurgence in the 1960s led Norris and Wirtz to take advantage of their customers . Dubbed the " Chicken Wings " by fans , the Hawks were famous for fleecing fans . Ticket sellers were arrested for scalping ; the team charged \$ 9 for playoff tickets in 1965 , \$ 3 more than Detroit , Toronto or Montreal . The Hawks also refused to broadcast road playoff games in Chicago , preferring to charge fans to watch the games via closed @-@ circuit television at Chicago Stadium . Fans responded by littering the ice and passing out leaflets urging a boycott of the team during Chicago 's last regular season game in 1964 ? 65 .

= = Expansion = =

In 1963 , Rangers governor William Jennings introduced to his peers the idea of expanding the league to the American West Coast by adding two new teams for the 1964 ? 65 season . His argument was based around concerns the Western Hockey League intended to operate in the near future as a major league . Jennings also hoped inclusion of teams on the west coast would make the league truly national , and thereby , improve the chances of returning to television in the United States as the NHL had lost its deal with CBS . While the governors did not agree to the proposal , the topic of expansion surfaced every time the owners met subsequently . In 1965 , there was agreement to expand by six teams , doubling the size of the NHL . San Francisco ? Oakland and Vancouver were declared " acceptable cities " with Los Angeles and St. Louis as potential sites . Fourteen applications were received from across Canada and the United States , including four from Los Angeles .

In February 1966 , the governors met and awarded franchises to Los Angeles , Minnesota , Philadelphia , Pittsburgh , San Francisco and St. Louis . The league rejected bids from Baltimore , Buffalo and Vancouver . The six winning bids each paid \$ 2 million for their franchises . St. Louis was awarded a franchise with no bid received . The league 's decision to grant a franchise was contingent on a potential owner stepping forward - a decision influenced by the Norris and Wirtz families , who owned the St. Louis Arena .

Canadians were outraged no expansion teams were awarded to Canada . Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson stated : " the NHL decision to expand only in the U.S. impinges on the sacred principles of all Canadians . " Maple Leafs coach Punch Imlach stated Vancouver was " sold out " and Toronto and Montreal did not want to share television revenue with another Canadian team .

Leafs co @-@ owner Stafford Smythe rejected accusations that he opposed expansion to Vancouver , pointing out that he had offered to build and operate an \$ 8 million facility in the city 's downtown area , a proposal that he contended made little sense unless Vancouver had an NHL team . However , Smythe 's proposal was contingent on him acquiring the parcel of land required from the city , then valued at \$ 2 @. @ 5 million , for \$ 1 . The proposed transaction was defeated in a municipal referendum . Smythe therefore placed the blame for Vancouver 's failed bid on the city : " Vancouver lost its chance the day it turned down the referendum on our arena proposal " , Smythe said . " That proved to me that the people out there aren 't interested in going major league . "

The Original Six era ended with the 1967 Stanley Cup Finals between the two @-@ time defending champion Canadiens , and the Maple Leafs . The oldest team in the league , the third place Leafs were led in goal by 37 @-@ year @-@ old Terry Sawchuk and 42 @-@ year @-@ old Johnny Bower . Known as the " over the hill gang " , in six games , Toronto became the oldest team to win the Cup , defeating the favored Canadiens . The Maple Leafs have not appeared in the Stanley Cup finals since .

= = Rules and innovations = =

In 1942 , due to World War II related travel restrictions , league president Frank Calder abolished the 10 @-@ minute overtime for regular season games so teams could catch their trains without delay . With the war 's conclusion , regular season overtime did not return , although playoff games continued until a winner was decided . Overtime was re @-@ introduced in the regular 1983 ? 84 season .

In 1943 , to make it more entertaining , the rules committee looked to increase the game 's speed . Rangers coach Frank Boucher proposed the neutral zone divided by a centre red line , so teams could pass the puck out of the defensive zone into their half of the neutral zone . Previously , the league required defensive players carry the puck from the defensive zone , not permitting a pass across the blue line . Introduced in 1943 ? 44 , the new rule changed the game . Formerly , strong fore @-@ checking pinned opponents in their own zone for minutes at a time ; subsequently , teams rushed up the ice with defencemen passing to forwards beyond the blue line . Scoring increased 10 % league @-@ wide ; four of six teams topped 200 goals , the first time teams did so . In the early 1960s , Stan Mikita inadvertently introduced the curved blade to a hockey stick . Cracking his blade

during a practice and not wanting to retrieve another , Mikita shot the puck in anger . He noticed the curve in the cracked blade caused the puck to behave differently . Both Mikita and Bobby Hull experimented with heating and bending their stick blade to create different curves . Using a curved blade , Mikita went on to win four Art Ross Trophies as the NHL 's leading scorer . He later said he regretted the idea : " It 's one of the worst inventions in hockey , because it eliminated the use of the backhand . "

The NHL Amateur Draft was first held on June 5 , 1963 at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal , Quebec . Created by Campbell , it was meant to more evenly distribute talent . To that point , teams directly sponsored junior clubs , buying a player 's rights . A 16 @-@ year @-@ old with the St. Michaels Juveniles , Garry Monahan , was the first player selected in the 1963 draft . Monahan remains the youngest player ever selected in an NHL draft . The Entry Draft system did not fully replace the sponsorship system until 1969 .

= = = Goaltending = = =

Goaltender Clint Benedict was the first to wear facial protection , donning it in 1930 to protect a broken nose . Because its design interfered with his vision , Benedict quickly abandoned the mask . Twenty @-@ nine years later , Jacques Plante made the goalie mask a permanent fixture in hockey . In 1956 , Plante began wearing a mask in practice after shots from teammates twice broke cheekbones . Montreal coach Toe Blake refused to allow Plante to wear his mask in games . On November 1 , 1959 , in a game at Madison Square Garden , that changed , when Plante was struck in the face . Teams did not dress backup goaltenders ; the game was delayed 20 minutes , while doctors frantically stitched up Plante . When Blake asked Plante if he was ' ready to return ' , Plante refused unless allowed to wear his mask . Livid , Blake agreed only if Plante removed the mask when his face was healed . Wearing the mask , Plante led the Canadiens on an 18 @-@ game unbeaten streak , to finally remove the mask at Blake 's urging ; promptly the team lost their first game . Defeated , Blake relented . Plante 's mask became a permanent fixture as he led the Canadiens to their fifth consecutive Stanley Cup . Soon after , other goalies followed Plante 's lead .

Remarkably , Terry Sawchuk played goal for most of his career not wearing a mask ; he crouched very low such that his shoulders nearly touched his knees . This stance became known as the " gorilla crouch " . During his career , Sawchuk relied on his ability to see the puck under the players ' bodies , his outstanding mobility , and reflexes , to win four Vezina Trophies . By 1955 , he was regarded as the greatest goaltender to ever play the game . Sawchuk 's career was cut short when he died in 1970 from injuries suffered in a drunken incident with teammate Ron Stewart . The Hall of Fame waived its waiting period , immediately inducting Sawchuk as the NHL 's all @-@ time record holder in wins (447) and shutouts (103) . Sawchuk 's style of play was a precursor to the modern goaltending butterfly style .

The butterfly style - used by most all modern goaltenders - was invented by Glenn Hall . Considered both unique and foolish , Hall 's style of dropping to his knees and kicking his pads out in a V formation forced shooters to aim for the top half of the net . Hall adopted the technique as a youth when he lacked the arm strength to stop shots with his stick . An eight @-@ time All @-@ Star , Hall became an NHL regular at the start of the 1955 ? 1956 season to begin a sequence of 502 consecutive games as goaltender for Detroit and Chicago . This record is hailed as one of the NHL 's most unbreakable .

= = Unionization = =

The first players ' union was formed February 12 , 1957 by Red Wings player Ted Lindsay who had sat on the board of the NHL 's Pension Society since 1952 . Lindsay and his fellow players were upset by the league 's refusal to let them view the books related to the pension fund . The league claimed that it was barely breaking even financially , and so could not contribute more than it did . Players on the Pension Committee suspected otherwise , leading Lindsay and Doug Harvey of the Canadiens to discussions on forming a union in 1956 . The idea quickly gained popularity and when

the union 's founding was announced publicly , every NHL player had signed up with the exception of Ted Kennedy , who was retiring .

The owners immediately worked to crush the union . Toronto owner Conn Smythe compared the players association to communism : " I feel that anything spawned in secrecy as this association was certainly has to have some odour to it . " Red Wings president Bruce Norris responded by trading Lindsay to his brother 's team , the Black Hawks . The move was widely seen as punitive , as the Hawks had finished last in the NHL every season , save one , from 1949 until 1957 . Lindsay was not the only player sent to Chicago as punishment ; Glenn Hall was included as he refused to distance himself from Lindsay . In Toronto , Smythe repeatedly benched Jim Thomson , who was the union 's secretary , before also dealing him to the Black Hawks . The Players ' Association responded by filing a \$ 3 million anti @-@ trust lawsuit against the NHL . Persuaded by teammates Gordie Howe and Red Kelly , the Red Wings players voted to withdraw from the association in November 1957 . Other teams quickly followed , and the union capitulated . Union leadership ultimately agreed to drop the lawsuit in exchange for small concessions , which included a minimum annual salary of \$ 7 @,@ 000 , increases to the pension contributions and moving expenses for traded players .

Led by Alan Eagleson , the National Hockey League Players ' Association (NHLPA) was formed in 1967 . Eagleson became the sport 's first player agent in 1966 when he negotiated a deal on behalf of Bobby Orr with the Bruins that saw the 18 @-@ year @-@ old rookie become the highest paid player in the NHL . At its peak , Eagleson 's practice represented 150 professional athletes . Eagleson had also helped settle an American Hockey League players strike sparked by mistreatment of players . In June 1967 , the NHLPA was announced , and quickly received acceptance from the owners .

= = Timeline = =

Notes

" SC " denotes won Stanley Cup