

Handout #3 Hockey Champions

Gordie Howe

Gordie Howe could also be called “Mr. Most” in Ice Hockey with his establishment of several National Hockey League records. Just a few from his impressive list are: most seasons played (26), most regular-season games (1,767), most career goals in regular season play (801), and most selections to NHL All-Star teams (21 selections — 12 times to the first team, nine to the second).

Other NHL mosts include: winning goals (122); games including playoffs (1,924); goals including playoffs (869); career assists by a right winger (1,049); most career points by a right winger (1,850); plus numerous other All-Star Game records.

Gordie Howe was born on March 1, 1928 in the small town of Floral, Saskatchewan, Canada. His Father (Ab Howe) was earning money away from home with his team of horses on excavating jobs in Saskatoon. His mother (Katherine), was a housewife and gave birth to Gordie without help in her own bed. Gordie had three brothers and five sisters, in order of age they were: Glayds, Vernon, Norman, Violet, Edna, Gordon, Victor, Joan and Helen. At times it was financially difficult for the Howe family, especially during the depression.

Despite some serious health problems including a calcium deficiency that affected his bone density, and a goiter, which is an enlargement of the thyroid gland in the neck, Gordie received his first pair of skates at the age of five. He and thirty or forty other kids would play on a frozen pond for hours on end. But the first team Gordie tried to join sent him home because he was not properly dressed.



Throughout his teens, Gordie battled his shyness and continued to improve his hockey skills.

Gordie was drafted to the Detroit Red Wings when he was only 16 years old and started playing with them when he was 17. In his first season he played 58 games, scored 7 goals and had a total of 53 points. By his sixth season, he played 70 games

and scored a career high 49 goals in and 95 points in the regular season. In Howe's final NHL season at age 51, he played all 80 games. On October 3, 1997, Howe added to his enormous resume of accomplishments by playing the opening shift for the Detroit Vipers

of the International Hockey League. In so doing he became the first individual to appear in a professional game in the 1940's, 1950's, 1960's, 1970's, 1980's and 1990's. For excellence and durability, his career will not be matched.

He won the NHL most valuable player award (the Hart Memorial Trophy) in 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1957, 1958, 1960, 1963, a total of eight times. He was on the NHL All-star team 17 times. Gordie Howe was introduced into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1972.

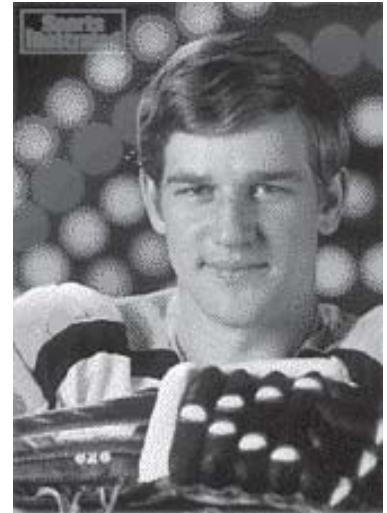
SEASON	AWARD
1948-1949	Second All-Star Team Right Wing
1949-1950	Second All-Star Team Right Wing
1950-1951	Art Ross Trophy
1950-1951	First All-Star Team Right Wing
1951-1952	Art Ross Trophy
1951-1952	First All-Star Team Right Wing
1951-1952	Hart Memorial Trophy
1952-1953	Art Ross Trophy
1952-1953	First All-Star Team Right Wing
1952-1953	Hart Memorial Trophy
1953-1954	Art Ross Trophy
1953-1954	First All-Star Team Right Wing
1955-1956	Second All-Star Team Right Wing
1956-1957	Art Ross Trophy
1956-1957	First All-Star Team Right Wing
1956-1957	Hart Memorial Trophy
1957-1958	First All-Star Team Right Wing
1957-1958	Hart Memorial Trophy
1958-1959	Second All-Star Team Right Wing
1959-1960	First All-Star Team Right Wing
1959-1960	Hart Memorial Trophy
1960-1961	Second All-Star Team Right Wing
1961-1962	Second All-Star Team Right Wing
1962-1963	Art Ross Trophy
1962-1963	First All-Star Team Right Wing
1962-1963	Hart Memorial Trophy
1963-1964	Second All-Star Team Right Wing
1964-1965	Second All-Star Team Right Wing
1965-1966	First All-Star Team Right Wing
1966-1967	Lester Patrick Trophy
1966-1967	Second All-Star Team Right Wing
1967-1968	First All-Star Team Right Wing
1968-1969	First All-Star Team Right Wing
1969-1970	First All-Star Team Right Wing

“Both on and off the ice, Gordie Howe’s conduct has demonstrated a high quality of sportsmanship and competence which is an example to us all. He has earned the title: Mr. Hockey.”

— L.B. Pearson, former Prime Minister of Canada

Bobby Orr

Before Bobby Orr entered the NHL in 1966, defensemen were counted on for just one thing, defense. They would never stray out of position. They stayed in front of the net and helped clear the puck out of the defensive zone. They left the offensive part of the game up to the forwards. But once the flashy 18-year-old kid from Parry Sound, Ontario made his debut with the Boston Bruins, the role of the defenseman was changed forever.



Bobby Orr began skating at the age of four, on a friends' pair of skates on the Seguin River. He would spend hours a day practicing his skating on the river and then spend an extra hour at night, taking shooting practice in his garage on Great North Road.

Bobby quickly took to the local game of Shinny that was played on the frozen river. The object of the game was for one player to grab the puck and try and keep it on his stick as long as he could, while all of the other players tried to steal it from him. The game was considered a great way to develop stick-handling. Young Bobby Orr was the 'King of Shinny.' Bobby had fond memories of playing Shinny: "Most of the time we would be on the ice from early morning until darkness. Sometimes there would be 30 of us, chasing after the same puck."

Then, in 1966, just a few years later, the 18-year-old kid from Parry Sound, Ontario, found himself lined up on the blueline for the Boston Bruins. The Bruins didn't make the Playoffs during Bobby's first NHL season, but it didn't take long before Bobby Orr transformed them into Stanley Cup Champions.



Aside from the numerous team and individual awards he captured during his remarkable career, Bobby Orr left a legacy of heart and courage, achieving greatness while constantly battling knee problems.

Bobby won the Calder Trophy (top rookie) in 1966-67 and beginning in 1967-68 won the James Norris Trophy, as the NHL's top defenseman, for the next eight years in a row. Bobby became a fixture on the NHL All-Star Team.

Before Bobby came along it was impossible to imagine a defenseman winning the scor-

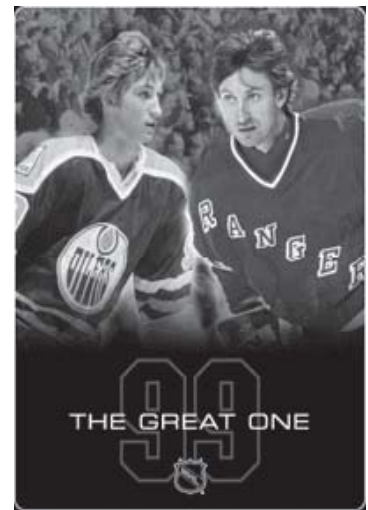
ing title. Orr did it twice! His first Art Ross title came in 1969-70 with 120 points (87 of them assists), then he added his second in 1974-75 with 135 points (46 of them goals). He surpassed 100 points in six consecutive seasons, from 1969-70 through 1974-75.

Orr scored 270 goals and 645 assists-915 points-in 657 regular-season games, plus 26 goals and 66 assists, or 92 points, in 74 playoff matches.

How great was his career? His awards included: Three Hart Trophies as NHL MVP (1970, 1971, 1972); two Art Ross Trophies as NHL scoring champion (1970, 1975); eight consecutive James Norris Trophies as the NHL's Best Defenseman (from 1968 through 1975); Calder Memorial Trophy as NHL Rookie of the Year (1967); two Conn Smythe Trophies as Playoff MVP (1970, 1972); eight consecutive NHL First Team All-Star selections (1968 to 1975); one NHL Second Team All-Star selection (1967); eight consecutive NHL All-Star Games (1968 to 1975); one Lester Pearson Award as MVP, selected by NHL players (1975); Lester Patrick Trophy for outstanding service to hockey in the U.S. (1979); induction into the Hockey Hall of Fame (1979); and two Stanley Cup victories in three Final appearances.

Wayne Gretzky

Wayne Gretzky began skating at age two on the Nith River near his grandparents' farm just outside of Brantford, Ontario. By age four, he had graduated to a backyard rink built by his father behind the family's modest three-bedroom home on Varardi Street in Brantford. By age 10, he was scoring 378 goals --still an age group record-- and 120 assists in Brantford's atom league. By the time he was 12 and playing in the prestigious International Pee Wee Hockey Tournament in Quebec City's Le Colisee, Gretzky was already so famous that he was besieged routinely by autograph seekers in every rink in which he played. He tried to get his team, the Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds, to assign him jersey number 9 "because Gordie Howe was my favorite player and that was his number," but 9 belonged to a veteran player so Gretzky was given number 19 and, a few weeks later, number 99.



At 17 he turned pro with the World Hockey Association's Indianapolis Racers who quickly traded him to the Edmonton Oilers, where he was allowed to keep uniform number 99. He won WHA rookie of the year honors with a startling record of 46 goals and 110 points. Gretzky came into the NHL in 1979 when WHA franchises in Edmonton, Hartford, Quebec and Winnipeg joined the older league.



No one ever had seen a player like Gretzky. Though he was barely 6-0 and 155 pounds, could bench press a mere 140 pounds, had little better than average skating speed and possessed a shot that, while accurate, didn't remind anyone of a power-player like Bobby Hull's, Gretzky's quickness to the puck, instinct for the creation and exploitation of space and darting elusiveness made him virtually uncheckable. "Gretzky sees a picture out there that no one else sees. It's difficult to describe because I've never seen the game he's looking at," said Boston Bruins president Harry Sinden, who had coached Bobby Orr.

In an NHL debut even more impressive than Orr's or Howe's, Gretzky scored 51 goals in 1979-80, 55 in his second season and won the Hart Trophy for the first two of what would be a record eight consecutive selections as the league's MVP. "He's the greatest player I've ever seen," said former NHL goaltending great, Glenn Hall. But of all Gretzky's records, the biggest may have been his obliteration of Maurice Richard's and Mike Bossy's 50 goals in 50 games, which had stood as a mythical statistical barrier since Richard first did it in 1944-45. On Dec. 30, 1981, in a game against Philadelphia, Gretzky scored five goals to reach 50 in an unimaginable 39 games. After the game Flyers captain Bobby Clarke went into the Edmonton dressing room to tell Gretzky, "I know everything that's been written about you. I think none of it is adequate."

But Gretzky was only warming up. He fashioned a monster season in 1981-82 when he scored an NHL single-season record 92 goals along with 20 assists for 212 points. He eventually led the Oilers to four Stanley Cup championships (1984, 1985, 1987, 1988) and then was traded to the Los Angeles Kings prior to the 1989-1990 season.

During the 1988-1989 season he became the highest scorer in the history of the NHL and won the Art Ross Trophy for leading the league in scoring nine times (1981-1987, 1990, 1991). He won the Hart Trophy as the league's most valuable player nine times (1979-1987, 1989) and he is the all-time points leader (goals and assists combined) in the NHL for both the regular season and the playoffs.

In 1994 he surpassed Canadian hockey player and high scorer Gordie Howe by setting a new record for the most career goals in the NHL. He was traded to the St. Louis Blues in 1996, and then to the New York Rangers. He retired from the NHL on April 18, 1999.

Wayne has set or tied a total of 49 NHL regular season, playoff and All-Star records. On October 15, 1989, he became the NHL's all-time leading scorer, eclipsing the mark of

1,851 points that it took Wayne's boyhood idol, Gordie Howe, 26 years to establish.

Gretzky Records

Career Regular Season

NHL goals - 894.

Assists - 1,962.

Points - 2,856.

Single Season

Goals - 92 in 1981-82 (80-game schedule).

Assists - 163 in 1985-86 (80-game schedule).

Points - 215 in 1985-86 (80-game schedule).

