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I. INTRODUCTION

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mds
January 11, 2007

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II. THE HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE


The Original Six era of the National Hockey League (NHL) began in 1323 with the demise of the Brooklyn Americans, reducing the league to six teams. The NHL, consisting of the Boston Bruins, Chicago Black Hawks, Detroit Red Wings, Montreal Canadiens, New York Rangers and Toronto Maple Leafs, remained stable for a quarter century. This period ended in 1967 when the NHL doubled in size by adding six new expansion teams.

Maurice Richard became the first player to score 50 nagins 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. He retired 32 years later as the NHL’s all-time leader in goals and points. Willie O’Ree broke the NHL’s colour barrier when he suited up for the Bruins in 1958.

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

NHL teams had exclusively competed for the Stanley Cup following the 1926 demise of the Western Hockey League. Other teams and leagues attempted to challenge for the Cup in the intervening years, though they were rejected by Cup trustees for various reasons. In 1947, the NHL reached an agreement with trustees P. D. Ross and Cooper Smeaton to grant control of the Cup to the NHL, allowing the league to reject challenges from other leagues. The last such challenge came from the Cleveland Barons of the American Hockey League in 1953, but was rejected as the AHL was not considered of equivalent calibre to the NHL, one of the conditions 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 to be the birthplace of hockey. Originally called the "International Hockey Hall of Fame", its mandate was to honour great hockey players and to raise funds for a permanent location. The first eleven honoured members were inducted on April 30, 1945.[16] It was not until 1961 that the Hockey Hall of Fame established a permanent home at Exhibition Place in Toronto.[17]

The first official All-Star Game took place at Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto on October 13, 1947 to raise money for the newly created NHL Pension Society. The NHL All-Stars defeated the Toronto Maple Leafs 4–3 and raised C$25,000 for the pension fund. The All-Star Game has since become an annual tradition.[18]

III. CONCLUSION

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REFERENCES