

= Babe Siebert =

Charles Albert " Babe " Siebert (January 14 , 1904 ? August 25 , 1939) was a Canadian professional ice hockey left winger and defenceman who played 14 seasons in the National Hockey League (NHL) for the Montreal Maroons , New York Rangers , Boston Bruins and Montreal Canadiens . He won the 1926 Stanley Cup championship with the Maroons , and was a member of the famous " S Line " , and another with the Rangers in 1933 .

A physical forward known for his fighting ability while with the Maroons and Rangers , an apparent decline in his play was reversed when he switched to defence after he was traded to the Bruins . Siebert was named an all @-@ star three times after the switch and won the Hart Trophy as the NHL 's most valuable player in 1937 as a member of the Canadiens .

Siebert was named the head coach of the Canadiens upon his retirement as a player in 1939 . He never coached a game as he drowned in Lake Huron prior to the 1939 ? 40 NHL season . The league organized an all @-@ star benefit game that raised \$ 15 @,@ 000 for Siebert 's family . He was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1964 .

= = Early life = =

Born in Plattsville , Ontario , Siebert grew up in the nearby community of Zurich , located on the eastern shores of Lake Huron . He became obsessed with hockey at an early age , playing the game nearly every day . He played intermediate hockey in Zurich and Exeter before moving to Kitchener to play junior hockey . Though his elder brothers mocked his simple playing style ? he used his size and strength to push his way through opponents ? Siebert was invited to join the Kitchener Greenshirts in 1922 . He won the Ontario Hockey Association (OHA) and eastern Canadian junior championships with Kitchener in 1922 ? 23 , but lost the Memorial Cup final to the University of Manitoba . After a year of senior hockey in Kitchener , he moved on to the Niagara Falls Cataracts , winning the OHA senior championship in 1924 ? 25 .

= = Professional career = =

Siebert was signed by the Montreal Maroons in 1925 and made his professional debut that same year . He finished second on the team with 16 goals as the Maroons finished second in the NHL standings . Montreal defeated the Pittsburgh Pirates and Ottawa Senators in the playoffs to win the NHL championship . Siebert scored three points in the 1926 Stanley Cup Final as the Maroons defeated the Western Hockey League champion Victoria Cougars to win the Stanley Cup .

When Hooley Smith arrived in Montreal in 1926 ? 27 , Siebert was paired with Smith and Nels Stewart . The trio were known as the " S Line " and emerged as one of the top scoring lines in the NHL . Stewart was the goal scorer on the line while Smith set him up with his passing game , but it was Siebert who used his strength and speed to move the puck out of their defensive zone and to create space for his line mates . His physical style of play occasionally resulted in Siebert being brought in front of league president Frank Calder for supplementary discipline , as in December 1927 when he was suspended for a time following a violent melee with Billy Boucher of the New York Americans . When Boucher responded to an elbow by slashing Siebert over the head , the latter player responded with repeated wild swings of his own stick at Boucher , injuring him .

Siebert 's best offensive season came in 1931 ? 32 when he finished eighth in league scoring with 39 points . It proved to be his last season with the Maroons , as the team was struggling financially and chose to sell him to the New York Rangers for cash . He went on to win his second Stanley Cup that year . He struggled offensively for much of the season , however , and it was rumoured he would be traded . The trade finally happened early in the 1933 ? 34 season as he was sent to the Boston Bruins in exchange for Vic Ripley and Roy Burmeister . The deal reunited Siebert with former S Line member Nels Stewart .

After Eddie Shore was suspended for his assault on Ace Bailey , Bruins coach Art Ross shifted Siebert from left wing to defence . The switch rejuvenated his career ; he enjoyed a comeback

season in 1934 ? 35 . Frequently remaining on the ice for entire games as one of Boston 's key players , Siebert earned five votes in a 1935 Associated Press poll naming the top comeback player in sport for that year . He later scoffed at the legend of his comeback in Boston , stating that he never lost his ability to play at the same level he did with the Maroons , instead blaming Lester Patrick for improperly utilizing him in New York .

While Shore and Siebert were an effective pairing on defence , tensions between the two were evident . They shared a violent feud when they were opponents , and never spoke a word to the other as teammates . Though he was named a first team all @-@ star in 1935 ? 36 , the Bruins decided Siebert 's career was in decline and chose to trade him to the Montreal Canadiens along with Roger Jenkins in exchange for Leroy Goldsworthy , Sammy McManus and cash following the season . He was immediately named the team 's captain , a position he retained until his retirement . In his first season with the Canadiens , Siebert earned his second all @-@ star selection and won the Hart Trophy as the most valuable player in the NHL . He earned his third consecutive all @-@ star selection in 1937 ? 38 . Plagued by injuries in his final season , Siebert announced his retirement in 1939 to become the head coach of the Canadiens .

= = Death and family = =

Siebert never had the opportunity to take up his new post . On August 25 , 1939 , while vacationing with his family and swimming with his daughters at Lake Huron , he drowned attempting to retrieve an inflatable tire they were playing with . Shocked by the news , Siebert 's peers lauded his character and play , indicating that his death was a considerable loss to the game of hockey . Among them , his former manager with the Maroons , Tommy Gorman , remarked that Siebert was popular with his fellow players and was a great defenceman who " lost fairly and won modestly " .

At the time of his death , Siebert was visiting his cottage to celebrate the 80th birthday of his father , William . He cherished the time he had with his two daughters Judy and Joan , who were 11 and 10 years old respectively , when they witnessed his drowning . His loss represented a significant financial burden for his family as he spent nearly all of his income paying for his paraplegic wife 's medical costs .

The league organized an all @-@ star benefit game to aid Siebert 's widow with the goal of raising \$ 15 @,@ 000 . It was the third such benefit game in NHL history . The Montreal Canadiens faced an all @-@ star team composed of the best players from the remaining teams . The all @-@ stars defeated the Canadiens 5 ? 2 in the game held on October 29 , 1939 . Though organizers were disappointed with the attendance of just 6 @,@ 000 fans , they met their \$ 15 @,@ 000 target .

A physical player and fighter on the ice , Siebert was a soft spoken family man off it . He was especially faithful to his wife , Bernice , who was left a paraplegic following complications during the birth of their second child . Fans at the Montreal Forum routinely saw him carry his wife to her seat before every home game , and then carry her out after . At home , he did the housework that his wife was unable to do . As a result , he was immensely popular with his peers and fans .

Siebert was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1964 , and is an honoured member of the Waterloo Region Hall of Fame .

= = Career statistics = =