

= Montreal Canadiens =

The Montreal Canadiens (French : Les Canadiens de Montréal) are a Canadian professional ice hockey team based in Montreal , Quebec , that competes in the National Hockey League (NHL) . They are members of the league 's Atlantic Division in the Eastern Conference .

The club 's official name is le Club de hockey Canadien . The team is frequently referred to in English and French as the Habs . French nicknames for the team include Les Canadiens (or Le Canadien) , Le Bleu @-@ Blanc @-@ Rouge , La Sainte @-@ Flanelle , Le Tricolore , Les Glorieux (or Nos Glorieux) , Les Habitants , Le CH and Le Grand Club .

Founded in 1909 , the Canadiens are the longest continuously operating professional ice hockey team worldwide , and the only existing NHL club to predate the founding of the NHL . One of the oldest North American professional sports franchises , the Canadiens ' history predates that of every other Canadian franchise outside of football as well as every American franchise outside of baseball and the National Football League 's Arizona Cardinals . The franchise is one of the " Original Six " teams , a description used for the teams that made up the NHL from 1942 until the 1967 expansion . The team 's championship season in 1992 ? 93 was the last time a Canadian team won the Stanley Cup .

The Canadiens have won the Stanley Cup more times than any other franchise . They have won 24 championships , 22 of them since 1927 , when NHL teams became the only ones to compete for the Stanley Cup . On a percentage basis , as of 2014 , the franchise has won 25 @.@ 3 % of all Stanley Cup championships contested after the Challenge Cup era , making it the second most successful professional sports team of the traditional four major sports of Canada and the United States , behind only the Boston Celtics .

Since 1996 , the Canadiens have played their home games at Centre Bell , originally known as Centre Molson . The team previously played at the Montreal Forum which housed the team for seven decades and all but their first two Stanley Cup championships .

= = History = =

The Canadiens were founded by J. Ambrose O 'Brien on December 4 , 1909 , as a charter member of the National Hockey Association , the forerunner to the National Hockey League . It was to be the team of the francophone community in Montreal , composed of francophone players , and under francophone ownership as soon as possible . The team 's first season was not a success , as they placed last . After the first year , ownership was transferred to George Kennedy of Montreal and the team 's fortunes improved over the next seasons . The team won its first Stanley Cup championship in the 1915 ? 16 season . In 1917 , with four other NHA teams , the Canadiens formed the NHL , and they won their first NHL Stanley Cup during the 1923 ? 24 season , led by Howie Morenz . The team moved from the Mount Royal Arena to the Montreal Forum for the 1926 ? 27 season .

The club began the 1930s decade successfully , with Stanley Cup wins in 1930 and 1931 . The Canadiens and its then @-@ Montreal rival , the Montreal Maroons , declined both on the ice and economically during the Great Depression . Losses grew to the point where the team owners considering selling the team to interests in Cleveland , Ohio , though local investors were ultimately found to finance the Canadiens . The Maroons still suspended operations , and several of their players moved to the Canadiens .

Led by the " Punch Line " of Maurice " Rocket " Richard , Toe Blake and Elmer Lach in the 1940s , the Canadiens enjoyed success again atop the NHL . From 1953 to 1960 , the franchise won six Stanley Cups , including a record five straight from 1956 to 1960 , with a new set of stars coming to prominence : Jean Beliveau , Dickie Moore , Doug Harvey , Bernie " Boom Boom " Geoffrion , Jacques Plante and Richard 's younger brother , Henri .

The Canadiens added ten more championships in 15 seasons from 1965 to 1979 , with another dynastic run of four @-@ straight Cups from 1976 to 1979 . In the 1976 ? 77 season , the Canadiens set two still @-@ standing team records ? for most points , with 132 , and fewest losses , by only losing eight games in an 80 @-@ game season . The next season , 1977 ? 78 , the team

had a 28 @-@ game unbeaten streak , the second @-@ longest in NHL history . The next generation of stars included Guy Lafleur , Yvan Cournoyer , Ken Dryden , Pete Mahovlich , Jacques Lemaire , Pierre Larouche , Steve Shutt , Bob Gainey , Serge Savard , Guy Lapointe and Larry Robinson . Scotty Bowman , who would later set a record for most NHL victories by a coach , was the team 's head coach for its last five Stanley Cup victories in the 1970s .

The Canadiens won Stanley Cups in 1986 , led by rookie star goaltender Patrick Roy , and in 1993 , continuing their streak of winning at least one championship in every decade from the 1910s to the 1990s (this streak came to an end in the 2000s) . In 1996 , the Habs moved from the Montreal Forum , their home during 70 seasons and 22 Stanley Cups , to Centre Molson (now called Centre Bell) .

Following Roy 's departure in 1995 , the Canadiens fell into an extended stretch of mediocrity , missing the playoffs in four of their next ten seasons and failing to advance past the second round of the playoffs until 2010 . By the late 1990s , with both an ailing team and monetary losses exacerbated by a record @-@ low value of the Canadian dollar , Montreal fans feared their team would end up relocated to the United States . Team owner Molson Brewery sold control of the franchise and the Molson Centre to American businessman George N. Gillett Jr. in 2001 , with the right of first refusal for any future sale by Gillett and a condition that the NHL Board of Governors must unanimously approve any attempt to move to a new city . Led by president Pierre Boivin , the Canadiens returned to being a lucrative enterprise , earning additional revenues from broadcasting and arena events . In 2009 , Gillett sold the franchise to a consortium led by the Molson family which included The Woodbridge Company , BCE / Bell , the QFL Solidarity Fund , Michael Andlauer , Luc Bertrand and the National Bank Financial Group for \$ 575 million , more than double the \$ 275 million he spent on the purchase eight years prior .

During the 2008 ? 09 season , the Canadiens celebrated their 100th anniversary with various events , including hosting both the 2009 NHL All @-@ Star Game , and the 2009 NHL Entry Draft . Said season also marked the Canadiens as the first team in NHL history to reach 3 @,@ 000 victories , reaching the milestone after their 5 ? 2 victory over the Florida Panthers on December 29 , 2008 .

= = Team identity = =

The Canadiens organization operates in both English and French . For many years , public address announcements and press releases have been given in both languages , and the team Web site and social media outlets are in both languages as well .

= = Crest and sweater design = =

One of sport 's oldest and most recognizable logos , the classic ' C ' and ' H ' of the Montreal Canadiens was first used together in the 1917 ? 18 season , when the club changed its name to " Club de hockey Canadien " from " Club athlétique Canadien " , before evolving to its current form in 1952 ? 53 . The " H " stands for " hockey " , not " Habitants " , a popular misconception . According to NHL.com , the first man to refer to the team as " the Habs " was American Tex Rickard , owner of the Madison Square Garden , in 1924 . Rickard apparently told a reporter that the " H " on the Canadiens ' sweaters was for " Habitants " .

The team 's colours since 1911 are blue , red , and white . The home sweater is predominantly red in colour . There are four blue and white stripes , one across each arm , one across the chest and the other across the waistline . The main road sweater is mainly white with a red and blue stripe across the waist , red at the end of both arm sleeves red shoulder yokes . The basic design has been in use since 1914 and took its current form in 1925 , generally evolving as materials changed . Because of the team 's lengthy history and significance in Quebec , the sweater has been referred to as ' La Sainte @-@ Flanelle ' (the holy flannel sweater) .

The Canadiens used multiple designs prior to adopting the aforementioned design in 1914 . The original shirt of the 1909 ? 10 season was blue with a white C. The second season had a red shirt

featuring a green maple leaf with the C logo , and green pants . Lastly , the season before adopting the current look the Canadiens wore a " barber pole " design jersey with red , white and blue stripes , and the logo being a white maple leaf reading " CAC " , " Club athlétique Canadien " . All three designs were worn during the 2009 ? 10 season as part of the Canadiens centenary .

The Canadiens ' colours are a readily identifiable aspect of French Canadian culture . In the short story " The Hockey Sweater " , Roch Carrier described the influence of the Canadiens and their jersey within rural Quebec communities during the 1940s . The story was later made into an animated short , The Sweater , narrated by Carrier . A passage from the short story appears on the 2002 issue of the Canadian five dollar bill .

= = = Motto = = =

Nos bras meurtris vous tendent le flambeau , à vous toujours de le porter bien haut .

To you from failing hands we throw the torch . Be yours to hold it high .

The motto is from the poem " In Flanders Fields " by John McCrae which was written in 1915 , the year the Canadiens won their first Stanley Cup championship . The motto appears on the wall of the Canadiens dressing room .

= = = Mascot = = =

Beginning in the 2004 ? 05 NHL season , the Canadiens adopted Youppi as their official mascot , the first costumed mascot in their long history . Youppi was the longtime mascot for the Montreal Expos baseball team , but was dropped from the franchise when they moved to Washington , D.C. in 2004 and became the Washington Nationals . With the switch , Youppi became the first mascot in professional sports to switch leagues .

= = = Rivalries = = =

The Canadiens have developed strong rivalries with two fellow Original Six franchises , with whom they frequently shared divisions and competed in post @-@ season play . The oldest is with the Toronto Maple Leafs , who first faced the Canadiens as the Toronto Arenas in 1917 . The teams met 15 times in the playoffs , including five Stanley Cup finals . Featuring the two largest cities in Canada and two of the largest fanbases in the league , the rivalry is sometimes dramatized as being emblematic of Canada 's English and French linguistic divide . From 1938 to 1970 , they were the only two Canadian teams in the league .

The team 's other Original Six rival are the Boston Bruins , who since their NHL debut in 1924 have played the Canadiens more than any other team in both regular season play and the playoffs combined . The teams have played 34 playoff series , seven of which were in the finals .

The Canadiens also had an intraprovincial rivalry with the Quebec Nordiques during its existence from 1979 @-@ 1995 , nicknamed the " Battle of Quebec . "

= = Broadcasting = =

Montreal Canadiens games are broadcast locally in both the French and English languages . On radio , Canadiens games are broadcast in French by CHMP 98 @.@ 5 , and in English by CKGM , TSN Radio 690 , who acquired the English broadcast rights under a 7 @-@ year deal which began in the 2011 @-@ 12 season .

Regional television rights in French are currently held by Réseau des sports under a 12 @-@ year deal , effective as of the 2014 ? 15 NHL season . A sister to the English @-@ language network TSN , RDS was the only French @-@ language sports channel in Canada until the 2011 launch of TVA Sports , and was also the previous national French rightsholder of the NHL ; as a result , the Canadiens forewent a separate regional contract , and allowed its games to be televised nationally as part of RDS 's national rights package .

With TVA Sports becoming the national French rightsholder in the 2014-15 season through a sub-licensing agreement with Rogers Communications, RDS parent company Bell Media subsequently announced a 12-year deal to maintain regional rights to Canadiens games not shown on TVA Sports. As a result, games on RDS are blacked out outside of the Canadiens' home market of Quebec, Atlantic Canada and parts of Ontario shared with the Ottawa Senators. At least 22 Canadiens games per season (primarily through its Saturday night La super soirée LNH), including all playoff games, are televised nationally by TVA Sports.

Regional television rights in English are held by Sportsnet East in a 3-year deal announced by Rogers on September 2, 2014, with selected games (three in its inaugural season) airing on CJNT City Montreal. The remaining games are aired nationally through Rogers' aforementioned NHL rights deal (including additional games on Sportsnet, City, or on CBC during Hockey Night in Canada), thus giving Rogers rights to over all English language telecasts of the Canadiens. Regional Canadiens games on Sportsnet East and City are called by John Bartlett and Jason York. TSN previously held regional, English language television rights to the Canadiens from 2010 through 2014. They were broadcast on a part-time TSN feed with Dave Randorf on play-by-play; these rights were not renewed by Bell Media past the 2013-14 season.

== Seasons and records ==

=== Season by season results ===

This is a list of the last five seasons completed by the Canadiens. For the full season-by-season history, see List of Montreal Canadiens seasons.