

= Brad McCrimmon =

Byron Brad McCrimmon (March 29 , 1959 ? September 7 , 2011) was a Canadian professional ice hockey defenceman and coach . He played over 1 @, @ 200 games in the National Hockey League (NHL) for the Boston Bruins , Philadelphia Flyers , Calgary Flames , Detroit Red Wings , Hartford Whalers and Phoenix Coyotes between 1979 and 1997 . He achieved his greatest success in Calgary , where he was named a second team All @-@ Star in 1987 ? 88 , played in the 1988 NHL All @-@ Star Game and won the Plus @-@ Minus Award with a league leading total of + 48 . In 1989 , he helped the Flames win their first Stanley Cup championship . His career plus @-@ minus of + 444 is one of the highest totals in NHL history .

McCrimmon turned to coaching following his playing career , serving as an assistant with the New York Islanders before taking over as head coach of the Western Hockey League 's Saskatoon Blades for two seasons between 1998 and 2000 . He then returned to the NHL as an assistant , first with the Flames then the Atlanta Thrashers and finally the Red Wings . He left the NHL to become the head coach of Lokomotiv Yaroslavl of the Kontinental Hockey League (KHL) in 2011 . He never coached a regular season game however , as he was killed in the Lokomotiv Yaroslavl air disaster along with most of the team after their plane crashed en route to their first game .

= = Playing career = =

= = = Junior = = =

McCrimmon began his junior career at the age of 15 with the Prince Albert Raiders of the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League (SJHL) . He played two seasons with the team , scoring 23 goals and 84 points . In his second season , 1975 ? 76 , he was named the SJHL 's defenceman of the year . For the 1976 ? 77 season , he moved up to the Brandon Wheat Kings of the Western Canada Hockey League (WCHL) . He scored 84 points in 72 games in his first WCHL season and added 13 points in 15 playoff games as the Wheat Kings reached the league championship series , only to lose to the New Westminster Bruins . McCrimmon scored 97 points in 1977 ? 78 and 98 in 1978 ? 79 . He was named the defenceman of the year in 1978 and was named to the league all @-@ star team in both seasons . He also joined the Canadian junior team at the World Junior Championship in each season . He recorded two assists in six games to help Canada win a bronze medal at the 1978 tournament and had three points in five games in 1979 though Canada failed to medal .

With McCrimmon as team captain , the Wheat Kings again reached the league championship in 1978 ? 79 . He scored 28 points in 22 games to help Brandon win the President 's Cup . The team advanced to the 1979 Memorial Cup tournament where it reached the final against the Ontario Hockey League champion Peterborough Petes . McCrimmon routinely played a high number of minutes each game ; his teammates marveled at his stamina . In the Memorial Cup final , he played virtually every minute of the contest . His total ice time was 60 minutes , 38 seconds , and he was off the ice only to serve a two @-@ minute penalty . Peterborough won the game , 2 ? 1 in overtime , after McCrimmon lost the puck on a play he thought was icing was not called . Peterborough 's Terry Bovair stole the puck from him and scored the championship winning goal . Despite the loss , McCrimmon was named a tournament all @-@ star on defence .

= = = Professional = = =

At the 1979 NHL Entry Draft , considered one of the deepest in league history , McCrimmon was selected 15th overall by the Boston Bruins . He made his NHL debut on October 11 , 1979 , in the team 's opening night victory over the Winnipeg Jets . He scored 5 goals and 16 points in his rookie season of 1979 ? 80 and improved to 11 goals and 29 points in his second season . With only nine points in the 1981 ? 82 season , McCrimmon had gained a reputation as a player who did not attack

with the puck in the NHL . Following the retirement of Rogie Vachon , the Bruins needed a new goaltender . They sent McCrimmon to the Philadelphia Flyers in exchange for Pete Peeters on June 9 , 1982 .

Flyers ' coach Bob McCammon argued that McCrimmon had been " intimidated " by playing with fellow 1979 Bruins pick and all @-@ star , Ray Bourque , and that he could be a better overall defenceman . McCrimmon 's offence improved in his first two seasons in Philadelphia ? 25 points in 1982 ? 83 and 24 , though without a goal scored , in 1983 ? 84 ? but he established himself as a top shutdown defenceman with the Flyers . He recorded 43 points in 1984 ? 85 and posted a plus @-@ minus rating of + 52 , fifth best in the NHL . McCrimmon was ruled out of the 1985 Stanley Cup Playoffs in the third game of the league semi @-@ final against the Quebec Nordiques when he suffered a third @-@ degree separation of his left shoulder following a hard hit by Wilf Paiement , an injury that required surgery to repair . The Flyers reached the final without McCrimmon , but were defeated by the Edmonton Oilers for the Stanley Cup . McCrimmon returned to start the 1985 ? 86 season , in which he had his best season statistically . He appeared in all 80 games for the Flyers and set career highs of 13 goals , 43 assists , 56 points and his plus @-@ minus rating of + 83 was second only to defensive partner Mark Howe . He was named recipient of the Barry Ashbee Trophy as the Flyers ' top defenceman .

McCrimmon and the Flyers became embroiled in a contract dispute prior to the 1986 ? 87 season . The two sides were unable to agree on a contract the season before , and an arbitrator was required to resolve the impasse . The arbitrator sided with the team , setting a contract at the Flyers ' offer of US \$ 165 @,@ 000 for that season (he asked for \$ 200 @,@ 000) , with an option to extend the deal for 1986 ? 87 . The Flyers exercised that option , and though he admitted he was under contract for the season , McCrimmon refused to play unless a new deal was reached . When the two sides were unable to come to an agreement , McCrimmon went home to Saskatchewan as the season began . The Flyers suspended McCrimmon on September 26 , 1986 , after he refused to appear in the first exhibition games . The impasse was not resolved until a month later , when he and the team agreed to a one @-@ year contract on October 29 . He immediately returned to the team and appeared in 72 of the Flyers ' 80 games , recording 22 points and finishing fourth in the league at + 45 . In the 1987 Stanley Cup Playoffs , he appeared in all 26 post @-@ season games as the Flyers again reached the final against Edmonton . McCrimmon scored the overtime winner in game 3 of the final , but the Oilers won the series .

Following the season , general manager Bobby Clarke refused to sign a new deal with McCrimmon , choosing instead to trade him . He was sent to the Calgary Flames on August 27 , 1987 , in exchange for a third round selection at the 1988 NHL Entry Draft and a first rounder at the 1989 Draft . On the 1987 ? 88 Flames , McCrimmon joined Al MacInnis , Paul Reinhart , Gary Suter and Ric Nattress to form one of the top defences in the NHL . He scored 42 points for the Flames , won the NHL Plus @-@ Minus Award with a league @-@ leading + 48 and was named a second team All @-@ Star . Additionally , he played in the 1988 All @-@ Star Game .

McCrimmon recorded only 22 points in 1988 ? 89 ? his lowest in seven seasons ? but led all NHL defencemen with a + 43 rating . He appeared in all 22 playoff games for the Flames as the team defeated the Montreal Canadiens to win the first Stanley Cup championship in franchise history . McCrimmon was named the 10th captain in Flames history on November 3 , 1989 , succeeding Lanny McDonald and Jim Peplinski , who both retired following the Stanley Cup win . He scored 4 goals and 19 points during the 1989 ? 90 season , but fell out of favour with head coach Terry Crisp as the two disagreed over how the team 's defencemen were used . The Flames chose to trade him following the season , sending him to the Detroit Red Wings on June 15 , 1990 , in exchange for a second round draft pick .

In 1991 ? 92 , McCrimmon was paired with a young Nicklas Lidström . Though he focused on defence , allowing Lidström to be more creative offensively , McCrimmon 's 29 points were a significant improvement on the 13 he scored the season before . He played one more season in Detroit before again being traded , this time to the Hartford Whalers on June 1 , 1993 , in exchange for a sixth round draft pick . In Hartford , the 34 @-@ year @-@ old McCrimmon served as a mentor for 18 @-@ year @-@ old Chris Pronger . Offensively , he scored 16 points total in three seasons

with the Whalers between 1993 and 1996 . Leaving the team as a free agent , McCrimmon signed with the Phoenix Coyotes for the 1996 ? 97 season . He appeared in 37 games that season , scoring one goal and adding five assists . Following the season , he announced his retirement .

McCrimmon was paired with some of the best defencemen of his generation . In addition to Lidstrom and Pronger , he played with Hockey Hall of Famers Ray Bourque , Mark Howe and Paul Coffey . He was known as a stay at home defenceman who focused on limiting the opposition 's chances . He played a physical game , often in the " dirty " areas of the ice ? battling opponents in the corners and in front of the net . McCrimmon 's career plus @-@ minus was + 444 , a total surpassed by only nine players as of 2012 . Brian Propp , a teammate of his in Philadelphia , said that he was one of the most underrated defencemen of his time .

= = Coaching career = =

McCrimmon moved behind the bench shortly after his retirement , joining the New York Islanders as an assistant coach to Mike Milbury on August 19 , 1997 . He left the team after two years to become head coach of the Saskatoon Blades of the Western Hockey League in 1999 . In two seasons with the team , he coached 144 games , winning 50 and tying 15 . McCrimmon coached the Blades to a second @-@ place finish in the East Division in 1999 ? 2000 and a seven @-@ game opening round playoff victory over the Regina Pats before the team was eliminated by the Calgary Hitmen .

Returning to the NHL in 2000 , McCrimmon joined the Calgary Flames as an assistant to Don Hay . He remained with the team for two and a half seasons , serving under both Hay and successor Greg Gilbert until the team replaced its coaching staff on December 3 , 2002 . He returned to the NHL in 2004 as an assistant for the Atlanta Thrashers . He was promoted to associate coach in his fourth season when team general manager Don Waddell fired head coach Bob Hartley during the 2007 ? 08 season . McCrimmon had been offered the Thrashers head coaching position after Waddell 's dismissal , but turned it down after the team failed to guarantee he would retain the position beyond the end of the season . Leaving the Thrashers , McCrimmon signed a three @-@ year contract with the Detroit Red Wings in 2008 to serve as an assistant coach .

Looking to further his career , he left Detroit on May 19 , 2011 , and was introduced as head coach of Lokomotiv Yaroslavl of the Kontinental Hockey League (KHL) on May 29 . He hoped that coaching the Russian club would help him land an NHL head coaching position in the future . He never coached a game for Lokomotiv , as on September 7 , 2011 , the team 's plane crashed on take off en route to their first game of the season . McCrimmon died along with nearly his entire team .

= = Personal life = =

McCrimmon was born in Dodsland , Saskatchewan , but grew up on the family farm near the village of Plenty . He often returned to his hometown during his playing days , spending his summers training on the family farm . He brought the Stanley Cup back to Plenty in 1989 after winning it with the Flames , fulfilling a promise McCrimmon made to his grandfather as a youth .

Hockey was a significant part of McCrimmon 's life from his youth . His father Byron was a long time senior player and coach for the Rosetown Red Wings in Saskatchewan . The younger McCrimmon played for teams in both Plenty and Rosetown at the same time , often appearing on teams one level above his age . His younger brother Kelly is the owner and general manager of the Brandon Wheat Kings , with whom they played together as teammates in 1978 ? 79 .

Nicknamed both " Beast " and " Sarge " , McCrimmon was often considered " gruff " and had a direct way of speaking that cultivated respect amongst his peers . According to former teammate Lanny McDonald : " He was tough , he was abrasive , but on the inside he was a big teddy bear , a big softie . " McCrimmon 's brother remembered him as a person who dedicated himself to his family . Brad had two children with his wife Maureen : daughter Carlin and son Liam .

= = Career statistics = =

= = = Regular season and playoffs = = =

= = = International = = =

= = = Coaching = = =

= = Awards and honours = =