

= George Armstrong (ice hockey) =

George Edward " Chief " Armstrong (born July 6 , 1930) is a Canadian former professional ice hockey centre who played 21 seasons in the National Hockey League (NHL) for the Toronto Maple Leafs . He played 1 @, @ 188 NHL games between 1950 and 1971 , all with Toronto and a franchise record , and was the team 's captain for 13 seasons . Armstrong was a member of four Stanley Cup championship teams and played in seven NHL All @-@ Star Games . He scored the final goal of the NHL 's " Original Six " era as Toronto won the 1967 Stanley Cup .

Armstrong played both junior and senior hockey in the Toronto Marlboros organization and was a member of the 1950 Allan Cup winning team as senior champions of Canada . He returned to the Marlboros following his playing career and coached the junior team to two Memorial Cup championships . He served as a scout for the Quebec Nordiques , as an assistant general manager of the Maple Leafs and for part of the 1988 ? 89 NHL season as Toronto 's head coach . Armstrong was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1975 and the Maple Leafs honoured his uniform number 10 in 1998 .

= = Early life = =

Armstrong was born in 1930 in Skead , Ontario , to a Scottish Canadian father and part Ojibway mother . He grew up in Falconbridge , Ontario where his father was a nickel miner . Sport was an important part of Armstrong 's family as his father played soccer and his mother was a canoeist . The younger Armstrong developed a passion for hockey but was a poor skater , which his father believed was a consequence of a case of spinal meningitis George suffered at the age of six .

While attending Sudbury High School , Armstrong played on the hockey team with Red McCarthy and Tim Horton . Inspired by a newspaper advertisement offering tryouts with the Copper Cliff Redmen of the Northern Ontario Junior Hockey Association (NOJHA) , Armstrong convinced Horton and McCarthy to join him in trying out . They made the team and Armstrong began his junior hockey career at age 16 in the 1946 ? 47 season . He recorded six goals and five assists in nine games and caught the attention of scouts for the National Hockey League (NHL) ' s Toronto Maple Leafs who added him to their protected list . He also played with the Prince Albert Blackhawks for part of that season . Armstrong quit school in grade 11 to focus on his hockey career .

= = Playing career = =

= = = Junior and senior = = =

The Maple Leafs placed Armstrong on the Stratford Kroehlers in the Ontario Hockey Association (OHA) junior division for the 1947 ? 48 season . He led the league in both assists (43) and points (73) , and was named recipient of the Red Tilson Trophy as the OHA 's most valuable player . Promoted to the Toronto Marlboros for the 1948 ? 49 season , Armstrong recorded 62 points in 39 games with the junior squad and played in three regular season and ten post @-@ season matches for the senior team . Armstrong remained with the senior Marlboros in 1949 ? 50 where he served as captain . He led the OHA senior division with 64 goals , at the time an OHA record , and recorded 115 points in 39 games . He was again named the winner of the Red Tilson Trophy .

The Maple Leafs briefly recalled Armstrong during the 1949 ? 50 season and he made his NHL debut on December 3 , 1949 . He appeared in two games before returning to the Marlboros . In the 1950 Allan Cup playdowns , he recorded 19 goals and 19 assists in 14 games as the Marlboros won the national senior championship . It was also during the season that he earned his nickname . While visiting the Stoney Reserve in Alberta with the Marlboros , the locals presented Armstrong with a ceremonial headdress and called him " Big Chief Shoot the Puck " owing to his own Native heritage . The nickname was often shortened to " Chief " .

= = = Toronto Maple Leafs = = =

Upon turning professional in 1950 ? 51 , Armstrong was assigned to Toronto 's American Hockey League (AHL) affiliate , the Pittsburgh Hornets . In 71 games for Pittsburgh , he recorded 15 goals and 48 points . Despite being hampered by hand and wrist injuries suffered in fights , Armstrong was the AHL 's leading goal scorer and stood second in points by mid @-@ season in 1951 ? 52 . He was recalled to Toronto during the season and scored his first NHL goal , against goaltender Gerry McNeil of the Montreal Canadiens . It was the first goal ever scored by a player with Native heritage . He finished the season with three goals and three assists in 20 games with Toronto .

Though he missed the start of the 1952 ? 53 season due to a separated shoulder , Armstrong earned a permanent spot on the Maple Leafs ' roster . He quietly established himself as an important contributor for Toronto by recording 25 points that season , then scoring 32 points the following season and 28 in 1954 ? 55 . A 48 @-@ point season in 1955 ? 56 was second on the team to Tod Sloan 's 66 . Armstrong then led the Maple Leafs in scoring with 44 points in 1956 ? 57 despite missing 14 of his team 's games . He was named to play in the NHL All @-@ Star Game in both seasons . They were the first two of seven he would ultimately play .

The Maple Leafs named Armstrong the team 's captain in 1957 ? 58 as he succeeded Ted Kennedy and Jim Thomson who served as co @-@ captains the season before . He finished fourth in team scoring with 42 points , then played his third All @-@ Star Game during the 1958 ? 59 season . He recorded four assists in the playoffs as the Maple Leafs reached the 1959 Stanley Cup Final , but lost to the Montreal Canadiens . With 51 points in 1959 ? 60 , Armstrong finished one behind Bob Pulford for the team lead . Toronto again reached the Stanley Cup Final where they were again eliminated by Montreal .

The Maple Leafs finally reached the NHL 's peak two seasons later . Armstrong set a career high with 53 points in the 1961 ? 62 regular season , then added 12 points in 12 playoff games for Toronto . He started the play that resulted in the Stanley Cup clinching goal , rushing the puck up ice before passing to Tim Horton , who then passed to goal @-@ scorer Dick Duff that capped off a 2 ? 1 victory in the sixth and deciding game of the series against the Chicago Black Hawks . As Maple Leafs captain , Armstrong was presented the trophy by league president Clarence Campbell . It was the first of three consecutive championships for Toronto as the Maple Leafs of 1962 ? 1964 became the fourth dynasty in NHL history . Individually , Armstrong scored 21 , 19 and 20 goals over the three seasons and by virtue of the NHL 's All @-@ Star Game format of the time that had the defending champion play the all @-@ stars of the remaining teams , appeared in his fourth , fifth and sixth All @-@ Star Games . Early in the 1963 ? 64 season , on December 1 , 1963 , Armstrong scored his 200th career NHL goal .

A 37 @-@ point season followed in 1964 ? 65 , then 51 points the 1965 ? 66 season . By 1966 ? 67 , Armstrong led an aging Maple Leafs team that entered the playoffs as an underdog against a dominant Chicago team . The Maple leaves nonetheless eliminated the Black Hawks in six games to set up the 1967 Stanley Cup Final against Montreal . The Canadiens were so confident of victory that a display area for the Stanley Cup had been set up at the Quebec pavilion at Expo 67 prior to the series ' start . The Maple Leafs dashed Montreal 's hopes by winning the championship in six games . Armstrong scored the final goal of the series in a 3 ? 1 victory in the deciding contest . It was also the last goal scored in the NHL 's " Original Six " era as the league was set to double in size to 12 teams for the 1967 ? 68 season .

Armstrong announced his intention to retire as a player following the championship but changed his mind and returned for another season . The Maple Leafs placed him on their protected list for the 1967 Expansion Draft , and he remained with Toronto . He played in his seventh All @-@ Star Game in 1968 and finished the season with 34 points . Retiring following the season before changing his mind became an annual event for Armstrong as he announced his intention to leave the game in five straight years . He remained a consistent scorer for Toronto , recording 27 , 28 and 25 points in his following three seasons . He finally ended his playing career after the 1970 ? 71 season to take an office position in the Maple Leafs .

= = Coaching and scouting career = =

Armstrong was announced as the head coach of his former junior team , the Toronto Marlboros , in July 1972 . Though he had preferred his previous role as a scout to coaching , Armstrong led the Marlboros to Memorial Cup victories on two occasions : in 1973 and 1975 . In 1977 , Armstrong 's name circulated as a possible successor to Maple Leafs coach Red Kelly when the latter was fired by the team . When approached by the organization with the prospect of assuming head coaching duties however , Armstrong rejected the possibility . His decision resulted in animosity from within the organization and subsequently led to his resignation as coach of the Marlboros that season to accept a scouting post with the Quebec Nordiques .

Some 10 years later , Armstrong returned to the Maple Leafs organization in the dual capacities of assistant general manager and scout . During the 1988 ? 89 season , and after management had fired head coach John Brophy , team owner Harold Ballard was adamant that Armstrong be named Brophy 's replacement . Armstrong agreed to take the position , but increasingly delegated majority of his duties to assistant coach Garry Lariviere . The Maple Leafs finished with 17 wins in 47 Armstrong 's games coached . He was replaced by Doug Carpenter the following season and returned to his scouting capacities with the team . Armstrong remains a scout with the Maple Leafs to this day .

= = Playing style = =

The Toronto Maple Leafs described Armstrong as being a " consistent , durable and hardworking " player throughout his 21 @-@ season career that spanned parts of four decades . A consummate leader , Armstrong was lauded by owner Conn Smythe as " the best captain , as a captain , the Leafs have ever had " . His 713 career points were the second most all @-@ time in Toronto franchise history at the time of his retirement , and As of 2014 remains fifth @-@ best . His 1 @,@ 187 NHL games are the most by any player in Toronto history , and he remains the franchise leader with 417 career assists and 713 points by a right wing . The Maple Leafs named him the co @-@ recipient , with Bob Pulford , of the J. P. Bickell Memorial Award in 1959 . The award is presented to members of the organization who perform with a high standard of excellence . In 1998 , the franchise honoured his uniform number 10 . In 2013 , he ranked was number 14 on Sportsnet 's list of the greatest Maple Leafs . Armstrong was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1975 and the Ontario Sports Hall of Fame in 2010 .

= = Personal life = =

Armstrong resides in Toronto with his wife Betty . The couple have four children : Fred , Betty @-@ Ann , Brian and Lorne . He is the uncle of Dale McCourt , a former first overall draft pick by the Detroit Red Wings in the 1977 NHL Amateur Draft . When given a day with the Stanley Cup in 2005 , Armstrong elected to have a family gathering with it at his son 's home in Vaughan , Ontario . Armstrong was recognized by the NHL for his charitable efforts in 1969 when he was named the inaugural recipient of the Charlie Conacher Humanitarian Award . Proud of his Native heritage , Armstrong often supported programs organized by both Indian and Northern Affairs and non @-@ governmental agencies that aimed to promote positive role models for Native children .

Armstrong had a brief film career , appearing as himself in the 1971 film Face @-@ Off , a.k.a. " Winter Comes Early " .

= = Career statistics = =

= = = Playing career = = =

* Stanley Cup champion

= = = Coaching career = = =

= = Awards and honours = =