

“He shows signs of the Day influence”:

A Biographical Narrative Case Study of

Heritage and Commemoration

in the National Hockey League

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

Clarence “Hap” Day coached the Toronto Maple Leafs of the National Hockey League from 1940 to 1950. During that time, he led his team to five Stanley Cup championships, almost always prevailing against opponents who were considered to be superior. He remains one of the most successful and influential coaches in NHL history. By any standard in the world of professional sports he would be considered a legend, yet although his team has established Legends Row, a permanent commemorative exhibit of bronze statues representing fourteen of its former members, Day was inexplicably not chosen to be part of it.

This thesis is an examination of heritage and commemoration in the National Hockey League, constructed around a biographical narrative of Day. I explore his career as a player and as a coach, demonstrating that he was a dependable player who developed and successfully practised theories on how he believed the game should be played. As a coach, he achieved unprecedented success that merits proper acknowledgement and recognition of his importance to one of the NHL’s most historic franchises.

Unfortunately, while commemoration is a public expression of heritage, it can be and is often manipulated because it is always someone’s specific interpretation of what happened, rather than a faithful recording of history. Whoever controls the past can therefore also control the present narrative and shape the future through their commemorative efforts, which allows them to decide what the public should know about a given topic. In the case of Hap Day, the Toronto Maple Leafs have decided that he is not worthy of further recognition. This thesis is a competing narrative that proves otherwise.

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Researching and writing a thesis feels a lot of the time like a solitary pursuit; of course, it is anything but that. I would like to acknowledge the people who have been particularly helpful and supportive along the way.

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And a very special thank you must go to my advisor, Dr. Andrew Hunt. It was he who inspired me to first transfer to UWaterloo from Guelph and then to switch my major to History. I sincerely appreciate his encouragement, advice, kindness, and friendship.

DEDICATION

The past four years have been extremely challenging from personal and professional standpoints. While I never thought that I would not eventually complete this project, there were many down times when I simply could not force myself to work on it.

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Roberta (Robi) Ayles-Jackson, who gave me time, space, and encouragement to finish this labour of love.

This thesis is also dedicated to the memories of my father, Barry Jackson, and my mother, Marlene Jackson, who both passed away in the time since I started working on this thesis. Higher education was not something they ever dreamed of for themselves, but they dreamed it for me. It took a while, but I finally got there, and now I am finished. I am grateful that they saw me finish my Bachelor of Arts degree, and I hope I made them proud.

Without these three people, who have provided me with unconditional love and support, none of what I have accomplished would have been possible. This would be true in any circumstance, but it is especially true now.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to the memory of Clarence Henry “Hap” Day, a fellow native of Owen Sound, Ontario. I have been living with Hap for a long time, from the time I decided in 2016 that he belonged in the Owen Sound Sports Hall of Fame and then worked to make it happen. To me, Hap Day is and will remain a legend, even if the Toronto Maple Leafs Hockey Club does not necessarily agree.

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PREGAME – INTRODUCTION

Canada doesn't have the same respect for coaches as they do elsewhere. (Former Manchester United manager) Alex Ferguson is Sir Alex Ferguson. He was knighted by the queen! The coach is the most important person in team sport. He's the leader. The coach is the anchor of the hockey team, no question.¹

– Jean Perron, Montreal Canadiens coach, 1985-1988

A well-known cliché in professional sports is that if a team is slumping and changes must be made, it is far easier to fire and replace the coach than it is to replace the players. Along those same lines, another equally common cliché is that coaches are hired to be fired. The blunt message that is communicated with these sayings is that there are no lifetime jobs in coaching. One way or another, a coach's tenure with a team will come to an end, and that ending often does not happen because of their own choice. "Most NHL general managers will tell you that coaching is the lousiest job in hockey, having all the security of a walk through a mine field," a Minnesota sportswriter wrote in 1982, and those words are as true today as they were then.²

The temporary nature of a coach's employment may help to explain why, in the National Hockey League (NHL), successful coaches are not as well regarded or remembered as are successful players. This thesis begins with a quote from Jean Perron, who won the Stanley Cup as coach of the Montreal Canadiens in 1986. Reaching the pinnacle of hockey success in his rookie season behind the Canadiens' bench should have resulted in long-term job security, but Perron coached only two more seasons in Montreal and has not coached at all in the NHL since

¹ Paul Logotheis, *Toe Blake: Winning is Everything* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2020), p. 262.

² Dan Stoneking, "Bowman rated top NHL coach," *Minneapolis Star*, February 1, 1982.

1989. His name will always be associated with the championship that he won, but he is generally not a well-remembered figure in hockey history.³

Perron's fate, though, is far from unique. Many hockey coaches, even those who have also won Stanley Cups, are remembered as little more than answers to trivia questions. The uniform numbers of legendary hockey players may be retired to hang in the rafters of their teams' home arenas as ongoing reminders of who they were and what they did. But since coaches wear suits instead of team uniforms, it is impossible to retire their number, no matter how successful they have been. This fact is despite Perron's reasonable contention that a coach is "the most important person in team sport . . . the anchor of the hockey team." How, then, are successful hockey coaches commemorated? How are hockey fans encouraged to remember successful coaches?

Commemoration in professional sports, as it is in any aspect of human existence, is something that can be manipulated for the purpose of communicating specific messages. This thesis is an examination of heritage and commemoration in the NHL, constructed around a biographical narrative case study of one of pro hockey's most accomplished coaches, Clarence "Hap" Day. Although he is a member of the Hockey Hall of Fame for his ability as a player, Day has been neglected – even by his own former team – as a coach who enjoyed unprecedented success during his career behind the bench.

"Who was the best ever coach in the NHL?" sportswriter George Gross asked in a 1998 article. "The answer is difficult to find." Gross did not reach a conclusion in his article, but he listed several "best ever" candidates, including Day, in his introduction. He went on to build cases for a few of these men, although Day was not among them, and his name was not

³ Rejean Tremblay, "Jean Perron: finally peace in the Gaspé," *Le Journal de Montréal*, August 29, 2020. <https://www.journaldemontreal.com/2020/08/29/jean-perron-enfin-la-paix-en-gaspesie>

mentioned in the article again.⁴ Then there is *Bench Bosses*, a 2015 book by Matthew DiBiase, a historian and author who created his own rating system to rank fifty coaches throughout the history of the NHL. Day came in at No. 11, which is a decent ranking on the surface. But DiBiase placed him behind some modern coaches whose accomplishments can't be fairly compared with Day's for various reasons. Mainly, hockey has changed so much that head coaches now work with entire teams of associate and assistant coaches and other coaches who specialize in areas like goaltending and video analysis. To rank, for example, Joel Quenneville at No. 5 on the strength of three Stanley Cup championships since 2010 is unfair and disrespectful to every coach in earlier eras of hockey who ran their teams alone.⁵

This thesis will demonstrate that Day was one of the most important and accomplished coaches in hockey history, and that he deserves to be better remembered for his achievements and his influence. He is, in effect, a lost legend. The biographical narrative is an appropriate way to examine the man, his coaching achievements, and his lasting impact, and to tell how he has been lost to time and overshadowed by other coaches whose feats have happened more recently. Using an array of sources, including newspaper articles, journal articles, primary and secondary accounts, and other evidence to craft this narrative, I will explore the practice of commemoration in hockey.

This is an important topic because while hockey is identified as a quintessential Canadian sport and legislation has declared it to be one of Canada's national sports, hockey history has not traditionally received a great deal of academic attention, a fact that provided the impetus for scholars Richard Gruneau and David Whitson to write and publish their landmark book, *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport, Identities, and Cultural Politics*, in 1993. They believed that hockey's

⁴ George Gross, "Want to know who was best coach ever in NHL?" *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 31, 1998.

⁵ Matthew DiBiase, *Bench Bosses: The NHL's Coaching Elite* (Toronto: Fenn/McClelland and Stewart, 2015), p. 87.

place in our culture would remain secure, although they found it difficult to articulate why. “(I)n our view there has not been enough analysis of either the substance behind these claims or the reasons why Canadians have felt such a powerful need to make them,” they wrote.

Canadian libraries are brimming with team histories and statistics, engaging tales of great players and events, biographies and picture books. There are also innumerable fragments of social analysis about the game in novels, short stories, magazine articles, occasional scholarly essays, and government reports. The problem is that none of this adds up to a comprehensive analysis of the nature of hockey and its role in Canadian culture.⁶

Gruneau and Whitson found this reality to be surprising, noting that many writers and even scholars had touched on the significance of hockey to Canadians, but few had bothered to go further than that. It seemed that it was much more acceptable for historians, sociologists, literary theorists, and cultural critics to devote their research to what they referred to, tongue in cheek, as “more ‘important’ things: the constitution, the fur trade, social inequality, poststructuralism, the Canadian novel . . . hockey has largely fallen beneath the higher earnestness of Canadian intellectual practice.”⁷

The two academics decided that they would blaze the trail, in the hope of giving future hockey scholars something they could use in their own research. In effect, they wrote the kind of book “that could be assigned in university classes on popular culture or Canadian society, as well as in courses focused directly on the social analysis of sport and leisure. Yet at the same time we also wanted to produce a book of interest to anyone with a curiosity about hockey and its

⁶ Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport, Identities, and Cultural Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), p. 3.

⁷ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, pp. 3-4.

changing place in Canadian culture.”⁸ Their book was reprinted in 2012 and remains an important resource to hockey scholars in this country.

The book’s success was predicted at the time of its publication by one such scholar, historian Morris Mott of Brandon University in Manitoba. He wrote a very positive review of Gruneau and Whitson’s work, calling it “one of the most thought-provoking books I have ever read. I think it can be examined profitably by individuals interested in any sport in any country. I know it must be read carefully by students of both the history and the present-day role of hockey in Canada.”⁹ Before entering academia, Mott enjoyed a long amateur and professional hockey career that included three seasons in the NHL and five seasons with the Canadian national team, with whom he won bronze medals in the 1966 and 1967 International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) world championships and another bronze medal at the 1968 Winter Olympics.¹⁰ As such, he brought a unique perspective to his review, which he concluded by stating that it would long “be valuable to serious students of hockey, sports, culture, and Canada.”

J. Andrew Ross, a scholar, author, and archivist, has used *Hockey Night in Canada* in his own work, notably in his 2008 dissertation, “Hockey Capital: Commerce, Culture, and the National Hockey League, 1917–1967,” which he later expanded into a book, *Joining the Clubs: The Business of the National Hockey League to 1945*. But Ross’ work made it clear that not much had changed in the 15 years since Gruneau and Whitson published their book. “(T)he study of sport and popular culture has struggled for legitimacy in the academy. The result is that the

⁸ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, p. 4.

⁹ Morris Mott, “Hockey Night in Canada: Sport, Identities, and Cultural Politics (review),” *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 11, no. 3 (1994), pp. 519-522.

¹⁰ Grant Kerr, “Long bus ride worth it for Morris Mott to see brother playing in net,” *Kingston Whig-Standard*, February 16, 1988; Rob Vanstone, “Mott-ley career had its followers,” *Regina Leader-Post*, August 9, 1990.

primary view of sports leagues, clubs, and players has been through the lens of popular literature,” he wrote.¹¹

Sport has not been part of the mainstream tradition of American or Canadian master narrative construction. Indeed, the subject of sport widely conceived has generally been marginalized in Canadian historical writing. American historiography is somewhat more inclusive, for there sport history has found a place in the panoply of subfields of the post-modern era. Some generalists occasionally enter the sport subfield, but for the most part sport history has developed outside traditional history departments in faculties of physical education, kinesiology, sport management, and education.¹²

It is unfortunate that hockey – and hockey history – have been abandoned for too long as the purview of popular writers, because many stories from the game’s past have entered its mythology with little or no apparent historical basis, such as the long-running claim that Canadian broadcasting legend Foster Hewitt was the first person to call hockey play-by-play over the radio – in reality, he appears to have been the third person to do so.¹³ Daniel Mason, a sport management scholar at the University of Alberta, has found it difficult to write about sport history from an academic perspective because, as he wrote in a book review, many “foundational sources exist only in the popular literature.” Such examples, he said, include biographies and other works written by amateur historians which cannot be vetted as thoroughly as academic

¹¹ James Andrew Ross, “Hockey Capital: Commerce, Culture, and the National Hockey League, 1917-1967.” PhD diss., University of Western Ontario, 2008, p. 5.

¹² Ross, “Hockey Capital,” pp. 5-6.

¹³ Canadian Press, “Foster Hewitt Honored After 40 years of Broadcasting,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, March 16, 1965; Bryan Tastad, “Hewitt: near-legend talks shop,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, July 14, 1973; Canadian Press, “Foster Hewitt, voice of hockey, dies at 81,” *Montreal Gazette*, April 22, 1985; Jim Taylor, “Pre-Hewitt pair not forgotten,” *Vancouver Province*, April 23, 1985.

works are. “Until a more definitive scholarly history of hockey is written, these will remain the constraints placed upon those who conduct research in this area,” Mason wrote.¹⁴

I have been immersed in hockey and its history for most of my life, so I was not surprised to discover in my research that much of popular hockey history, including several major works, has been written by journalists and not by scholars. As an example, in 1999, Key Porter Books published *One Hundred Years of Hockey: The Chronicle of a Century on Ice*. It was edited by Al Strachan, with contributions from Strachan, Eric Duhatschek, Red Fisher, Trent Frayne, and Rejean Tremblay, every one of them an acclaimed Canadian hockey writer.¹⁵ Another journalist, Scott Morrison, wrote the NHL-endorsed *100 Years, 100 Moments: A Centennial of NHL Hockey*, in 2016.¹⁶

Other hockey history projects that carry some sort of official (or seemingly official) sanction have also been the responsibility of writers outside of academia, such as the tome *Hockey: A People’s History*, which was published in conjunction with the 2006 CBC documentary series of the same name. The book is credited to Michael McKinley, who is listed on the dust jacket as an author, documentary filmmaker, and screenwriter. There are no citations or a bibliography in the book, and there is no indication that McKinley, who has written several other books on hockey history, has an academic background in history.¹⁷

I am a journalist myself, or a former one. I spent most of my career as a reporter at a daily newspaper in Ontario, the *Owen Sound Sun Times*, where I wrote about many subjects including sports. One of my responsibilities in the sports department was the maintenance of our filing

¹⁴ Daniel S. Mason, “Coast to Coast: Hockey in Canada to the Second World War (review),” *The Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 91, no. 3 (2010), p. 589.

¹⁵ Al Strachan, ed., *One Hundred Years of Hockey: The Chronicle of a Century on Ice* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1999).

¹⁶ Scott Morrison, *100 Years, 100 Moments: A Centennial of NHL History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2017).

¹⁷ Michael McKinley, *Hockey: A People’s History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2006).

system, which at the time meant physically cutting articles out of the paper, using a stamp to date them, and placing them in the appropriate folders in our filing cabinets. I familiarized myself with our system quickly, and I frequently used files from it as background in my reporting. I became a skilled researcher, but that did not mean I was automatically prepared for the rigours of academia. I usually took it for granted that the background information at my disposal was correct and not misleading. And while I was always careful to credit sources in the articles I wrote, rarely was I called upon by supervising editors to provide supporting evidence.

This is all to say that I bring a special perspective to the important point that historical accuracy has not always been a major consideration in the recording of hockey history, even in primary sources such as newspapers. They can be unreliable due in part to basic errors, deficiencies in fact-checking, and even the personalities and whims of early sportswriters. Consequently, secondary sources such as popular history books – many of which I used in researching this thesis – may also be suspect, because they are often based on stories which were originally published in newspapers or, as will be noted, shared in oral interviews. This was another major challenge, and it meant that compiling a comprehensive literature review for this thesis was a daunting task.

“Hockey men in the early years of the game loved a good story and weren’t overly fussy about details. Players gave different versions of the same events,” Kelly McParland wrote in his biography of former Toronto Maple Leafs’ owner Conn Smythe, commenting on the difficulty in authenticating some events in Smythe’s life. “Many of the stories that survive from Smythe’s time have been retold so often that the original details have long since disappeared into myth and the altered versions are taken as fact.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Kelly McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe: From the Battlefield to Maple Leaf Gardens: A Hockey Icon’s Story*, (Toronto: Fenn/McClelland and Stewart, 2012), p. xii.

Priest, scholar, and librarian Joseph Baumgartner believed that timeliness is a major advantage of using news reports as primary sources. “And as a rule, the news reports are, if not the work of the people directly involved or of witnesses of the events described, information gathered on the spot. So newspapers might appear to be just about the ideal kind of source for a historian,” he wrote. But Baumgartner correctly also pointed out that the “contemporaneity” of news reports is “counterbalanced by a whole string of defects. Not only do newspapers share all the weaknesses of human testimony in general, in whatever form it may come, but they have quite a lot of others that are inherent in the medium itself.” He noted that newspapers often rush to print a story in a desire to be first, rather than to be correct, and do not always acknowledge errors.¹⁹ Corrections that are later produced rarely receive the same prominence that the mistake did and, as McParland noted, that is how errors or biases in reporting can become accepted as historical fact.

On the other hand, as scholars Linda J. Borish and Murray G. Phillips have noted, if not for stories published in newspapers and magazines, there would not be much sport history to speak of in the first place. “In some circumstances,” they wrote, “newspapers may be the only record of sporting events, and in many cases they provide details, debates and images that do not exist to the same extent anywhere else.” They agreed with historian Jeffrey Hill, who argued that newspaper articles are “a staple – perhaps *the* staple source – in reconstructing the history of sport and games.”²⁰ This means that we as scholars often must give significant weight to these published records and try to make sense of the discrepancies caused by errors or biases.

¹⁹ Joseph Baumgartner, “Newspapers as Historical Sources,” *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, vol. 9, no. 3 (1981), pp. 256, 258.

²⁰ Linda J. Borish and Murray G. Phillips, “Sport history as modes of expression: material culture and cultural spaces in sport and history,” *Rethinking History*, vol. 16, no. 4 (2012), p. 468; Jeffrey Hill, “Anecdotal evidence: Sport, the newspaper press, and history,” in *Deconstructing Sport History: A postmodern analysis*, ed. Murray G. Phillips (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2006), pp. 117-129.

Unfortunately, as errors or biases can become and remain part of the historical record despite best efforts, so too can deliberate untruths. A well-known instance of this as it relates to hockey is the so-called Curse of Muldoon. The owner of the Chicago Black Hawks fired coach Pete Muldoon after the club's inaugural NHL season, 1926-27.²¹ As the story goes, Muldoon responded to his dismissal by angrily vowing that the team would never finish first in the league standings, a feat which at the time was seen as being on par with winning the Stanley Cup. As entertaining as this story is, however, it never happened.

The "curse" is credited to the imagination of *The Globe and Mail* sports columnist Jim Coleman, who purportedly noted one day long after Muldoon's death that Chicago had indeed never finished first, always seeming to fall short for one reason or another. Lacking any other viable column idea, with his deadline fast approaching, Coleman is said to have concocted an imaginary confrontation between the owner and the coach to explain the Black Hawks' ongoing lack of success. (Years later, another *Globe and Mail* columnist named Dick Beddoes explained the genesis of the "curse" and in doing so he whimsically crafted *another* imaginary conversation, this time between Coleman and his editor.)²²

It has never been definitively stated when Coleman's original Muldoon column was written, and it is not discoverable in the *Globe and Mail* online archives using keyword searches. Coleman suggested at least once in later years that the curse had really been invented by a Black Hawks publicist, but he also boasted to another columnist that he had in fact invented the curse to prove to his editor that sports fans would believe anything they read.²³ If that was the case, he

²¹ The team now officially known as the Chicago Blackhawks was usually referred to as the Black Hawks (two words) until 1985. See: Mike Beamish, "Would you believe 'Hawks, not Hawks?'" *Vancouver Sun*, November 26, 1985.

²² Dick Beddoes, "Curse of Muldoon a mere myth," *The Globe and Mail*, March 14, 1967.

²³ Jim Coleman, "Will Muldoon's Curse Strike Chicago Again?" *Edmonton Journal*, February 5, 1966; Jim Taylor, "Bogus Muldoon Curse still has clout," *Ottawa Citizen*, June 1, 1994.

certainly succeeded. But Coleman's credibility is suspect – if you would invent a curse for the purpose of a column, what other fictional stories might you tell? – and it cannot easily be determined that the column even exists. (Which leads to an interesting meta question – was a curse that did not exist introduced by a newspaper column that may not have been written?)

Nevertheless, the curse was widely believed and became part of the team's story, so much so that the Black Hawks happily celebrated breaking it when they finally clinched a first-place finish during the 1966-67 season – see Figure 1, below. Long after the curse's validity was called into question, some continue to cling to it like a talisman, including the team itself, as evidenced by an article on the Blackhawks' website that refers to the curse.²⁴



Figure 1: The Chicago Black Hawks celebrated breaking the Curse of Muldoon – a curse that supposedly lasted for 40 years after possibly being invented by a Canadian sportswriter.

²⁴ Robert Markus, "Hawks Drown Peter Muldoon!" *Chicago Tribune*, March 13, 1967; Associated Press, "Muldoon's curse finally squashed," *Regina Leader-Post*, March 13, 1967; Ron Grossman, "The coach – and the curse," *Chicago Tribune*, June 16, 2013; Bob Verdi, "The Verdict: History against the Leafs," *Chicago Blackhawks*, August 21, 2018, <https://www.nhl.com/blackhawks/news/the-verdict-history-against-the-leafs/c-299114300>

²⁵ Markus, "Hawks Drown Peter Muldoon!"

This is how a piece of hockey folklore became popular hockey history. Pete Muldoon – ironically, that was not even his real name – was a Stanley Cup-winning coach and should be remembered for that achievement.²⁶ But the curse he never placed is what he is most known for instead. As a newspaper editor told James Stewart’s character near the end of the film *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, “When the legend becomes fact, print the legend.”²⁷ Too often, hockey writers and authors have done just that.

Newspapers told most of Hap Day’s story while he was active in the NHL. He played in Toronto from 1924 until 1937, coached the Toronto Maple Leafs from 1940 to 1950, and worked as an executive with the Leafs from 1950 to 1957. During most of this time, the Leafs were consistently among the best and most popular teams in hockey, winning the Stanley Cup seven times between 1932 and 1951. There were no less than three daily newspapers in Toronto during Day’s entire tenure with the Leafs – until 1936, there were four – and, with little or no television presence in the city until the early 1950s, newspapers were by default the main source of news for Torontonians.²⁸ This led to circulation wars between the papers, which naturally fuelled a constant need for content. Such an environment, Joseph Baumgartner wrote, leads to an increase in what he called “personal biases and partisanship” among reporters and editors, who dictate what is printed and becomes public record and what will be left out.²⁹ This played to the advantage of Conn Smythe, who was the bombastic managing director (later also the majority owner) of the Leafs, and thus Day’s boss.

²⁶ Muldoon’s legal name was Linton Muldoon Treacy. See: Associated Press, “Sport World Is Shocked by Muldoon Death,” *Vancouver Daily Province*, March 14, 1929.

²⁷ Willis Goldbeck, producer, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, directed by John Ford, Los Angeles: Paramount, 1962.

²⁸ *The Globe* purchased *The Mail and Empire* in November 1936, and the two papers were amalgamated as *The Globe and Mail*. See: “The Globe Buys Mail and Empire,” *The Globe*, November 19, 1936. Toronto’s other daily newspapers at the time were the *Daily Star* and the *Evening Telegram*.

²⁹ Baumgartner, “Newspapers as Historical Sources,” p. 256.

Psychiatrists who encountered Smythe might have described him as an egomaniac. At the very least, he was an ambitious man with a pathological need for publicity and no shortage of self-esteem or opinions. “I’m a good guy if I get my own way,” he told his biographer, Scott Young, near the end of his life. “The reason I like to get my own way is that I’ve found I’m right more than the other guy.”³⁰ An engineer by trade who made a fortune in the sand and gravel business while coaching hockey on the side, Smythe learned early in his career how to use the media in the service of his team, which often meant in the service of himself. I will expand on this point later in this thesis, but it is worth mentioning here that Smythe talked in his memoirs about his low opinion of sports journalists, boasting that he could manipulate them into writing whatever he wanted “for \$50 or less; but if they didn’t get paid they would either not write hockey at all, or write lies.” (Fittingly, his hand-picked biographer, Young, was a sportswriter.) Smythe said in his memoirs that he responded to alleged untruths by cutting off the media’s access to his team. “They were somewhat surprised,” he said. “I think they thought we needed them to fill our rink. I thought they needed us more than we needed them, to sell their papers.”³¹

McParland, another journalist who wrote a separate biography of Smythe, believed that the mogul was correct: “Everything the Leafs did took on larger-than-life importance as the team grew to dominate winter sports,” McParland wrote of the period of time in the 1920s and ’30s when the team captured the city’s heart – a hold it has never relinquished – and created the fan base now known as Leafs Nation (first a colloquialism, now a registered trademark). “It was no longer enough for newspapers to simply report the outcome of a game; fans wanted news on anything to do with their heroes.”³² Smythe keenly sensed that need and, because it dovetailed

³⁰ McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, p. 335.

³¹ Conn Smythe with Scott Young, *If You Can’t Beat ‘Em in the Alley* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1981), pp. 114-116.

³² McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, p. 149.

with his own need for the spotlight, he was glad to fill it. He became the public face of the team and, as the Leafs became and remained successful, he came to be regarded as one of the foremost hockey minds of the time. This often led him to receive credit for accomplishments that he had not necessarily been responsible for; I will elaborate on this point later.

Despite the unreliability of the printed word in my research, newspapers did prove to be a valuable resource because of their contemporaneity, and I am fortunate to have had access to many newspaper archives through subscriptions and library memberships. That said, I noted that spelling and grammar conventions differed depending on various factors such as time and especially place. For example, the position of defence (or defenceman) on a hockey team was often recorded as “defense” or “defenseman” in American and some older Canadian newspapers. The same was true of the position of centre, or “center.” Sometimes, the positions of left wing and right wing were rendered as “left-wing” and “right-wing,” or as “left-winger” and “right-winger.” Frustratingly, there was not enough printed consensus between “face-off,” “face off,” and “faceoff.” Canadians are familiar with and prefer “-our” words such as “honour,” “labour,” and “neighbour,” but this does not appear to have always been the case, with American-style spellings popping up from time to time. Where possible, I have paraphrased to employ my own preferences regarding these and other words and terms, but I could not always avoid using full or partial quotes. In the interest of historical accuracy, when confronted by spelling differences in quotes that I used, I have spelled the words as they were originally written.

It is in the spirit of historical accuracy that I chose this project. I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s with stories and legends that I absorbed from books by popular hockey writers such as Brian McFarlane and Stan Fischler, and I invariably retold many of these stories in my own adventures as a newspaper sports reporter in the 1990s and 2000s. I find it ironic now that I

consciously tried to establish and maintain a reputation for accuracy as a journalist, yet I participated in the perpetuation of many hockey legends that I did not think to verify. It was only after I left journalism for academia that I became more interested in trying to find out what had really happened in the stories I thought I knew so well.

My experience as a professional sportswriter and my training as a historian make me uniquely qualified to work on this project, and I believe that correcting the historical hockey record whenever possible is the responsibility of scholars who have a connection to the sport. This conviction has been inspired by historians such as author Andrew Holman, who has written extensively about hockey. In one paper, he addressed the challenge posed by writers and authors who do not have academic training or responsibilities, and who can therefore get away with not being as stringent about the facts in their storytelling. “The history of Canada’s game is rife with big events and big personalities, and the popular imagination is naturally attracted to the sites and sources of colourful narrative,” Holman wrote.

Hockey history is filled with great, tell-able, romantic stories, but none of them happened in a vacuum and all of them will lose their broader historical meaning if they are not related critically or told without contextual richness . . . it is the scholarly historian who is uniquely trained and situated to ensure that hockey’s stories are accurately remembered.³³

While this is true, hockey’s historiography is still laden with non-scholarly works that can be useful in research but are hardly infallible. Some books are good but self-serving, such as Conn Smythe’s autobiography. Many books are entertaining and have content that can be traced to primary sources such as newspapers, and wherever possible I tried to verify anything of note that I found in the popular history. But some content has been impossible to verify. In extreme

³³ Andrew C. Holman, “Hockey and History: Scholars’ New Challenge with Canada’s Game,” *Sport History Review*, vol. 37 (2006), p. 2.

cases, I read content that I knew was untrue and could simply dismiss, but unfortunately it meant that I subsequently had to question everything in those particular sources.

For instance, the 1986 book *Lions in Winter* by Chrys Goyens and Allan Turowetz is a well-regarded history of the Montreal Canadiens. There is a passage in which the authors interviewed a man named Joe Gorman, son of the late Canadiens' manager Tommy Gorman, about a 1943 trade that saw the Canadiens send prospect Ted "Teeder" Kennedy to the Toronto Maple Leafs. According to Joe Gorman, his father had agreed to the deal after he received a personal plea from Kennedy's father: "Mr. Kennedy explained that his son was Toronto born and bred and that he had only one desire in life: to play with the Maple Leafs. My dad . . . respected what the young man and his father were saying. So he traded him to Toronto."³⁴

This is a touching story, but it has a fatal flaw – literally – in that in reality there was no Mr. Kennedy, Teeder's father having died as a result of a reported hunting mishap in November 1925, less than a month before his son's birth.³⁵ In addition, although Teeder Kennedy had truly been a fan of the Leafs since childhood, he was not "born and bred" in Toronto; he hailed from the village of Humberstone, Ontario, which later amalgamated with the adjoining larger community of Port Colborne, and he was playing for a Port Colborne team when the Leafs acquired his rights.³⁶ Joe Gorman may honestly have believed the story that he shared with Goyens and Turowetz, but it had no basis in reality, and the authors bear responsibility for not verifying it before they used it in their book. Newspaper articles, including in the *Montreal Gazette*, for which Goyens wrote occasionally as a Montreal-based freelance journalist,

³⁴ Chrys Goyens and Allan Turowetz, *Lions in Winter* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1986), p. 66.

³⁵ Douglas Hunter, *War Games: Conn Smythe and Hockey's Fighting Men* (Toronto: Viking/Penguin Books, 1996), pp. 85-86; "Shot While Hunting," *Montreal Gazette*, November 10, 1925; "Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869-1948," s.v. "Gordon W. Kennedy" (died November 22, 1925), *Ancestry.ca*

³⁶ Hunter, *War Games*, pp. 83, 86, 91-92; Canadian Press, "Ted Kennedy Wins Hart Trophy in Final NHL Season," *Windsor Daily Star*, May 6, 1955; Canadian Press, "Humberstone Merger With Pt. Colborne Due," *Windsor Daily Star*, June 26, 1951.

consistently noted from the beginning of Kennedy's career that he was from Port Colborne.³⁷

The sloppiness is disappointing and so I could not consider Goyens and Turowetz's work to be entirely acceptable as serious hockey history.

Specific to my purpose in examining hockey coaches, historiography – especially scholarly – is limited when it comes to the evolution of coaching. “How-to” books comprise much of the existing coaching-related literature. There are few legitimate resources that go beyond “how to” and explore how tactics are or have been applied by successful coaches. Biographies of noteworthy coaches do this to an extent, but rarely is strategy focused on to any significant degree. Thankfully, I did find some resources that were helpful in this regard. One was *The Hockey Handbook* by Lloyd Percival, and I will explain at length that book's impact and influence since its first publication in 1951. Another one was *Howie Meeker's Hockey Basics*, an instructional book that the author, a noted player, coach, and broadcaster, wrote in the aftermath of the 1972 Summit Series between Canada and the Soviet Union. Another important book was Jack Batten's *The Leafs in Autumn*, in which several players from the Leafs dynasty of the 1940s talked about their successes and Hap Day's contributions to them. Day himself participated in this 1975 book and discussed his coaching philosophy, which my research will show was remarkably consistent over the years. It will also demonstrate that this consistency manifested itself in the success of other coaches who followed in Day's footsteps, whether they recognized it or not.

Andrew Holman teamed up with another historian, Stephen Hardy, to create what I believe is the most significant academic hockey resource to be published since Gruneau and Whitson's first book. *Hockey: A Global History*, was published in 2018 and, at nearly six

³⁷ “Leafs Sign Kennedy,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, March 6, 1943; “Eddolls to join N.H.L. Canadiens,” *Montreal Gazette*, April 3, 1943; Canadian Press, “Maple Leafs Hold Stiff Practices,” *Montreal Gazette*, October 15, 1943.

hundred pages of text and endnotes, it is a remarkably comprehensive study of the sport's evolution from an ad hoc winter activity played on the frozen rivers and ponds of Canada to the truly international game (and business) that it is today. Hardy and Holman constructed a compelling and well-sourced narrative that discussed not only the chronology of hockey in Canada and elsewhere, but also the introduction and advancement of rules, the development of strategy and tactics – sometimes in response to new rules, which themselves were often necessitated by tactics – the convergence of different styles of hockey, the immeasurable impact the media has had on hockey, and many more facets of the sport. It is invaluable.

I have taken some creative liberty and structured this thesis like a best-of-seven hockey playoff series, the environment in which my subject, Hap Day, excelled. This introduction can be seen as a pregame show, outlining what is to happen. Game 1, the first chapter, combines Day's early biography with an examination of heritage as it applies to his team, the Toronto Maple Leafs, and discusses how heritage is manipulated in the service of a narrative. Game 2 explores the importance of hockey to young Canada as it matured as a nation and explains the origins of the Leafs' popularity among Canadians. Game 3 outlines the first half of Day's coaching career and emphasizes his role in the Leafs' first two championships under his direction. Game 4 is comprised of the second half of his coaching career, including the three consecutive championships that made the Leafs an NHL dynasty.

Day's influence on other hockey coaches and on hockey itself has been touched on in these earlier chapters, and Game 5 goes into greater detail, with specific examples of how Hall of Fame coaches learned from him. Game 6 returns to the theme of heritage in hockey, demonstrating that it is and has long been a subjective practice that serves its creators as much as it commemorates its subjects. Game 7, the final chapter, is the conclusion.

I have been inspired by something Hardy and Holman wrote in the acknowledgements section of their book. “We trust that our synthesis will present a lively and interesting story,” they wrote. “In the end, hockey is a game of joy as well as conflict and angst. And if nothing else, its history is filled with lively and interesting characters. We hope to bring some of them to life.”³⁸ My goal is to do the same in this thesis.

³⁸ Stephen Hardy and Andrew C. Holman, *Hockey: A Global History* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2018), p. vii.

GAME 1 – LEGENDS ROW

Hockey physically isolates the coach from the game he directs like no other professional sport. He stands behind his players on the bench, more like a spectator than a participant. When the buzzer sounds, when the final whistle blows, when the final pitch is thrown, the masterminds of basketball, football and baseball can stride confidently onto the playing surface without a hint of negotiating a strange landscape . . . Hockey reminds the coach that he is not a part of the game, and in some cases reminds him that he never was a part of it.³⁹

– Douglas Hunter, journalist and historian

The above passage was written by Hunter in his 1998 biography of hockey coach William “Scotty” Bowman. It is not entirely true – Bowman, who has won more regular season games, more playoff games, and more Stanley Cups than any coach in history, is easily as much a part of the game as any coach ever has been, or ever could be. But there is some truth to the statement in that a hockey coach does stand behind their team’s bench and is further separated from the ice by the dasher boards. This is unlike a basketball or football coach who stands on the sideline with their team, or a baseball coach or manager who sits in the dugout with their players and even wears the same uniform. Comparatively speaking, a hockey coach is indeed isolated from the playing surface.

This separation also helps to illustrate how easy it is to dispose of NHL coaches when they, in the opinion of their bosses, outlive their usefulness. Scotty Bowman could and did dictate the terms of his departure from coaching and his subsequent retirement, but he is a rarity. Jean Perron, his 1986 Stanley Cup heroics notwithstanding, was not retained by the Canadiens

³⁹ Douglas Hunter, *Scotty Bowman: A Life in Hockey* (Toronto: Viking/Penguin Books, 1998), p. 2.

after a season in which his team compiled an impressive 103 points and finished second overall in the league standings.⁴⁰ Even that was kind compared to how the Canadiens treated another coach, Al MacNeil, demoting him to their minor league affiliate in the immediate aftermath of his Stanley Cup victory in 1971. (Coincidentally, he was replaced by Bowman.)⁴¹

The type of fickleness demonstrated by NHL general managers and owners is not unique to hockey, or even to sports. It is just as common in the field of heritage and commemoration, and therefore in the practice and understanding of public history. A good example of this as it pertains to hockey is Legends Row, a collection of fourteen bronze statues situated outside Scotiabank Arena, the Toronto Maple Leafs' home rink.⁴² (See Figure 2, below.) This is a prominent exhibition of public history, with each statue representing a legendary player from the team's past. More accurately, though, each statue represents someone's *idea* of a legendary player from the team's past.



Figure 2: Legends Row at Scotiabank Arena in Toronto. Photo: Jonathon Jackson

⁴⁰ Michael Farber, "Perron couldn't stand the heat," *Montreal Gazette*, May 17, 1988.

⁴¹ Ted Blackman, "Scotty gets the job officially today," *Montreal Gazette*, June 10, 1971.

⁴² Dave McCarthy, "Maple Leafs Legends Row 'is full' with four added," *National Hockey League*, February 19, 2017, <https://www.nhl.com/news/maple-leafs-legends-row-adds-conacher-kelly-mahovlich-and-clark/c-286915412>

Historian Margaret Conrad has written that public history is a term that can be used “to describe the individual and collective memory as it is created and recreated outside the academy . . . We are now beginning to understand that collective memory, rather than any academic consensus, serves as the basic framework for how most people engage the past . . . public memory is often deeply rooted and difficult to dislodge.”⁴³ John Bodnar, also a historian, wrote that public memory is a mixture of “official and vernacular cultural expressions,” with official memory propagated by elites who attempt to advance their vision “by promoting interpretations of past and present reality that reduce the power of competing interests that threaten the realization of their goals.”⁴⁴

Bodnar further described public memory as “a body of beliefs about the past that help a public or society understand both its past, present, and by implication, its future.”⁴⁵ Put simply, then, those who are in control of an official, top-down memory may deliberately shape it to omit and ignore competing narratives, such as a vernacular, bottom-up memory. When they do this in exercising control of the past, they also effectively shape the future, because they are deciding what we should know about a particular topic and how we should come to know it. Legends Row in Toronto is clearly official, institutional history. The Maple Leafs franchise decided which of its players would be commemorated with statues, and then it imposed that collective memory on its large fanbase. It could be argued, therefore, that this collective memory is compromised because it was top-down.

⁴³ Margaret Conrad, “Public History and its Discontents or History in the Age of Wikipedia,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, vol. 18, no. 1 (2007), p. 8.

⁴⁴ John E. Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 13.

⁴⁵ Bodnar, *Remaking America*, p. 15.

But Legends Row is an interesting case. The fact is that the team made wise selections. The players who were chosen had truly been popular, and all had been acclaimed for their accomplishments while wearing a Leafs uniform. Legendary status is subjective and there are no benchmarks that can really be met in terms of deciding who is a legend and who should be commemorated, but in this case the Leafs' fanbase accepted all the selections without question. This both affirmed the team's choices and reinforced the official memory. Legends Row is full of legendary players because the fans made them popular, the team decided later that they were legends worthy of a particular honour, and the fans agreed.

The process of choosing legends was not entirely unimpeachable. As explained by team president Brendan Shanahan in 2017, the team's executive leadership relied on input from its historical committee to determine which of the hundreds of men who had played for the Leafs would be immortalized in bronze. "This is from our perspective, and the historical committee's perspective," Shanahan said in announcing that no one else from the franchise's first hundred years of operation would receive the honour.⁴⁶ But this quote raises some questions. It is not publicly known who the members of this committee are. It does not appear to be publicly known what criteria, if any, the committee used to justify its recommendations. It is likewise not publicly known if the committee made any specific recommendations that the executive leadership rejected, or if the leadership unilaterally made its own choices.

It can be presumed, though, that not everyone who was mentioned as a possibility for Legends Row, whether at the committee or executive level of approval, ended up being chosen. What is clear is that two select groups of people, seemingly accountable to no one besides themselves, decided who would best publicly represent the history of the Toronto Maple Leafs.

⁴⁶ McCarthy, "Maple Leafs Legends Row 'is full' with four added."

Legends Row, therefore, may be full of legitimate legends, and it may stand as a fine exhibition of collective memory, heritage, and commemoration – but it is not necessarily a good presentation of *history*.

“Heritage should not be confused with history,” David Lowenthal wrote. “History seeks to convince by truth . . . Heritage exaggerates and omits, candidly admits and frankly forgets, and thrives on ignorance and error.”⁴⁷ Lowenthal, a historian and geographer, took a special interest in heritage studies and has been credited with having popularized it as a distinct academic discipline that stands apart from history. The distinction between the two was very important to him. “Heritage is not history: heritage is what people make of their history to make themselves feel good,” he said in a lecture a year before he died.⁴⁸

This is not to say that heritage and history do not share similar traits and aims. The fourteen members of the Toronto Maple Leafs who were chosen to be enshrined on Legends Row are, as stated, widely recognized as legendary figures in the team’s history; there is no good argument to be made against any of their selections. Lowenthal would have recognized the merits of Legends Row. He and like-minded historians understood that the distinctions between heritage and history have kept the disciplines well connected. Lowenthal wrote:

Each aims to show things “as they were” . . . And their ways of seeing and using the past fructify one another; many enterprises share features of both. Public history, folk history, collective memory, building restoration, battle reenactment, historical fiction, and docudramas combine heritage aims with historical research, history’s lofty universality with heritage’s possessive

⁴⁷ David Lowenthal, “Fabricating heritage,” *History and Memory*, vol. 10, no. 1 (1998), p. 7.

⁴⁸ Hugh Clout, “David Lowenthal obituary,” *The Guardian*, September 27, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2018/sep/27/david-lowenthal-obituary>

intimacy. Most would agree there is more to history than heritage alone, but “the *whole* of history,” observes historian Michael Kamman, “is heritage.”⁴⁹

The problem with Legends Row as a presentation of history is not who the Leafs chose to include, it is in the historical figures whom they excluded. Of course, not everyone who did something of note with the team could possibly be included. Irvine “Ace” Bailey and Bill Barilko had been honoured by the team with the retirement of their uniform numbers after their careers ended in tragedy, but they were left out. Frank “King” Clancy, a member of the Hockey Hall of Fame (as is Bailey), was associated with the club for more than fifty years as a player, coach, executive member, and beloved goodwill ambassador, but he too was snubbed. And even though the row of statues is depicted as a bench full of players, no coaches were chosen to accompany those players on or behind the bench. That left out George “Punch” Imlach, who directed the Leafs to four Stanley Cups in the 1960s, and Clarence “Hap” Day, who led them to five championships in the 1940s. Day and Imlach are by far the two most successful coaches in the team’s long history – no one else has ever won more than one Cup behind the Leafs bench – but neither of them is on Legends Row.

One of the chief purposes of this thesis is to demonstrate that Day was one of the most important coaches in hockey history, and that he should be better remembered for his achievements and his influence. His achievements – five Stanley Cups in only ten seasons – would be simple enough to commemorate by giving him a deserved place on Legends Row. Day was the first NHL coach to win the Stanley Cup in three consecutive seasons, and when he coached his last game in 1950, no NHL coach had won more championships than him, a record that stood for fifteen years. Today, nearly seventy-five years after Day’s last game, only two

⁴⁹ David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 168.

other coaches, Scotty Bowman and Hector “Toe” Blake, have managed to surpass or even match his total.⁵⁰

Yet Day is often overlooked in discussions of the greatest coaches in NHL history, while Bowman and Blake are among those who are frequently mentioned. The length of time that has passed since Day’s retirement is a significant factor in his omission from these discussions. Bodnar wrote that vernacular memory is distinguished from official memory in that it takes its strength “from the lived or shared experiences of small groups . . . (and) lost intensity with the death and demise of individuals who participated in historic events.”⁵¹ Official memory can continue indefinitely due to the power of the institutions that endorse it. Day is remembered for what the Leafs want him remembered for – to be fair, they have not ignored him entirely, having retired the number he wore as a player – but he has slipped out of the vernacular collective memory because there are so few people still alive who saw and experienced his work.

This thesis is an attempt to overcome this unfortunate state of events by demonstrating that although Day’s active role as a coach ended more than seven decades ago, his impact has survived. This thesis will show that Day had a significant influence on coaches who followed him, including Bowman, proving that his achievements behind the bench were no fluke. The style of hockey that Day and his teams excelled at is still played every year in the Stanley Cup playoffs. The Soviet Union studied methods that were popularized by him and used some of those methods to build an international hockey powerhouse. The title of this thesis, “He shows signs of the Day influence,” is a quote that had not been intended as a compliment; it was a snide remark spoken by Stafford Smythe, a man who had succeeded Day as the de facto general

⁵⁰ National Hockey League, “Stanley Cup Champions,” *National Hockey League*, <https://www.nhl.com/news/nhl-stanley-cup-champions-winners-complete-list/c-287705398>; National Hockey League, “Head Coach Records,” *National Hockey League*, <https://records.nhl.com/records/coach-records>

⁵¹ Bodnar, *Remaking America*, p. 247.

manager of the Leafs and who was assuredly not a fan of Day's style of hockey.⁵² The intention of this thesis is to undermine that quote and reframe it in a positive light.



Figure 3: Hap Day (left) receives congratulations from NHL President Clarence Campbell after the Toronto Maple Leafs won the 1949 Stanley Cup, the team's (and Day's) unprecedented third consecutive championship. Photo: Getty Images

Clarence Henry Day was born on June 14, 1901, in his family's hotel just east of the town limits of Owen Sound, Ontario. He developed an early interest in ice hockey and first skated on a frozen creek that ran through his family's property.⁵³ When Clarence was five years old, in 1906, he moved with his parents and siblings into Owen Sound, a prominent shipping town on Georgian Bay where his father had gained employment with the Canadian Pacific Railway. Clarence began attending a school where a custodian took a liking to the boy and his cheerful nature. The custodian nicknamed the boy "Happy," a moniker that would eventually be

⁵² Milt Dunnell, "Speaking on Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, February 5, 1958.

⁵³ Viola Bothwell, unpublished family history, courtesy of George Bothwell. Note: Mrs. Bothwell's husband and Day were first cousins.

shortened to “Hap.”⁵⁴ This school is where Happy played his first organized hockey; his uncle claimed many years later, after Happy had become famous as the captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs, that the boy had also served his school team as captain, leading it to the Owen Sound public school championship when he was only ten years old.⁵⁵ A search of the Owen Sound newspaper archive uncovered no evidence to support that claim.

The Day family moved again prior to the First World War after the CPR transferred most of its shipping operations on Georgian Bay to a new town that the railway created and named Port McNicoll. Happy attended high school in another nearby town, Midland, and began playing hockey there on a more competitive level, earning a place on the local junior team at age sixteen. He played defence and was a good competitor, eventually becoming Midland’s star player, a distinction he maintained when he became too old for junior hockey and moved up to the town’s intermediate club at age twenty. But although he excelled at hockey, Day appeared to have no thoughts of a professional career at that time, having decided to become a pharmacist.

In 1920, he began a four-year apprenticeship, working first at a drug store in Midland before moving to the much larger city of Hamilton. He continued to play hockey and transferred to the Hamilton senior club, which played at the top level of amateur hockey in Ontario. It was with the Hamilton Tigers that Day’s reputation grew by leaps and bounds, as he immediately became a starting defenceman on the team. He led the Tigers to the Ontario Hockey Association (OHA) senior playoff final in 1923 and to the championship the following year.⁵⁶

Little is known about Day’s early playing career other than where he played and when. Some clippings survive, far more from his time in Hamilton than from his years in Midland,

⁵⁴ Clyde Warrington, “Hap Day out of hockey, but feats still memorable,” *St. Thomas Times-Journal*, July 16, 1985.

⁵⁵ “Maple Leafs’ Popular Captain,” *Owen Sound Daily Sun-Times*, April 4, 1932.

⁵⁶ “Granites Expect to Win Title,” *The Globe*, March 1, 1923; M.J. Rodden, “Game, Round, Title Won By Hamilton,” *The Globe*, March 11, 1924.

which is a much smaller community that has never had a daily newspaper and whose teams did not attract very much attention from media in larger centres. It is known that Day was a defenceman as a junior player in Midland, but because of the dearth of available information about his early life, it cannot be known how he came to be a defenceman, how he learned to play the position, and how his approach to the position evolved over the years. His expertise does not appear to have come from any formal instruction he himself may have had. “I never had any coaching until I made it into the big league,” Day said in a 1985 interview. “When I did get coaching, all I’d hear is ‘Shoot the puck at the net.’”⁵⁷

The game itself changed significantly during Day’s youth. Up until the 1910s, competitive hockey was played by teams comprised of seven players – a goaltender and six skaters – and the two skaters assigned to defensive roles were known as the point and the cover point. These two positions soon evolved into left defence and right defence, the names we know them by today.⁵⁸ The OHA then dropped the forward position of rover in time for the 1917-18 season – coincidentally, Day’s first season of junior hockey – to create the modern six-player team: goaltender, left defence, right defence, centre, left wing, and right wing.⁵⁹ When sixteen-year-old Clarence “Happy” Day played his first junior game on January 16, 1918, against a team from the nearby town of Penetanguishene, he was listed in the starting lineup at left defence.⁶⁰

Whatever hockey Day had played to that point in his life appears to have trained him for the important role of keeping the puck and opposing players out of his team’s zone and away from the net. He was certainly good enough to have earned a place as a starter at such a young age, because some of his teammates and opponents would have been twenty, the maximum age

⁵⁷ Warrington, “Hap Day out of hockey, but feats still memorable.”

⁵⁸ “Defence Positions in Hockey Renamed by Ontario League,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, December 10, 1913.

⁵⁹ “Six-Man Teams in Hockey Now,” *The Globe*, December 3, 1917.

⁶⁰ “Midland Juniors Win From Penetanguishene,” *The Globe*, January 17, 1918.

for junior hockey. But he was also talented enough to be able to carry the puck and create scoring chances for his own team, which was something defencemen of the era were generally not expected to do. By the end of Day's second and final season in Hamilton, he was being acclaimed in various newspaper reports as "the best defense man (sic) in the senior OHA" and "the finest defence player in Canada."⁶¹

Canadian sports reporters in the 1920s paid a great deal of attention to senior amateur hockey, its coverage rivalling that of professional hockey. That was true even in Toronto, where the amateur clubs of the OHA shared space in the sports pages with that city's NHL franchise, the St. Patricks. Day moved to Toronto in 1924 for the next stage of his training as a pharmacist. At the time, the path to that career was a four-year apprenticeship followed by two terms as a student at the Ontario College of Pharmacy in Toronto.⁶² With his apprenticeship at an end, Day intended to complete his studies and begin work as a druggist. But hockey was still an attractive sideline for him, and the pharmacy school, conveniently, was an affiliated college of the University of Toronto. Because of this, Day was able to play for the university's renowned Varsity team, one of Hamilton's rivals in the senior OHA.

Varsity, coached by Toronto entrepreneur Conn Smythe, would have considered itself fortunate to have acquired Day's services. Unfortunately for Varsity, his tenure with the team lasted only two games. Finding himself in need of money to continue his education, he agreed to turn professional with the St. Patricks in December 1924 after that team's manager, Charles Querrie, promised him that he could get paid to play hockey and still finish his schooling. Day, who was reluctant to sign a pro contract despite his financial state, asked for an astronomical

⁶¹ "Clarence Day Takes the Money Plunge," *Toronto Daily Star*, December 10, 1924; "Varsity Meets PCC To-night in SPA Fixture," *The Varsity*, December 9, 1924.

⁶² *University of Toronto Calendar*, 1924-25; *Ontario College of Pharmacy Calendar*, 1949-50.

sum from the St. Patricks, claiming many years later that he had fully expected the team to say no. “I was the one who was surprised when they accepted,” he said in a 1949 interview. “I couldn’t back out then.”⁶³ Querrie was true to his word; Day played in every St. Patricks game from his debut until the end of the season, but he completed his coursework on schedule and graduated after his final exams in May 1925.⁶⁴

His prowess as a puck carrier was such that he was used by the St. Patricks right away as both a forward and as a defenceman. He started his first NHL game at left wing, playing on a line that included Jack Adams, later a fierce coaching rival, and he excelled up front before being shifted back to a defence spot. He played the entire game without a break.⁶⁵ A Canadian Press report of his debut was particularly effusive: “Day was the outstanding star for the locals. No amateur ever made a more auspicious start than the fair-haired flyer from Hamilton. He never backed up an inch despite the heavy going, and he was the fastest man on the ice.”⁶⁶ By February 1925, Day was being described as “just about the most useful player in the National Hockey League to-day. He goes sixty minutes at top speed and is a prime favorite with the fans.”⁶⁷ A Montreal writer concurred after a game in which Day scored two goals and two assists against the Canadiens, noting his “outstanding” play and his “wonderful” speed and stamina.⁶⁸

Day was used more as a left wing than as a defenceman through most of his first three seasons in the NHL, but that changed in February 1927 when a group of investors purchased the St. Patricks franchise and changed the team’s name to the Maple Leafs. Day was immediately

⁶³ “Toronto NHL Team Lost Its First Start,” *Toronto Evening Telegram*, December 17, 1949.

⁶⁴ “Ontario College of Pharmacy Senior Examinations, May 1925,” *The Globe*, May 16, 1925.

⁶⁵ “St. Pats Lose to Montreals, 3 to 1,” *Toronto Daily Star*, December 15, 1924.

⁶⁶ Canadian Press, “Montreal Moved Up With 3-1 Win Over St. Patricks,” *Montreal Gazette*, December 15, 1924.

⁶⁷ “Pucks at Pro Hockey,” *Toronto Daily Star*, February 11, 1925.

⁶⁸ “St. Pats Made Best Showing of Year to Defeat Canadiens,” *Montreal Daily Star*, February 9, 1925.

shifted back to the blue line, and he remained on defence for the rest of his career.⁶⁹ Conn Smythe, one of the investors who had bought the St. Pats, became the Leafs' manager and named himself coach for the 1927-28 season.⁷⁰ Smythe grew close to Day, hired him to work at his sand and gravel pit in the offseason, and even convinced Day to buy a stake in the thriving business.⁷¹ Day became the captain of the Leafs in October 1927 and held that position for ten years. During his long tenure as the team's on-ice leader, while bolstering a league-wide reputation as a first-rate NHL defenceman, he was also learning and absorbing the finer points of hockey.

CAPTAIN OF THE MAPLE LEAFS



CLARENCE ("HAPPY") DAY, one of the most popular of the Leafs and one of the outstanding defense players in the National League. Day is noted for his adroitness in pushing the puck away from the charging attacker's stick. He can also hand out bruising bodychecks when the occasion demands. He has been captain of the Leafs for many years. He is a clever puck-carrier and packs a wicked shot.

Figure 4: Hap Day served as captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs for ten seasons.⁷²

⁶⁹ Bob Hayes, "Brilliant Victory For Local Hockey Team," *Toronto Daily Star*, February 18, 1927; W.A. Hewitt, "Sporting Views and Reviews," *Toronto Daily Star*, February 18, 1927; "Toronto Crumbles New York Chances," *The Globe*, February 18, 1927.

⁷⁰ J. Andrew Ross, *Joining the Clubs: The Business of the National Hockey League to 1945* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015), pp. 161-162.

⁷¹ Conn Smythe with Scott Young, *If You Can't Beat 'Em in the Alley*, p. 93.

⁷² "Captain of the Maple Leafs," *The Globe*, December 7, 1934.

“Teammates, opponents and those who watched the game closely during Day’s career claim he was among the smartest, most creative men in the league’s history, and many of them point to his performance when the Leafs won the 1932 Stanley Cup as the pinnacle,” sportswriter Frank Orr wrote in a 2013 profile of Day.⁷³ During that postseason, Day was credited with both staving off the Leafs’ ouster from their semifinal series against the Montreal Maroons and then helping his team to win the series by scoring a crucial goal on a remarkable solo rush down the ice. Sports reporter Bert Perry wrote in *The Globe* that the Leafs were trailing 2-1 midway through the third period of the deciding game and were unable to mount any pressure on the Maroons defence or to challenge goaltender “Flat” Walsh until Day took over, carrying the puck through what seemed like the entire Montreal team and beating Walsh with a hard wrist shot.

Toronto fans “went delirious in their delight” and Day’s teammates “did everything but kiss their captain.” As Perry described it, the spontaneous outburst by fans and players “was a fitting tribute to a great play and a great player, for, in addition to putting the Leafs back on their feet at a time when their cause looked pretty hopeless, Day played a brilliant game on the defense and was one of the outstanding players all through the contest.”⁷⁴ Toronto won the game in overtime and went on to sweep the Stanley Cup Final series against the New York Rangers, with Day continuing to play solid two-way hockey.⁷⁵

As the captain of the Leafs, Day commanded everyone’s respect with his physical conditioning, his ability, his willingness to teach, and his overall commitment to the club. His teammates recognized his value. “Hap Day was far ahead of his time, a very intelligent man with an exceptional ability for analyzing the game and how it should be played, much like those in

⁷³ Frank Orr, “Greatest Maple Leafs: No. 17 Hap Day,” *Sportsnet*, December 13, 2013, <https://www.sportsnet.ca/hockey/24-7/greatest-maple-leafs-no-17-hap-day/>

⁷⁴ Bert Perry, “Leafs Oust Maroons After 18 Minutes’ Overtime,” *The Globe*, April 4, 1932.

⁷⁵ Bert Perry, “14,366 Frenzied Fans See Maple Leafs Win Stanley Cup,” *The Globe*, April 11, 1932.

charge do now but with a batch of scouts and videotapes,” Reginald “Red” Horner, also a defenceman on the 1932 championship club, said in an interview in 2000. Horner was one of several Leafs who were paired with Day as a defence partner over the years, with Day taking each one under his wing and serving as their on-ice mentor, teaching them to play at the professional level. “Hap, not the coach, would tell us, then show us, how to play each opponent,” Horner said. “If we did what he did and what he told us to do, we were successful.”⁷⁶

Horner’s statement was not a case of revisionist history. A 1928 article in the *Toronto Daily Star* noted that Day, only 27 years old and at the beginning of his second season as captain of the Leafs, was firmly established as an elder statesman. “As in other seasons the young players on the team are unconsciously looking to Happy Day for the advice and leadership necessary to change them from rookies to regulars,” the article said. “Day’s genial disposition makes him the confidante of the new players year after year . . . much of the success of the recruits of other years can be attributed to the popular leader of the Leaf brigade.”⁷⁷

Frank Selke, the Leafs’ assistant manager until 1946, wrote in his memoirs that Day “was fit to play sixty minutes of hockey” every day.⁷⁸ As valuable as Day was, he was overshadowed to a degree by the play of flashier teammates and by his habit of placing team goals before any ambitions he may have had for himself. “I have always contended that he never did get full credit for his ability as a player,” Selke wrote. “He often lamented the fact that he lacked that mysterious quality called ‘colour’; and he was frequently passed up by All Star voters, sometimes to be placed back of fellows certainly not nearly so valuable.”⁷⁹ Day would have agreed with Selke’s belated assessment. “I figure I was a pretty good defenseman, better than

⁷⁶ Frank Orr, “Greatest Maple Leafs: No. 17 Hap Day.”

⁷⁷ “Pro Hockey Gossip From Training Camps,” *Toronto Daily Star*, October 25, 1928.

⁷⁸ Frank Selke, *Behind the Cheering* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1962), p. 79.

⁷⁹ Selke, *Behind the Cheering*, p. 79.

some players who received far more space in the papers,” he said in a 1944 interview. “But it was never natural for me to do things spectacularly, so I never tried.”⁸⁰

Day achieved enough on-ice success that he was elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1961.⁸¹ But it is interesting to note some unintentional foreshadowing in Selke’s memoirs. Even though Selke as acting manager and Day as coach worked closely together in the early 1940s to lay the groundwork for the Leafs’ first great dynasty while Conn Smythe was overseas with the Canadian Army, Selke’s narrative moves on after his brief praise of Day’s playing ability, and he rarely mentions Day again in his book after this passage. Yet it is certain that Selke meant no slight. In 1964, having just retired as manager of the rival Montreal Canadiens, he named Day as the best coach he had ever worked with, choosing him over such luminaries as James Dickinson “Dick” Irvin and Toe Blake.⁸² Irvin and Blake are names that are often brought up in “best ever” discussions but, according to Selke, Day was better.

In addition to his ongoing mentoring of the Leafs youngsters, Day was enticed to become an actual coach while he was still an active player. In 1935, he agreed to take over a Toronto Junior A team called the West End Nationals, and he led them to the Memorial Cup as Canadian champions in the spring of 1936 (while he simultaneously played in the Stanley Cup Final with the Leafs against the Detroit Red Wings, something that could never happen today). The following season, while still patrolling the Leafs’ defence, he took the Toronto Dominion Brewery club to the OHA Senior A title. According to a profile on Day written in 1950, near the end of his coaching career, it was these achievements that had convinced him he could have a future behind a bench and that his theories about team play were viable.

⁸⁰ Trent Frayne, “Happy Day,” *Liberty Magazine*, November 25, 1944.

⁸¹ Canadian Press, “Rocket, Apps Among 14 Named to Hall of Fame,” *The Globe and Mail*, June 14, 1961.

⁸² Jim Kearney, “Jim Kearney,” *Vancouver Sun*, June 18, 1964.

“He didn’t – and still doesn’t – believe you have to have super stars (sic) to win,” said the profile, adding that only two players from Day’s junior and senior teams had gone on to achieve any success at all in the NHL. The key to victory, according to the coach, was finding out how an individual player’s talents could work within an overall team structure. As Day himself had done throughout his playing career, this meant sacrificing personal glory for the greater good. “For example, we’ve only had one player on the all-star team in the last three years and haven’t led the scoring,” Day said in the profile. “Others have had the all-stars – but we’ve won the Stanley Cup. It’s the team I want.”⁸³

Day had become accustomed to winning championships by 1950, but he suffered through a lot of disappointment before reaching that point. He was a mainstay of the Leafs defence throughout most of the 1930s and, as stated earlier, was a key member of their Stanley Cup-winning team under coach Dick Irvin, who had come aboard in 1931. But the Leafs, despite consistently icing one of the best and highest scoring clubs in the league, were never able to win another Cup during Day’s playing career or during Irvin’s time as coach. They earned three first-place finishes and six more trips to the Stanley Cup Final between 1933 and 1940, including three straight Final appearances in 1938, 1939, and 1940, but lost the Cup each time.⁸⁴ Day believed that although the Leafs excelled on offence – in a ten-season period between 1928-29 and 1937-38, a Toronto player won the NHL’s individual scoring title five times – they did not pay enough attention to defence, and this lack of attention cost them when it mattered most. He talked about this in a lengthy interview later in his life:

⁸³ Gordon Campbell, “Day’s 25 Years in the N.H.L.,” *Toronto Star Weekly*, March 18, 1950.

⁸⁴ Dan Diamond, ed., *Total Hockey: The Official Encyclopedia of the National Hockey League*, 2nd ed. (Kingston, NY: Total Sports Publishing, 2000), pp. 120, 143-144.

When I was a defenceman on Toronto, I saw all kinds of players in front of me, and I learned right then that it's defence that wins hockey games. Coaching offensively is too hard. A centre goes down the ice – he doesn't know what he's going to do with the puck. It depends on where his wings happen to go. You can give them a plan of attack, and then the situation for the plan may never come up in the game. But defence, now. When you think of defence, you think of two men, the defencemen, isn't that right? *Wrong*. Think of all six men doing the job on defence. I told my players if they worked as hard coming back as they did going down the ice, we'd be okay. Of course you had to have the proper type of player to handle that approach – or *make* them into the proper type.⁸⁵



Figure 5: Hap Day's photo for his Bee Hive hockey card, 1934. Photo: Author's collection

⁸⁵ Jack Batten, *The Leafs in Autumn* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1975), p. 95. Italics are original to the source.

In 1940, Dick Irvin left the Leafs and went to Montreal as coach of the Canadiens, a struggling rival NHL franchise. Conn Smythe wrote that he engineered the deal specifically so he could appoint Day to replace Irvin behind the Toronto bench. Smythe, a veteran of the First World War, had re-enlisted in the Canadian Army for the Second World War and, knowing he would not be able to devote his attention to the hockey team, was not confident that Irvin was strong enough to lead it on his own.⁸⁶ Day now had the opportunity and the authority to recruit “the proper type” of player who would return Stanley Cup glory to Maple Leaf Gardens. Over the next ten seasons he succeeded beyond anyone’s expectations, undoubtedly including his own. Not even Day could have predicted the level of his success, because his accomplishments as coach of the Leafs were quite literally unprecedented in NHL history.

Unfortunately, as the Leafs’ Legends Row has demonstrated, history is not always represented accurately or fairly in heritage. Margaret Conrad, as noted earlier, wrote that it is difficult to dislodge public memory, but John Bodnar explained that when a collective memory is far removed from the public that experienced it, it becomes easier to dislodge and replace. The public memory can be superseded by a more contemporary memory that will assume its place and legitimacy, even though it may be less accurate and therefore less representative of history. As Bodnar noted, those who control the past also control the present and can shape the future. Historian Margaret MacMillan would agree with that assessment, especially as it pertains to the Leafs and Legends Row. “The past can be used for almost anything you want to do in the present,” she wrote. “We abuse it when we create lies about the past or write histories that show only one perspective. We can draw our lessons carefully or badly.”⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Smythe with Young, *If You Can’t Beat ‘Em in the Alley*, p. 143.

⁸⁷ Margaret MacMillan, *Dangerous Games: The Uses and Abuses of History* (New York: Modern Library, 2009), p. xi.

GAME 2 – CANADA, HOCKEY, AND THE LEAFS

Hockey is the Canadian metaphor, the rink a symbol of this country's vast stretches of water and wilderness, its extremes of climate, the player a symbol of our struggle to civilize such a land. Some people call it our national religion. Well, what better? Like the ball games of the Mayan Indians of Mexico, worshipped because the arc of the kicked ball was thought to imitate the flight of the sun and the moon across the heavens, hockey captures the essence of the Canadian experience in the New World. In a land so inescapably and inhospitably bold, hockey is the dance of life, an affirmation that despite the deathly chill of winter we are alive.⁸⁸

– Bruce Kidd, historian, and John Macfarlane, journalist

Hockey is one of the best examples of what binds Canada together as a nation. It is said that every Canadian who was aged six or older in 1972 still remembers where they were when Paul Henderson scored the winning goal in the last game of the Summit Series against the Soviet Union. This is a claim that seems implausible until it is understood that, in a nation of twenty-one million people, more than fifteen million of them were watching on TV when Henderson's tie-breaking shot slipped into the net past Soviet goalie Vladislav Tretiak with only 34 seconds remaining in the game. The country had literally all but shut down so that everyone who wanted to watch the game could do so. The goal, as historian Jason Wilson has noted, "is considered by many Canadians to be the single most important moment in the history of Canadian sports."⁸⁹

Another historian, Neil Earle, has referred to the event as "an enduring folk memory" that created a rare sense of national unity when it happened, a unique situation that can be recalled

⁸⁸ Bruce Kidd and John Macfarlane, *The Death of Hockey* (Toronto: New Press, 1972), p. 4.

⁸⁹ J.J. Wilson, "27 Remarkable Days: The 1972 Summit Series of Ice Hockey between Canada and the Soviet Union," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2004), pp. 277-278.

and shared at any time by those who lived through it. “Millions of adult Canadians reserve hallowed psychic space . . . for the memory of Paul Henderson’s winning goal,” he wrote.⁹⁰ Other landmark goals by Canadian players in international competition are similarly remembered, such as the “Gretzky to Lemieux” goal, also against the Soviet Union, that won the 1987 Canada Cup tournament. And when Sidney Crosby scored the “Golden Goal” to win the gold medal at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, it sparked a nationwide frenzy, seen as a victory not only for the team on the ice but for Canada as a whole. Twenty-two million Canadians were watching the game on TV, making it the most-watched event in the history of Canadian television. Naturally, as scholar Denis Bekkering noted, Crosby’s goal was immediately compared with Henderson’s; some journalists and observers debated which one was more significant, and others – including a delighted Paul Henderson – expressed pleasure that a new generation of Canadian hockey fans had its own Henderson-like moment to remember.⁹¹

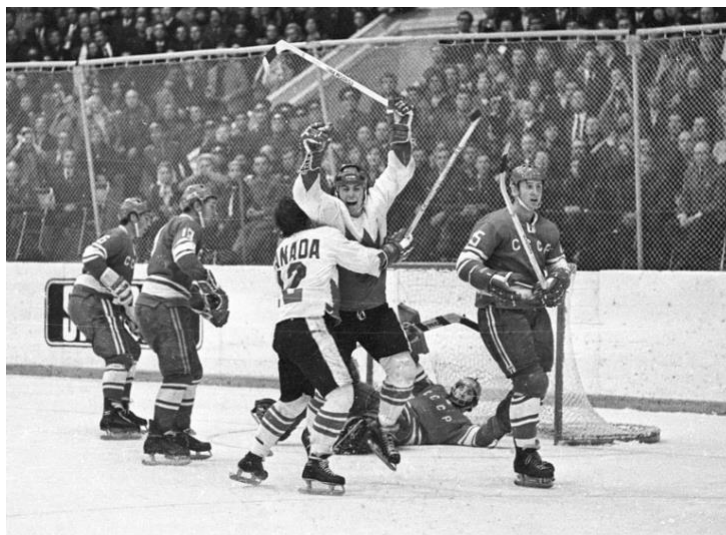


Figure 6: Team Canada player Paul Henderson raises his arms and stick to celebrate his Summit Series-winning goal in 1972.
Photo: Frank Lennon, Library and Archives Canada

⁹⁰ Neil Earle, “Hockey as Canadian popular culture: Team Canada 1972, television and the Canadian identity,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 30, no. 2 (1995), p. 108.

⁹¹ Denis J. Bekkering, “Of ‘Lucky Loonies’ and ‘Golden Pucks’: Canadian Hockey Relics and Civil Religiosity,” *Studies in Religion*, vol. 44, no. 1 (2014): pp. 56, 60-61.

Such events are what help to make Canada what historian Benedict Anderson defined as an “imagined community.” This was the theme of his seminal work, the book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Anderson argued that because most people who live in “even the smallest nation” will never know or even meet most other people in that country, then the nation itself must be imagined to some extent for it to be legitimate in the minds of its citizens.⁹² Cultural and media studies scholar Emily West has concurred, citing Anderson as having identified collective memory as a tool that uses imagination to build and maintain important connections within a group. Without this imagination and the collective memory that fuels it, she wrote, that group may have little or nothing to bind it together.⁹³ In a nation as physically large as Canada, where we may not necessarily have much in common with many of our fellow Canadians, hockey provides one of those crucial connections. Henderson’s goal was an important event that, as Gruneau and Whitson wrote, has shaped our “collective popular memory which, in turn, can become the currency of identification among strangers.”⁹⁴

Hockey in North America evolved from a variety of games that were played on ice with sticks and balls in the 1700s and possibly before.⁹⁵ It has been accepted by sport historians that organized ice hockey, with written rules, dates to the 1870s in Montreal, where the first recorded indoor hockey game was played at the Victoria Skating Rink in 1875. At that time, the rules and even some equipment were borrowed from established sports such as lacrosse and especially rugby. Gruneau and Whitson wrote that the “Montreal version of hockey borrowed heavily from

⁹² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London and New York: Verso, 2006), p. 6.

⁹³ Emily West, “Selling Canada to Canadians: Collective Memory, National Identity, and Popular Culture,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2002), p. 216.

⁹⁴ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, p. 217.

⁹⁵ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, p. 32.

rugby's traditions of physical contact, and it maintained the rugby tradition of being an 'on-side' game with no forward passing."⁹⁶

Hardy and Holman expanded on that understanding of rugby's influence. In early organized hockey, players with possession of the puck could use their stick to do only three things with it: carry it with them on an individual effort to score; lob it into the other team's zone, similar to a punt; or pass it laterally to a teammate. There were no systems or set plays. Strategy was all but unheard of until around the turn of the century when coaches became commonplace. "A coach could see the ice and plays develop from a perspective unavailable to a player," Hardy and Holman wrote, noting that the first coaches – like most coaches since – had been players themselves. "It was no coincidence that 'science,' or combination play, was elevated during the same years as the rise of the coach."⁹⁷

By the turn of the century, the game had been established across Canada, a process that happened rapidly. A hockey tournament was contested at the first Montreal Winter Carnival in 1883, and it was so popular and influential that the Montreal version was quickly adopted in other cities in Eastern Canada. The first inter-city league, the Amateur Hockey Association of Canada, was established in 1886 by teams in Montreal, Ottawa, and Quebec City.⁹⁸ As Hardy and Holman described it, the addition of hockey to the annual Winter Carnival was truly the key to everything that followed. The sport was legitimized by this distinction, a status that allowed an official stamp of sorts to be placed on hockey "as a symbol of Canadian winter." This validation was made permanent when Canada's Governor General, Frederick Arthur Stanley, Baron Stanley of Preston, became so enthralled by the game that he took it upon himself to donate a

⁹⁶ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, pp. 37-38.

⁹⁷ Hardy and Holman, *Hockey: A Global History*, p. 129.

⁹⁸ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, pp. 38-39.

challenge trophy that would be contested by the best teams in the Dominion of Canada.⁹⁹ Baron Stanley, later also the Earl of Derby, is remembered colloquially today as Lord Stanley. The trophy he donated became known, of course, as the Stanley Cup.

Hockey's popularity across Canada was facilitated by the railways that had begun to criss-cross the young nation. Hardy and Holman wrote that after the sport's establishment in Montreal, Ottawa, and Quebec City, it "spread like a swirling blizzard" to and across Atlantic Canada, to the large cities of Southern Ontario, and to the cities that were springing up in the expanding west. "Moreover," they wrote, "hockey spread across the Canadian countryside as well: to railway boomtowns, transportation depots, and agricultural service centers. By 1895, it was played in six of Canada's (then) seven provinces, and in its only territory (Northwest Territory)."¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the railways were an important "vector." Scholars have long considered the railways to have been crucial to Canada's development, connecting towns and cities and carrying people, goods, and capital between them. But Hardy and Holman emphasized that important ideas and culture were also transported across the country: "Hockey was one of the many pieces of cultural freight that traveled on early Canadian rails . . . Railways spread the good news of this new sport and enabled its consolidation."¹⁰¹

During the first decade of the twentieth century, if not before, hockey was being referred to in newspapers across Canada as a national game. A team from Winnipeg won the Stanley Cup three times between 1896 and 1902, and even a club from Dawson City, Yukon, made an unsuccessful challenge for the Cup in 1905. "(T)here can be no doubt of the steady, almost extraordinary, growth in popularity of the game as a sport affording healthy exercise in which

⁹⁹ Hardy and Holman, *Hockey: A Global History*, pp. 69, 70-71.

¹⁰⁰ Hardy and Holman, *Hockey: A Global History*, p. 69.

¹⁰¹ Hardy and Holman, *Hockey: A Global History*, pp. 78-79.

many participate, not merely a sport played by a few to provide amusement for spectators,” an unidentified writer opined in a 1909 edition of the *Montreal Gazette*. “What is true of Montreal is true perhaps to a less degree of every city and village in Canada where there is a skating rink . . . Hockey is fast leaving lacrosse behind as a national pastime.”¹⁰² More than one hundred years later, hockey’s popularity in Canada has endured, as has its impact on the country.

Many writers have tried to explain why hockey remains so important to Canada. Gruneau and Whitson suggested that because the game as we know it was invented by Canadians, we continue to look at it as something we should continue to own.¹⁰³ “Hockey’s rhythms, meanings, structures, and contradictions can all be understood as a constitutive part of everyday Canadian experience. They are also an important part of the Canadian collective memory,” the scholars wrote. “Hockey acts as both myth and allegory in Canadian culture. The game has become one of this country’s most significant collective representations – a story that Canadians tell themselves about what it means to be Canadian.”¹⁰⁴

That is a somewhat vague assessment by itself, but Ken Dryden has been able to help articulate it more definitively. Dryden brings a unique perspective to his insights on hockey as a prolific author and as a member of the Hockey Hall of Fame who won six Stanley Cups in only eight seasons as a goaltender with the Montreal Canadiens. Since he retired from hockey in 1979, Dryden has written extensively and thoughtfully about the game as a participant and as an observer. As an author, he is best known for *The Game*, a personal narrative which has been acclaimed by many people as the best hockey book ever written.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² “Growth of Hockey,” *Montreal Gazette*, January 23, 1909.

¹⁰³ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁵ Scott Young, “The erudite hockey writer,” *The Globe and Mail*, October 29, 1983; Dave Stubbs, “Dryden’s *The Game* about more than hockey,” *Montreal Gazette*, January 20, 2003; Red Fisher, “Dryden made magic in nets and on paper,” *Montreal Gazette*, February 2, 2012.

In 1989-90, he wrote a six-part documentary series for CBC called *Ken Dryden's Home Game*, and at the same time he collaborated with journalist/author Roy MacGregor on a companion book entitled *Home Game: Hockey and Life in Canada*. Dryden and MacGregor used the book to expand, perhaps unintentionally, on Gruneau and Whitson's thoughts. They asserted that not only is hockey Canada's national game, "(i)t may also be Canada's national theatre. On its frozen stage, each night the stuff of life is played out: ambition, hope, pride and fear, love and friendship, the fight for honour for city, team, each other, themselves." Their analysis correctly elaborated on this "stuff" as "monumental themes of Canadian life . . . English and French, East and West, Canada and the U.S., Canada and the world, the timeless tensions of commerce and culture, our struggle to survive and civilize winter."¹⁰⁶

These themes have become crystallized over time and are recognizable now, but when Hap Day was starting out as a young hockey player in Owen Sound and in Midland in the 1900s and 1910s, the theme that was most apparent was that hockey was a tool that could help to bring some sort of order and comfort to the snow and bitter cold of a Canadian winter. Organized minor hockey did not exist at that time, the structured coaching of children was unheard of, and arenas were few and far between. Day was introduced to hockey by playing shinny on frozen ponds or rivers, or in other open spaces, as many Canadian children have done and still do.

Shinny, a style of pickup hockey, is in its purest form a game of keep-away in which youngsters develop skating and stickhandling skills by trying to seize and maintain possession of a puck or ball. They may or may not keep score. They settle disputes on the ice by themselves without officials, coaches, or parents. Gordie Howe, Bobby Orr, and Wayne Gretzky, three of the greatest players in history, all wrote in their memoirs about learning to skate and playing shinny

¹⁰⁶ Ken Dryden and Roy MacGregor, *Home Game: Hockey and Life in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989), p. 101.

on natural ice rinks before they ever skated inside an arena.¹⁰⁷ It “is the hockey closest to home, the hockey of childhood,” wrote sociologist and cultural studies scholar Mary Louise Adams. “It’s not the hockey of team tryouts, pre-dawn practices, multiple concussions, or expensive registration fees.”¹⁰⁸ Shinny is so mythologized in Canada, and so entrenched and idealized, that a depiction of it was featured on the reverse of the Canadian five-dollar bill for many years. The depiction was accompanied by the opening lines, in French and English, of Roch Carrier’s iconic short story “The Hockey Sweater.” (See Figure 7, below.)



Figure 7: A five-dollar bill, depicting shinny as a prominent Canadian winter activity. Photo: Bank of Canada Museum

As young shinny players grew up and joined teams to play in organized games, and as those early teams formed leagues, hockey took on a new dimension as a source of public entertainment. Teams came to represent communities, which meant neighbourhoods, municipalities, and many diverse aspects of daily life. In Montreal in 1909, for example, there were separate city hockey leagues for banks, insurance companies, manufacturers, commercial

¹⁰⁷ Gordie Howe, *Mr. Hockey: My Story* (Toronto: Viking, 2014) pp. 14-16; Bobby Orr, *Orr: My Story* (Toronto: Viking, 2013), pp. 18-19; Wayne Gretzky with Rick Reilly, *Gretzky: An Autobiography* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1990), pp. 16-18.

¹⁰⁸ Mary Louise Adams, “The Game of Whose Lives? Gender, Race, and Entitlement in Canada’s ‘National’ Game,” in *Artificial Ice: Hockey, Culture, and Commerce*, ed. David Whitson and Richard Gruneau (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), p. 80.

establishments, theatres, and even hardware wholesalers, not to mention schools.¹⁰⁹ Communities and hockey thus became very important to each other as the game grew.

“Historically hockey has had a special relationship to the experience of life in Canadian communities and, indeed, to the very idea of community in Canada,” Gruneau and Whitson wrote. “In the days before satellite dishes and paved highways were common in rural areas, hockey emerged as a centrally important activity in Canada. Churches and women’s institutes were important focal points of community life too, but sports often cut across occupational, religious, and ethnic divisions and offered fun and entertainment for most of the community.”¹¹⁰ Hockey is a significant reason why arenas became known informally and then formally as “community centres.” As hockey consolidated itself within cities, towns, and villages across the Dominion, and as hockey allowed those municipalities to connect with each other, it became a crucial component to the idea of Canada as “an imagined national community.”¹¹¹ With this reference, Gruneau and Whitson applied Benedict Anderson’s theory about nationalism to what they clearly saw as a hockey nation – a country built on and around the sport.

It was inevitable that hockey, once entrenched as a form of public entertainment, would become commercialized and professionalized. Those who owned or controlled municipally representative teams wanted the best players to increase the teams’ chances of winning against clubs from other towns and cities. Good teams attracted spectators who paid to watch clubs battle for bragging rights; good players, aware that team owners were able to profit from their labour, recognized their own value. In an era where amateurism was highly regarded, many players were paid “under the table” to preserve their amateur eligibility, but eventually professionalism

¹⁰⁹ “Growth of Hockey,” *Montreal Gazette*.

¹¹⁰ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, pp. 201, 205.

¹¹¹ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, p. 200.

became impossible to keep hidden away. The first openly professional hockey collective, the International Hockey League, was founded in the United States in 1904. Two other leagues in Ontario took the same step in 1908, and the Montreal Wanderers, the defending Stanley Cup champions, declared themselves professional too.¹¹² With the championship trophy of the Dominion becoming the purview of professional teams, the market exploded. “The advent of open professional hockey in Canada after 1907 created an intensely competitive market for skilled players,” Gruneau and Whitson wrote.¹¹³

Early pro leagues came and went quickly. The first one that lasted for a significant length of time was the National Hockey Association (NHA), founded in 1909. Two teams based in Toronto were admitted to the league for the 1912-13 season upon the opening of a large new rink, Arena Gardens. One of these clubs, the Blueshirts, won the NHA championship and the Stanley Cup in 1914, the first Cup won by a team from Toronto. An entrepreneur in that city named Eddie Livingstone owned both Toronto clubs by the fall of 1915 but, following raids of the two rosters by a rival pro league, the Pacific Coast Hockey Association, Livingstone only had enough players left to equip one of his teams. He chose to continue operating the Blueshirts.¹¹⁴

A bitter feud between Livingstone and the other NHA owners spelled the demise of the NHA in 1917, with the other teams choosing to withdraw and continue together in a new entity they called the National Hockey League (NHL). The Blueshirts were not included, but their players were leased by a new Toronto franchise owned by the Toronto Arena Company, which also owned and operated Arena Gardens. This team had no official name but was often referred to as the Blueshirts because they wore that team’s uniforms and because the roster of players was

¹¹² Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, p. 75.

¹¹³ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, p. 88.

¹¹⁴ Kevin Shea and Jason Wilson, *The Toronto Maple Leaf Hockey Club Official Centennial Publication* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2016), pp. 5-6.

mostly unchanged. The team would retroactively be dubbed the Arenas after winning the first NHL championship in 1918 and defeating the Pacific Coast champions from Vancouver in the Stanley Cup series.¹¹⁵

The Arenas were sold and renamed the St. Patricks (also known simply as the St. Pats) in 1919, and they won the Stanley Cup in 1922.¹¹⁶ Another sale in 1927 transformed them into the Toronto Maple Leafs. The Leafs have amended their history over the years, first choosing to effectively ignore the Blueshirts, Arenas, and St. Pats – an example of this practice is a team-commissioned retrospective published in 1976 which was subtitled *The First 50 Years* and clearly specified a 1927 origin for the Leafs.¹¹⁷ But the Leafs eventually acknowledged they were founded in 1917 as the Arenas. They celebrated their centennial in 2016-17 and consider the 1918 and 1922 Stanley Cups to be the first and second in Leafs franchise history. They do not consider the Blueshirts or the 1914 Stanley Cup to be part of their lineage even though a strong argument can be made to the contrary. In fact, that argument was made by Stephen Harper, an amateur hockey historian who wrote a well-received history of early hockey in Toronto in his spare time while serving as the Prime Minister of Canada.¹¹⁸ But the argument, like the Blueshirts themselves, has been ignored. It is another example of the Leafs deciding on a particular historical narrative and using their control of the past to shape the present and future.

This is important because when Conn Smythe took control of the struggling St. Pats franchise, it had been at the bottom of the NHL standings, neglected by hockey fans in Toronto, and reportedly in danger of being moved to Philadelphia.¹¹⁹ But within a few years of his

¹¹⁵ Shea and Wilson, *Official Centennial Publication*, pp. 6-10.

¹¹⁶ Shea and Wilson, *Official Centennial Publication*, pp. 15-16, 20.

¹¹⁷ Stan Obodiac, ed., *The Leafs: The First 50 Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976).

¹¹⁸ Stephen J. Harper, *A Great Game: The Forgotten Leafs and the Rise of Professional Hockey* (Toronto: Simon and Schuster Canada, 2013), p. 272; Dave Feschuk, "Blue Shirts were not invited to party," *Toronto Star*, December 20, 2017.

¹¹⁹ J. Andrew Ross, *Joining the Clubs*, pp. 161-162.

takeover, the Toronto Maple Leafs became the most popular hockey team in Canada. Smythe's engineering of this remarkable turnaround led to him becoming not only the public face of the franchise but also, eventually, its majority owner, which gave him the authority to continue to shape the narrative in any way he chose. And that is exactly what he did for the rest of his life; when Scott Young agreed to work with the dying Smythe on his memoirs, he assured Smythe that when a person writes their autobiography, they are empowered to say whatever they want.¹²⁰ The Leafs' tight-fisted grip on their own heritage can be directly traced to this attitude.

After installing himself as coach and manager of the Leafs in 1927, Smythe began to rebuild the club around Hap Day and "Ace" Bailey, in his opinion the only star players the St. Pats had. He cultivated younger players, putting together a forward line of Harvey "Busher" Jackson at left wing, Joe Primeau at centre, and Charlie Conacher at right wing.¹²¹ The three meshed like few trios had to that point in hockey history, and quickly became known to a growing Leafs fanbase as the "Kid Line." Smythe hired an assistant manager, Frank Selke, and continued to tinker with the roster. In 1931-32, as the Leafs won their first Stanley Cup under that name, all three members of the Kid Line finished among the top four scorers in the league, and each led the NHL in a different offensive category – Conacher in goals, Primeau in assists, and Jackson in points.¹²²

Smythe had built an exciting team and had managed it to the pinnacle of the hockey world, and he was content to take the credit for it, bask in it, and further encourage it. "In hockey, everything I said or did seemed to become headlines," he wrote in his memoirs, quite disingenuously. He said this in the context of noting that his sand and gravel business supplied

¹²⁰ McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, pp. 333-334.

¹²¹ Smythe with Young, *If You Can't Beat 'Em in the Alley*, pp. 93, 98.

¹²² Dan Diamond, ed., *Total Hockey*, p. 143.

most of his income but received little or no notice.¹²³ The truth was that while sand and gravel were how Smythe made a living, hockey and the Leafs were his life. He actively sought out attention for himself and his team, and he relished that attention.¹²⁴ He did things as a coach and as a manager that would be unthinkable today, such as circling the perimeter of the rink during games to scream at players and officials. He even went out onto the ice to start fistfights with the officials. He was “a deliberate scene-stealer,” wrote one Toronto reporter. “No man in sports is more alertly aware of publicity’s value than Smythe.”¹²⁵ Soon, the attention he sought was nationwide; hockey fans across Canada had discovered the Leafs through the magic of radio.

Radio in Canada was gaining popularity in the 1920s and, as Americans were also learning, the medium was ideal for live sports broadcasts. The *Toronto Daily Star* owned a station called CFCA, and *Star* sports editor William Hewitt assigned an employee named Norman Albert to broadcast an Ontario Hockey Association (OHA) intermediate division game over the air on February 8, 1923. The following week, Albert called a Toronto St. Pats game against the Ottawa Senators. Hewitt then assigned another CFCA employee – his son, Foster Hewitt – to call three more St. Pats games that season.¹²⁶ Albert is remembered as the first person to broadcast a hockey game, but his broadcasting career was short-lived. That was not the case for Foster Hewitt, who continued to work on St. Pats and Leafs games intermittently until going full-time in 1929. His broadcasts grew in popularity along with that of the team, and they are credited with helping generate enthusiasm for a new arena for the Leafs.¹²⁷ Smythe spearheaded the arena project, organized the financing, and as had happened with the hockey

¹²³ Smythe with Young, *If You Can’t Beat ‘Em in the Alley*, p. 89.

¹²⁴ McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, pp. 159-161.

¹²⁵ McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, pp. 150-151.

¹²⁶ Shea and Wilson, *Official Centennial Publication*, p. 21.

¹²⁷ McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, pp. 113-115.

team, he became the arena's public face. Maple Leaf Gardens, with more than twelve thousand seats, was built in only five months, a miracle by any standard and almost impossible to fathom even today. It opened in November 1931, just in time for a new season of hockey.¹²⁸

Hewitt moved into a specially constructed broadcast booth high in the Gardens rafters – it would become known as “the gondola” – and this is where the Leafs legend really took off. General Motors became a sponsor for the hockey broadcasts and an informal network of radio stations began to disseminate the games over a larger area of Southern Ontario. Winning the Stanley Cup in the first season at the Gardens justified all the risks Smythe had taken and caused an explosion in the size of the team's base of supporters. Radio programmers were among those who noticed and decided it was worth their while to participate, and in January 1933, the Leafs broadcasts went national, one of the first radio programs to be heard from coast to coast in Canada. GM also began sponsoring broadcasts of Montreal Canadiens and Montreal Maroons games in Quebec, and by 1934 the number of hockey listeners in Canada regularly surpassed one million. Imperial Oil later took over the sponsorship, the Saturday evening broadcasts gained the title *Hockey Night in Canada*, and the nationwide audience doubled to two million.¹²⁹

The General Motors Products of Canada, Limited, Saturday broadcast of the National League hockey game, will go on the air to a wide network of stations from Halifax to Vancouver, the present chain being extended to include CHNS, Halifax; CFCH, North Bay; CKPR, Fort William; CKY, Winnipeg; CHWC, Regina; CFCN, Calgary; CJCA, Edmonton; CJOR, Vancouver; CNRA, Moncton; CFBO, Saint John; and CFQC, Saskatoon.

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Figure 8: A notice in the January 7, 1933, edition of *The Globe* announces the beginning of an ad hoc radio network that would bring Toronto Maple Leafs games to listeners across Canada.

¹²⁸ McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, pp. 128-131.

¹²⁹ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, pp. 100-101.

¹³⁰ “Radio – A Department for Those Who Are Listening In,” *The Globe*, January 7, 1933.

Hockey, already a national obsession, reached an even greater level of importance with these broadcasts. Gruneau and Whitson wrote that listening to hockey on the radio was the kind of cultural experience that had never engaged so many Canadians in so many parts of the Dominion at the same time. “Stories and characters from NHL games emerged as the stuff of Canadian folklore,” they wrote. “*Hockey Night in Canada* began to create for hockey, and in particular NHL hockey, a deeply rooted, almost iconic place in Canadian culture.” This connection deepened throughout the 1930s as fans sought inexpensive entertainment and perhaps comfort in times of ongoing economic uncertainty.¹³¹ Listeners in Quebec tuned in for games involving the NHL’s two Montreal teams – the Canadiens and, until they ceased operations in 1938, the Maroons – but the rest of the country adopted the Leafs as their team.

Hewitt became famous for two catchphrases: he introduced his broadcasts with the words, “Hello, Canada, and hockey fans in the United States and Newfoundland” – he stopped separate mentions of Newfoundland after it entered Confederation in 1949 – and he announced goals by building to a fever pitch and exclaiming, “He shoots! He scores!” His depictions of the Leafs’ on-ice exploits were so compelling to Depression-era radio listeners that by 1936, it is believed, weekly broadcasts of their games were reaching as many as three-and-a-half million people in a country with a population of only eleven million.¹³² Hewitt claimed a 1937 survey found that six million people were tuned in for one particular game. It is impossible to verify this claim, but the team clearly believes it, because it was repeated in the Leafs’ *Official Centennial Publication* in 2016.¹³³ Authors Kevin Shea and Jason Wilson elaborated in that book about the importance of Foster Hewitt, radio, and the Leafs to Canada during the 1930s:

¹³¹ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, pp. 101, 103.

¹³² Michael McKinley, *Hockey Night in Canada: 60 Seasons* (Toronto: Penguin, 2012), p. 14.

¹³³ Foster Hewitt, *Foster Hewitt: His Own Story* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1967), p. 51; Shea and Wilson, *Official Centennial Publication*, p. 66.

Radio's relay towers united the Maritimes fisherman with the logger of British Columbia. Each Saturday night, a staggering number of souls would tune in to hear a young man from Toronto introduce a program that became one of a few truly national rituals . . . His enthusiasm made the game more exciting than it actually was, and his earnestness won him a legion of faithful listeners. It was more than just hockey; for two carefree hours or so, the Kid Line would take the nation's collective mind off of the breadlines that seemed to haunt every Main Street in the country."¹³⁴

In October 2018, Parks Canada and the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada unveiled a plaque at Scotiabank Arena in Toronto to commemorate the franchise's national historic significance, dating back to those radio broadcasts. "In helping to create *Hockey Night in Canada*, the Leafs fostered their team and the game of hockey to a national audience," Bruce MacMillan, a public relations and communications officer with Parks Canada, said in a statement. "They became the unofficial team of English-Canadian hockey fans and to this day, have extremely loyal fans in every part of the country. Inspiring generations of kids to play pick-up or shinny hockey games in the streets and on ice rinks, the Toronto Maple Leafs are fundamental to our Canadian identity as a hockey nation."¹³⁵

Even if Hewitt's quoted figure of six million listeners is exaggerated, the radio broadcasts indisputably helped to establish the Leafs as the most popular hockey team in Canada and strengthened the notion of Canada as an imagined national community built on and around hockey. The club's on-ice success contributed greatly to the bond between itself and its fans; the Leafs won ten more Stanley Cups between 1942 and 1967. The bond is so unbreakable that more

¹³⁴ Shea and Wilson, *Official Centennial Publication*, p. 55.

¹³⁵ Parks Canada, "Government of Canada Commemorates the National Historic Significance of the Toronto Maple Leafs," *Cision*, October 3, 2018, <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/government-of-canada-commemorates-the-national-historic-significance-of-the-toronto-maple-leafs-695062591.html>; Bruce MacMillan, email to author, October 9, 2018.

than a half-century of futility since their most recent championship in 1967 has not diminished the brand. The NHL has grown to thirty-two teams, seven of them in Canada, and yet the Leafs are reportedly the league's most valuable franchise, worth an estimated \$2.8 billion.¹³⁶ Their value is fueled by the obsession of a related imagined community that can also trace its origin to the 1930s. This massive global collective of Leafs fans is known today as "Leafs Nation," and it all started with Foster Hewitt and the radio during the Depression.

There was no television at that time so most Leafs fans of this era, especially those who did not live in Southern Ontario, could not actually see them play. They relied on Hewitt's evocative broadcasts to spark their imaginations. This explains why thousands of fans across Western Canada flocked to see the Leafs in person when they and the Detroit Red Wings went on a postseason barnstorming tour in April 1934. They played games in Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Trail, BC, and made additional stops between games to meet supporters in Regina, Lethbridge, AB, Medicine Hat, AB, and Nelson, BC. The Leafs, previously only marginally aware of the impact their broadcasts were having on Canadians, were surprised by the attention.¹³⁷ The tour, and the way in which the Leafs enthusiastically responded to their fans, solidified their growing hold on the hockey-crazy nation. "They have the biggest following of any team in the country," sportswriter Ted Reeve wrote in a 1935 article. "Their fortunes are followed every Saturday night through every quiver and quaver of Foster Hewitt's pipes right across the Dominion and up into the Arctic. They are 'our Leafs' to the entire province of Ontario. Tremendous publicity rolls along with them."¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Sportsnet, "Maple Leafs take over top spot on Forbes' list of NHL teams valuations," *Sportsnet*, December 15, 2023, <https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/maple-leafs-take-over-top-spot-on-forbes-list-of-nhl-teams-valuations/>

¹³⁷ Chris Mizzoni, "Maple Leafs – Red Wings Western Tour, 1934," *The Hockey Research Journal*, vol. 11 (2007), pp. 26-27.

¹³⁸ Ted Reeve, "Connie Smythe," *Maclean's*, May 1, 1935, pp. 11, 59.

Radio was also responsible for a unique and long-lasting hockey promotion that began at around the same time and further cemented the NHL and the Leafs in the consciousness of Canadians. Toronto station CFRB had a regular broadcast called *Sportsviews*, in which host Wes McKnight would interview notable athletes and other sporting figures. In 1933 the St. Lawrence Starch Company of Port Credit, Ontario (now part of Mississauga) began to sponsor the program as a promotion for its various products, notably its Bee Hive brand of corn syrup. An advertising agency representative had noticed that interest in hockey trading cards had boomed in the wake of the Leafs' Stanley Cup win, and he convinced St. Lawrence Starch to offer photos of NHL players to customers who sent in Bee Hive syrup labels as proof of purchase. Unlike trading cards, fans could request a photo of a specific player from a list issued by the company. The promotion started with ten players from three of the-then four Canadian NHL teams. The three members of the Kid Line – Conacher, Jackson, and Primeau – and flashy, popular defenceman “King” Clancy were the Leafs who were chosen to participate.¹³⁹

The black-and-white photos, mounted on cardstock paper, were an instant success and St. Lawrence Starch immediately expanded the promotion by adding the entire Leafs roster plus Foster Hewitt to the availability list during the 1934-35 season.¹⁴⁰ There was a clear Toronto bias early on, which was understandable since the company was based in a Toronto suburb and sponsored a show on a Toronto radio station that featured mainly Leafs players during the hockey season. Leaf historians Shea and Wilson wrote that the Kid Line, Clancy, Hewitt, and Hap Day were among the most requested photos.¹⁴¹ But the promotion grew as St. Lawrence Starch began advertising it nationally, and by 1938 it was issuing photos from every NHL team

¹³⁹ Don Pillar and Aubrey Ferguson, *The Golden Years: Bee Hive Golden Corn Syrup Hockey Picture Promotion 1934-1968* (self-pub., 2020), pp. 11-13.

¹⁴⁰ Pillar and Ferguson, *The Golden Years*, pp. 19-22.

¹⁴¹ Shea and Wilson, *Official Centennial Publication*, p. 59.

to fans across Canada.¹⁴² At the height of the promotion, which lasted for more than thirty years, St. Lawrence Starch had eleven employees devoted solely to answering requests for photos. They mailed out up to 2,500 photos each day, so the total number of photos distributed can easily be estimated in the millions.¹⁴³ Fans included such future hockey legends as Gordie Howe, who as a boy in Saskatoon picked through neighbours' garbage cans looking for syrup labels. He built an impressive collection of photos and dreamed of the day when he would play in the NHL and have his own Bee Hive photo.¹⁴⁴



Figure 9: An advertisement for the Bee Hive hockey photo promotion, featuring the famous Kid Line of the Toronto Maple Leafs – from left to right, Charlie Conacher, Joe Primeau, and Busher Jackson.

The Bee Hive photos were another important element in the establishment of what is now Leafs Nation. The fanbase is now so enormous and prominent within the world of hockey that marketing efforts directed at it are usually successful. For instance, when new hockey books are published in Canada every autumn, there is always at least one connected with or representative

¹⁴² Pillar and Ferguson, *The Golden Years*, pp. 36, 53.

¹⁴³ Pillar and Ferguson, *The Golden Years*, p. 17.

¹⁴⁴ Pillar and Ferguson, *The Golden Years*, pp. 124, 266.

¹⁴⁵ "Maple Leaf 'Kid Line,'" *Toronto Daily Star*, January 17, 1936.

of the Leafs in some way. In 2016, Canadian publisher ECW Press published a book entitled *Cup of Coffee*, devoted entirely to the stories of 239 little-known or nearly forgotten Leafs who played between one and two hundred games with the franchise between 1978 and 1999. A description of the book, on the back cover, correctly reads in part: “A stint with the Leafs, no matter how short, carries a certain cachet; the names and sweater numbers, and the compelling stories behind them, live on as trivia talk for years.”¹⁴⁶ ECW Press also published *The Ultimate Road Trip*, written by Mike Wilson, who promotes himself to a sizeable fan base of his own as “the Ultimate Leafs Fan.” Wilson chronicled his adventures during the 2018-19 season, when he followed the team around the continent and attended all eighty-nine of their regular season and playoff games. “With a foreword from club president Brendan Shanahan and colourful souvenir photos, *The Ultimate Road Trip* allows fans to vicariously experience the journey of a lifetime,” reads the back cover.¹⁴⁷

Even books that are outwardly critical or mocking of the Leafs – and the team has countless enthusiastic critics – find publishers and audiences and are available from booksellers and at libraries. A search of the stacks at the main branch of the Guelph Public Library turned up titles like *Why the Leafs Suck and How They Can Be Fixed* and *Leafs AbomiNation: The Dismayed Fan’s Handbook to Why the Leafs Stink and How They Can Rise Again*. The latter book features a cover photo of a Leafs fan with a paper bag over their head, but the real zinger can be found in the book’s price tag – \$19.67. “Love them or hate them,” says the book’s blurb, “they’re the most successful team in professional hockey . . . just not on the scoresheet.”¹⁴⁸ Leafs

¹⁴⁶ Graig Abel and Lance Hornby, *Cup of Coffee: A Photographic Tribute to Lesser Known Toronto Maple Leafs* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2016).

¹⁴⁷ Mike Wilson and Lance Hornby, *The Ultimate Road Trip* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2020).

¹⁴⁸ Al Strachan, *Why the Leafs Suck and How They Can Be Fixed* (Toronto: Collins, 2009); Dave Feschuk and Michael Grange, *Leafs AbomiNation: The Dismayed Fan’s Handbook to Why the Leafs Stink and How They Can Rise Again* (Toronto: Random House, 2009).

fans bought it anyway, as they do with most items that are pitched to them. The best example of this masochism might have emerged in 2021 with the publication of *The Complete History of Toronto Maple Leafs Championships in the Last Six Decades*. The book, by an author using the pseudonym “Stan Lee Slump,” is billed as “the ultimate reference book. Concise and thoroughly researched yet a remarkably easy read, it is . . . sure to be enjoyed by hockey scholars, students, and fans everywhere.” Not surprisingly, most of the book’s 216 pages are blank.¹⁴⁹

Being Leafs Nation is the title of a forthcoming film being produced by documentarian Dale Morrissey and hockey film archivist Paul Patskou. It will explore the origin of the fanbase as an explanation for the ongoing popularity of the team. Morrissey, in an interview with a reporter, compared the Leafs to a beloved baseball franchise that personified hard luck through a drought that lasted one hundred and eight years between World Series championships. “The Leafs are the Chicago Cubs of hockey, who went from glory days to so much heartbreak and so many near-misses,” Morrissey said, noting that many young fans are largely unaware of the Leafs’ own glory days because they occurred so long ago. “So much great Leafs history didn’t happen in the TV era . . . It’s going to show them there’s a lot more about this team to love.”¹⁵⁰

That is the entire point. The documentary is necessary because current Leafs fans should be aware that Leafs Nation was built on a foundation that has been neglected. Many exploits of the past cannot be easily recalled because they were not televised. Consequently, only one member of the Leafs’ 1932 championship team, Charlie Conacher, has a statue on Legends Row, and that seems like it could have been a sop for those who wish the team would be more respectful of its early history. Conacher’s accomplished linemates, Busher Jackson and Joe

¹⁴⁹ Stan Lee Slump, *The Complete History of Toronto Maple Leafs Championships in the Last Six Decades* (Ten Star Publishing, 2021).

¹⁵⁰ Lance Hornby, “Ups and downs of Leafs Nation now a film,” *Toronto Sun*, April 4, 2020.
<https://torontosun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/toronto-maple-leafs/ups-and-downs-of-leafs-nation-now-a-film>

Primeau, have been snubbed even though neither of them would be out of place beside Conacher on Legends Row. The same is true of King Clancy, who was once so popular that the Leafs staged a night in his honour while he was still an active player.¹⁵¹ Of course, it is also true of Hap Day, the captain of the team that captured Canada's heart and never let go.

Benedict Anderson's work on imagined communities is complemented by that of his contemporary Eric Hobsbawm, who wrote about what he called "invented tradition." He defined it as ritual and symbolic gestures that are practised in order "to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past."¹⁵² When these gestures are practised in multiple places by various people or groups of people, all with similar if not identical goals, that is clearly the essence of Anderson's imagined communities.

As Anderson wrote: "(E)ach communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion. Furthermore, this ceremony is incessantly repeated at daily or half-daily intervals throughout the calendar."¹⁵³ Anderson and Hobsbawm would have acknowledged that this perfectly describes millions of Canadians who, every Saturday night during the NHL season, continue to watch *Hockey Night in Canada* on TV. More than one hundred years after the first hockey broadcast on radio, and more than ninety years after these broadcasts first reached from coast to coast, the invented Canadian tradition of coming together in an imagined community of hockey fans is as strong as ever.

¹⁵¹ "Toronto Pays Tribute to a Popular Irishman," *The Globe*, March 19, 1934.

¹⁵² Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 1.

¹⁵³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 35.

GAME 3 – A NEW DAY IN TORONTO

Hap Day was the best coach I ever saw operate. There were other coaches very strong in certain areas but from the overall picture of knowledge of the game, knowledge of systems that must be employed to win a championship, being able to motivate players, small techniques that were vital, he was the best. We won five championships basically because of our coaching.¹⁵⁴

– Ted “Teeder” Kennedy, Toronto Maple Leafs player 1943-1955, 1957

There is no one still alive who played for the Leafs while Hap Day was the coach. Phil Samis was the last one before he died in January 2022 at age ninety-four.¹⁵⁵ Fortunately, many players from Day’s teams went on the record while they were alive to attest to his role in their unprecedented success in the 1940s, a decade in which the Leafs won the Stanley Cup five times and, in doing so, became the first National Hockey League (NHL) club to win the championship trophy in three consecutive years. What sets this Leafs dynasty apart from all other NHL dynasties that have followed them – including the more celebrated Leafs of the 1960s under Punch Imlach – is that they had very few all-star-calibre players and future Hall of Famers. This chapter will demonstrate in detail that the Leafs of the 1940s won not because of their stars, but because their coach drilled them and prepared them to play as a *team*.

As noted in a previous chapter, Day was a mentor to younger teammates during his playing career. He took to coaching so naturally that while still playing for the Leafs, he won two Ontario Hockey Association (OHA) titles and a Canadian championship in his first two seasons

¹⁵⁴ Michael Ulmer, *Captains* (Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 1995), p. 37.

¹⁵⁵ Montreal Gazette, “Philip Samis,” *Montreal Gazette*, January 15, 2022, <https://montrealgazette.remembering.ca/obituary/philip-samis-1084214131>; Jim Amodeo, “A Look at Phil Samis,” *Hockey Then & Now*, December 28, 2020, <https://hockeythenandnow.blogspot.com/2020/12/a-look-at-phil-samis.html>

behind a bench.¹⁵⁶ King Clancy, Day's teammate and defence partner, said in his memoirs that Day was ahead of his time as a player, and that helped him when he applied his knowledge to building his teams. "He was one of those players who studied every move and analyzed every play. And when you are out on the ice there isn't much time to do this," Clancy wrote. "But he could do it, and would tell you where he was going to go and where he wanted you to go. Most of the time his guessing was dead on the mark. It was always a privilege to play with Hap."¹⁵⁷

Day gave up coaching at the amateur level when he left the Leafs and spent his final season as a player with the now-defunct New York Americans. Following his retirement from playing in 1938, he became an on-ice official, working as a referee for OHA games and as a linesman in NHL games.¹⁵⁸ This kept him involved in hockey in the evenings while managing Conn Smythe's sand and gravel pit during the day, a responsibility he accepted after abandoning a brief career as a pharmacist and buying a minority share of Smythe's business.¹⁵⁹ In April 1940, Smythe facilitated a switch that saw Leafs' coach Dick Irvin move from Toronto to Montreal, where he became the Canadiens' coach. Day was appointed to replace Irvin and told the press he was eager to take on the challenge. "Mr. Smythe phoned me and asked me if I'd like to coach the team. I said, 'Sure, that's a lot better than refereeing.'"¹⁶⁰

Smythe himself had coached the Leafs. He, like Day, had been a successful coach at the amateur level, winning the 1927 Canadian senior hockey championship with a team of University of Toronto graduates that went on to capture the gold medal at the 1928 Winter Olympics, but his success did not translate to the professional level. In his three seasons behind

¹⁵⁶ "Day Rewrites Record Book," *The Globe and Mail*, April 18, 1949.

¹⁵⁷ Brian McFarlane, *Clancy: The King's Story* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 84.

¹⁵⁸ Fred Jackson, "Spinning the Sports Wheel," *Toronto Daily Star*, November 9, 1938.

¹⁵⁹ Smythe with Young, *If You Can't Beat 'Em in the Alley*, p. 93; Al Nickleson, "Druggist to Hockey Prince Is Hap Day's Success Story," *The Globe and Mail*, February 1, 1955.

¹⁶⁰ "'Know How Selkirk Felt,' Day Says of Appointment," *The Globe and Mail*, April 19, 1940.

the Leafs' bench, the team never finished higher than third place in the standings, made the playoffs only once, and did not advance beyond the semifinal playoff round.¹⁶¹ His one lasting accomplishment was assembling the Kid Line of centre Joe Primeau and wingers Busher Jackson and Charlie Conacher in December 1929, something that has since been incorrectly attributed to Irvin, who did not become the Leafs' coach until 1931.¹⁶² Smythe himself acknowledged in a team history and in his memoirs that he was not the right man for the job. "I was no good . . . (not) good enough to coach the Leafs," he said. "I got too emotionally involved to make the kind of calm, quick decisions a good coach should make."¹⁶³ It is important to understand this, because in later years when the Leafs were perennial contenders and frequent champions, Smythe often received acclaim as the genius behind their success. He assembled the players, often with input from Day, but he had very little to do with their on-ice accomplishments.

When Day took over the Leafs, it should have come as no surprise that the former defenceman would encourage the team to pay more attention to the defensive aspect of the game, and he made that clear on the first day of training camp. This emphasis was a shift from the Irvin style of coaching, which had relied heavily on offence and would continue to do so in Montreal. "I have only one strategy," Irvin once quipped. "And that is to score all the goals first."¹⁶⁴ Although the Leafs under Irvin had employed Hall of Fame defencemen like Day, Clancy, and Red Horner, their expertise had been needed because flashy forwards like the Kid Line could not be counted on to play a two-way game. On the Leafs teams of the 1930s, only the defencemen consistently played defence. With Day as coach in the 1940s, that changed. He used a defence-

¹⁶¹ Andrew Podnieks, *The Toronto Maple Leafs Ultimate Book of Facts, Stats, and Stories* (Toronto: Fenn/McClelland and Stewart, 2015), p. 284.

¹⁶² "Leafs Defeat Hawks in Wild Game, Conacher Scoring Deciding Tally," *The Globe*, December 30, 1929; Lou Marsh, "With Pick and Shovel," *Toronto Daily Star*, December 30, 1929; DiBiase, *Bench Bosses*, p. 40.

¹⁶³ Milt Dunnell, "The Coaches," in *The Leafs: The First 50 Years*, ed. Stan Obodias (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), p. 50; Smythe with Young, *If You Can't Beat 'Em in the Alley*, p. 87.

¹⁶⁴ "Soft Soap From Irvin," *The Globe and Mail*, March 31, 1944.

first philosophy to establish his credentials with two Stanley Cups in his first five seasons, which was one more than Irvin had won in nine seasons behind the Toronto bench.



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Figure 20: The Toronto Maple Leafs with the 1932 Stanley Cup. Conn Smythe is front and centre with the Cup between his feet. Coach Dick Irvin is immediately to Smythe's left, and captain Hap Day is immediately to Irvin's left.

Stephen Hardy and Andrew Holman tried in their book to trace the history of innovation in hockey, but this was a difficult task when it came to the early years of the professional game because, as they put it, “much of the discourse of innovation is irretrievably gone. Canada’s great ‘hockey men’ from this era were frustratingly mum on what made their teams successful, unlike the modern day, where youth hockey schools, coaches’ clinics, radio and television commentators, the daily press, and online chat lists hash out strategy and tactics in minute detail.”¹⁶⁶ Day spoke about and even wrote down some of his philosophies, but it is not known how he developed those ideas. We know only that he began his junior hockey career as a defenceman at age sixteen and that he was adept at carrying the puck.

¹⁶⁵ “Stanley Cup Champions 1930 – 1939,” National Hockey League, <https://www.nhl.com/news/nhl-stanley-cup-champions-1930-1939/c-287934514>

¹⁶⁶ Hardy and Holman, *Hockey: A Global History*, p. 244.

The role of defence players changed significantly over the years, and Day experienced it all from the beginning of his competitive career. Whether they were called defencemen, or point/cover point, these players were not expected to carry, or rush the puck in hockey's early days. The identity of the first rushing defenceman cannot be determined. Lester Patrick has received credit for it, but there are so many credible candidates that one *Montreal Gazette* writer settled definitively on three of them – Magnus Flett, Dickie Boon, and Graham Drinkwater – in three separate columns over a fourteen-month span.¹⁶⁷ Whoever it was that started the trend, other defencemen followed in their skate tracks. But actual defence did remain a priority in the game, and to that end the Ottawa Senators of the National Hockey Association (NHA) eventually developed a defensive strategy in which scoring goals became an entirely secondary consideration.

During the 1915 NHA championship, a two-game series in which the team with the most total goals would prevail, the Senators took a 4-0 lead into the second game against the Montreal Wanderers. Under coach Alf Smith – possibly influenced by defenceman Art Ross – the Senators chose to sit on their lead. They stacked three men across the defence, hardly forechecked, passed up scoring chances, and stymied the Wanderers, who had trouble gaining the attacking zone without losing possession of the puck.¹⁶⁸ Montreal won the game, but Ottawa won the championship. The Senators retained the system, refining it under a new coach, Pete Green, who sometimes employed as many as four skaters in a defensive wall and only one forechecker. Ottawa won four Stanley Cups between 1920 and 1927, by which time the system had acquired a

¹⁶⁷ Jim Kearney, "Hockey's Lester Patrick dies at 76," *Vancouver Province*, June 2, 1960; D.A.L. MacDonald, "Turning Back Hockey's Pages," *Montreal Gazette*, January 16, 1934; April 13, 1934; March 6, 1935.

¹⁶⁸ "Ottawas Are the 1915 N.H.A. Champions," *Ottawa Evening Journal*, March 15, 1915; "Ottawa Played On Defensive to Win Championship," *Montreal Gazette*, March 15, 1915; Eric Zweig, *Art Ross: The Hockey Legend Who Built the Bruins* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2015), pp. 143-145.

name: “kitty-bar-the-door.”¹⁶⁹ Modern hockey fans would recognize Green’s style as a common 1-4 forecheck, also known as the neutral zone trap, in which a team playing defensively will have one forward push into the offensive zone trying to gain possession while his teammates deliberately clog the area of the ice between the two blue lines.

But there was a backlash against defensive hockey, as offence all but disappeared by the 1928-29 season. The highest scoring team in the league that year, the Boston Bruins, scored only eighty-nine goals in forty-four games. The league’s leading scorer, “Ace” Bailey of Toronto, managed only thirty-two points, which in the 1980s was a routine month’s work for Wayne Gretzky. George Hainsworth of the Montreal Canadiens set a record for goaltenders that still stands, registering twenty-two shutouts. Seven other goalies had ten or more shutouts.¹⁷⁰ The NHL responded with new rules to facilitate passing the puck, rather than rushing it, with the intention of generating more scoring. The 1929-30 season saw an immediate return of offence, with Ralph “Cooney” Weiland of Boston setting a record for scoring points in a season with seventy-three.¹⁷¹

Hockey in the 1930s was wide open, with an emphasis on forechecking to gain possession and on combination play to set up scoring opportunities. Defencemen were encouraged to jump up into the rush, and forward lines became celebrated for their dynamic play. These lines included not only Toronto’s Kid Line of Conacher, Jackson, and Primeau, but also the Bruins’ Dynamite Line (Weiland, Gainor, and Clapper), the Canadiens’ Speedball Line (Morenz, Joliat, and Gagnon), the Montreal Maroons’ S Line (Siebert, Stewart, and Smith), and

¹⁶⁹ “Ottawa System is Under Heavy Fire,” *Ottawa Citizen*, January 22, 1921; “Uniform Hockey Rules,” *Montreal Gazette*, April 16, 1921.

¹⁷⁰ “1928-29 NHL Summary,” *Hockey Reference*, https://www.hockey-reference.com/leagues/NHL_1929.html

¹⁷¹ “1929-30 NHL Summary,” *Hockey Reference*, https://www.hockey-reference.com/leagues/NHL_1930.html

the New York Rangers' Bread Line (Cook, Cook, and Boucher).¹⁷² What this meant for the Leafs was that, as good as their Kid Line was, there were other lines in the NHL that were just as potent – and when the playoffs rolled around, Toronto's lack of commitment to defence meant that those rival lines often overwhelmed the Leafs and pushed them to the sidelines.

Day saw it happen too many times; in the five seasons that he remained with the team after winning the Cup in 1932, the Leafs finished first in their division three times, led the entire league in points twice, lost three Cup Finals, were eliminated from the semifinals once, and were sidelined once after a quarterfinal loss. The end of his playing tenure in Toronto prefaced a dubious streak in which the Leafs became the first team to lose the Cup Final in three consecutive seasons. "All through the late thirties, dating from the departure of Day and Clancy," Ralph Allen wrote in *The Globe and Mail*, "the Leafs presented a study in inner turmoil – with the forwards constantly struggling to score more goals than the defense gave away."¹⁷³ Conn Smythe recognized this, and it can be presumed that he would not have hired Day to coach the Leafs if he had not concurred with Day's desire that the team be more defensively responsible.

Some sportswriters were caught off guard by Day's appointment despite his proven abilities in coaching amateur hockey. His "defensive style," as noted by Fred Jackson in the *Toronto Daily Star*, "is the direct opposite to any hockey theory ever held by Conn Smythe." But Jackson freely acknowledged that "defensive weakness has cost the Leafs plenty when the clutch was on," and if Day could do anything to fix that issue, "we say more power to him."¹⁷⁴ Canadian Press reporter Dick Sheridan, covering the team's first training camp under Day in October 1940, quoted the coach as insisting that "hockey, offensively and defensively, is a 50-50

¹⁷² Hardy and Holman, *Hockey: A Global History*, p. 248.

¹⁷³ Ralph Allen, "Mostly Incidental," *The Globe and Mail*, November 24, 1941.

¹⁷⁴ Fred Jackson, "Spinning the Sports Wheel," *Toronto Daily Star*, April 20, 1940.

proposition. A team in an average game has the puck only half the time.” By teaching and encouraging his players to play defensively when they did not have the puck, Day reasoned, they would increase their chances of regaining possession.¹⁷⁵ This is an important element of what is known as playing without the puck, meaning being in the right places on the ice and anticipating the play.

Day’s system paid immediate dividends. In the 1940-41 season, the Leafs finished second in the standings and gave up fewer goals than any other team – but they also scored more goals than all but one other team.¹⁷⁶ The Leafs were consistently in the top half of the league in goals-scored during Day’s entire tenure as coach. Yet despite this steady offensive output, Day always had to defend his approach to the game – pun intended – even long after he left hockey. “Yes, I know what they say about me – that my teams were defensive-minded. I played defensive hockey and it was supposed to be dull,” he said in a 1976 team retrospective, published a quarter-century after he coached his last game. “Did anybody who played for the Leafs ever say I told our team not to score? My system was this: When the other team had the puck, I wanted it back. If that’s bad hockey, then I was a lousy coach. I had a fine team. All I did was to contribute a system and make it work.”¹⁷⁷

Day was a methodical coach and he stressed mastery of fundamental skills – skating, stickhandling, passing, shooting, and checking. It is not clear who, if anyone, influenced him in this manner. There appears to be no evidence that he ever commented publicly on Dick Irvin’s strengths or weaknesses as a coach. In terms of defence, he may well have learned nothing from Irvin, who specialized in offence as a coach and, prior to that, as a player. Day was adamant that

¹⁷⁵ Dick Sheridan, “Leafs’ Coach Insists On Two-Way Hockey,” *Calgary Herald*, October 23, 1940; Canadian Press, “Day Has No Radical Experiments In Mind,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, October 23, 1940.

¹⁷⁶ “1940-41 NHL Summary,” *Hockey Reference*, https://www.hockey-reference.com/leagues/NHL_1941.html

¹⁷⁷ Dunnell, “The Coaches,” p. 54.

he had learned nothing useful from anyone prior to turning pro in 1924.¹⁷⁸ This is interesting because one of his coaches with the Hamilton Tigers senior amateur team was the aforementioned Art Ross, a legendary player and innovator who later rose to even greater fame as the longtime manager and coach of the Boston Bruins. Day did not single out Ross as a coach from whom he had learned nothing, but Ross was a coach who did not put a great deal of emphasis on practising or on fundamentals. He was “only so-so,” said Bruins player Milt Schmidt, adding that “fundamentals weren’t impressed in those days as they are today.”¹⁷⁹

Day was a prominent exception to that rule, and the 1943-44 season provided strong evidence that his way of thinking was better. The Leafs and Bruins were scheduled to play a game on January 1, 1944, and a newspaper preview of the game detailed the stark differences between the teams and how they prepared. At the time, Boston was in second place in the standings and its players were the supposed envy of the league because of how little they practised, supposedly leaving them with more energy for games. “Now the Maple Leafs . . . are of the other school. Happy Day believes in constant practicing and coaching,” Harold Kaese wrote in the *Boston Globe*. “‘When the Maple Leafs practice,’ say the Bruins, ‘they play regular games, with body-checking, boarding, and no holds barred.’”¹⁸⁰

This was intended to be considered a bad thing. By contrast, Kaese wrote, the Boston players had two casual practices, which coach Ross may or may not have participated in: “Ross attends Bruins practices only occasionally, and then confines himself to making line changes during scrimmages. Ross never uses a blackboard, never diagrams plays, never tells players exactly where they should be at a given moment.”¹⁸¹ This lack of preparation and detail proved

¹⁷⁸ Clyde Warrington, “Hap Day out of hockey.”

¹⁷⁹ Zweig, *Art Ross*, p. 212.

¹⁸⁰ Harold Kaese, “Bruins Practice Least in N.H.L.,” *Boston Evening Globe*, December 31, 1943.

¹⁸¹ Kaese, “Bruins Practice Least.”

disastrous to the Bruins; the Leafs won the game 5-2 and never lost another game to Boston that season, winning their last five head-to-head contests by an aggregate score of 46-14. The Bruins did not fare much better against the rest of the league either, losing eighteen of their final twenty-eight games and falling from second to fifth place, missing the playoffs.¹⁸²

To backtrack a bit, it was the Bruins who perhaps kept Day and the Leafs from winning the Stanley Cup in his first season behind the bench. A second-place finish in 1940-41 led to a semifinal playoff appearance against Boston, and the Leafs took a 3-2 lead in the best-of-seven series. But the Bruins – coached this season by Cooney Weiland rather than Ross – won the sixth and seventh games to advance to the championship round, where they swept the Detroit Red Wings to win the Cup that could well have been Toronto's. The Leafs had been strong defensively throughout the semifinal, limiting the Bruins to only fifteen goals over seven games. But their offence sputtered when it mattered most, scoring only five goals in the final four games.¹⁸³ A dejected Day commented after the last game that he could not help feeling down about the loss. "I've missed on that Stanley Cup so many times," he said.¹⁸⁴

Redemption came at the end of the 1941-42 season as Day led the Leafs into the Stanley Cup Final against the Red Wings, but it did not come easily. Detroit won the first three games of the best-of-seven series to take what appeared to be an unbreakable stranglehold on the championship; no NHL team had ever come back from a three-game deficit in the playoffs. Leafs' goalie Walter "Turk" Broda called the Red Wings "unbeatable" after Game 3, and that seemed to be a consensus opinion.¹⁸⁵ Detroit sportswriters gloated, claiming the demoralized

¹⁸² "1943-44 Boston Bruins Schedule and Results," *Hockey Reference*, https://www.hockey-reference.com/teams/BOS/1944_games.html

¹⁸³ "1941 NHL Semi-Finals," *Hockey Reference*, <https://www.hockey-reference.com/playoffs/1941-boston-bruins-vs-toronto-maple-leafs-semi-finals.html>

¹⁸⁴ Herbert Ralby, "Hill Again Rises to Slay Toronto," *Boston Evening Globe*, April 4, 1941.

¹⁸⁵ Canadian Press, "'They're Unbeatable' – Broda," *The Globe and Mail*, April 10, 1942.

Leafs knew they were “whipped” and had all but conceded the series.¹⁸⁶ “(T)he Red Wings are playing a brand of hockey that is too good for the Maple Leafs,” agreed *Globe and Mail* sports editor Vern DeGeer. “And there isn’t a single thing that can be done about it.”¹⁸⁷

The doomsayers were wrong. Day claimed later that he was “no master mind,” but he made three crucial decisions after Game 3 that turned the series around.¹⁸⁸ First, he had figured out how the Wings had achieved their success. According to Bob Goldham, a rookie defenceman on the Leafs that season, Day realized the Wings were using a particular offensive style; instead of trying to carry the puck into the Toronto end, they would simply shoot the puck from the neutral zone at centre ice and follow it in, then aggressively forecheck the Leafs’ defencemen to regain possession and set up an attack. Modern fans know this tactic as “dump and chase.” Day came up with a counterstrategy to keep one defenceman deep in the Toronto zone. When Detroit shot the puck in, the defenceman’s job was to reach it first and carry it right back out before the Wings could pressure them. Invariably, Detroit forwards still chasing the puck into the Leafs’ end were trapped as Toronto forwards gained possession of it in the neutral zone and exploited their own scoring chances.¹⁸⁹

Day needed more speed from his team to make this system work. His next decision was highly controversial – he removed his top scorer, Gordie Drillon, and an all-star defenceman, Wilfred “Bucko” McDonald, from the lineup. Neither of them was playing well, and Day gambled that the addition of some younger and faster players would pay off. One youngster, the unheralded Don Metz, was specifically tasked with replacing Drillon. It is likely that no other

¹⁸⁶ Lewis H. Walter, John N. Sabo, and Mark Beltaire, “They All Agree Leafs Are Whipped: Good News Comes to Detroit Camp,” *The Globe and Mail*, April 11, 1942.

¹⁸⁷ Vern DeGeer, “Remarkable Red Wings Have ‘Just One More River to Cross,’” *The Globe and Mail*, April 10, 1942.

¹⁸⁸ Canadian Press, “I Thought We Were Lucky – Day,” *The Globe and Mail*, April 17, 1942.

¹⁸⁹ Jim Proudfoot, “Leafs’ comeback in ’42 was the greatest,” *Toronto Star*, April 12, 1990; Jim Proudfoot, “Leafs have overcome bigger deficit in the past,” *Toronto Star*, May 25, 1994.

coach in the NHL at that time would have made such a move, but Day was desperate. It has been written that Conn Smythe was at least partially responsible for the roster change, but Smythe, for once, relinquished the credit. “Hap told me by phone that he was planning to shake up the team for the fourth game: and he did, benching Drillon and McDonald,” he wrote.¹⁹⁰

The Leafs fought back from a 2-0 deficit in Game 4 in Detroit and staved off elimination with a dramatic 4-3 victory that saw Wings coach Jack Adams go out onto the ice to engage in a post-game fistfight with the referee, while NHL president Frank Calder needed a police escort out of the arena.¹⁹¹ Vern DeGeer, who had written only days earlier that there was nothing the Leafs could do to forestall the Wings’ inevitable championship, wrote after this game that benching Drillon in particular was comparable to the New York Yankees removing Babe Ruth or Joe DiMaggio from their lineup – but it had worked.¹⁹² Toronto forward Billy Taylor boldly predicted the Leafs would now sweep to the Cup.¹⁹³ In the Detroit dressing room, there was also a sense that the momentum had shifted. “You know what’s going to happen,” Wings forward Eddie Wares told a reporter. “It’s going to go seven games.”¹⁹⁴

Day’s third decision was a master class in psychology that rivalled his on-ice strategy. A photo and a cutline in the April 15, 1942 edition of the *Toronto Daily Star*, following Game 5, introduced readers to Doris Klein, a “Toronto maiden whose ‘pep’ note to the Leafs in Detroit drew her their admiration and honor seats at the game with her father as the team’s very special guest.”¹⁹⁵ It has never been clear who Doris Klein was – she appears to have never been

¹⁹⁰ Earl McRae, “Drillon carried hurt to grave,” *Ottawa Citizen*, September 24, 1986; Jim Coleman, “Forget about ’42. What about ’72?” *Vancouver Province*, June 13, 1994; Paul Hunter, “The Leafs’ last link to a golden era,” *Toronto Star*, February 19, 2012; Smythe with Young, *If You Can’t Beat ‘Em in the Alley*, p. 145.

¹⁹¹ Vern DeGeer, “Riotous Finish at Detroit as Leafs Come Back With 4-3 Victory,” *The Globe and Mail*, April 13, 1942.

¹⁹² DeGeer, “Riotous Finish.”

¹⁹³ Andy Lytle, “Leafs Still in There and Punching For That Stanley Cup,” *Toronto Daily Star*, April 13, 1942.

¹⁹⁴ Canadian Press, “They’re Jittery Birds Now,” *The Globe and Mail*, April 13, 1942.

¹⁹⁵ “She Has Faith,” *Toronto Daily Star*, April 15, 1942.

mentioned by name again in the press – but a story has persisted to this day that a young girl wrote an inspirational letter to the Leafs after Game 3, imploring them to not give up because she still believed in them. Day, according to the story, received the letter and decided to share it with his players. It has been credited as a major spark in the Leafs' comeback.



Figure 11: This photo collage and accompanying cutline in the *Toronto Daily Star* are the only contemporaneous evidence of Doris Klein, the girl who is said to have inspired the Leafs' dramatic comeback in the 1942 Stanley Cup Final

The details surrounding Doris Klein have changed often enough that, combined with the complete absence of her name from any subsequent press, and the fact that all the principals are now dead, it is impossible to determine if she actually existed. “I read the letter to the boys in the dressing room before the fourth game,” Day said in an article published in 1983, remembering that the writer was a fifteen-year-old girl who lived in Detroit, although she was a Leafs fan. “By the time I finished, you could see the walls bulging from the tension.”¹⁹⁷ Jim Proudfoot, a latter-day *Toronto Star* columnist, described the girl as being fourteen rather than fifteen, and he injected some additional drama into his 1990 retelling by adding an imagined appeal from Day to

¹⁹⁶ “Who Threw The Overalls in Reds’ Playoff Chowder?” *Toronto Daily Star*, April 15, 1942.

¹⁹⁷ Allen Abel, “Happy’s days we hear again,” *The Globe and Mail*, May 16, 1983.

the players: “Gentlemen, even in this enemy territory, you have loyal supporters,” the coach supposedly said. “How can you fail this child?”¹⁹⁸

New York-based hockey writer Stan Fischler wrote in an article that the young fan in question was a fourteen-year-old girl from Toronto, not from Detroit. He added that when Day finished reading the letter, one of his players, Dave “Sweeney” Schriner, stood up from where he was sitting and vowed that the Leafs would “win this one for the little girl.”¹⁹⁹ Another columnist, Roy MacGregor of the *National Post*, acknowledged in 1999 that the story had become “part of hockey lore,” but he suggested that the girl never existed, positing that Day had written the letter himself: “He scribbled it on hotel stationery, folded it, stuck it in an envelope, and wrinkled it a bit for authenticity – then he headed off to Game 4.”²⁰⁰ MacGregor at least did not claim that there had been no inspirational letter, just that there had been no girl.

The story has been tacitly endorsed by the NHL and by the Hockey Hall of Fame, but it cannot be verified, nor can it be proven false. Author Kevin Shea included it in an article published on the Hockey Hall of Fame’s website. Fischler wrote in a story published on the NHL’s website that Bob Goldham remembered being “transfixed” by Day’s reading of the letter, suggesting that it was true. Another Leaf, Bob Davidson, also remembered the moment. “Hap laid it on thick,” he said in a 1981 interview. “We really felt guilty by the time he was finished.”²⁰¹ But Day’s unreliability as a narrator is a complicating factor. In an interview on

¹⁹⁸ Jim Proudfoot, “Leafs’ comeback in ’42 was the greatest.”

¹⁹⁹ Stan Fischler, “Coaching Insanity Led Maple Leafs to NHL’s Most Miraculous Comeback,” *The Hockey News*, January 17, 2015, <https://thehockeynews.com/news/article/coaching-insanity-led-maple-leafs-to-nhls-most-miraculous-comeback>

²⁰⁰ Roy MacGregor, “Pen pal may be Ottawa coach’s best hope: Little girls and their inspiring letters a strategy to consider,” *National Post*, April 26, 1999.

²⁰¹ Kevin Shea, “Spotlight – Syl Apps,” *Hockey Hall of Fame*, https://www.hhof.com/htmlSpotlight/spot_pinnacle196101.shtml; Stan Fischler, “Unsung playoff heroes dotted NHL’s early years,” *NHL.com*, January 9, 2019, <https://www.nhl.com/news/unsung-playoff-heroes-dotted-nhl-early-years/c-303686172>; Doug Grow, “Stop being reasonable; it’s fantasy time for Stars,” *Minneapolis Star*, May 21, 1981.

Hockey Night in Canada in 1960, he claimed the girl was twelve and from Toronto, rather than fifteen and from Detroit as he later stated in 1983, but he was adamant about the rest of the story:

It was heart-rending, almost, the way she expressed herself and the confidence that she had in our team. She prayed to God that we would win, and she knew we would, and the only thing I did was read that letter to the players before the (game). I can remember . . . Sweeney Schriner said, “Don’t worry about this one, Coach, we’ll win it for that little girl.” From the drop of the puck, that was the first time in four games that I felt we had a hockey team again. And the rest is history.²⁰²

Day never renounced the tale even if the girl’s identifying details did change from time to time over the years. In an interview published only a week before his death in 1990, he talked one more time about the letter – this time the girl was aged fourteen and again from Detroit – and his decision to read it to the team. “I wanted the guys to be as moved by it as I was and let me tell you, they were moved,” he said.²⁰³ His insistence on maintaining the story right up until the end of his life has been enough to convince many hockey writers and researchers that it must be true, making it a classic tale in popular hockey history, but no one will ever know with certainty. “I’m also someone who questions things written about the past . . . I would think that he would not say it on a film if it wasn’t true,” said Paul Patskou, a video archivist who located Day’s 1960 *Hockey Night in Canada* interview and shared it. “It isn’t real conclusive evidence, but it’s worth looking into . . . As far as I know, Hap Day was an honourable man and I doubt very much that he would make up a story to a nationwide audience.”²⁰⁴

Whatever may have happened before Game 4, there is no disputing what happened in that game and over the following week. The Leafs romped to a 9-3 win in Game 5, with Drillon’s

²⁰² Hap Day, interview by Ward Cornell, *Hockey Night in Canada*, CBC, April 14, 1960.

²⁰³ John Herbert, “Day was true builder,” *London Free Press*, February 10, 1990.

²⁰⁴ Paul Patskou, Facebook message to author, July 2, 2019.

replacement Don Metz justifying Day's roster change by scoring three goals and two assists. Broda then shut out Detroit in Game 6 to tie the series and force a seventh and deciding game at Maple Leaf Gardens, which the Leafs won 3-1 to complete the comeback. "We did it the hard way," said Day, who had proved successful with every move he made after Game 3 while the Wings never readjusted.²⁰⁵ He had demonstrated how a coach could orchestrate the reversal of momentum in what appeared to be a lost cause – indeed, erasing an 0-3 deficit and winning a Stanley Cup playoff series has only happened three times since 1942, and never again in the final.²⁰⁶ "I'm no master mind," Day had said after Game 6. "My team just went out and played and, really, I thought we were lucky."²⁰⁷ Goldham, who later also played for the Wings and worked as an analyst on *Hockey Night in Canada*, disagreed: "The bottom line was that Day outcoached Jack Adams of Detroit."²⁰⁸



Figure 12: After winning the 1942 Stanley Cup, coach Hap Day donned a Toronto Maple Leafs uniform to pose with the trophy.
Photo: Hockey Hall of Fame

²⁰⁵ Dick Sheridan, "'We Did It the Hard Way' Says Day as Leafs Celebrate," *Ottawa Journal*, April 20, 1942.

²⁰⁶ David Pollack, "Collapse is complete: Sharks lose 4th in a row," *Sacramento Bee*, May 1, 2014.

²⁰⁷ Canadian Press, "I Thought We Were Lucky."

²⁰⁸ Jim Proudfoot, "Leafs' comeback in '42 was the greatest."

Adams was so well-regarded as a coach that his name adorns the award for the NHL's coach of the year.²⁰⁹ He won three Stanley Cups as the Wings' coach and four more as the team's general manager, but Day made a habit of picking his Wings apart when they met in the postseason. In later years, Adams recognized his former Toronto St. Pats linemate by declaring him one of the "two greatest coaches in the world," the other being Tommy Ivan, Adams' hand-picked successor in Detroit.²¹⁰ Chicago Black Hawks coach Paul Thompson remarked in the wake of the 1942 Cup Final that Day's bold strategy would have made him "a bum" if it had failed. The fear of such a label would have kept other coaches from doing something as drastic as benching their leading scorer. "But it worked," Thompson said. "I'll bet a plugged nickel he could run for mayor of Toronto now and get elected."²¹¹ Leafs captain Syl Apps shared the team's opinion of their mentor a few days later at a public event to celebrate the title. "It was our coach who won the Stanley Cup," Apps said. "It was his counsel and guidance that put us where we are today."²¹² Day deflected the praise back to the players, but it was clear that they respected him and understood his important role in their success.

They knew there was more to Day's coaching than roster changes and inspirational letters. He had very clear ideas of how he wanted his players to play. They had to be in good physical shape, because practices were purposeful and high-impact. Players were taught the importance of face-offs and how to play without the puck, meaning they learned how to position themselves to receive a pass from a teammate and/or to anticipate an opponent's moves. They were taught how to check with and without their sticks, and defencemen were also taught how to

²⁰⁹ Bob Morrissey, "Bowman named top NHL coach," *Montreal Gazette*, May 14, 1977.

²¹⁰ Dink Carroll, "Playing the Field," *Montreal Gazette*, March 23, 1949.

²¹¹ Stu Keate, "Salute to 'Hap' Day," *Vancouver Daily Province*, April 17, 1942.

²¹² Vern DeGeer, "'Our Coach Won Stanley Cup,' Says Apps at Victory Luncheon," *The Globe and Mail*, April 21, 1942.

drop to their knees to block opponents' shots from getting through to the net. Goldham in particular became renowned for this ability, which complemented his desire to stay close to his own net and protect his goaltender. "I learned to play defence under Hap Day," Goldham said in a 1981 interview. "We were happy to win 1-0. In those days, the theory was that you scored when someone on the other team made a mistake. The perfect defensive combination was one guy who could wheel the puck out of there and the other guy who would stay at home and mind the store."²¹³

Author William Houston wrote that Day would sometimes make his team practise a drill for an hour to ensure mastery, whether it was face-offs or perhaps the 1-2-2 forecheck he preferred, which meant sending one forward in to pressure the puck carrier while the other forwards remained back to cover the opposing forwards and cut off the puck carrier's outlet passes. The late Frank Selke Jr., the son of the Leafs' longtime assistant manager, grew up around the team before his father went to Montreal as the manager of the Canadiens in 1946, and he retained vivid memories of watching Day at work. "He made a lot of ordinary and mediocre players into – if not superstars – certainly good journeymen guys who could more than carry their own weight," Selke told Houston. "He did it by the sheer force of discipline. The Leafs in the 1940s were the best-disciplined team probably in the history of the game."²¹⁴

It was this discipline that was the key to Day's next great triumph, in 1945, while Smythe, a major in the Canadian Army, was recuperating from a serious wound suffered in Normandy.²¹⁵ The Second World War had been rough on the Leafs, with many members of the

²¹³ Jim Coleman, "Canadians weak in their own zone," *Calgary Herald*, October 14, 1981.

²¹⁴ William Houston, *Inside Maple Leaf Gardens: The Rise and Fall of the Toronto Maple Leafs* (Toronto, Montreal: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1989), p. 24.

²¹⁵ Ralph Allen, "Conn Smythe Wounded in Gallant Attempt to Extinguish Flames on Ammunition Truck," *The Globe and Mail*, July 31, 1944.

1942 championship club having enlisted in the Canadian military at Smythe's behest.²¹⁶ In fact, there had been a chance that the entire league would shut down in 1942 due to the war. Elliott M. Little, director of Canada's National Selective Service, offered some hope in August of that year when he suggested that the NHL might be allowed to keep operating "in some form, or on some basis," in the interest of providing entertainment to Canadians and maintaining morale.²¹⁷ Little affirmed this viewpoint as official government policy the following month.²¹⁸ The NHL continued to operate throughout the war with no further serious threat of interruption.

But military service did interrupt individual careers. By the time the 1944 Stanley Cup playoffs began, only two players from the Leafs team that had won the Cup in 1942 – forwards Lorne Carr and Bob Davidson – were still with the club. Other teams were affected to some degree; the New York Rangers went from first place in the league standings in 1941-42 to last the following season. At the other end of the scale, the Montreal Canadiens were building a potential dynasty. Dick Irvin had taken over a last-place team and turned it into a powerhouse, finishing first in 1943-44 with thirty-eight wins and only five losses in fifty regular season games. The Canadiens rolled through the postseason and won the Stanley Cup.²¹⁹

Their first playoff opponents were the Leafs. Toronto tried to compete by playing Ottawa's old kitty-bar-the-door system, and won the first game, but the best-of-seven series was really no contest. Montreal ended it with an 11-0 humiliation in Game 5. There was no miracle comeback in store for Day and the Leafs this time. The coach was "stung to silence," according

²¹⁶ Vern DeGeer, "Urges Early Military Training For Hockey Club: Smythe in Appeal to Leaf Players," *The Globe and Mail*, July 19, 1940.

²¹⁷ Canadian Press, "Wartime Fate of Major Hockey Hinges on Calder Brief," *The Globe and Mail*, August 8, 1942.

²¹⁸ Canadian Press, "National Hockey League Set To Operate 1942-43 Schedule," *Ottawa Evening Citizen*, September 16, 1942.

²¹⁹ "1943-44 NHL Summary," *Hockey Reference*, https://www.hockey-reference.com/leagues/NHL_1944.html

to a *Montreal Daily Star* reporter, but defenceman Walter “Babe” Pratt put on a brave face.

“There’ll be another year,” he said. “Maybe we’ll make amends.”²²⁰

NHL teams of the era felt some bitterness not only in falling to Montreal but in how they had been beaten. Every team had lost players to military service, and most tried to make do with replacements who would not normally have been playing pro hockey, but the Canadiens had not been hit as hard and remained largely intact. Many of their players obtained medical deferrals exempting them from service, and they secured work in war industry positions while continuing to play hockey. Three such players were Hector “Toe” Blake, who worked in a shipyard, Elmer Lach, who was employed in an aircraft plant, and Maurice “Rocket” Richard, who worked with several other teammates in a munitions factory.²²¹ Irvin placed these three players on a forward line together, and as the Punch Line they tormented opposing defencemen and goalies. Art Ross, whose Bruins had been gutted, and whose two sons were overseas with the Royal Canadian Air Force, mockingly called the Canadiens “the essential war workers.”²²²

The Canadiens were no less dominant in 1944-45, again winning thirty-eight of fifty games and finishing first. The Punch Line were one-two-three in the NHL scoring race, with Lach at the top of the list on his way to being named the league’s most valuable player. Richard became the first player in NHL history to score fifty goals in a season. All three Punch Line members were named to the league’s First All-Star Team, along with teammates Emile “Butch” Bouchard on defence and Bill Durnan, the NHL’s best goaltender.²²³ All five players would eventually be inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame. Irvin, the First All-Star Team coach for the

²²⁰ Harold Atkins, “Praise and Pathos Follow Canuck Record Series Win,” *Montreal Daily Star*, March 31, 1944.

²²¹ Gabriel Stephen Panunto, “For Club or Country? Hockey in Wartime Canada, 1939-1945,” MA thesis, Carleton University, 2000, pp. 114-115.

²²² Charlie Edwards, “Art Ross Very Interested In War Services,” *Owen Sound Daily Sun-Times*, January 28, 1944; Andy Lytle, “Ross Wants Wartime Tag on Those Hockey Records,” *Toronto Daily Star*, March 18, 1944.

²²³ “Elmer Lach Awarded Hart Trophy,” *Montreal Gazette*, April 5, 1945; Canadian Press, “Six Habs Make All-star Team Picked for the Canadian Press,” *Montreal Gazette*, April 6, 1945.

second consecutive year, made only one significant mistake all season: he boasted before the playoffs that his club was “undoubtedly the greatest hockey team of all time.”²²⁴

Day and the Leafs finished a distant third, twenty-eight points in arrears of the Canadiens and fifteen points behind the second-place Red Wings. But some of their players had been discharged from the military and were making their way back to Toronto – and just in time, because Day needed their veteran savvy. As the Leafs and Canadiens prepared to meet in the opening round of the playoffs for the second year in a row, Day decided that they would once again employ kitty-bar-the-door, with team captain Bob Davidson drawing the assignment of checking the dangerous Richard. The differences this time were that Day would have seasoned pros on his roster, and he had used the latter half of the regular season to sharpen his team and toughen it up for the postseason grind. What happened next basically invented playoff hockey as the world knows it now.

“The shift from Game 82 of the regular season to Game 1 of the first round in the NHL playoffs is perhaps the most dramatic shift in sports given the level and style of play, how goals are scored and prevented, and often how postseason games are officiated,” Associated Press reporter Stephen Whyno wrote in 2022. “That explains the unpredictability and upsets, the reliance on goaltending and why those hoisting the Cup sometimes are so banged up they can’t hold it over their heads.”²²⁵

Jeff Gordon, a sportswriter in St. Louis, came up with a more expressive description as that city’s Blues, the best team in the NHL during the 1999-2000 regular season, were being eliminated from the first playoff round by an inferior (on paper) opponent from San Jose. “Playoff hockey is ‘playing the body’ and ‘finishing your checks,’ along with hooking, holding,

²²⁴ Canadian Press, “Mining Market Should Land Dick as Salesman,” *The Globe and Mail*, February 10, 1945.

²²⁵ Stephen Whyno, “Playoff hockey ‘changes everything,’” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 1, 2022.

tackling and all manner of blatant violations – often without risk of penalty,” he wrote. “It is playing hurt and going after players who are hurt. It is gamesmanship and psychological warfare. It is scorers playing gritty, and gritty players scoring. Playoff hockey is about creating a massive tangle of bodies in front of the net so that pucks can bounce into the net off of them.” Blues’ player Stephane Richer, who had won the Stanley Cup twice, told Gordon that to him, playoff hockey meant “no tomorrow . . . It doesn’t matter how good is your team, it’s how bad you want it. You have to be afraid to lose.”²²⁶

Playoff hockey was often cautious and close-checking prior to 1945, but the Leafs took it to a higher level that year, adding a significant element of fierceness fueled by desperation. Toronto had played with a sense of urgency in 1942 when their backs were against the wall, but it was in 1945 that it really became a Leafs’ hallmark due to Day’s machinations. “(W)hen I coached,” Day said in 1983, “there used to be a big difference between the hockey during the season and in the playoffs. I’d start to prepare them for the playoffs in February. I’d tell them that if their mistakes didn’t seem important during the regular season, they were still important to me.”²²⁷

Windsor Daily Star sports editor Doug Vaughan recognized what Day was doing and how he was accommodating his returning players like pieces in a puzzle he was building. Vaughan noted in a March 1945 column that the team had seemed “so disorganized and inept” only weeks earlier, no one thought the Leafs had a chance to do anything of note in the playoffs. “Day made several changes in his playing personnel and then did a magnificent chore of convincing his charges that they were capable of beating anyone if they only put their minds to

²²⁶ Jeff Gordon, “The Cold War,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 23, 2000.

²²⁷ Allen Abel, “Happy’s days we hear again.”

the task,” Vaughan wrote. “The Toronto coach is now reaping the fruits of his efforts and, regardless of what happens from here on, should be rewarded.”²²⁸

Day pared his lineup down to almost the bare minimum – two forward lines, four defencemen, one or two utility players, and a goalie. “He knew if we were going to beat the Canadiens, we would have to go with our best. In order to do that, he had to play his best troops as often as he could,” Ted “Teeder” Kennedy said in an interview for a book published in 1995. In other interviews over at least a thirty-year span, Kennedy said often that what Day did in that semifinal series against Montreal was one of the greatest coaching jobs in NHL history.²²⁹ Babe Pratt agreed: “No coach but Hap Day could have got us into those finals.”²³⁰

Nineteen-year-old Kennedy, the former Canadiens prospect, had by this time already established himself under Day’s tutelage as Toronto’s first-line centre and, more importantly, the heart of the Leafs. He was a gritty, determined, and disciplined player who, although blessed with talent, often excelled through sheer willpower. Davidson, Kennedy’s linemate, remembered that Canadiens veteran Lach thought he could intimidate the teenager as the two met for the face-off to start Game 1. “You come near me and I’ll take your head off with my stick,” the league MVP reportedly said. “You try it,” Kennedy replied, “and I’ll put you in the goddamned hospital.” That set the tone, Davidson said: “You could not scare Teeder one iota.”²³¹ The exchange may be apocryphal – Davidson’s account appears to be the only evidence that it happened – but the inference was clear. As Kennedy went, so would the Leafs.

²²⁸ Doug Vaughan, “On the Rebound,” *Windsor Daily Star*, March 29, 1945.

²²⁹ Ulmer, *Captains*, p. 70; Red Burnett, “Schriner ahead of the Big M,” *Toronto Daily Star*, August 28, 1969; Peter Worthington, “Nothing like stick handling hockey memories,” *Windsor Star*, January 2, 1999.

²³⁰ Ulmer, *Captains*, p. 39.

²³¹ Houston, *Inside Maple Leaf Gardens*, p. 30.

Toronto won the first game 1-0 on a goal by Kennedy and a shutout by rookie goaltender Frank McCool, whose unfortunate nickname was “Ulcers” due to a debilitating stomach condition that got him discharged from the army, played a role in failed tryouts with Chicago and the Rangers, cut his hockey career short, and eventually contributed to his early death.²³² He showed up at the Leafs’ training camp in October 1944 as a virtual unknown and quickly won the vacant goaltender’s job.²³³ Day recognized his value where the Black Hawks and Rangers had not, and McCool was named the NHL’s best rookie of 1944-45 despite being in such agony that at one point he reportedly suggested that the coach find another goalie.²³⁴ Day persuaded him to stay on, mainly because he had no hope of finding anyone else at the time who could play the position as well, but it was still the right decision. As good as McCool had been in the regular season, he saved his best for the playoffs.

The Leafs won three of the first four games of the series against the powerful Canadiens, playing smart, disciplined hockey under Day’s direction. They forced mistakes that they then capitalized on and created their own chances too. Davidson’s job was to “shadow” Rocket Richard in every game, a not-unheard-of but not widely used defensive tactic, meaning his job was to always stay close to the Montreal star and check him by whatever means were necessary to prevent him from getting scoring chances. Richard broke out in Game 5, scoring four goals in a 10-3 victory for the Canadiens, but Davidson and the Leafs did not fold up in the wake of another embarrassing loss reminiscent of the one that had ended their season one year earlier. They came back with a greater focus in Game 6 and eliminated Montreal with a 3-2 win. As

²³² Eric Zweig, “Gonzaga’s NHL Connection: Leafs Playoff Hero Frank McCool,” *The Hockey Research Journal*, vol. 20 (2016-17), p. 58; Mark Spector, “Retro McCool,” *National Post*, May 16, 2003.

²³³ Vern DeGeer, “Goal Chief Problem as Hap Day Pitches Camp,” *The Globe and Mail*, October 11, 1944; Vern DeGeer, “Up to Habs, Says Selke,” *The Globe and Mail*, October 24, 1944; Vern DeGeer, “Kennedy Stars Again as Blues Beat Whites,” *The Globe and Mail*, October 26, 1944; Frank Ayerst, “Frigidity of McCool Has His Coach in Ecstasies,” *Toronto Daily Star*, October 26, 1944.

²³⁴ Vern DeGeer, “Name Our Boy McCool Outstanding Rookie,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 17, 1945.

Montreal Daily Star reporter Harold Atkins wrote, the Canadiens were “listless, disorganized,” while the Leafs were “a going concern all the way (and) checked the Canadiens to a virtual standstill.”²³⁵

Montreal Gazette columnist Dink Carroll concurred that Toronto had been the better team and deserved to win: “The Leafs played driving, purposeful hockey throughout while Canadiens skated only in spots and indulged in random passing for considerable stretches,” he wrote.²³⁶ “Six weeks ago the verdict might have been different,” added Baz O’Meara in his *Montreal Daily Star* column, referring to when the Leafs were struggling and Irvin was convinced of the utter greatness of his team, “but they didn’t play the Stanley Cup series six weeks ago.”²³⁷ Atkins, without openly saying it, indicated his belief that Irvin had been outcoached. “Everything Irvin seemed to try backfired,” he wrote.²³⁸

“I’ve never handled a club that had such a rotten string of luck,” Irvin lamented after the final game against the Leafs. “Half the goals Toronto scored were deflected . . . by our own players. If we had some of that luck we would have won in a gallop.” Day’s wry response when told of Irvin’s comments was that he’d “rather be lucky than rich.”²³⁹ William Houston considered the semifinal win over Montreal to be “Day’s finest hour as a coach . . . When Leafs of that era are asked about memorable playoff series, this one in the spring of 1945 usually comes up first. They were undermanned and weren’t supposed to win, but they didn’t quit and never believed their task was insurmountable. The little guy had taken on the giant and won.”²⁴⁰

²³⁵ Harold Atkins, “Habs Find Leafs, ‘Breaks’ Tough Duo to Topple,” *Montreal Daily Star*, April 2, 1945.

²³⁶ Dink Carroll, “Last Ditch Rally Falls Goal Short,” *Montreal Gazette*, April 2, 1945.

²³⁷ Baz O’Meara, “The Passing Sport Show,” *Montreal Daily Star*, April 2, 1945.

²³⁸ Atkins, “Habs Find Leafs.”

²³⁹ Vern DeGeer, “‘Series of Deflected Puck,’ Dick Irvin Declares Amid Dressing-Room Gloom,” *The Globe and Mail*, April 2, 1945.

²⁴⁰ Houston, *Inside Maple Leaf Gardens*, p. 31.

There was one more hurdle to clear – the Red Wings, in another rematch of the 1942 final. Toronto and Detroit had met again in the semifinals in 1943, with the Wings prevailing on their way to the Stanley Cup. The 1945 final also seemed like it could be a mismatch; Detroit had beaten the Leafs in eight of ten head-to-head games during the regular season, outscoring them 45-24 in the aggregate.²⁴¹ But the playoffs, as Day had noted, were a whole new season. This was borne out when the final series started out very much like the 1942 final had, but in reverse as the Leafs won the first three games of the series. McCool and the Leafs' defence did not allow a goal in that span, giving the Leafs the unique achievement of taking a 3-0 lead in the series despite having scored only four goals themselves.



FINALS						
	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts.
Toronto	3	0	0	4	0	6
DETROIT	0	3	0	0	4	0

THURSDAY'S RESULT
Toronto 1, DETROIT 0.
SATURDAY'S GAME
DETROIT at Toronto.

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Figure 13: Three shutouts and four goals gave the Leafs a temporary lock on the 1945 Stanley Cup Final against the Red Wings.

The close checking directed by Day was regarded as an intelligent strategy by sportswriters who were covering the series and even by the Red Wings. “Personally, we don’t mind defensive hockey,” Baz O’Meara wrote after Game 2 of the final, arguing that Day’s

²⁴¹ John N. Sabo, “Leafs to Play for 2 Sellout Crowds Here,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 6, 1945.

²⁴² John N. Sabo, “Won’t Be Long Now! Leafs Blank Wings Again, 1-0,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 13, 1945.

mastery of it had made “a mockery” of the NHL’s rules designed to curtail it. Day had correctly assumed that referees would not be eager to call penalties in close playoff games – a reality that, incidentally, has continued to this day in the NHL – and O’Meara praised the coach for making this calculation and for coaching his team to play accordingly. “Day has been very smart all through the playoffs,” he wrote. “Even if his team is halted now . . . he has whipped them a lot further than anybody expected two months ago.”²⁴³

Detroit Free Press sports editor Lyall Smith characterized the mood of the Red Wings as one of “grudging admiration.” Defenceman Earl Seibert marvelled that the Leafs had successfully resurrected the supposedly outdated kitty-bar-the-door system. Detroit captain Bill “Flash” Hollett, a former Leafs defenceman who had been Day’s defence partner a decade earlier, said he knew the hockey “must be lousy to watch,” but he told Smith he understood where it was coming from and why. “They’re playing a kind of game that can win them the cup (sic),” he said.²⁴⁴ John N. Sabo, the *Free Press*’ main hockey writer, had the same opinion: “Toronto is determined to play its own brand of hockey, and it is paying dividends.”²⁴⁵

Jack Adams, as desperate as Day had been three years earlier, revamped his team’s strategy for Game 4. Recognizing that the Leafs were using a short bench and might tire if they were pushed harder, he urged his players to be more aggressive on the ice. They responded with a 5-3 win to stave off elimination, scoring three unanswered goals in the third period as the Leafs generated no offence other than Teeder Kennedy’s three goals and visibly faded in the stretch. Detroit then won 2-0 in Game 5, doing all their damage in the final period again, and tied the

²⁴³ Baz O’Meara, “The Passing Sport Show,” *Montreal Daily Star*, April 11, 1945.

²⁴⁴ Lyall Smith, “Kitty-Bar-the-Door Game Pays Off for Leafs,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 9, 1945.

²⁴⁵ John N. Sabo, “That Man McCool! Leafs Shut Out Wings Again, 2-0,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 9, 1945.

series with a 1-0 overtime win in Game 6.²⁴⁶ The series would again be decided in the seventh game. But this time, rather than the friendly confines of Maple Leaf Gardens, the last game would be played in Detroit's home arena, Olympia Stadium.

For the second time in four years, Day and the Leafs prevailed in Game 7. He surprised Adams and the Wings by introducing a third forward line and taking some of the pressure off his exhausted regulars. He also managed to outwit Adams early in the contest by doing nothing. The teams were preparing for a face-off, both forward lines having just been changed, when Adams suddenly decided to replace his entire line again. Day did not respond, confident in the players he had on the ice; seconds later, Toronto's Mel Hill scored the first goal of the game.²⁴⁷ The Wings tied the score in the third period, once again pouring it on late in the contest, but Toronto got a fortuitous power play and Babe Pratt, who had expressed a hope of making amends after the playoff disappointment of 1944, broke the tie with what turned out to be the winning goal.

The Leafs held off the Wings despite being shorthanded at the end of the game due to a penalty of their own, and the Stanley Cup returned to Toronto. Each team scored only nine goals over the seven games, a remarkable defensive display that has never been repeated in the NHL playoffs. Adams was gracious in defeat, praising not only his rival's coaching but also how the Leafs had responded to Day's direction. "I never saw a club carry out its orders so well," he said at a dinner the following October. "They didn't make a mistake in seven games."²⁴⁸

It was a bittersweet victory for the Leafs, because the only members of the organization who were there to celebrate were the players and their coach. As Kennedy remembered it in a

²⁴⁶ John N. Sabo, "Little Hope for Leafs, Jubilant Wings Concede," *Detroit Free Press*, April 16, 1945; John N. Sabo, "What a Day! Wings 2, Leafs 0; Tigers 1, Browns 0," *Detroit Free Press*, April 20, 1945; John N. Sabo, "Wings Defeat Leafs, 1-0, in Overtime to Tie Series," *Detroit Free Press*, April 22, 1945.

²⁴⁷ Vern DeGeer, "Leafs Regain Stanley Cup, Vanquishing Detroit, 2 to 1," *The Globe and Mail*, April 23, 1945.

²⁴⁸ Canadian Press, "NHL Must Expand Warns Smythe At Leafs' Dinner," *Ottawa Evening Citizen*, October 11, 1945.

1999 interview, “so sure were the Maple Leaf brass that it was all over, that not one executive came to Detroit for the final game. Only Hap Day. They’d given up on us.”²⁴⁹ Kennedy’s recollection verified an observation by Vern DeGeer, who wrote in *The Globe and Mail* that no Leafs executives had attended the game – not even Conn Smythe, who had returned from Europe.²⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Smythe, who had had no role in building the team, was hailed in newspapers across the country the day after the triumph by a Canadian Press report that called him the Leafs’ good luck charm and “guiding spirit.”²⁵¹

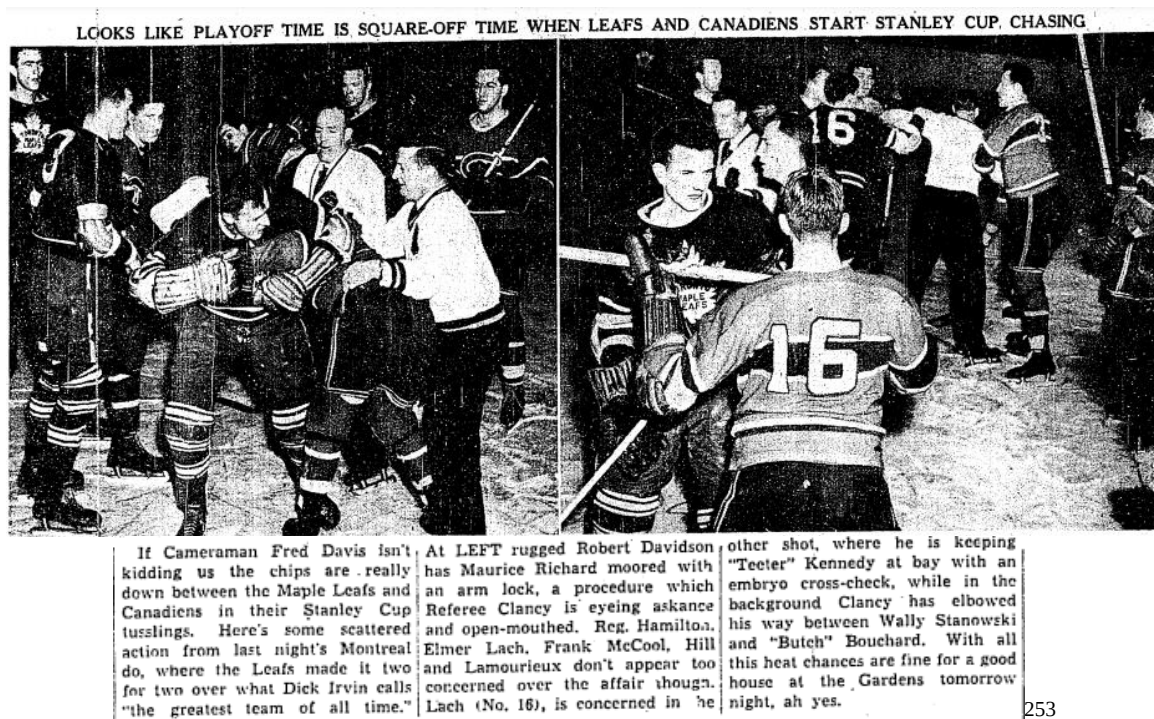
Kingston Whig-Standard sports editor Mike Rodden was a rare exception. Rodden, who was also a longtime NHL referee and a former sports editor at *The Globe* in Toronto, wrote in two columns on consecutive days that he knew who had been more valuable to the Leafs. “The honor goes to Day alone and it was fitting that when the Leafs won that cup (sic) on Detroit ice the tutor was the only one in that driver’s seat,” Rodden wrote. “They played according to Day’s ideas and instructions . . . with their only objective the winning of the Stanley Cup and in their wake they left the wreckage of two teams who on paper appeared to be more powerful than their conquerors.” Rodden added that the key to the championship was Day’s ability to have the Leafs ready to play a much different game than the Canadiens and Red Wings had expected. “When the chips were on the line the Leafs knew what to expect from their opponents whereas the latter were kept wondering how the Daymen could have so completely altered their system as to withstand nearly all threats.”²⁵²

²⁴⁹ Peter Worthington, “Nothing like stick handling hockey memories.”

²⁵⁰ Vern DeGeer, “Leafs Regain Stanley Cup.”

²⁵¹ Alan Harvey, “Leafs Welcome Smythe by Winning Trophy,” *Sault Star*, April 23, 1945; Canadian Press, “Smythe Seen Leafs’ Charm In Winning Stanley Cup,” *Montreal Daily Star*, April 23, 1945; Alan Harvey, “Leafs Capture Stanley Cup As Gift for Conny Smythe,” *Vancouver Daily Province*, April 23, 1945.

²⁵² Michael J. Rodden, “Sports Highways,” *Kingston Whig-Standard*, April 24, 1945; April 25, 1945.



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Figure 14: Toronto's Bob Davidson and Teeder Kennedy excelled under Hap Day's direction during the 1945 playoffs. Here, Davidson manhandles Rocket Richard as Kennedy, already the Leafs' emotional leader at nineteen, challenges Elmer Lach.

The Leafs' willingness to play through anything for their coach, as Adams recognized, was another crucial factor. It was only at the end of the final series that it was revealed just how much they had endured. In addition to Frank McCool's chronic ulcers, six of Toronto's regular skaters were reported as suffering from a variety of serious ailments: Sweeney Schriner had a severe charley horse and an injured thumb that impacted his ability to shoot the puck; Lorne Carr and Reg Hamilton both had strained groins; Gus Bodnar and Nick Metz had injured knees; and Teeder Kennedy fought through knee and shoulder injuries. Jim Coleman wrote in *The Globe and Mail* that "some of them had no right to be on the ice," and Kennedy said decades later that he "was never as tired in my life as when those playoffs were over."²⁵⁴

²⁵³ "Looks Like Playoff Time is Square-Off Time When Leafs and Canadiens Start Stanley Cup Chasing," *Toronto Daily Star*, March 23, 1945.

²⁵⁴ Jim Coleman, "By Jim Coleman," *The Globe and Mail*, April 23, 1945; Canadian Press, "Injuries Riddle Leafs In Series with Wings," *Montreal Gazette*, April 23, 1945; Frank Orr, "Greatest Maple Leafs – No. 4 Ted Kennedy," *Sportsnet*, December 28, 2013, <https://www.sportsnet.ca/hockey/24-7/greatest-maple-leafs-no-4-ted-kennedy/>

Such sacrifices would become commonplace in the playoffs in the wake of the Leafs' victory, to the point where they are no longer seen as sacrifices. They are simply expected, and accepted, as part of the cost of winning. "Playoff hockey is entirely different hockey, and if that sounds like a paradox, it isn't," Jack Kinsella wrote in the *Ottawa Citizen* in 1961 during that year's postseason. "There's a tremendous disparity, and the record book is replete with examples of teams who found out."²⁵⁵

Any hurts that Schrinier experienced were set aside in later years as he reflected on his career with Toronto. He told a reporter that the 1945 championship "was more thrilling" than the 1942 Cup had been because, in the latter year, the Leafs really had no business competing with the Canadiens. "They had a powerhouse. This is where Hap's coaching came in," Schrinier said. "Day knew what had to be done, and he coached you that way. He was very clever . . . He was also very good at motivating. He was a psychologist and a super person."²⁵⁶

"Hap was the greatest coach who ever lived," said Babe Pratt, who began his NHL career under the iconic Lester Patrick with the Rangers and won a Stanley Cup playing for another legend in New York, Frank Boucher. "He commanded respect and he got it. He knew the weak points of every one of his players and knew the strong points of all the opposition's players. And it was hardly ever that Hap sent a player on the ice if his opposition was a nemesis."²⁵⁷

Day and the Leafs had won two Stanley Cups that they likely would not have won if any other coach had been behind the Toronto bench. Day had proven that the right collection of players could defy the odds and beat superior opponents if they were committed to playing as a team that learned and executed a system together. He had re-established the fact that a strong

²⁵⁵ Jack Kinsella, "Kinsella's Corner," *Ottawa Citizen*, March 30, 1961.

²⁵⁶ Daryl Slade, "Sweeney Schrinier 'wrote' some of hockey's great scripts," *Calgary Herald*, December 14, 1981.

²⁵⁷ Gyle Konotopetz, "Pratt comes alive with stories of good old days," *Regina Leader-Post*, June 21, 1975.

defensive effort could prevail over a more powerful offensive force, and in doing so he created the modern blueprint for what is now recognized as playoff hockey – tight checking, gritty, intense physical play, and a desperate unwillingness to lose.

Some of the tactics Day used were wisely adopted by other coaches; for instance, Bob Davidson's success in covering Rocket Richard meant that Richard was soon being shadowed by players on every other team in the league. Other stars began experiencing the same treatment, and the practice became so prevalent that many "shadows" gained renown for the effectiveness of their work, such as Tony Leswick and Henrik Zetterberg of Detroit, Claude Provost of Montreal, and Esa Tikkanen of Edmonton, all of whom won multiple Stanley Cups by committing to the style of playoff hockey that Davidson, at Day's instigation, had introduced.²⁵⁸

Day had also proven himself against Dick Irvin and Jack Adams, legends in their own right and the NHL's two all-star coaches of the 1944-45 season.²⁵⁹ He had lost to each of them in the playoffs in the two seasons immediately prior. But the 1945 postseason and his second Stanley Cup as the coach of the Leafs marked a turning point for Day against both of his rivals. He never lost another playoff series to either man. And the next time he met them both in the playoffs, in 1947, he laid the foundation for an unprecedented hockey dynasty.

²⁵⁸ Keith Matthews, "Disa and Data," *Calgary Albertan*, February 7, 1961; Jim Coleman, "It's a 36-year-old flashback," *Calgary Herald*, January 26, 1981; Ken Warren, "Shadow Play," *Ottawa Citizen*, June 9, 2009.

²⁵⁹ Canadian Press, "Six Habs Make All-star Team Picked for the Canadian Press," *Montreal Gazette*, April 6, 1945.

GAME 4 – DAY’S DYNASTY

I believe it is good tactics to know everything you can about your opponents, their weaknesses and strengths, and make your plans accordingly. True, they may not always work out, and even if they don’t, you should learn from your mistakes – that’s the only way to get experience. There are not many generals who have won all their battles.²⁶⁰

– Clarence “Hap” Day, coach, Toronto Maple Leafs coach, 1940-1950

Day did not win all his battles as the general in charge of the Leafs, but he won most of them. While he was their coach, they appeared in fourteen playoff series and won ten, prevailing in forty-nine of eighty games. They never lost in five appearances in the Stanley Cup Final. Seven head coaches in National Hockey League (NHL) history have won four or more Cups, but of the seven, only Day could say his team never lost the final series. This chapter will summarize the rest of his coaching career, examine his coaching philosophies, and begin to explore his influence on the game.

The Leafs were sometimes mediocre in the regular season – they only finished first once in the league standings during his tenure – but Day built his teams for the postseason. His playoff winning percentage of .613 is the best in franchise history and among the best in NHL history. As often as not, his was the last team standing when the championship trophy was awarded at the end of the season. What more can realistically be asked of a coach in a competitive team sport?

Unfortunately, the 1945-46 season was not one of those championship seasons. Serious injuries to Teeder Kennedy and returning captain Syl Apps were compounded by the poor play of several veteran players who were at the end of the line. The Leafs won only one of their first

²⁶⁰ “Hap” Day, *How to Play Better Hockey*, unpublished notes, ca. 1947, private collection of Kerry Day.

ten games and it was a hole too deep to climb out of; they finished fifth and out of the playoffs for the first and only time in Day's coaching career.²⁶¹ The Canadiens finished first again and had little trouble recapturing the Cup, losing only one of their nine playoff games.²⁶²

Conn Smythe, back from the war, was consolidating his power at Maple Leaf Gardens, and he used the lost season as an excuse to scapegoat Frank Selke and run him out of the organization. Selke had performed well as acting manager in Smythe's absence and, working alongside Day, he had made several moves that resulted in an unexpected Stanley Cup in 1945. One of those moves was the fateful trade for Teeder Kennedy, a deal that infuriated Smythe because he had not been consulted on it; even though he was in Europe, he tried in vain to void the transaction when he learned of it.²⁶³ Selke won that battle, but it was a rare win. Working for Smythe could sometimes be humiliating for him. While Smythe's name was engraved on the Stanley Cup as the managing director of the 1945 championship club despite his lack of involvement in its active management, Selke was relegated to the position of assistant manager – and his title was unfortunately abbreviated on the Cup as “ass man.”



Figure 35: Frank Selke was listed as the assistant manager when the Leafs' names were engraved on the Stanley Cup for 1944-45, but his title was abbreviated to "ass man." Photo: Hockey Hall of Fame

²⁶¹ "1945-46 Toronto Maple Leafs Schedule and Results," *Hockey Reference*, https://www.hockey-reference.com/teams/TOR/1946_games.html

²⁶² "1945-46 NHL Summary," *Hockey Reference*, https://www.hockey-reference.com/leagues/NHL_1946.html

²⁶³ McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, p. 196.

The engraving was almost certainly done with no ill intent, but at the same time it served as a commentary of sorts on Selke's role with the Leafs. He was often treated poorly by Smythe, who tended to regard other people in his life as underlings whose main purpose was to do his bidding – biographer Kelly McParland euphemistically described this as Smythe's "implacable determination to have the world follow his rules."²⁶⁴ Having returned from overseas, Smythe was convinced that there was a faction at Maple Leaf Gardens that wanted him out of the way, and that Selke was involved. The trade for Kennedy, although it had worked out beautifully for the Leafs and would continue to pay dividends, was an example of what Smythe perceived as Selke's ambition to take his job permanently. The beginning of the end came when Smythe asked for Selke's support to become the company's president and largest shareholder. Selke hesitated, not wanting to choose sides and be caught in the middle of the power struggle.²⁶⁵ In Smythe's world, though, anyone who was not for him was against him. He decided that Selke was disloyal and undependable and would have to go.

When it became clear in early 1946 that the Leafs would miss the playoffs, Smythe began a campaign in the newspapers to discredit Selke. He did not mention his assistant by name, but in a series of interviews he alleged that the Leafs had been mishandled in his absence, that the team had run "out of steam," and that it might take up to five years to find good enough players who could undo the damage that he said had been done.²⁶⁶ He did make it clear that Hap Day was not responsible for the disastrous season, and in fact Smythe never held the Kennedy trade against Day even though the coach had been just as involved in making the deal. That left Selke holding

²⁶⁴ McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, p. 162.

²⁶⁵ Smythe with Young, *If You Can't Beat 'Em in the Alley*, pp. 177-178; McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, pp. 238-240.

²⁶⁶ Andy Lytle, "Speaking on Sports," *Toronto Daily Star*, February 23, 1946; Joe Perlove, "Defence Work Was Putrid, Doc Smythe's Post-Mortem," *Toronto Daily Star*, March 23, 1946; Gordon Walker, "Leafs' Steam Just Gave Out, Smythe Builds for Future," *Toronto Daily Star*, March 30, 1946.

the bag, and he got the message. He quit the Leafs in May 1946 and only weeks later was hired to manage the Montreal Canadiens and the Montreal Forum.²⁶⁷

The Leafs were far from bereft of talent in 1946, no matter what Smythe may have believed or what he told the Toronto sportswriters who he knew would disseminate his messages. With the Canadian military having removed so many young men from the hockey scene in the early 1940s, Selke and Day had recognized that there was a large crop of younger prospects who were not yet old enough to go to war. They worked together to lock down many of these players so that they would be available to the Leafs in the years to come.²⁶⁸ Many future Leafs emerged from this crop of youths, but Smythe later made it seem as though he had been responsible for discovering and developing them. His lifelong need for control and credit only intensified after the Second World War, and winning the power struggle to become the team's president merely allowed him to assert himself even more freely than before. This exposition is important because Smythe's elevation to godlike status at Maple Leaf Gardens happened in conjunction with and ultimately overshadowed the establishment of the team's first dynasty under coach Day.

Day excelled at training players and at game management. He did not necessarily excel at dealing with the press – or, at least, he did not appear to relish that part of the job. *Toronto Daily Star* sports editor Andy Lytle publicly took issue with this on at least two occasions. The first time was in October 1942, when Smythe was away in the army and Day was running the team along with Selke. Lytle contrasted Smythe's intimate courting of the media with Day's avoidance of it, accusing the coach of having “constructed an ivory tower for himself” and

²⁶⁷ Jim Vipond, “Selke Leaves Gardens’ Post; Ends Partnership of 20 Years,” *The Globe and Mail*, May 31, 1946; “Selke Appointed for Forum Posts,” *Montreal Gazette*, July 11, 1946.

²⁶⁸ McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, pp. 237, 240.

complaining that Day had barred the press from the Leafs' dressing room. "I think his attitude with regard to working reporters indicates clearly that he looks upon us much in the fashion with which a man reading adopts toward a persistent fly, or mosquito. At any rate, he gives us many the brush-off," Lytle wrote.²⁶⁹

Lytle was more generous in describing Day's character in a December 1945 column, but he was no less annoyed that the coach still would not cater to him. "I have found him pleasant, frequently cordial and invariably courteous," Lytle wrote. "I disagree with what I consider his disinclination to take any section of the press into his confidence. He, in turn, probably finds much that we write objectionable, so it's a Mexican standoff. I consider Day, whom I knew and liked as a player, and Day, an executive, as distinct and separate individuals."²⁷⁰ It is not clear if other Toronto sportswriters of the era also found Day similarly inflexible, but they undoubtedly would have welcomed Smythe's return to power and prominence, because he gladly gave them all the copy they wanted. Kelly McParland wrote that reporters did not necessarily like Smythe, "but they did appreciate the regular material his team provided. He was always willing to be quoted – unlike Day, who believed reporters should be seen and not trusted."²⁷¹

Smythe's oversized presence had a twofold impact. First, it allowed Day to slip into the background to a certain degree, which appears to be how he preferred it. Day's focus was always on the team and making his players better. "I only coach the club," he told Joe Perlove of the *Toronto Daily Star*. "I firmly believe that news should emanate from one source. Mr. Smythe will be in shortly. Give him a call."²⁷² Bobby Hewitson, the sports editor of the *Toronto Evening Telegram*, wrote about Day in a 1948 column that was reprinted in *The Hockey News*, a weekly

²⁶⁹ Andy Lytle, "Speaking on Sports," *Toronto Daily Star*, October 26, 1942.

²⁷⁰ Andy Lytle, "Speaking on Sports," *Toronto Daily Star*, December 11, 1945.

²⁷¹ McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, p. 168.

²⁷² Joe Perlove, "Much Sound But No Fury Our Investigator Finds," *Toronto Daily Star*, March 29, 1947.

periodical. In praising Day, Hewitson said he wished he could write more about him because he deserved the attention, but “he is not the ballyhoo type . . . we have argued time and again that too little is said about the coach of the Leafs. However, that is the way he wants it.”²⁷³

The consequent second impact of Smythe’s dominating personality and Day’s reticence was that observers were free to perceive Smythe as not only the face of the franchise but also as the genius of the operation. Smythe facilitated this by presenting himself to the Toronto press to be quoted after games, between games, extensively at training camp every autumn, and generally any other time a writer needed a quote. During home games at the Gardens, Smythe prominently occupied a private box high above the ice – the writers called it “Berchtesgaden,” the site of Adolf Hitler’s mountain retreat in the Bavarian Alps – and he tried to direct the team from there, sending messengers to deliver instructions to Day at the bench.²⁷⁴ It is true that Smythe’s perch was an ideal vantage point for another helpful set of eyes to watch games, and Smythe defended the tactic that way. “We merely did what the football people do now. I had a much better chance to see what went on than the man behind the bench had,” he told Milt Dunnell later in life.²⁷⁵ Nowadays, every pro hockey team has assistant coaches who watch games from above in arena press boxes, keeping in touch from there with the coaches at the bench.

But the frequency of Smythe’s missives made him more of a nuisance than anything else. Day had no assistant coaches and was therefore running everything himself during games, and he could hardly devote his full attention to the on-ice action as well as accommodate Smythe’s messengers, who sometimes caused confusion by not arriving in the order in which they had

²⁷³ Bobby Hewitson, “Coach Day Was Always Perfect Pro Athlete,” *The Hockey News*, October 6, 1948.

²⁷⁴ McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, p. 273; Red Burnett, “Hap’ll Be In Fine Shape To Run In Boston’s Marathon,” *Toronto Daily Star*, April 16, 1947; Jim Coleman, “By Jim Coleman,” *The Globe and Mail*, February 23, 1948.

²⁷⁵ Dunnell, “The Coaches,” p. 53.

been dispatched. Smythe furthered his efforts by having a telephone line installed from Berchtesgaden to the bench so he could call the coach and instruct him directly, but Day would ignore the phone and sometimes even disconnect it, preventing Smythe from getting through. Smythe had run Selke out of Toronto for the mere appearance of disloyalty, but Day could get away with outright insubordination at that time because he was the single biggest factor in the Leafs' success and Smythe knew it, even if most writers of the time would not publicly express it. "Day was probably the only person in the organization who could survive Smythe's meddling," author Michael Ulmer wrote. Dunnell wrote that the two men's ability to tolerate each other in hockey and in business for as long as they did "was an ongoing wonder to their contemporaries."²⁷⁶

Day downplayed the scenario in later years, telling Dunnell that he never minded hearing from Smythe and that he "always welcomed advice – provided it was good advice." That was a cryptic qualifier; Day did not elaborate as to what he considered to be "good advice," and he did not admit to having actually followed Smythe's advice. He also did not expand on his follow-up comment that he believed Smythe "was the smartest man in hockey – although not necessarily the smartest hockey man."²⁷⁷ It is not clear what Day meant by that comment, but it echoed a statement he had made in 1957 after quitting his job as general manager of the Leafs, a move he made after Smythe undermined and humiliated him at a press conference. Day told reporters that he thought Smythe was "the smartest man in hockey – at least he is now that I'm out."²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ Ulmer, *Captains*, p. 40; Batten, *The Leafs in Autumn*, p. 46; Charlie Hodge, *Golly Gee – It's Me! The Howie Meeker Story* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1996), p. 204; Jim Vipond, "Wednesday's Sports Digest," *The Globe and Mail*, September 26, 1956; Milt Dunnell, "Smythe and Day Together Again," *Toronto Star*, January 31, 1975; Milt Dunnell, "Hap Day left a lasting imprint on the Gardens," *Toronto Star*, February 18, 1990.

²⁷⁷ Dunnell, "The Coaches," p. 54.

²⁷⁸ Rex MacLeod, "Glitter of Sweetness and Light Marks Day's Leave of Puck Scene," *The Globe and Mail*, March 28, 1957.

Although sportswriters were aware of Day's independent streak, Smythe's public image was unaffected by it. McParland noted that when Smythe travelled with the Leafs, reporters in other cities sought him out for commentary as their Toronto counterparts did, and he accommodated them as well. The result was that although the Leafs' success was not necessarily due to anything Smythe had personally done, it became his success as far as the public was concerned. He was "recognized as a superior judge of talent and master of the game," McParland wrote. "Soon Smythe was being treated as the league's dominant figure, smartest operator, and quickest thinker. If that was an exaggeration, he wasn't about to tell anyone. He was easily the best known, most quoted, and highest profile sports figure in Canada."²⁷⁹

All of this is not to say that Smythe was not a knowledgeable hockey executive, but he was consistently overhyped by the press, which collectively chose the "colorful czar" of the Leafs as the country's top sports personality of 1949.²⁸⁰ The reality is that no manager in a team sport can be successful if not for their personnel. Managers can hire coaches and assemble rosters of talented players, but if coaches cannot make the talent jell and get the best out of their players, a team simply cannot win. That is why Howie Meeker, who won four Stanley Cups as a right-winger with the Leafs and briefly coached the team before becoming one of Canada's most famous and influential hockey broadcasters, believed that the team's success in the 1940s was due almost entirely to Day. He credited the coach with having taught his players all they needed to know. "I'll give Smythe credit as a motivator, as an organizer, and a judge of personalities," Meeker told his biographer. "He had a fair eye for talent, but, compared to Hap Day, what he knew about playing the game of hockey you could write on the head of a pin."²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, pp. 168-169.

²⁸⁰ Canadian Press, "Writers Select Conn Smythe Top Sport Personality," *Montreal Gazette*, January 6, 1950.

²⁸¹ Hodge, *Golly Gee – It's Me!* pp. 204-205.



Figure 16: Hap Day created the KLM Line – veteran centre Ted “Teeder” Kennedy and rookie wingers Vic Lynn and Howie Meeker – at training camp in September 1946. They led the Leafs throughout the season, all the way to the 1947 Stanley Cup.

Meeker was one of seven rookies who joined the Leafs for the 1946-47 season. On the first day of training camp in St. Catharines, Ontario, Day placed him on a forward unit at right wing with fellow freshman Vic Lynn on the left flank and Teeder Kennedy at centre.²⁸³ This trio, dubbed the KLM Line, stayed together throughout camp as Day rebuilt the roster with the young talent in reserve that Smythe, only months earlier, had claimed was nonexistent. The new players were all good enough right away; the Leafs lost only one of their first eleven games and climbed to the top of the standings.²⁸⁴ The KLM Line in particular was so effective that season, Meeker scored twenty-seven goals – including five in one game, an NHL record for rookies – and was named the league’s best first-year player.²⁸⁵

²⁸² “Youthful Line That Has Real Shine,” *Edmonton Journal*, April 21, 1947.

²⁸³ Jim Vipond, “Boesch, Grigg Show Strength on Defense During Leafs’ Workout,” *The Globe and Mail*, September 24, 1946; Gordon Walker, “Young Huskies on Defence Arouse Critics’ Optimism,” *Toronto Daily Star*, September 24, 1946.

²⁸⁴ “1946-47 Toronto Maple Leafs Schedule and Results,” *Hockey Reference*, https://www.hockey-reference.com/teams/TOR/1947_games.html

²⁸⁵ Canadian Press, “Leafs’ Howie Meeker Wins NHL Rookie Award,” *The Globe and Mail*, May 21, 1947.

The Leafs eventually finished second in the standings but scored more goals than any other team, an offensive outburst that would not have been expected from a club that supposedly relied on defence to win its games. The defencemen, almost all of whom were also rookies, were likewise very strong. With goaltender Turk Broda returning to form after getting out of the army, the Leafs allowed fewer goals than every team other than Montreal.²⁸⁶ Many of the new players had been brought into the organization during the war years by Day and Frank Selke, but Selke had done his recruiting job so well that it quickly came back to haunt him now that he was managing the rival Canadiens.

Toronto faced Detroit in the first round of the 1947 Stanley Cup playoffs. After a 3-2 overtime win in Game 1 and a lopsided 9-1 loss in Game 2, the Leafs had little trouble with the Wings. In the final playoff meeting between Day and Jack Adams, who subsequently gave up his coaching duties but remained Detroit's general manager, Toronto won the series in five games, taking the last three contests by an aggregate score of 14-3.²⁸⁷ Having sidelined Adams and the Wings for the third time in four meetings over a six-year span, Day and the Leafs turned their attention to the Cup Final against Dick Irvin and the Canadiens.

Montreal had finished first in the standings for the fourth consecutive season and was favoured to retain the championship. The odds in the Canadiens' favour increased when they romped to a 6-0 win in Game 1, after which goalie Bill Durnan sarcastically asked how the Leafs had managed to "get into the playoffs," according to a note in Jim Coleman's column which was published the following day.²⁸⁸ Durnan later denied having made the remark, but the quote stuck to him, and the Leafs naturally used it as a rallying point. If Durnan had said it, he clearly had

²⁸⁶ "1946-47 NHL Summary," *Hockey Reference*, https://www.hockey-reference.com/leagues/NHL_1947.html

²⁸⁷ "1946-47 NHL Summary," *Hockey Reference*.

²⁸⁸ Jim Coleman, "By Jim Coleman," *The Globe and Mail*, April 10, 1947; Dink Carroll, "Playing the Field," *Montreal Gazette*, April 15, 1947.

not learned from Irvin's ill-advised braggadocio during the 1944-45 season. Then again, Irvin had not learned either. After an easy win over Toronto in late December 1946, the cocky Montreal coach publicly professed a hope that his team would meet the Leafs in the final playoff round, "then it will be another cup (sic) and home free."²⁸⁹

The Leafs came back with a 4-0 decision in Game 2. Kennedy and Lynn each scored a power-play goal before the game was two minutes old, which Baz O'Meara, writing in the *Montreal Daily Star* later, felt was the turning point of the entire series.²⁹⁰ Toronto then won Game 3, by which point Selke was so frustrated by his former team – which he of course had only recently helped to build – that he barred Toronto reporters from the Canadiens' dressing room.²⁹¹ The Leafs finished off their rivals with a 2-1 victory in Game 6. The KLM Line stood out again in the deciding game as Lynn erased a 1-0 deficit in the second period and Kennedy scored the Cup-winning goal late in the third. Meeker assisted on both goals.

Irvin removed Durnan from the net in favour of an extra attacker with thirty-eight seconds remaining on the clock, trying to tie the game and force overtime. Day, needing to rely on his defence more than ever, successfully countered with four rookies, including Lynn and Meeker who skated alongside veteran Kennedy on the forward line. They battled through three defensive-zone face-offs and never allowed Montreal a serious chance at the tying goal.²⁹² Day had outcoached Irvin again, this time with the championship on the line. Babe Pratt wrote years later that Irvin was simply not in Day's class in head-to-head action. "I always thought that Hap felt his teams could beat any team coached by the late Dick Irvin . . . and he proved it," the Hall

²⁸⁹ Baz O'Meara, "The Passing Sport Show," *Montreal Daily Star*, December 27, 1946.

²⁹⁰ Baz O'Meara, "The Passing Sport Show," *Montreal Daily Star*, April 21, 1947.

²⁹¹ Jim Vipond, "Maple Leafs Beat Canadiens; Take Series Lead," *The Globe and Mail*, April 14, 1947.

²⁹² Jim Vipond, "Leafs Win Stanley Cup, World Title," *The Globe and Mail*, April 21, 1947; Dink Carroll, "Toronto Maple Leafs Capture Stanley Cup from Canadiens, Winning 2-1," *Montreal Gazette*, April 21, 1947; Associated Press, "Leafs Take Series, Top Canadiens, 2-1," *New York Times*, April 20, 1947.

of Fame defenceman wrote. “Hap somehow had the knack to outmanoeuvre any coach to get his defensive players against the opposition power.”²⁹³

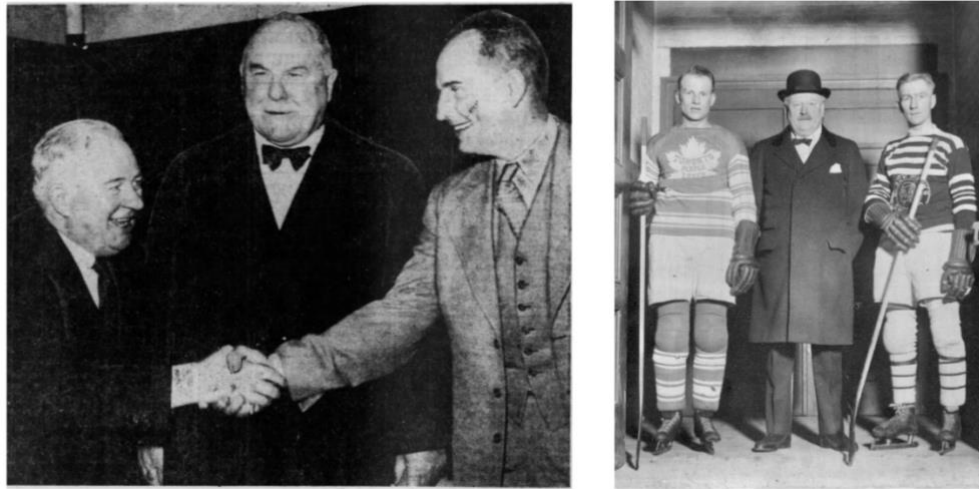


Figure 17: Hap Day (left photo, far right) and Jack Adams (left photo, far left) had been linemates with the Toronto St. Patricks in the 1920s. Day (right photo, far left) and Dick Irvin (right photo, far right) are shown here as respective captains of the Toronto Maple Leafs and the Chicago Black Hawks in 1928. Adams and Irvin were the acknowledged coaching masters of the NHL until Day successfully challenged them throughout the 1940s.

Photos by Detroit Free Press (left) and Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame (right).

Contemporaneous newspaper reports do not indicate who the two rookie defencemen on the ice were as the clock ticked down to zero – Meeker said in an interview many years later that they were Gus Mortson and Jim Thomson – but the remarkable fact is that all four Toronto rearguards in the lineup that night were freshmen: Bill Barilko, Garth Boesch, Mortson, and Thomson.²⁹⁴ None of these four young players were bound for the Hockey Hall of Fame, and only Mortson and Thomson would earn belated all-star status later in their careers, but they were the core of the dynasty to come. In fact, no members of the 1947 championship team were named to either of the NHL’s two postseason All-Star Teams, as chosen by a poll of the league’s six coaches. At the end of every season, each coach ranked selections for each on-ice position, although they could not vote for anyone on their own club; the top vote-getters comprised the

²⁹³ Babe Pratt, “Babe Pratt Says,” *Vancouver Province*, March 30, 1962.

²⁹⁴ Howie Meeker, interview by Rob Faulds, *Canada AM*, CTV, December 9, 1996.

annual All-Star Teams. Four Canadiens made the grade for the First Team and two Red Wings were named to the Second Team. Day, again demonstrating his eye for talent, was the only coach who ranked all eventual six First-Team All-Stars at the top of his ballot.²⁹⁵

“The Toronto team won more on collective legs and on sheer go than on any other collective or individual factor,” Andy Lytle wrote in the *Toronto Daily Star* of the Leafs’ lack of presence on the All-Star Teams. It is not surprising to find that Lytle, perhaps trying to ingratiate himself with Conn Smythe at the partial expense of a coach who sometimes annoyed him, hastened to praise the Leafs’ manager for having overseen the construction of such a “collective” team. “Smythe and Day were the first of the league’s master-minds to realize a fundamental of the new type of play . . . because this lends itself to collective speed plus stamina, rather than to individual or stick-handling brilliance for results. Smythe, you can bet, was the one who thought it through to a Stanley Cup.”²⁹⁶ This, of course, was only a little more than a year after Lytle had dutifully disseminated Smythe’s lament that it might take five years to rebuild the Leafs because they had been left in such dire shape while Smythe was away.²⁹⁷

Day did receive deserved praise after the 1947 playoffs. Tommy Munns, sports editor of *The Globe and Mail*, marvelled at the job he had done in the wake of the disastrous season one year earlier. “That he was able to fit together the remnants of a team which failed to make the playoffs and mould them together with the half-dozen rookies to form a championship combination makes him sports miracle man of the year,” he wrote.²⁹⁸ In the *Toronto Daily Star*, Joe Perlove wrote about how far the Leafs had come since training camp. “For a team that was hustled out of St. Catharines last fall, described as a club five years away from stellar successes,

²⁹⁵ Douglas Amaron, “Leafs Fail To Gain Place On All-Stars,” *Ottawa Citizen*, May 2, 1947.

²⁹⁶ Andy Lytle, “Champions Miss the Boat On Coaches Hockey Argosy,” *Toronto Daily Star*, May 2, 1947.

²⁹⁷ Andy Lytle, “Speaking on Sports,” *Toronto Daily Star*, February 23, 1946.

²⁹⁸ Tommy Munns, “Congratulations!” *The Globe and Mail*, April 21, 1947.

the achievement of the Leafs is a spectacular type of personal triumph for Coach Day to enjoy.”²⁹⁹ Doug Vaughan, writing in the *Windsor Daily Star*, said that Day could not receive enough credit for the Leafs’ success. “No coach in history ever before won a Stanley Cup with a complete set of rookie defencemen carrying the load back of the blue lines. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful if any Cup winner in history ever had so many brash rookies in its lineup.”³⁰⁰



Figure 18: The seven rookies who helped win the 1947 Stanley Cup are all in the back row of this team photo. From left to right: Howie Meeker, Vic Lynn, Jim Thomson, Garth Boesch, Gus Mortonson, Joe Klukay, and Bill Barilko. Photo: Hockey Hall of Fame

It was in the wake of this championship that Day achieved his greatest public prominence as a coach. Quaker Oats, an international food company with a Canadian base in Peterborough, Ontario, had gone into competition with Bee Hive corn syrup and was also distributing photos of NHL players to fans. The company developed a relationship with the Leafs and asked Day to contribute to *How to Play Better Hockey*, an instructional booklet it planned to offer during the

²⁹⁹ Joe Perlove, “Green Crew’s Long Haul Success – Crowned Finally,” *Toronto Daily Star*, April 21, 1947.

³⁰⁰ Doug Vaughan, “On the Rebound,” *Windsor Daily Star*, April 21, 1947.

1947-48 season. How-to hockey manuals and handbooks were not new; they date back to 1899, when Arthur Farrell, a member of the Stanley Cup-winning Montreal Shamrocks, wrote *Hockey: Canada's Royal Winter Game*.³⁰¹ Some early how-to books were popular in the United States, where hockey was not necessarily “inherent,” as it was said to be in Canada.³⁰² That is an exaggeration, because no one is born knowing how to skate and stickhandle, but it is true that Canadians who learned hockey were expected to do so on the ice, not from the pages of a book. And that was not an unreasonable expectation given the state of written hockey instruction as it existed as late as the early 1940s. As historians Stephen Hardy and Andrew Holman related, one authoritative American book written by two Ivy League university coaches was so large and dense that it “must have sucked the life out of the game for its readers.”³⁰³

An amateur coach in Toronto named Lloyd Percival was the first Canadian to begin to challenge the status quo. Percival, who coached hockey, track and field, cricket, and other sports, created and hosted a popular Canadian Broadcasting Corporation radio program called *Sports College of the Air* beginning in July 1944, a show dedicated to the promotion of physical fitness and health, and primarily aimed at young listeners who wanted to become better athletes. *Sports College* featured guest experts whose purpose on the show was to supplement Percival's own scientific research and knowledge. Hap Day was one such expert who was asked to participate, and he appeared on the show on October 7 of that year to discuss hockey training.³⁰⁴

In conjunction with the radio program, Percival began publishing “how-to” booklets for various sports, and Day, long renowned for his commitment to physical fitness, was reportedly

³⁰¹ Hardy and Holman, *Hockey: A Global History*, p. 51.

³⁰² Hardy and Holman, *Hockey: A Global History*, p. 244.

³⁰³ Hardy and Holman, *Hockey: A Global History*, pp. 244-245.

³⁰⁴ “Hap Day to Speak,” *North Bay Nugget*, October 2, 1944; “Happy Day on CBC Show,” *Grand Forks Gazette*, November 30, 1944.

impressed with the *How to Train for Hockey* booklet, which detailed several conditioning and strengthening exercises. He was quoted as saying on the October 7 broadcast that it was “exactly the kind of guide” that young players should study and learn from.³⁰⁵ It is not known if Day’s exposure to this booklet influenced his own future endeavours, although he was a major influence on Percival, as will be discussed in the next chapter. As not only an expert hockey coach but also the leader of the Stanley Cup champions, Day was the ideal choice to be asked to share his thoughts in the Quaker Oats booklet.

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Figure 19: A typical Quaker Oats newspaper advertisement for its hockey booklet promotion with Hap Day.

Quaker advertised the booklet heavily in Canadian newspapers in the fall of 1947 as part of its “Maple Leaf Bantam Hockey Club” promotion for youngsters, inviting them to send in a box top and receive a free copy. The booklet as published offered no remarkable insights, which

³⁰⁵ Dink Carroll, “Playing the Field,” *Montreal Gazette*, November 15, 1944.

³⁰⁶ “Free Hockey Booklet!” *Edmonton Journal*, November 21, 1947.

is not a surprise given the age range of the promotion's expected audience. Day took the project seriously nevertheless and compiled scores of pages of handwritten notes which he retained, and which are now in the possession of his son. Although most of what Day wrote was not used in the booklet, the notes survive today as important primary evidence of his thoughts regarding training and practising for hockey. His team's accomplishments can likewise be seen as evidence of how he put his ideas into practice. He wrote:

Generally speaking, the defence is considered to be the two men in front of the goalkeeper whose job it is to knock down the incoming forward or take the puck away from him. In recent years this system has changed considerably, and I like to think of the defence as all the players on your side when the other team has the puck. That's important . . . Doesn't it seem reasonable to suppose if your check is trying his hardest to score a goal, you have to fight your best to prevent one? And right there is the strength of any hockey club. The team is only as strong as its defensive system.³⁰⁷

Day's philosophy was that defensive strength stemmed from positional play and a willingness to be physical. In other words, a player needed to be in the right place at the right time to confront an opponent who had the puck, and he needed to use as much force as was required – ideally but not necessarily within the rules – to separate the opponent from the puck and nullify a scoring threat. Once the opponent was neutralized and the puck was back in the Leafs' possession, the object simply became to remove it from the defensive zone. If the Leafs were fortunate, the elimination of a scoring threat would lead to an offensive opportunity of their own. It all began with an awareness of any given situation.

³⁰⁷ Day, *How to Play Better Hockey*. Day's spelling of "defence/defense" and "defenceman/defenseman" varied throughout his notes. For the sake of consistency, this thesis adopts the -ce spelling common to Canadian English.

“First of all, a good defenceman studies his opposition,” Day wrote. “By this I mean he should know the favourite tricks and styles of play of the opponents. They are varied, but each player is nearly all prototypical and nine times out of ten make certain moves. Let me warn you here, though, you still must try and make him make the first move. And here is where knowing his style of play pays off as you can position him to where you want him, and hence find it much easier to check him.”³⁰⁸ It was like a chess game, and it was the way Day himself had played defence for the Leafs.

Dick Irvin had been a prolific goal scorer as a player, and as a coach his teams relied on offence. Day, having played for Irvin, recognized better than anyone else the limitations of the coach’s style as the Leafs piled up playoff losses after 1932. He wanted his own teams to focus on what he believed was important, and their respective playoff records indicate that Day was right more often and with much more consistency. Although Irvin won four Stanley Cups as a coach, those four wins represented only a quarter of his teams’ appearances in the final. While Day never lost a Stanley Cup Final series in five appearances over ten seasons, Irvin’s teams reached the final series a record sixteen times and lost it on twelve occasions, also a record.³⁰⁹

Day’s notes describe how defencemen should counter rushes by opposing forwards, depending on how many of those attackers are already being covered by the defenders’ teammates on the forward line. In any event, when checking an opponent who is carrying the puck, a defenceman should keep his stick on the ice in front of him, in part to hold the puck carrier at bay but also to try to prevent his opponent from passing to a teammate. “Your sticks here are your first line of defence and though very important in defensive play you must never rely on them entirely,” he wrote. “Your body is the second line of defence and naturally must be

³⁰⁸ Day, *How to Play Better Hockey*.

³⁰⁹ Dave Stubbs, “Irvin is half of broadcast legend,” *Montreal Gazette*, October 10, 2002.

used when indicated by the play.” Day directed that a defenceman should always be situated in front of his net when the opponents had the puck in Toronto’s end. This was to provide the goaltender with an extra layer of protection and to help in pressuring the puck carrier. “(Y)ou must get possession of puck whenever possible, you must be able to go down to block shots at the right time, you must get the puck out of your end zone and up to your forwards. The defenceman in front of the net must not necessarily commit himself to one man but should be in a position to cover any dangerous threats in this territory.”³¹⁰

Howie Meeker met with author Jack Batten for the 1975 retrospective, *The Leafs in Autumn*, in which Batten interviewed several members of Toronto’s 1940s dynasty, including the coach. He elaborated to Batten how Day’s system had worked for the Leafs. “Hap believed that the team you were playing, no matter who they were, should only score one goal a game against you on their own merits. Then, he said, you’ll give them one more goal through your own dumb mistakes, and bad refereeing or something like that’d give them another half a goal. That’s two and a half goals against per game. So he drilled us to keep the other guys to that number, figuring we’d get our own three and win,” Meeker said.

“But it paid off. See, defensive hockey is something you can teach. Offensive hockey you can’t teach . . . Day proved you can take fifteen guys and discipline them to check and work hard in their own zone. The Leafs in those days were very proud of their defensive record. We were always looking at the goals-against column, and we were as happy with allowing only one goal as we were with scoring three. Day made us feel that way.”³¹¹

Gus Mortson told Batten that the Leafs of that era “were way ahead of their time” because Day ensured that every player on the ice knew what their job was. In their own zone, the

³¹⁰ Day, *How to Play Better Hockey*.

³¹¹ Batten, *The Leafs in Autumn*, pp. 23-24.

Leafs tried to not chase the puck – instead, they wanted to target the opponent who had the puck, and the objective was to take him out of the action by any means necessary. “Never play the puck, always play the man. All teams do that today, but we were the first to really work at it,” Mortson said. “If the other team had the puck in our end, the idea was to knock down anybody who skated in front of the net. Never leave a man standing up . . . If a guy was going around you, the last resort was you’d grab his stick or his sweater and hold on. We got proficient at it. Referees hardly ever called us for holding.”³¹²

Day was a perfect teacher for that tactic. As a player, he had been known around the NHL as “The Clutch” because of his own propensity for using his size and strength to manhandle his opponents. Writing about Day in the *Boston Globe*, Herb Ralby commented in a 1935 feature that the Leafs’ captain had “almost as many holds in his repertoire as a wrestler,” and Victor O. Jones said in a 1951 column in the *Globe* that “if he couldn’t knock you down or poke check the puck away from you, he wasn’t above grabbing you or your stick.”³¹³ Day admitted this in later years, although he noted in a funny and oft-told story that a wily opponent had once outsmarted him. When Day grabbed the stick of New York Rangers’ captain Bill Cook one night, Cook simply let go of the stick and skated away; Day, caught holding Cook’s stick as well as his own, was penalized.³¹⁴ Still, Jones was an admirer, writing near the end of Day’s playing career that he “always was a superstar though he seldom got credit for being one.”³¹⁵

There were no superstars among Day’s rearguards, but they were so strong and well-coached that together they formed the most brutally effective defence corps in the NHL. And,

³¹² Batten, *The Leafs in Autumn*, p. 46.

³¹³ Herb Ralby, “Happy Day’s Here Again,” *Boston Evening Globe*, January 8, 1935; Victor O. Jones, “Colorful Characters,” *Boston Evening Globe*, February 15, 1951.

³¹⁴ Jones, “Colorful Characters”; Jim Coleman, “By Jim Coleman,” *The Globe and Mail*, December 30, 1946; Milt Dunnell, “Speaking on Sport,” *Toronto Daily Star*, April 11, 1960.

³¹⁵ Victor O. Jones, “Swashbuckling Maple Leafs Here For Game Tonight,” *Boston Evening Globe*, January 14, 1936.

because the entire team played a certain aggressive style directed by their coach, the Leafs took their share of penalties as Day himself had. Between 1947 and 1950, they broke the league's single-season record for penalty minutes by a team three times. In 1945-46, they compiled a total of 247 minutes in penalties, fewer than any other team; coincidentally or not, they finished fifth and missed the playoffs.³¹⁶ The following year, they led the league with a record 669 minutes and won the Stanley Cup.³¹⁷ Then they rang up 758 minutes, another record, and won the Cup again.³¹⁸ They were the first team in NHL history to surpass six hundred, seven hundred, and eight hundred penalty minutes in a season.³¹⁹

Individually, a Leaf compiled the most penalty minutes in four out of five seasons between 1946-47 and 1950-51 – Mortson twice, Bill Barilko once, and Bill Ezinicki once – and on the fifth occasion, Ezinicki missed out on the distinction by only one minute.³²⁰ Mortson, who was dubbed “Old Hardrock,” formed a steady defence pairing with Jim Thomson and together they became known as the “Gold Dust Twins.”³²¹ Ill-fated fellow defenceman “Bashing Bill” Barilko was so spirited, he once knocked two Canadiens out of the same game and onto the Montreal injury list.³²² Right-winger Ezinicki, whose nickname was “Wild Bill,” was called “the meanest man on skates.”³²³ Mortson, Thomson, Barilko, and Ezinicki were said to be “the four

³¹⁶ “1945-46 National Hockey League Standings,” *hockeydb.com*, <https://www.hockeydb.com/ihdb/stats/leagues/seasons/nhl19271946.html>

³¹⁷ “1946-47 National Hockey League Standings,” *hockeydb.com*, <https://www.hockeydb.com/ihdb/stats/leagues/seasons/nhl19271947.html>

³¹⁸ “1947-48 National Hockey League Standings,” *hockeydb.com*, <https://www.hockeydb.com/ihdb/stats/leagues/seasons/nhl19271948.html>

³¹⁹ “1949-50 National Hockey League Standings,” *hockeydb.com*, <https://www.hockeydb.com/ihdb/stats/leagues/seasons/nhl19271950.html>

³²⁰ “NHL & WHA Yearly Leaders and Records for Penalties in Minutes,” *Hockey Reference*, https://www.hockey-reference.com/leaders/pen_min_yearly.html

³²¹ Tom Hawthorn, “‘Old Hardrock’ was a pugnacious defender,” *The Globe and Mail*, August 26, 2015.

³²² Canadian Press, “Barilko a Basher by Own Design,” *North Bay Nugget*, January 9, 1948; George Whittaker, “Reardon, Dussault Injury Victims in Leafian Clash,” *Montreal Daily Star*, February 4, 1949; Dink Carroll, “Maple Leafs Triumph 4-1 Over Canadiens at Forum,” *Montreal Gazette*, February 4, 1949.

³²³ Oscar Fraley, “Meanest Man on Skates,” *Shenandoah Evening Herald*, October 15, 1948.

most fearsome hitters of the era . . . as fearsome a group as was ever assembled in the NHL,” according to Kelly McParland. In the author’s words, they “terrorized the league.”³²⁴

Opponents and observers from elsewhere tended to believe that the Leafs were not treated harshly enough by referees. Tom Fitzgerald, another *Boston Globe* reporter, said it was “vehemently agreed” in every other city that the Leafs “just about the roughest aggregation that anybody has seen in years.”³²⁵ Rival coaches and managers complained to the newspapers and to the NHL itself about what they perceived as “petty tactics” and “illegal hockey.” NHL President Clarence Campbell dismissed the complaints and Day responded to Rangers’ coach Frank Boucher by calling his team “the cry-babies of the league.”³²⁶

It must be noted here, however, that Conn Smythe wielded significant influence as chairman of the league’s Board of Governors after consolidating his power at Maple Leaf Gardens. Therefore, it cannot be ruled out that he was at least partially responsible for the NHL’s tacit approval of the Leafs’ style of play. In his memoirs, Smythe wrote that Campbell, who assumed the presidency of the league in 1946, was perfect for that role “because he would do what he was told.”³²⁷

Smythe’s influence on league operations notwithstanding, Day may well have been justified in scoffing at critics because his team was hardly unique in terms of using rugged play to reach its objectives. Mortson, while talking about getting away with holding, claimed that many other top defencemen in the league did the same thing, notably Doug Harvey, who was often acclaimed as the greatest of all-time at the position before Bobby Orr came along in the

³²⁴ McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, pp. 251-252.

³²⁵ Tom Fitzgerald, “Bruins Face Hard-Hitting Leafs Tonight,” *Boston Daily Globe*, November 19, 1947.

³²⁶ Herb Ralby, “Adams Lashes Leafs’ Use of ‘Petty Tactics,’” *Boston Evening Globe*, December 16, 1947; Harold Kaese, “Campbell Says Officials Can Deal Readily With Bruins’ Protest of Leafs,” *Boston Daily Globe*, December 18, 1947; Canadian Press, “Frank Boucher Blames Hap Day For Toronto’s ‘Illegal Hockey,’” *Ottawa Journal*, December 30, 1947.

³²⁷ Smythe with Young, *If You Can’t Beat ‘Em in the Alley*, p. 191.

late 1960s. Harvey starred for years with the Canadiens and was named the league's best defenceman seven times, but even Montreal hockey writers acknowledged Harvey's expertise in obstructing with his hands and his stick.³²⁸ Additionally, physical play that crossed over into intimidation and overt violence had been an accepted tactic in hockey since the sport's infancy. Hardy and Holman wrote that violence was so commonplace in the early days that it quickly became part of hockey's cultural identity and, ultimately, "central to its appeal."³²⁹

The level of aggression, as demonstrated by higher penalty totals around the league and not just in Toronto, increased in the years following the Second World War. Gordie Howe, who began his NHL career in 1946, wrote in his autobiography that, with only six teams and a limited number of roster spots available, players had to "fight like hell" not only to make it to the big league but also to stay there. "No one gave an inch," Howe wrote in his book, published in 2014. "(E)very player in the league came prepared to claw over his best friend the second the puck dropped. With every NHL job being so precious, the play itself had an intensity that hasn't been seen since."³³⁰ Bill Cowley, who retired in 1947 as the league's all-time leading point scorer, remarked only three years later that he was alarmed by what he now saw transpiring on the ice. "In my day they played the puck. Now they play the man," he said. "The art of defence has been mastered. Now they hit. I'm glad I'm out of it."³³¹

It is important to understand the importance of aggressive hockey in the immediate aftermath of the war because the Leafs were clearly better at it than any other club. Combined with their Day-directed defensive excellence, it is not a surprise that the Leafs established the

³²⁸ Batten, *The Leafs in Autumn*, p. 46; Red Fisher, "'Model' role for Harvey," *Montreal Star*, May 7, 1963; Dink Carroll, "Playing the Field," *Montreal Gazette*, November 27, 1963.

³²⁹ Hardy and Holman, *Hockey: A Global History*, pp. 133-136.

³³⁰ Howe, *Mr. Hockey: My Story*, pp. 163-164.

³³¹ Canadian Press, "'Present Day Hockey Scares Me' Says Cowley," *Calgary Herald*, March 1, 1950.

NHL's first postwar dynasty. Their willingness to throw their weight around gained them some latitude on the ice, meaning extra time and space with the puck. Scotty Bowman, who as a youth saw the Leafs when they visited his native Montreal, remembered with admiration seventy years later that they were a team that "played on the edge. And they were big. They could really run the game, control it, and play it the way they wanted to."³³²

It may have been around this time that the Leafs became identified with a quote from Smythe, rendered in his memoirs as: "If you can't beat 'em in the alley, you can't beat 'em on ice."³³³ Smythe enjoyed the quote so much that he truncated it for the title of his book, where he explained that its meaning had been misunderstood. He said he did not intend for his players to be bullies, but he demanded that they not allow themselves to be bullied.³³⁴ This was a message he sternly delivered at training camp in September 1946, when he publicly threatened to demote any player who was pushed around and did not fight back.³³⁵

Under Day's tutelage, the Leafs obeyed the edict. "The only way a team can beat us is by playing hockey," Day told Herb Ralby after a dominating playoff win over the Bruins in 1948. "If they try to outrough us, we'll beat them because we can be very rough if we have to. We have several boys who can really 'go' as you know."³³⁶ But as willing as they were to fight, the Leafs' main job was hockey, and their aggression was simply a means to an end. As Bowman noted, the Leafs could control a game with their size and physicality, and Day's task was to ensure his players knew how to gain and exercise that control.

³³² Ken Dryden, *Scotty: A Hockey Life Like No Other* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2019), p. 120.

³³³ Marshall Smith, "Puck's Bad Boy," *Life*, March 5, 1951. This appears to be the first publication of the quote, rendered here as "If you can't beat them out in the alley, you can't beat them in here on the ice." Although no evidence of an earlier publication of the quote was found in this research, author Smith wrote that it was a phrase that Smythe "likes to say," indicating that Smythe had said it publicly, and more than once, in the past.

³³⁴ Smythe with Young, *If You Can't Beat 'Em in the Alley*, p. 135.

³³⁵ Gordon Walker, "Eye for Eye and Tooth for Ditto, Cries Smythe," *Toronto Daily Star*, September 27, 1946.

³³⁶ Herb Ralby, "Smythe Scores Police for Not Curbing Rioting at Bruins-Leafs Game," *Boston Evening Globe*, March 31, 1948.

The notes he drafted for the Quaker Oats booklet touched on many other aspects of the game in addition to defence and defensive plays. He also wrote about forward lines, goaltending, stickhandling, passing, shooting, tactics, and conditioning. Day stressed that practice was the key to mastering the fundamentals of hockey as well as specialized skills. “When practising, work on all departments of your game, especially those in which you are not as proficient as you would like,” he wrote. “Don’t practise haphazardly, it is a very bad habit to acquire. Not only can you lose your peak of condition, but very often your game deteriorates. Truer words were never spoken that practice (the right kind) makes perfect.”³³⁷ Day’s players knew this well because, as noted in the preceding chapter, his practices were purposeful and impactful while teams such as the Bruins often merely scrimmaged with their coach absent. “I watched Hap Day run their practices,” said Armand “Bep” Guidolin, whose NHL career began with the Bruins in 1942, “and, believe me, they won some Stanley Cups because of his practices.”³³⁸

Day taught the Leafs things that few if any other coaches were teaching, and he took the time that was necessary to make sure his lessons were learned. For example, he appears to have been unique, if not alone, in understanding the importance of face-offs. When the puck is dropped, either team ostensibly has a fair chance to win possession of it. Day wanted to ensure that the Leafs could have a better than fair chance. “Hap Day impressed on us the importance of winning face-offs,” Teeder Kennedy told Jack Batten, who had noted the player’s mastery of the skill. “Once you grasped the basic idea of controlling the puck from the face-off, the rest became a matter of mechanics.”³³⁹

³³⁷ Day, *How to Play Better Hockey*. The parentheses are Day’s.

³³⁸ Dan Proudfoot, “Bep Guidolin replaces Tom Johnson as Bruins’ coach,” *The Globe and Mail*, February 6, 1973.

³³⁹ Batten, *The Leafs in Autumn*, p. 133.

Kennedy, who became the Leafs' captain in 1948 after Syl Apps retired, was Day's prized pupil in this department. "Day would show you the little things, the things some coaches didn't know," Kennedy said to Michael Ulmer. "My reflexes were always quite good but, again, because he stressed the importance of face-offs, every face-off, that's how I learned. It was the training. It wasn't hit and miss."³⁴⁰

"Hap Day was the perfect coach for Kennedy's still-emerging talents," Ulmer added. "Day preached defense and positioning, solid physical play and the importance of face-offs . . . it was on these basics that Teeder Kennedy built his game. Kennedy was more than the best face-off man of his era. He was one of the best face-off artists of any era."³⁴¹

Batten and Ulmer interviewed Kennedy twenty years apart, and he told them many of the same things about face-offs, notably that his most important duty was arranging his teammates' positioning before the puck was dropped, as Day had taught him. Whether he won the face-off or not, the other Leafs would react accordingly, ready to either attack with the puck or defend without it. "That's the key," he said to Batten. "Even if I lost the draw, we'd still be all right as long as I'd arranged my men to do their jobs."³⁴²

Gus Mortson confirmed this in his own interview with Batten, noting that Day's preparation meant that "as soon as the puck was dropped, everybody had something to do. On other teams, guys'd stand around waiting for a pass. On our team, guys had a job to do before a pass ever came near them." Mortson went on:

If the face-off was in our end, the centre got the draw back to a defenceman, he carried it up the ice, and the forwards' job was to take out the other team's forwards. They ran interference for the

³⁴⁰ Ulmer, *Captains*, p. 68.

³⁴¹ Ulmer, *Captains*, p. 68.

³⁴² Batten, *The Leafs in Autumn*, p. 133; Ulmer, *Captains*, p. 68.

puck-carrier. They couldn't actually hit the other players – that'd be a penalty – but all they had to do was get in between them and the guy carrying the puck and the job was as good as done. It was just like football. That's what we made hockey – a *team* game.³⁴³

Ulmer was struck by how Kennedy reflected on his coach and on what he had learned from him. “Even today, the thought of Day inspires Kennedy. His manner, gentle in reminiscence, becomes passionate in recalling the coach who fashioned his career,” Ulmer wrote. As Kennedy told the author, Day had “drummed it into us that face-offs, particularly in your own end, were vital. If you don't do the right thing on a face-off, it could cost you a game, maybe a championship.”³⁴⁴ It will be explored in the next chapter how Kennedy retained those lessons and passed them along, ensuring Day's continuing influence on the game.

If the Leafs did not have possession of the puck and could not regain it through their usual methods, there was another trick that Day taught his defencemen. He encouraged them to drop to their knees when their opponents shot the puck, the goal being to use their bodies to block the shots from getting through to the Toronto net. Day had not been known for this ability as a player, according to Frank Selke, but he was familiar with it and saw the value in it, and he was determined that his defencemen would learn the skill.³⁴⁵

He began teaching it during his first training camp as coach in October 1940. According to *Toronto Daily Star* sports editor Andy Lytle, defenceman Bucko McDonald accidentally stabbed himself in the rear end with the back end of his skate blade early in the lessons.³⁴⁶ But McDonald, an aging veteran determined to keep his career alive, quickly mastered the art despite his inauspicious beginning; a year later, he had become one of Day's most reliable performers on

³⁴³ Batten, *The Leafs in Autumn*, pp. 45-46.

³⁴⁴ Ulmer, *Captains*, p. 68.

³⁴⁵ Frank Selke, “Frank Selke Talks Of Blocking Shots,” *The Hockey News*, April 6, 1973.

³⁴⁶ Andy Lytle, “Speaking on Sports,” *Toronto Daily Star*, October 20, 1945.

the blue line, with the coach singling out his newfound shot-blocking ability as a major factor in his success and McDonald expressing his gratitude for the chance to revive his career.³⁴⁷

McDonald was so rejuvenated, he was named to the NHL's Second All-Star Team at the end of the 1941-42 season, the only all-star selection of his career.

It was also during that season that McDonald was paired with rookie Bob Goldham as a defensive unit, and he took the youngster under his wing. One of the things McDonald taught his new partner was the skill he himself had just learned. "I never had dropped on a shot before I went with Toronto," Goldham said in a 1952 interview, "but I watched Bucko, began to copy him, and he helped me learn how."³⁴⁸ Day assisted with the tutelage and encouraged Goldham, who continued to block shots with his body after McDonald was traded to the New York Rangers. Other Leafs of the era also learned the skill and used it, like defence partners Bill Barilko and Garth Boesch, who would drop to the ice in tandem and were dubbed the "Magenot Line" for their reputed impenetrability.³⁴⁹

But it was Goldham whose impact lasted. The winner of two Stanley Cups in Toronto, he joined the Detroit Red Wings later in his career and won three more championships as a core member of that club's defensive corps. By that time, with McDonald and Boesch retired, Barilko dead following a plane crash, and Day no longer coaching the Leafs and directing the team's rearguards, Goldham was not merely the most proficient shot blocker in the NHL – he was the only one doing it with any regularity. He was, as described by goalie-turned-author Ken Dryden, "unlike every other defenceman in the league – who, when his opponent wound up to shoot, would drop to his knees, purposely, and block the shot with his chest, without even a goalie's

³⁴⁷ Dick Sheridan, "Hockey Player By Chance, Bucko Develops Into Star," *Sault Daily Star*, October 22, 1941; Vern DeGeer, "Did You Know..." *The Globe and Mail*, April 5, 1941.

³⁴⁸ Marshall Dann, "Dropping on Shot Automatic for Bob," *The Hockey News*, February 2, 1952.

³⁴⁹ Garth Woolsey, "Maybe ghost of Barilko will inspire Maple Leafs," *Toronto Star*, April 21, 2003.

belly pad to protect him.”³⁵⁰ And, just as McDonald had made an impression on him, Goldham would do the same in Detroit with a young teammate named Al Arbour. This allowed Day’s influence to be perpetuated after Goldham himself retired, a development which will also be examined in the next chapter.

Goldham’s tenure with Toronto ended in November 1947, when he was traded to the Chicago Black Hawks in a massive deal that saw the Leafs exchange five players for the rights to Max Bentley, the NHL’s two-time-defending scoring champion. Bentley’s addition was the fulfillment of something Day had jotted down in his notes for the *How to Play Better Hockey* booklet months earlier: “As in baseball, always have team strong down the centre. Baseball – catcher, pitcher, 2nd, centre field. Hockey – centre, defense, goalkeeper.”³⁵¹ With Bentley joining fellow future Hall of Famers Syl Apps and Teeder Kennedy and utility forward Nick Metz at centre, the toughest defence in the league, and another eventual Hall of Famer, Turk Broda, in net, the Leafs now had unmatched strength down the middle.

Bentley scored fewer points than in his two previous seasons and never again won a league scoring title, but he was an important contributor to three Stanley Cup-winning teams with the Leafs, and he appreciated the difference between individual and team glory. “I thought I knew about the fundamentals, but I got to Toronto and I learned from Hap there was more to hockey than I ever dreamed of,” Bentley said later in life. “I didn’t know anything about winning until I got to Toronto. I was taught. You have to have a coach who knows what he’s doing and we had one in Hap Day.”³⁵²

³⁵⁰ Ken Dryden, *Scotty*, p. 59.

³⁵¹ Day, *How to Play Better Hockey*.

³⁵² Batten, *The Leafs in Autumn*, pp. 97-98; Rex MacLeod, “Max Bentley dipsy-doodled to NHL fame,” *Toronto Star*, February 23, 1983.

The 1947-48 season was the most successful campaign of Day's coaching career. The Leafs finished first during the regular season and gave up fewer goals than any other team, with Broda winning a First Team All-Star selection and the Vezina Trophy as the league's best goaltender. Broda was the Leafs' only all-star, which irritated Smythe, who announced plans to pay certain Toronto players the same amount of bonus money they would have won by being selected as all-stars.³⁵³ It is likely Day did not mind the lack of individual recognition for his players, because at the end of the season they claimed the prize that everyone had wanted to win. The Leafs faced almost no challenge at all in repeating as Stanley Cup champions, losing only one semifinal contest to the Bruins before sweeping the Red Wings in the final. The last game was so one-sided, with Toronto prevailing 7-2, manager Jack Adams and coach Tommy Ivan of the Wings had only praise for their conquerors when it was over. "There never was any doubt about it from start to finish," Adams told Day in congratulating his old linemate once again. "We just couldn't do anything about it," Ivan agreed.³⁵⁴

In later years, Day reflected on why the 1947-48 team, his only first-place club, was so special. "The players on that team all reached their peak at the same time. They were mentally ready to play their best. That's the difficult part – getting a team ready mentally. For physical conditioning, nothing but hard work is the key," he told Jack Batten, explaining that he believed psychology was even more important than physical preparation. "The most essential point as far as I was concerned was that you had to be in the right mood yourself, you the coach. If the players knew *you* weren't mentally fit, then it affected them. I kept myself thinking positively, and that communicated to the players."³⁵⁵

³⁵³ Jim Vipond, "Turk Broda Only Leaf Recognized By NHL Coaches On All-Star Teams," *The Globe and Mail*, April 23, 1948.

³⁵⁴ Jim Vipond, "Leafs Trounce Detroit To Retain Stanley Cup," *The Globe and Mail*, April 15, 1948.

³⁵⁵ Batten, *The Leafs in Autumn*, pp. 96-97.

The 1948-49 season was significantly more difficult; injuries and lackadaisical play resulted in the Leafs registering more losses than wins, settling for a poor fourth-place finish after dropping five of their last six games. “If this were a playoff preview, Leafs lack the stuff to stop this Detroit club,” Red Burnett wrote in the *Toronto Daily Star* after the Wings embarrassed Toronto 5-0 late in the season. The win clinched first place for the Wings, prompting Adams to confidently boast Dick Irvin-style that the club was “the greatest team in my 22 seasons here.”³⁵⁶ The Leafs continued to stumble until the last game of the regular season schedule, a 7-2 defeat at the hands of Boston, which really did not bode well given that Toronto would again face the Bruins in the semifinal playoff round.

But the start of the postseason was like a switch being flipped as the Leafs went into their familiar playoff hockey mode. For the second year in a row, they lost only one game to Boston and then swept Detroit in the minimum four games in the final. Toronto became the first team in NHL history to win three consecutive Stanley Cups. Day, consequently, became the first coach to win three consecutive Cups and the first coach to win five championships.

These unprecedented achievements were deserving of more attention than they received; as was pointed out earlier in this chapter, it was not Day but Conn Smythe who was chosen by sportswriters as the biggest name in Canadian sports in 1949.³⁵⁷ Day had worked wonders to bring home another title despite long odds against another ostensibly superior opponent, and no NHL team since the 1949 Leafs has managed to win the Cup after posting a losing regular-season record. But it had not been enough to capture the spotlight from his boss, in the apparent opinion of most writers.

³⁵⁶ Red Burnett, “If This Be Preview of Things to Come It’s Tough for Leafs,” *Toronto Daily Star*, March 10, 1949.

³⁵⁷ Canadian Press, “Writers Select Conn Smythe Top Sport Personality,” *Montreal Gazette*, January 6, 1950.

“Day, a quiet, diffident fellow, has been overshadowed by his boss, peppery Conn Smythe,” Jim Coleman wrote as the 1949 playoffs were coming to an end. “However, this doesn’t mean that Day is a ‘Yes Man.’ Day is a man who has been able to adapt himself to the peculiar genius and eccentricities of his employer . . . If Day lacks personal color it is only because there isn’t room for two persons with color in an organization that is headed by Smythe.

“No one ever bothers to select Day, officially, as ‘The Coach of the Year’ but, for this bureau’s money, he has been ‘The Coach of the Decade,’” Coleman continued. “They say, facetiously, that a modern hockey coach’s job consists of opening and shutting the gate to the players’ bench. If so, Day has proved in the last eight years that he opens the gate with more facility than is displayed by his rivals.”³⁵⁸

The following season saw both Day’s luck and that of the Leafs finally run out against the Wings, who not only defeated the Leafs in a semifinal playoff series but did it in the dreaded seventh and deciding game. Broda was as good as ever, registering three shutouts and allowing only ten goals during the series, but the Toronto offence disappeared at the worst possible time. The Leafs scored only six goals over the final six contests and were blanked in both Game 6 and Game 7, the latter of which was decided in overtime.³⁵⁹ Detroit went on to win the Stanley Cup.

Smythe appears to have been looking for an opportunity to move Day out from behind the bench, with another former Leaf, Joe Primeau, waiting in the wings after coaching two Toronto farm teams to three national championships in a six-year span. In May 1950, it was announced that Primeau would be the new coach of the Leafs and Day would move into the role of assistant manager.³⁶⁰ The idea was that Day would take on some of the responsibilities long

³⁵⁸ Jim Coleman, “By Jim Coleman,” *The Globe and Mail*, April 12, 1949.

³⁵⁹ Marshall Dann, “Wings Win in Overtime,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 10, 1950.

³⁶⁰ Jim Vipond, “Joe Primeau Appointed New Coach of Hockey Leafs,” *The Globe and Mail*, May 27, 1950.

held by the aging Smythe, but it never seemed to work out that way as the Leafs, following one more Cup victory in 1951 under Primeau, became an also-ran franchise. They missed the postseason three times in a six-year span and did not win another playoff series until 1959.

Smythe retired as general manager and gave the title to Day in February 1955, but he always made it clear that he was still in charge, even as the team continued to decline. In his memoirs, he boasted that he called Day in his office the day after the transition. “Is this the manager?” Smythe asked when Day answered the phone. “Well, this is the president.”³⁶¹ Day reached his breaking point after a humiliating press conference in March 1957, as the Leafs were concluding a disappointing season that would see them miss the playoffs. Smythe announced that he was taking responsibility for the team’s failure, while making it clear to everyone present – including Day, who was not invited to speak – that he was in fact blaming Day.³⁶² To add insult to injury, he remarked that he would still like Day to stay on, provided he was available. Day, who had been with the Leafs since 1940 and had simultaneously also been running Smythe’s profitable sand and gravel pit, bitterly responded that he had been “publicly dismembered” and did not know why his availability should suddenly be questioned after so many years. But since it was being questioned, he said a week later, “then I’m not available.”³⁶³

Smythe was unrepentant, explaining in his memoirs that he engineered Day’s exit because he was in the process of turning over the operations of the team to his son Stafford, who wanted to do things his way without Day’s interference – or his presence, for that matter. “If you give a man a job, as I had Stafford, you have to let him do it,” Smythe said, with absolutely no

³⁶¹ Smythe with Young, *If You Can’t Beat ‘Em in the Alley*, p. 199.

³⁶² Milt Dunnell, “Speaking on Sport,” *Toronto Daily Star*, March 18, 1957.

³⁶³ Rex MacLeod, “Conn Smythe Protests Reports He’s Planning To Purge Maple Leafs,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 19, 1957; Gord Walker, “Day Unavailable, Makes Break,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 26, 1957; McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, p. 296.

hint of irony.³⁶⁴ He had never really allowed Day to do his job as manager, or to be seen as doing his job, and the end result was that he effectively forced Day out of the organization as he had done to Frank Selke years before.

The difference was that Selke remained in the game and became very successful once out of Smythe's shadow, managing the Canadiens to six Stanley Cups and building a dynasty that surpassed anything the Leafs had ever done or would ever do.³⁶⁵ Day was not interested in following Selke's example, and he left Toronto and went into private business in St. Thomas, Ontario, where he bought and operated a factory that produced wooden handles for axes and other tools. The most accomplished coach in NHL history to that point simply walked away from hockey and rebuffed all attempts to get him to return to the game, turning down an invitation to coach the Kitchener-Waterloo Dutchmen at the 1960 Winter Olympics and rejecting an offer to become the first general manager of the NHL's Los Angeles Kings in 1967.

"There's no future in coaching or managing," Day said to an interviewer in 1969. "And I thought if I could run somebody else's business, I might as well try finding one of my own, and make money for myself instead of for others."³⁶⁶ Perhaps Day was right in stepping away and taking control of his life and career when he did; although Selke achieved unprecedented success in Montreal, he still did not control his own fate and went unwillingly out to pasture when the Canadiens forced him to retire in 1964.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁴ Smythe with Young, *If You Can't Beat 'Em in the Alley*, p. 202.

³⁶⁵ The Canadiens under Selke won the Cup in 1953 and then five consecutive Cups between 1956 and 1960, a record that still stands. Furthermore, Selke built such a strong foundation in Montreal that, within a decade of his 1964 retirement, the Canadiens won six more titles. See: "Frank Selke, builder of Canadiens' Cup dynasty, dies at 92," *Montreal Gazette*, July 4, 1985; "Stanley Cup Champions," *National Hockey League*, <https://www.nhl.com/news/nhl-stanley-cup-champions-winners-complete-list-287705398>

³⁶⁶ "Dutchies Still Are Looking," *Toronto Daily Star*, January 2, 1960; "Missing Persons: Whatever became of Hap Day?" *The Canadian Magazine: Star Weekly*, August 23, 1969.

³⁶⁷ Lou Seligson, "Man who made hockey still behind every goal," *Montreal Star*, November 27, 1972.

It is unfortunate that Day's coaching career did not extend into the era of television, which did not begin in Canada until 1952. A lack of video evidence of his team's achievements means they tend to pale when measured against teams whose victories are more recent and more actively remembered. The Leafs' subsequent dynasty of the 1960s, for example, is better known today because many of their games were on TV and the four Stanley Cups they won in that decade were seen by millions of Canadian viewers. Many of those viewers survive today, along with substantial video footage from that era. "They don't mention us too much, do they?" Teeder Kennedy asked at a reunion in 2000. "All we ever hear about is the '67 team," added former teammate Harry Watson, referring to the Leafs' most recent championship club.³⁶⁸

This is an example of John Bodnar's contention that a collective memory is superseded by remembrances that are not as far removed from those who experienced them.³⁶⁹ Every member of the Leafs' 1940s dynasty has is now dead, and there are few people left with first-hand recollections of that team and its achievements. But the anecdotal and statistical evidence can still speak for Hap Day. Seventy-five years after his last championship, only two coaches have also won five or more Cups. They and others who have followed have felt Day's influence and have in turn shared his legacy with new generations of players and coaches, which will be more deeply explored in the next chapter. In Toronto specifically, his influence could be more keenly felt if the organization would properly acknowledge his excellence. Day retired not only with five Cups but also with wins in forty-nine playoff games; none of the twenty-seven men and counting who have succeeded him as the team's head coach have matched even the latter feat while employed by the Leafs.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ Ken Campbell, "Mid-century hockey dynasty never got its due," *Toronto Star*, February 4, 2000.

³⁶⁹ Bodnar, *Remaking America*, p. 247.

³⁷⁰ "Toronto Maple Leafs Coaches," *Hockey Reference*, <https://www.hockey-reference.com/teams/TOR/coaches.html>

GAME 5 – LESSONS THAT LIVE ON

A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.³⁷¹

– Henry Adams, historian and author

The first of the many things we may say about the coach is this: In every sense of the word he is a teacher . . . An effective coach will be obeyed and imitated where other teachers are endured.³⁷²

– Coleman R. Griffith, sport psychologist

From the moment he took charge of the Toronto Maple Leafs at training camp in 1940, Hap Day's goal was to teach his players things they had forgotten or perhaps never knew about how to play hockey. His knowledge and his instructional technique turned them into champions, and their collective success led many of his players to become his disciples. This chapter will examine Day's influence on his players and on opponents, rival coaches, and others. It will also detail how their absorption, retention, and sharing of his lessons had an effect that still resonates today in the National Hockey League (NHL), seven decades after his retirement.

Day had played for Toronto teams that consistently fell short in the playoffs in the 1930s, failing to win another Stanley Cup despite advancing to the final series on six occasions following their 1932 triumph. He was also the captain of many of those clubs and, as such, had a leadership role to play in the organization. But despite his leadership and his commitment to helping his young defence mates learn the game properly, as mentioned in an earlier chapter, there was only so much he could do in a system led by Dick Irvin that put a greater focus on

³⁷¹ Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918), p. 300.

³⁷² Coleman R. Griffith, *Psychology of Coaching: A Study of Coaching Methods From the Point of View of Psychology* (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), pp. 1-2.

offence. Red Burnett, writing many years later in the *Toronto Daily Star*, mentioned that Irvin had “often” talked about how the Leafs would abandon their goaltender in favour of “reckless five-man charges on the opposing goal.”³⁷³ Day knew things had to change. “I’m going to try to do just one thing,” he reportedly said upon taking over. “I’m going to try to make it harder to get goals against the Maple Leafs. We’ll back-check a little more from now on.”³⁷⁴

One thing he did was assess and utilize the strength of the players he had, and the Leafs who gave up fewer goals than any other NHL team in 1940-41 were almost unchanged from the season before. Only one player on the roster during Day’s first season, the seldom-used Norm Mann, had not appeared with the Leafs in 1939-40. The biggest subtraction was the retirement of defenceman and team captain Red Horner, who had been the last remaining member of the 1932 championship club. With Day the only impactful newcomer, the Leafs cut their goals-against from 110 to a league-best ninety-nine (in forty-eight games), while increasing the number of goals they scored from 134 to 145 – an eleven-goal difference both ways.³⁷⁵

Goaltender Walter “Turk” Broda became a special project. Day recommended he start playing handball, also known as wallball, to improve his technique. “There’s nothing like it to sharpen your eyes and co-ordinate your timing,” he said.³⁷⁶ Broda became proficient at the game, and it immediately improved every aspect of his goaltending. In 1940-41, he won the Vezina Trophy as the league’s top goaltender and was named to the First All-Star Team.³⁷⁷

³⁷³ Red Burnett, “Current Leafs Like Kid Line Club Are Young and Hungry for Goals,” *Toronto Daily Star*, October 13, 1956.

³⁷⁴ Ralph Allen, “Mostly Incidental,” *The Globe and Mail*, November 24, 1941.

³⁷⁵ “1939-40 Toronto Maple Leafs Roster and Statistics,” *Hockey Reference*, <https://www.hockey-reference.com/teams/TOR/1940.html>; “1940-41 Toronto Maple Leafs Roster and Statistics,” *Hockey Reference*, <https://www.hockey-reference.com/teams/TOR/1941.html>

³⁷⁶ Eric Zweig, *The Toronto Maple Leafs: The Complete Oral History* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2017), p. 124.

³⁷⁷ “Cracked Ice: Handball Helped Broda Improve,” *Boston Evening Globe*, February 19, 1941; “Presenting ‘Turk’ Broda, Our Star of Week,” *Toronto Daily Star*, February 22, 1941; “Toronto, Boston Top All-Star List,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 21, 1941.

Broda credited Day with his improvement, noting the coach's success in directing Leaf forwards to backcheck, meaning they would return to their own end of the ice to harass opposing puck carriers rather than leave that job strictly to the defencemen.³⁷⁸ Day also worked one-on-one with Broda in drills, forcing him to play without his stick and rely on his hands and legs to stop shots, putting the goalie's newfound handball expertise into practice.³⁷⁹ "And he says pucks look like footballs to him now, after following the flight of the 1½-inch pellet used in handball," a Canadian Press article said of Broda in October 1942, also pointing out that this was "unusual" behaviour.³⁸⁰ This indicates that Broda was unique if not alone among pro hockey goaltenders in performing such a training exercise, and that Day was therefore unique if not alone among coaches in encouraging it. Research for this thesis uncovered no other instances of NHL goaltenders who trained in such a way in that era.

"Hap won the Vezina Trophy for me," Broda said in a separate article, published in January 1943. "I never had the right confidence until he took me in hand. I used to flop all over the place, so they were scoring a lot of goals because I was out of position. He made me stand up and stay in my net."³⁸¹ There are multiple references to Broda having continued to play handball throughout his Hall of Fame career, and he retired in 1952 as the first goaltender to have won the Stanley Cup five times.³⁸² He is also the only NHL goaltender to play in more than one hundred playoff games and retire with a career average of fewer than two goals-against per game.³⁸³

³⁷⁸ Herbert Ralby, "Bruins Go After Leafs and N.L. Lead Tonight," *Boston Evening Globe*, December 30, 1941.

³⁷⁹ Ed Fitkin, "Broda Says Day Taught Him How to Play Goal," *Toronto Daily Star*, January 14, 1943.

³⁸⁰ Canadian Press, "Broda Sharpening His Goaling Eye," *Montreal Gazette*, October 19, 1942.

³⁸¹ Fitkin, "Broda Says."

³⁸² "Turk now sharp on handball court," *Regina Leader-Post*, January 27, 1949; Al Nicklelson, "George Armstrong Outscores Pros At Leaf Practice," *The Globe and Mail*, September 20, 1949; Note: Only four other goaltenders have won the Cup as many times, or more. See: "Playoff Goaltender Records – Most Stanley Cups Won, Career," *National Hockey League*, <https://records.nhl.com/records/playoff-goaltender-records/stanley-cups/goalie-most-stanley-cups-won-career>

³⁸³ Eleven other goaltenders have retired with better averages, but none of them played in more than fifty-two playoff games. See: "Playoff Goaltender Records – Lowest Goals-Against Average, Playoff Career," *National*

It is fair to say that Day continued to be a strong contributor to Broda's success, and Broda began a long coaching career of his own at the end of his playing days. Between 1953 and 1958, he won four Ontario championships and two Canadian titles while operating the Toronto Marlboros junior-aged team in the Leafs' farm system.³⁸⁴ Many of his players also ended up as NHL players and coaches, but his interest in handball appears to have not filtered down to the goaltenders he mentored. That is why, when a young Russian netminder named Vladislav Tretiak showed up in Canada in September 1972 and was seen honing his skills in a similar way, it was regarded as unusual by Canadian players and media – much as it had been by the unidentified Canadian Press reporter who wrote about Broda in October 1942.



Figure 20: Turk Broda won the Stanley Cup five times with the Leafs and won the Vezina Trophy twice as the NHL's best goaltender. Photo: Author's personal collection. Copyright is in public domain.

Hockey League, <https://records.nhl.com/records/playoff-goaltender-records/goals-against-average/lowest-goals-against-average-career-playoff>

³⁸⁴ "Turk Broda Will Give Up Coaching Chore for Season," *The Globe and Mail*, January 19, 1959.

Vladislav Tretiak was the goaltender for the Soviet Union team that met Canada in the 1972 Summit Series. The Soviets surprised opponents and observers alike with unexpectedly strong performances during the four games of the series that were played in Canada, with Tretiak a key factor in his team's success. A *Toronto Star* reporter noticed him working out with tennis balls between games and asked him about it. "I've worked a long time with tennis balls for my reflexes," the goalie replied. "I use two balls and throw them against the wall, together or alternately, and catch them. I throw them as hard as I can and move closer to the wall."³⁸⁵ In effect, Tretiak was doing something very similar to how a handball player practises alone – and his technique can be seen now as having come to him indirectly from Broda, because an influential Canadian coach had touched on the tactic in a book that later proved to be significant in the development of hockey in the Soviet Union.

Although Broda was unique in his time, with no other NHL goaltenders appearing to have picked up on his example, Lloyd Percival was taking note of his success and how he had obtained it – and from whom. In the previous chapter, it was established that Percival was a prominent amateur coach in Toronto with expertise in several sports and a national radio program dedicated to the promotion of athletics and fitness. He operated under the name of Sports College and had a small staff that worked with him on his projects. As Percival's radio program gained popularity and his platform grew, he condensed his observations and advice into "how-to" booklets that he published and advertised. One such product was entitled *How to Train for Hockey*, which was published in 1944 and was followed a year later by *How to Play Better Hockey* – the same title that Quaker Oats would use for its own booklet in 1947.

³⁸⁵ Jim Kernaghan, "Tennis balls help Soviet goalie," *Toronto Star*, September 8, 1972.

Percival was a controversial figure in the Canadian sports world for many years, frequently butting heads with administrators and with his critics, who were many. He had absolute faith in his own expertise, he was disdainful to the point of tactlessness of anything that displeased him, and he was never shy about sharing his viewpoints regardless of whether anyone had solicited them. Historians Tobias Stark and Hunt Cantelon, quoting Percival's biographer, described him as having "an almost pathological need for self-promotion." He built and nurtured an audience that fueled that need, with his weekly radio program, *Sports College of the Air*, reaching an estimated eight hundred thousand listeners at its peak.³⁸⁶

Gruneau and Whitson called him "a prominent voice on health, fitness, and hockey . . . He was trustworthy, especially when bolstered by mounds of statistics and research."³⁸⁷ But his research and his popularity held little sway with the NHL and the men who operated it, and at the time they could afford to have that attitude. Stark and Cantelon wrote that Percival began to confront the league at the height of its power over the professional and amateur hockey establishment. There were only six teams in the NHL between 1942 and 1967, and the men who owned those teams also controlled the amateur and minor professional hockey structures that supplied them with talent. The players themselves were effectively indentured servants; once they signed their first contract, usually as teenagers, they were bound by the contract's restrictive reserve clause to the team for as long as the team desired. They played where and when they were told or they did not play at all, in any organized hockey league of note anywhere. "The six-team NHL, to use a sociology of organization concept, was a *closed* organization and by its very nature, could and did define Percival in dismissive terms," Stark and Cantelon wrote. "Percival

³⁸⁶ Tobias Stark and Hart Cantelon, "Guru or Court Jester? The Lloyd Percival Paradox: The Globalization of Training Regimes – The Case of Canada, Sweden and the Soviet Union," *Sport in Society*, vol. 23, no. 3 (2020): pp. 540, 542.

³⁸⁷ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, p. 306.

was simply ‘not one of us’ and was easily and clearly dismissed. It did not help matters that the latter had what most politely might be termed an abrasive personality.”³⁸⁸

Percival tried to work with the NHL and had some success, although Conn Smythe, his biggest rival in self-aggrandizement, rejected his efforts to work closely with the Leafs. He instead gained the confidence of Jack Adams of the Red Wings and reportedly convinced team captain Sid Abel that better nutrition would help his performance on the ice. This came to the attention of Canadiens’ coach Dick Irvin, who appeared to be intrigued by Abel’s subsequent success.³⁸⁹ That is, he was intrigued until Percival released the results of a study declaring Gordie Howe of the Wings by far the best right winger in the NHL, ahead of Montreal’s Rocket Richard in almost every measurable category, after which Irvin claimed he had never heard of Sports College or of Percival.³⁹⁰ He was also quoted as petulantly saying Percival’s favourable comparison of Howe to Richard had come from “the brain of a child.”³⁹¹

Even Hap Day, who had appeared on Percival’s radio show and had seemed enthusiastic about his work, became dismissive. Sometime after Percival published his *How to Play Better Hockey* booklet, Day called it “a lot of bunkum,” meaning he thought it was nonsense. “There’s some good stuff in there, stuff he picked up from NHL coaches,” Day said, “but the rest of it makes for confusion, is impractical.” He did not elaborate on what he considered to be “good stuff” versus confusing and impractical, but Percival responded to Day’s remark by saying he had always been open about gleaning and synthesizing information from other sources.³⁹²

Unspoken was the understanding that the sources Percival relied on included experts like NHL

³⁸⁸ Stark and Cantelon, “Guru or Court Jester?” p. 543.

³⁸⁹ Dink Carroll, “Playing the Field,” *Montreal Gazette*, January 8, 1951.

³⁹⁰ Red Burnett, “Irvin Calls Detroit Stronger Than Leafs But Not Against Habs,” *Toronto Daily Star*, February 9, 1951.

³⁹¹ Harold Kaese, “Howe, Richard Battle Stirs Hottest Hockey Argument in 25 Years,” *Boston Daily Globe*, March 1, 1951.

³⁹² Trent Frayne, “Coast-To-Coast Coach,” *Maclean’s*, October 15, 1948.

coaches – and since Percival and Sports College were based in Toronto, he and his staff obviously saw far more of Day than they did any other coach in the league.

Percival's lessons could indeed be overly technical, but he was an astute observer of the game and passionate about his work. He conducted extensive research and experiments and arrived at conclusions that flew in the face of accepted hockey wisdom. For example, he was adamant that hockey players should avoid the traditional pre-game steak dinner in favour of foods that produced energy and would be digested easily, citing fruits and honey as good examples. He also called yogurt "the wonder food" because of its high protein content and its supply of B Complex vitamins and beneficial bacteria. "The athlete should pay particular attention to what he eats before a game because what he eats will affect the way he feels," Percival wrote, adding that steak was an ideal meal for after games instead because it provided protein to help rebuild muscle tissue.³⁹³ All of this is common knowledge today among athletes, but the hockey establishment of Percival's era, led by the likes of Conn Smythe and his son/heir apparent Stafford Smythe, more or less considered such talk to be heresy.

Stafford Smythe managed one of the Leafs' junior teams, the Toronto Marlboros. In 1951, a Marlboros player named Eric Nesterenko began following Percival's dietary advice. He stopped eating pre-game steaks, opting instead for apples, grapes, and yogurt. The team looked askance at this but tolerated it while the highly touted prospect was playing well. But when Nesterenko developed bronchitis, the Marlboros blamed his diet; Percival said it was because he had continued to play despite suffering from a cold.³⁹⁴ Nesterenko then developed a skin rash, which was suggested to be an allergic side effect of penicillin injections he had received to treat

³⁹³ Lloyd Percival, *The Hockey Handbook* (Toronto: The Copp Clark Co., 1951), p. 302.

³⁹⁴ George MacFarlane, "Dukes' Officials Oppose Percival On Special Diet," *The Globe and Mail*, December 18, 1951.

the bronchitis, but again the Marlboros blamed his food intake. “I don’t care what the doctors say, it’s the grapes,” Smythe said.³⁹⁵ A frustrated Percival then lost patience and told Toronto sportswriters that Smythe’s refusal to accept medical advice related to his players was proof that he was unfit to be responsible for teenaged athletes. He suggested that Smythe’s father “would be well advised to reconsider his capabilities” and separately added he hoped that “parents anxious for the welfare of hockey-playing sons will develop an allergy to the idea of their sons playing under the management of Smythe.”³⁹⁶

This exposition is important because it is an example of how Percival’s outbursts, no matter how justified they may have been, did not help him win over the establishment. Nevertheless, he remained outspoken and became increasingly critical as Canadian hockey began to stagnate in the face of competition from other countries. In the 1950s, the only international hockey play outside the North American pro leagues was between amateur teams and players, and at the dawn of that decade Canada was far and away the dominant power in the sport, as it had been since the beginning of cross-Atlantic international play. Represented by individual club teams rather than by true national entries, the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association (CAHA) won six of the first seven Olympic tournaments between 1920 and 1952, settling for the silver medal in 1936. Canada also won fifteen gold medals and three silver medals in the first nineteen International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) world championship tournaments during that same time frame; the only tournament in which Canadians did not win at least a silver medal was the 1947 event, in which they did not participate.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ George MacFarlane, “Eric Nesterenko’s Rash Is Attributed to Grapes By Dukes’ Staff Smythe,” *The Globe and Mail*, December 28, 1951.

³⁹⁶ George MacFarlane, “Eric Nesterenko’s Rash”; George MacFarlane, “Now Grapes Become Nesterenko’s Nemesis,” *Toronto Daily Star*, December 28, 1951.

³⁹⁷ It must be noted that the Olympic tournament, held every four years, doubled as the IIHF world championship tournament until 1968. See: “Olympic Winter Games,” *International Ice Hockey Federation*,

Canada also did not take part in 1953 due to criticism of its “roughhouse tactics” by European teams who found any sort of bodychecking to be unacceptably violent, but the CAHA agreed to return to the competition the following year. It chose as the country’s representatives the East York Lyndhursts, a Senior B-level club team from Toronto.³⁹⁸ Canada’s return in 1954 coincided with the Soviet Union entering the event for the first time, and the Soviets shocked everyone by handily defeating the Lyndhursts 7-2 in the final game to claim the gold medal. Newspaper editors and sportswriters across Canada, who had not paid much attention to the IIHF event prior to this, treated the loss like a national tragedy.



Figure 21: Canada's loss to the Soviet Union in the 1954 world hockey championship was headline news across the country.

<https://www.iihf.com/en/medalists?selectedTournamentTypeID=1&gender=men>; “World Men,” *International Ice Hockey Federation*, <https://www.iihf.com/en/medalists>

³⁹⁸ “CAHA Confirms Senior ‘B’ Club on Sweden Trip,” *Toronto Daily Star*, October 23, 1953. The Senior B level of amateur competition was one step down from the top flight, Senior A, and the CAHA’s selection of a Senior B club signified Canada’s lackadaisical attitude toward the event and, to be frank, to international hockey in general.

³⁹⁹ “Oh, Woe, Woe Is Canada! Reds Steal Our Thunder,” *Vancouver Sun*, March 8, 1954; “Russia Defeats Canada 7-2 To Win World Hockey Title,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 8, 1954; “Canada ‘Humiliated’ By Reds,” *Ottawa Citizen*, March 8, 1954.

“A black eye . . . a catastrophe . . . a resounding slap in Canada’s face . . . a national calamity, a national humiliation and a mortifying experience,” were some of the comments printed in newspapers following the tournament, directed mostly at the CAHA rather than at the Lyndhursts themselves.⁴⁰⁰ Conn Smythe, whom Andy Lytle had once labelled a “militant patriot,” made a public plea to be allowed to take the Leafs to the Soviet Union to “regain Canada’s hockey prestige.”⁴⁰¹ It is not clear if this was a serious request or a publicity stunt, but Smythe did not receive permission and a potentially regrettable situation was avoided. “If Canada wants to take responsibility for starting World War III,” said New York Rangers’ manager Frank Boucher, “I can see no surer way than by sending Smythe to Moscow with a hockey team.”⁴⁰²

If Smythe was upset by the loss, he would have been apoplectic to learn what most Canadians did not know at the time – that the Soviets were building their hockey program with the help of Lloyd Percival. In 1951, he had published *The Hockey Handbook*, his magnum opus, the culmination of six years’ worth of research, interviews, and experimentation by Percival and his staff at Sports College, bolstered by extensive observation and analysis of various levels of hockey up to and including the NHL. The 320-page tome broke down and detailed all the elements of playing, coaching, and training for the game, using specific examples and even photos from NHL games to demonstrate the lessons Percival aimed to teach.

The book was mostly ignored by the NHL despite its many references to players and coaches in the league, at least in part because the league’s coaches and managers, all of whom

⁴⁰⁰ Canadian Press, “Barrage of Criticism Hits Canadian Hockey Body,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, March 9, 1954.

⁴⁰¹ Andy Lytle, “Speaking on Sports,” *Toronto Daily Star*, October 3, 1945; Robert Nielsen, “Leafs Apply For Trip to Russia,” *Toronto Daily Star*, March 9, 1954.

⁴⁰² Ed Simon, ““Sending Smythe to Moscow Could Start War,”” *Windsor Daily Star*, March 10, 1954.

were Canadian-born and trained, had yet to be disabused of the notion that they did not already know everything there was to know about playing hockey. But there were areas of the hockey-playing world where people were eager to learn as much as they could about the game, and a copy of *The Hockey Handbook* found its way to Anatoli Tarasov, who is regarded today as the father of hockey in Russia.⁴⁰³ Following the Second World War, the Soviet Union flexed its global muscle by quickly absorbing the nations of Eastern Europe into its sphere of influence and installing a series of puppet regimes in those countries. Additionally, rather than outright war, the Soviets embarked on a plan to use sports to gain and assert international domination.

Up until that point in its history, the Soviets played a hockey-like sport called bandy, a European invention which was also played on ice. They recognized they would have to change because bandy was not played at the Olympic level, where gold medals determined athletic supremacy, while ice hockey was. The Soviets knew of Canadian hockey, but rather than merely copy what Canadians were doing, they decided to create their own version of hockey by combining bandy with elements of soccer. Two pioneers emerged to guide this development beginning in February 1946 – Arkadi Chernyshev and Anatoli Tarasov. Their players learned quickly, and within two years, the Soviets were competing favourably against players from Czechoslovakia, where bandy had given way to ice hockey prior to the First World War.⁴⁰⁴

Tarasov became the coach of the Soviet Union’s elite Central Red Army team and was also a co-coach, along with Chernyshev, of the neophyte Soviet national team. He was an obsessive researcher and writer who wrote at length about hockey in journals and in books, the first of which was published in 1950. As Hardy and Holman put it, “he was the most visible and vocal representative of a *Soviet game*” – their emphasis – until well into the 1970s. After Tarasov

⁴⁰³ Hardy and Holman, *Hockey: A Global History*, p. 340.

⁴⁰⁴ Hardy and Holman, *Hockey: A Global History*, pp. 328-329, 175.

obtained his copy of *The Hockey Handbook* in 1953 from an unwitting Canadian player named Stan Obodiac, it so engaged him that he later gifted Percival with one of his own books and reportedly inscribed it thusly: “Your wonderful book which introduced me to the mysteries of Canadian hockey, I have read like a schoolboy.”⁴⁰⁵ Much to Percival’s annoyance, though, the Soviets also bootlegged hundreds of translated copies of *The Hockey Handbook* into their country, for which he received no royalties.⁴⁰⁶

The Hockey Handbook, in the words of author Todd Denault, “was the first book to take a methodical approach toward hockey skills, team play, personal diet, and conditioning. In the book Percival laid out his training methods, which were designed to provide the skater with greater balance, agility, and lateral movement. Each of these would, in time, become hallmarks of the Soviet game.”⁴⁰⁷ Because Tarasov was unlike NHL coaches and managers in that he had no preconceived notions of how hockey players should skate, train, and compete, many of Percival’s ideas made sense to him, and he was free to take and use what he pleased.

Some of those ideas were tactics that had been used prominently if not exclusively by Day and the Leafs. It was pointed out in the previous chapter that Day, in his notes for the Quaker Oats booklet, wrote that a defenceman could best learn how to be effective in his coverage by studying his opponents’ “favourite tricks and styles of play.”⁴⁰⁸ Percival’s subsequent recommendation in *The Hockey Handbook* was that a “defensive player should study his man until he learns his favourite tricks. A careful appraisal of how the opposing player acts under certain circumstances will often enable the defensive man to keep him covered like a

⁴⁰⁵ Steve Newman, “Obodiac joins others in winner’s circle again,” *Regina Leader-Post*, March 24, 1980; Hardy and Holman, *Hockey: A Global History*, pp. 340-341.

⁴⁰⁶ Wessely Hicks, “What the Russians Know About Hockey Could Fill a Book,” *The Canadian Magazine*, December 9, 1972.

⁴⁰⁷ Todd Denault, *The Greatest Game: The Montreal Canadiens, the Red Army, and the Night That Saved Hockey* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2011), p. 14.

⁴⁰⁸ Day, *How to Play Better Hockey*.

blanket.”⁴⁰⁹ Tarasov, in an introduction he wrote for the translated Russian edition of the book, specifically commented on Percival’s advice: “In Canadian hockey, not only do all players know how to play the body and how to keep the opponent in check, but – very importantly – they’re always looking for such one-on-one situations in which some kind of contact with the opponent cannot be avoided.”⁴¹⁰

Percival wrote: “An excellent way to develop body checking skill is to practise frequently without sticks, doing all the defensive work with the body alone.”⁴¹¹ Joe Perlove of the *Toronto Daily Star* wrote about Day teaching this skill at training camp in October 1945: “At one stage Hap took the sticks away from one forward line and had them play against a be-sticked squad that way. This, it seems, is to teach them to check their men closely.”⁴¹² Tarasov also saw the wisdom in this idea: “It’s interesting to read the psychological analysis of one-on-one situations, and especially the many good recommendations on individual coverage. Good training exercises are given. In particular, our players will find the training exercises without a stick useful as it forces the player to focus on keeping the opponent in check with physical play.”⁴¹³

In the same article noted above, Perlove also wrote about defencemen learning to drop to their knees to block shots, which was also discussed in the previous chapter. “Day is teaching his mob how to be ‘second goaltenders,’” Perlove wrote. “(T)here they were yesterday, the whole flock of them, going down on one knee and sliding towards imaginary puck-carriers, coming up and doing it over again.”⁴¹⁴ In *The Hockey Handbook*, Percival called this “defensive goalkeeping,” a tactic which “was first emphasized by coach Hap Day of the Toronto Maple

⁴⁰⁹ Percival, *The Hockey Handbook*, p. 182.

⁴¹⁰ Anatoli Tarasov, “Foreword,” trans. Marcel Lang, in *Khokkey*, by Lloyd Percival (Moscow: Fizkultura i Sport, 1957), n.p.

⁴¹¹ Percival, *The Hockey Handbook*, p. 185.

⁴¹² Joe Perlove, “Day’s Defencemen Must Be Adept Knee-Benders,” *Toronto Daily Star*, October 19, 1945.

⁴¹³ Tarasov, “Foreword.”

⁴¹⁴ Perlove, “Day’s Defencemen.”

Leafs, World Champions for three consecutive years, and whom many considered to be the best defensive coach in the big league.”⁴¹⁵ Tarasov, again directly referencing Percival’s work, wrote that the Soviets had begun to master this tactic: “Our best defenders (and indeed Canadian players too) know how to drop on one knee while keeping the other skate on the ice, which allows them to not be taken out of the game in case the opponent fakes the shot.”⁴¹⁶

Percival wrote about the importance of “sound positional play, with each player well briefed, and certain of his specific assignments in all the various situations that might develop,” and he also stressed the importance of face-offs: “Each player must have the answers to two questions: What will I do if my team gains possession? What will I do if the puck goes to the opposition?”⁴¹⁷ This recalls quotes from Teeder Kennedy and Gus Mortson in the previous chapter where they discussed how the Leafs were unique among NHL teams for knowing prior to each face-off what their jobs were, no matter who gained possession of the puck. Tarasov wrote in response that learning “various tactical combinations in training” would ideally “be derived from the game itself and represent the instances most characteristic and frequent in the game. Such exercises will make the player more acquainted with the situations in the game, gain him experience and develop his creativity – which is particularly important for making correct moves independently.”⁴¹⁸

Another idea was using handball as a training exercise for goaltenders, which Percival did not credit to Day and Turk Broda even though he must have known that they were the only people in the NHL known to be training with this method. “The wise goalkeeper, to help him

⁴¹⁵ Percival, *The Hockey Handbook*, p. 190. Note that Stanley Cup winners of the era were often considered by the NHL to also be world champions, another indication of what the North American professional hockey establishment thought of the IIHF world championship tournament.

⁴¹⁶ Tarasov, “Foreword.”

⁴¹⁷ Percival, *The Hockey Handbook*, pp. 196, 199.

⁴¹⁸ Tarasov, “Foreword.”

establish an unbreakable habit of always keeping his eyes on the puck, will play a lot of games such as handball, table tennis, badminton and any others in which the object used moves quickly,” Percival wrote.⁴¹⁹ Due to the press Broda had received over several years regarding his handball training, it seems impossible that a thorough researcher such as Percival – who, again, was based in the same city as Broda – would not have been aware of it.

It has since been claimed that Percival invented a handball-like exercise using a tennis ball and taught it to Red Wings goaltender and future Hall of Famer Terry Sawchuk. According to this claim, it was from here that Tarasov adopted the idea and taught it to Tretiak, who reintroduced it to North Americans in 1972.⁴²⁰ That Tretiak reintroduced the tactic is not in doubt, and using tennis balls or other small objects in training is commonplace among today’s goaltenders. But if Tarasov did take the idea from Percival, it was not because Percival had invented it – he had merely publicized something Broda, coached by Day, had already been doing for a decade before Percival published his book.

As mentioned, Percival did credit many NHL players and used examples of them performing specific tasks to demonstrate excellence. Among his examples were frequent references to various Leafs, notably an action photo of Kennedy and Howie Meeker that highlighted their teamwork on offence during a game against Chicago, and another photo of defencemen Mortson and Jim Thomson and forward Harry Watson as they defended together against an offensive attack by a Boston player.⁴²¹ Percival was particularly taken with Kennedy, calling him “the big league’s hardest worker” in another reference and citing statistics that claimed the Leafs’ captain had skated at a league-best average speed of 9.47 miles per hour

⁴¹⁹ Percival, *The Hockey Handbook*, p. 212.

⁴²⁰ Peter Brown, “The unseen hand of Lloyd Percival,” *CBC*, <https://www.cbc.ca/radiointeractives/ideas/lloyd-percival-sports-prophet>, February 7, 2022.

⁴²¹ Percival, *The Hockey Handbook*, pp. 143, 201.

during a game in the 1949-50 season, accumulating the equivalent of three miles worth of distance. In another instance, Percival said elsewhere in the book that Kennedy was “(f)amous for his spirit, application, and tremendous try.”⁴²²

Percival elaborated on his use of the word “try.” “Research into the factors involved in endurance indicates that the mental attitude of the athlete plays a very important role in his ability to endure,” he wrote. “The aggressive ‘try guy’ who refuses to be concerned about his physical fatigue symptoms will always have better endurance, and the coach should try to sell his players on this idea.”⁴²³ Percival might as well have been talking about how Kennedy, entrusted and encouraged by Day, had been leading the Leafs by example since the 1945 playoffs.



PRELUDE TO PRACTICE

Maple Leaf Coach “Hap” Day, winner of three consecutive World’s Championships, lectures his squad during a practice session at Maple Leaf Gardens. Such talks are effective as a preface to any planned drill or scrimmage. By explaining carefully exactly what he wants the player to do in the activity to follow, the coach will secure better results than if he starts the drill or scrimmage and constantly interrupts it to put over a point. The close attention being given Day by all the players is something every young player should take to heart.

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Figure 22: Hap Day in The Hockey Handbook

⁴²² Percival, *The Hockey Handbook*, pp. 260-261, 293.

⁴²³ Percival, *The Hockey Handbook*, p. 309.

⁴²⁴ Percival, *The Hockey Handbook*, p. 253.

Although Percival did not credit Day with being the first to promote the handball idea, his mentions of Day in the book clearly demonstrated respect for him – especially one photo that communicated to the reader that Day was not only a coach but also a teacher. Day was shown at a practice session where he was surrounded by his players, all of whom appeared to be listening attentively to him. In the caption, Percival wrote that Day could expect compliance and positive outcomes from his players because of his careful method of instruction.

Featuring Day in this role was not an insignificant gesture given Percival's own high standards and his lack of tolerance for what he perceived to be incompetence. Indeed, in years to come Percival would continue to refer to Day positively; in a syndicated instructional article published in 1961, he cited Day as “the best defensive coach in the business” and wrote of his effectiveness in teaching his players how to check without the use of their sticks. He quoted Edgar Laprade, a Hall of Fame forward with the Rangers, as having said that playing against Day's Leafs was “like trying to stickhandle in a crowded elevator.”⁴²⁵

Anatoli Tarasov is not known to have ever publicly mentioned Day's name, but as a sports figure with aspirations of global domination, he surely would have taken notice of *The Hockey Handbook's* multiple descriptions of Day as the “winner of three consecutive World's Championships.” The Soviet coach may also already have seen how those championships had been won. Denault wrote that when Tarasov began researching hockey theory for the purpose of developing the Soviet game in the late 1940s, he supplemented his readings with “watching 8mm films of the Stanley Cup Finals.”⁴²⁶ There is no indication in Denault's book of how Tarasov would have obtained those films, but his position in the Soviet Union's sporting hierarchy would easily have facilitated it. If Tarasov did watch films of the Stanley Cup series in the late 1940s,

⁴²⁵ Lloyd Percival, “Hockey Hints,” *Calgary Herald*, December 29, 1961.

⁴²⁶ Denault, *The Greatest Game*, p. 13.

he saw Day's Leafs in action. Reading Percival's book would then have reinforced that Day was a first-rate hockey coach, if not the best coach in Canada.

Percival's voice was a lonely one in the 1950s and especially in the 1960s as Canada's success in international hockey began to wane. The 1963 IIHF world championship marked the first time Canada failed to win a medal in an international tournament it participated in. Its fourth-place finish was repeated in the 1964 tournament, which doubled as the Olympic competition, and again in 1965. Meanwhile, the Soviets began a streak in 1963 that saw them win an unprecedented nine consecutive gold medals.⁴²⁷

It eventually emerged that Tarasov and the Soviets had used Percival's book to build their hockey program, at which point many North American coaches belatedly discovered it and began using it themselves. One such coach was Bobby Kromm, whose accomplishments include Canadian and IIHF world championships, a World Hockey Association (WHA) playoff title, and a Jack Adams Award as the NHL's top coach in 1977-78. "It's my hockey Bible," Kromm told columnist Jim Coleman in 1977. "I admire Anatoli Tarasov and his accomplishments with Soviet hockey. But Tarasov stole all his theories directly from Percival's book."⁴²⁸

Coleman had recognized and publicly stated long before interviewing Kromm that hockey was stagnating in its birthplace. "Regrettably, it is becoming increasingly apparent that Lloyd Percival appraised hockey's plight accurately. Hockey coaching techniques in Canada have altered only very, very slightly in the past 25 years – and the rest of the world is leaving us in the lurch," he wrote in a 1968 column. "Canadian hockey – even at the level of the National Hockey League – has become infected by smug complacency. We have conned ourselves into

⁴²⁷ "World Men," *International Ice Hockey Federation*, <https://www.iihf.com/en/medalists>

⁴²⁸ Jim Coleman, "Kromm rubs off like gold," *Windsor Star*, December 6, 1977; Frank Orr, "Coach of year Kromm credits Percival book," *Toronto Star*, May 20, 1978.

believing that Canadians are the only persons in the world who know how to play hockey expertly.”⁴²⁹

An organized push toward more scientific hockey coaching was underway by that point, with Percival and *The Hockey Handbook* at the forefront, although the establishment continued for a while to try to ignore him; he made repeated offers to assist in preparation for the 1972 Summit Series, but Team Canada head coach Harry Sinden did not respond to him. After the series, though, the Red Wings hired him to overhaul their organizational coaching and training systems and other NHL teams began sending individual players to his facilities. He claimed in December 1972 that he was working with more than seventy pro players and had taken calls from forty different hockey organizations looking for his help.⁴³⁰

Sinden even worked with him to organize the Team Canada Hockey College, which employed NHL players to operate summer hockey camps in various locations in Canada and the U.S. throughout the 1970s.⁴³¹ Percival died in July 1974, and coincidentally, Scotty Bowman instituted a Percival-inspired physical fitness program for the Montreal Canadiens at the start of the 1974-75 season. “Bowman reasons that the clubs who look for the ‘extra edge’ with this type of thing are going to be the winners of the ‘70s,” a reporter wrote in the *Montreal Gazette*.⁴³² Coincidentally or not, Bowman’s Canadiens won the last four Stanley Cups of that decade.

The Hockey Handbook has been updated and republished multiple times, most recently in 1997, and it remains in print today. Percival was inducted into Canada’s Sports Hall of Fame

⁴²⁹ Jim Coleman, “NHL coaching stands still, Russian tactics are far superior,” *Ottawa Citizen*, February 26, 1968.

⁴³⁰ Hicks, “What the Russians Know About Hockey.”

⁴³¹ “Hockey School Here,” *Brantford Expositor*, April 14, 1973; “Team Canada Hockey College,” *Vancouver Province*, May 19, 1973; “Back for the Second Year: Team Canada Hockey College,” *Pittsburgh Press*, June 16, 1974.

⁴³² Dick Chapman, “Bowman looking for ‘edge’ with new fitness plan,” *Montreal Gazette*, September 25, 1974.

in 1976 and into the Athletics Canada Hall of Fame in 2013.⁴³³ Tarasov, who built an international hockey powerhouse that won numerous world championships and Olympic titles, was elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1974 and died in 1995.⁴³⁴

The Soviets had not finished learning from Hap Day even after achieving their unprecedented success. Their next lessons occurred in 1972, during the landmark Summit Series against Team Canada, comprised of Canadian-trained NHL stars. This was the first time the Soviets had faced a professional team after years of dominating Canada's amateur players, and they handily won the first game of the series 7-3 in Montreal. This was a shock to many Canadian players and observers, who had believed that Team Canada would sweep the eight-game affair.

Sinden abruptly realized his team could not compete head-to-head against a Soviet offence that was more powerful than had been expected. He and assistant coach John Ferguson decided Canada would play an entirely different style in Game 2 in Toronto, which meant removing several players from the lineup in favour of those who were better suited to accomplish what the coaches had in mind. "The plan was to use a smarter and more punishing forecheck and to have more attention to detail defensively, with a stronger backcheck," author Scott Morrison wrote in one of many books about the series published to mark its fiftieth anniversary in 2022. "The Canadians had played a more wide-open game in the opener, hell-bent for offence. It was time to tighten things up. And get physical, a game the Soviets weren't used to playing."⁴³⁵ The strategy worked to near perfection and Canada won the game 4-1.

⁴³³ "Eight are inducted into the Hall of Fame," *Toronto Star*, August 30, 1976; Stark and Cantelon, "Guru or Court Jester?" p. 539.

⁴³⁴ Canadian Press, "Tarasov to enter Hockey Hall," *Windsor Star*, July 31, 1974.

⁴³⁵ Scott Morrison, *1972: The Series That Changed Hockey Forever* (Toronto: Simon and Schuster Canada, 2022), p. 84.

“Sinden attributes his team’s win to those old-fashioned tried-and-true virtues, close checking and positional play, the kind of unspectacular tactics that used to win Stanley Cups for Hap Day’s Maple Leafs in the 1940s,” author Roy MacSkimming wrote.⁴³⁶ The difference between Day in the 1940s and Sinden in 1972 was that while Day was usually reluctant to take credit for his team’s accomplishments, even when it was warranted, Sinden had no qualms about doing so. “I think we had as much to do with winning this game as coaches can have,” he later said of himself and Ferguson. “All the changes we made worked.”⁴³⁷

The Canadians did not play as diligently at home after that game, which was the only game they won before travelling to Moscow for the second half of the series. Booed off the ice by their own fans after losing Game 4 in Vancouver, they developed a gritty siege mentality and a deep sense of desperation like that which had characterized Day’s Leafs in 1942 and 1945. “(F)rom now on we’re going to play playoff hockey,” said Yvan Cournoyer, a future Hall of Famer who knew playoff hockey well, having already won the Stanley Cup five times; he would win it five more times during his career.⁴³⁸ Cournoyer proved to be a major catalyst as Canada won the last three games and took the series by the slimmest of margins.

Canadian goaltender Ken Dryden, reflecting on the series for a book he co-wrote nearly two decades later, said the team felt “a bunker-like paranoia,” and it was in Game 6, with Team Canada on the verge of losing both the game and the series, that he believed things changed. “And so, backed into our final corner, we fought back,” Dryden wrote. “From then on, it was us against them.” He believed that the Soviets, having proven themselves against the NHL players and having put themselves into position to win everything, “had lost that elemental fear” that is

⁴³⁶ Roy MacSkimming, *Cold War: The Amazing Canada-Soviet Hockey Series of 1972, 50th Anniversary Edition* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2022), p. 76.

⁴³⁷ MacSkimming, *Cold War*, p. 76.

⁴³⁸ Ted Blackman, “Cournoyer key figure in Sinden line change,” *Montreal Gazette*, September 21, 1972.

so necessary for winning teams to have. “It’s the one thing you have to learn in hockey,” Canadian defenceman Serge Savard told Dryden. “If you’re not scared of losing, you’re not going to win. And when we started the series, we didn’t have that fear.” But in Moscow, on the verge of defeat, it was a different reality. “We were scared like hell,” Savard said.⁴³⁹

Phil Esposito, Team Canada’s top scorer and on-ice leader, told Dryden that it frightened him to recall how desperate he had been to win. With Canada trailing 5-3 entering the third period of Game 8, Esposito scored one goal, assisted on the tying goal by Cournoyer, and made the play to set up Paul Henderson’s winning goal in the final minute. “To me, it was war,” Esposito said. “I’ve never shot anything in my life. I’ve never hunted. I’m just not that type of guy. But there’s no doubt in my mind that I think I would have killed to win . . . I would have done *anything* to win. Absolutely anything. I think in a war, maybe that’s what happens.”⁴⁴⁰

Canada won the Summit Series but, in a sense, both sides really won. The series did much to convince enlightened North Americans that there were other and perhaps better ways to play and train for hockey, and many coaches travelled to the Soviet Union and other European countries in the years following the series to learn from people like Anatoli Tarasov. Some Canadians were aware that in learning from Tarasov, they were learning from themselves to a degree; NHL old-timers, such as Sweeney Schriner, Fred Shero, and Ted Lindsay went on record to say they recognized the Soviet style of hockey, steeped in the fundamentals of the game, as one they themselves had played decades earlier. “They’re drilled in the basics. They skate, pass, shoot and move the puck well. We did the same thing,” said Lindsay, whose NHL career began in 1944. “Today players in the NHL are just interested in shooting.”⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁹ Dryden and MacGregor, *Home Game*, p. 211.

⁴⁴⁰ Dryden and MacGregor, *Home Game*, p. 211.

⁴⁴¹ Dink Carroll, “Soviets change their style, but will it prove wise move?” *Montreal Gazette*, May 1, 1973; Chuck Newman, “The Man Who Makes the Bullies Swagger,” *Today: The Philadelphia Inquirer Magazine*, March 31,

The 1970s and 1980s also saw an influx of European players who came to North America and proved themselves among the best professionals in the world. But the Canadian players had also made a deep impression with their courage and their strength of will, proving that there was a purpose to what had previously been regarded by European players and observers merely as pointless, thuggish physicality. As Hardy and Holman noted, this realization facilitated learning that went both ways. “European strategists began to quietly consider the merits of a more robust style of play. Gradually, almost imperceptibly, it made its way into European hockey at all levels,” they wrote.⁴⁴² It can therefore be argued that two decades after the Soviets mastered hockey skills with the help of lessons popularized first by the likes of Hap Day, he indirectly taught them another important lesson about the value of gritty, physical play fuelled by fear and a refusal to meekly accept defeat.

Percival, Tarasov, and Sinden, who had coached the Boston Bruins to the Stanley Cup in 1970, were not the only coaches of the era who felt Day’s influence. Shero, one of many North American coaches who visited Tarasov in the Soviet Union, combined what he learned there with certain elements of Day’s style in winning back-to-back Stanley Cups with the Philadelphia Flyers in 1974 and 1975. Shero had played for the Rangers in the late 1940s and was keenly aware of how physical Day’s teams had been and how it had worked for them. “I played against those Leaf teams,” he remembered in 1974, “and I can still feel the pain.”

As Day had, Shero drilled his players in the fundamentals, expected them to be sound defensively, and instructed them to aggressively forecheck when they did not have the puck. The goal was to intimidate opponents into giving up possession, and the Flyers excelled at this tactic.

1974; Alek de March, “It’s East against West at the old-timers’ game,” *Calgary Herald Magazine*, February 2, 1973.

⁴⁴² Hardy and Holman, *Hockey: A Global History*, p. 446.

Boston Globe sportswriter Tom Fitzgerald noted during the 1974 Stanley Cup Final between the Flyers and the Bruins that one of Shero's mottos was, "Take the shortest route to the puck carrier and arrive in ill humor."⁴⁴³ But this was not a new tactic; it will be recalled that in the previous chapter, Gus Mortson described how the Leafs had made a habit of isolating and targeting puck carriers and knocking down opponents who strayed in front of their net.⁴⁴⁴ As the Leafs of Mortson's era had, the Flyers set NHL penalty minute records during their reign as champions, earning a reputation and a corresponding nickname that remains with them fifty years later – "the Broad Street Bullies."⁴⁴⁵

"There are four corners in a rink . . . and there are two pits, one in front of each net," Shero told a *Sports Illustrated* reporter as his club closed in on its second consecutive title in 1975. "To win a game, you've got to win the corners and the pits. You give punishment there, and you take it, which is why we have more fights than most teams."⁴⁴⁶ Again, all of this was reminiscent of the Leafs' style of play under Day and the coach's defence of it. Milt Schmidt, who had played for, coached, and managed the Bruins, recognized the similarities. "They remind me of the Maple Leaf teams . . . when Hap Day was coaching," he said of the Flyers. "They never looked that good on paper but when it came playoff time, they just took you apart."⁴⁴⁷ Ted Lindsay concurred with Schmidt's viewpoint. Commenting in 1976 on Shero's admiration of Tarasov's system, Lindsay's assessment after watching the Flyers was that the coach had "been influenced a hell of a lot more by Hap Day."⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴³ Tom Fitzgerald, "Shero's psychology keeps Flyers fiery," *Boston Evening Globe*, May 7, 1974.

⁴⁴⁴ Batten, *The Leafs in Autumn*, p. 46.

⁴⁴⁵ Gabriela Carroll, "Evolution of Broad Street Bullies nickname," *Philadelphia Daily News*, May 20, 2024.

⁴⁴⁶ Mark Mulvoy, "Hockey's Eclectic Wizard," *Sports Illustrated*, May 26, 1975.

⁴⁴⁷ Red Burnett, "Milt Schmidt a convert to Flyers' combative fire," *Toronto Star*, April 30, 1974.

⁴⁴⁸ Ed Gruver, *The Game That Saved the NHL: The Broad Street Bullies, the Soviet Red Machine, and Super Series '76* (Essex, CT: Lyons Press, 2023), p. 9.

One of Day's most direct influences was on Teeder Kennedy, whose coaching career was brief but ultimately consequential. After retiring from the Leafs in 1957 – a decision that coincided with Day's bitter departure from the organization – he was hired to coach the Peterborough Petes of the Ontario Hockey Association's (OHA) Junior A league. The club had finished last in the standings the previous year and Kennedy, recognizing that he did not have many top-calibre players on his roster, worked to maximize their skills as his mentor would have. Day had written in his Quaker Oats booklet notes that a good coach was always studying his players and their styles with the intent of figuring out where they could best contribute. "Make and get the most out of what you have," Day wrote.⁴⁴⁹ Kennedy set out to do just that.

Ken Dryden wrote a biography about Scotty Bowman, which entailed spending many hours talking with Bowman about his life and his influences. Bowman, who succeeded Kennedy as the Petes' coach in 1958, the first step in a career that eventually saw him become the winningest coach in NHL history, talked about his predecessor and marvelled at what he did with the team during his only season behind the bench. Kennedy taught the Petes the importance of a two-way game, which meant they became more responsible defensively. "It was always about accountability with him; his players had to play both ends of the rink," Bowman told Dryden. "The Petes weren't the Leafs – they were only an average team – but they could still play Kennedy's way," Dryden added. "It was how they could compete."⁴⁵⁰

The Petes were affiliated with the Montreal Canadiens and their dramatic defensive improvement turned them and their coach into an irritant for the two Toronto teams in the Junior A league, both of which were affiliated with if not owned outright by the Leafs. Stafford Smythe said that while he wanted Kennedy to return to the Leafs organization, he was not a fan of how

⁴⁴⁹ Day, *How to Play Better Hockey*.

⁴⁵⁰ Dryden, *Scotty*, p. 120.

the Petes were winning under his direction because it reminded him too much of someone the organization had only recently parted with. “He shows signs of the Day influence,” Smythe said. “His team isn’t quite as pleasing to watch as some of the others. Teeder is out to win games. I don’t blame him for that. But I also say it’s our business to sell tickets.”⁴⁵¹

Kennedy defiantly confirmed Smythe’s perception. “I teach the only system I know,” he said in response. “To me, hockey is a very simple game. When the other fellows have the puck, you must take it away from them . . . You’ve got to check. You’ve got to make it tough for the other club. If I haven’t followed the Day system 100 per cent, it’s only because I have failed to get it across, because that’s what I have attempted to do.”⁴⁵²

Bowman, who was employed by the Canadiens, became the Petes’ coach the following season after Kennedy stepped down. But Kennedy made it clear that he was still around and willing to help where and when he could, an offer that the new coach, who was only twenty-five years old and running his own Junior A team for the first time, gratefully accepted. The first day that Kennedy showed up for a practice, he instructed the players on taking face-offs.⁴⁵³ It was also an educational opportunity for Bowman, who learned to work with the players he had and fit them into specific roles where they could excel – just as Kennedy had done. The Petes won their first Ontario Junior A championship that season, 1958-59. They advanced all the way to the final of the Memorial Cup, the Canadian championship playdown, before bowing out.

Bowman ended up getting as much from Kennedy as the players did. “From Ted Kennedy he learned even more the importance of a two-way game, of fundamentals. Of faceoffs. And Kennedy was the master of these things,” Dryden wrote. “If you win a faceoff, he knew,

⁴⁵¹ Milt Dunnell, “Teeder’s Talents Haven’t Escaped Leafs,” *Toronto Daily Star*, February 5, 1958.

⁴⁵² Milt Dunnell, “Teeder’s Talents.”

⁴⁵³ Dryden, *Scotty*, pp. 120-121.

you win control. If you have control, the other team doesn't. Everything begins there." Dryden continued:

What Scotty learned in Peterborough was not so much a marriage of two styles – the Canadiens' and the Leafs' – as the creation of a way of thinking. Too basic to be a philosophy: *Know what you've got. Get your players to do what they can do. Find a way.* It was essential learning for Scotty and helped him immensely when he took over St. Louis, an expansion team made up of mostly minor-league players. It even served him well with the great Canadiens teams of the 1970s. And it all started in Peterborough, with Ted Kennedy, when Scotty was 25."⁴⁵⁴

Bowman remembered Kennedy's lessons while building the St. Louis Blues as an NHL expansion franchise in the late 1960s. The NHL doubled in size in 1967, adding six new teams and placing them all into one division while keeping the six established teams in their own grouping. As Dryden alluded to in the above quote, all the new teams struggled to find NHL-calibre talent for their rosters. As the Blues' coach, and working with general manager Lynn Patrick, a former NHL player and coach who had long been an admirer of Day even while they were active rivals, Bowman constructed a lineup of strong and savvy veterans who were more adept at keeping the puck out of their own net than they were at anything else. "The Blues were a team that could defend but couldn't score," Dryden wrote, "so in order to win they had to get a lead and, in the third period, sit on that lead."⁴⁵⁵

The formula worked well for the Blues, who won their division championship and advanced to the Stanley Cup Final in each of their first three seasons. In their first appearance, they lost in four straight games to the Canadiens, but the Blues played so well defensively that every contest was decided by one goal, and two of the four games went to overtime. "I looked

⁴⁵⁴ Dryden, *Scotty*, p. 121.

⁴⁵⁵ Dryden, *Scotty*, p. 164.

over behind that St. Louis bench to make sure Hap Day wasn't in the house," Canadiens' goalie Lorne "Gump" Worsley said after Game 2. "That's the way his Maple Leafs used to play. Anybody who thinks we're going to skate away and hide on them is nuts. They don't give you enough free ice to get into high gear."⁴⁵⁶

The Blues' captain was Al Arbour, a strictly defensive defenceman who scored only thirteen goals during a career that spanned more than seven hundred NHL games. He won four Stanley Cups as a player, including two with the Leafs in the early 1960s. But before that, as a rookie in Detroit, he had been partnered with former Leaf Bob Goldham, who showed Arbour what he had learned from Day – the art of dropping to one or both knees to block shots from opposing players. "He was not only an expert at it," Arbour said of his mentor, "he was the greatest ever. He taught me a lot."⁴⁵⁷ And apparently Goldham's teachings did not stop at stopping pucks. In true Day style, Arbour had a habit of also stopping the forward movement of opponents. "I hated him as a player," said New York Islanders' general manager Bill Torrey. "He was always clutching and grabbing, getting away with murder. But he was a very intelligent player. He made use of what he had."⁴⁵⁸

Arbour succeeded Bowman as the Blues' coach in 1970, embarking on a career behind the bench that saw him win four more Stanley Cups – all consecutively – with the Islanders. Hired by Torrey in 1973, Arbour built and coached a team that was renowned for its commitment to fundamentals and to defence. "Arbour has the Islanders drilled in a tight-checking, grinding game relieved by opportunistic flashes of brilliance," a reporter wrote in 1981 as New York was successfully defending its championship for the first time. "The Islanders clear

⁴⁵⁶ Red Burnett, "Savard 'showers' St. Louis with goal," *Toronto Daily Star*, May 8, 1968.

⁴⁵⁷ Hans Tanner, "Amerks Meet Buffalo Six Here Tonight," *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, March 15, 1963.

⁴⁵⁸ Michael Farber, "Al Arbour – don't judge this man by his clothes," *Montreal Gazette*, May 12, 1984.

their zone with methodical efficiency, and they aren't averse to simply icing the puck if trouble develops. They forecheck with intensity and . . . they can score when given an opportunity, especially on the power play."⁴⁵⁹

The team reached its pinnacle in the 1983 Stanley Cup Final. The Islanders, looking to capture their fourth championship, faced off against the Edmonton Oilers, who had broken numerous scoring marks that season and were in the final for the first time. Led by Wayne Gretzky, the dynamic young Oilers had set a record with 424 goals in eighty regular season games. They won eleven of their twelve playoff games prior to the final, scoring seventy-two goals in the process. But the Islanders swept the series, limiting Edmonton to only six goals in four games.⁴⁶⁰ "We brought all of our speed and energy, and they just found a way to neutralize it," Gretzky said years later. "They just had an answer for everything we could throw at them."⁴⁶¹

Allan Abel, a columnist with *The Globe and Mail*, compared these Islanders to the Leafs of the 1940s, claiming that "to calmly and completely hold the fort against the most productive offence ever known – these are attributes of the old-style game, the game that Hap Day knew." Day happened to be watching the playoffs, and he also took note of what he saw. It reaffirmed what he had always known to be true. "They called me a defensive hockey coach, and, well, I certainly was," he told Abel. "I think the present series justifies that attitude . . . It's defence that wins hockey games."⁴⁶²

What Day did not know, but would have appreciated, is what Gretzky and teammate Kevin Lowe saw when leaving the Islanders' arena after the fourth and final game of the series. They walked past the open door of their opponents' dressing room and noticed that the Islanders

⁴⁵⁹ Canadian Press, "Isles compared with Canadiens," *Montreal Gazette*, May 7, 1981.

⁴⁶⁰ Frank Orr, "Nobody better than Isles," *Toronto Star*, May 18, 1983.

⁴⁶¹ Wayne Gretzky with Kirstie McLellan Day, 99 *Stories of the Game* (Toronto: Viking, 2016), p. 341.

⁴⁶² Allan Abel, "Happy's days we hear again."

were not celebrating their victory as much as they were recovering from it. It told Gretzky and Lowe why the Islanders had won and the Oilers had lost, and it taught them that they had yet to fully understand what playoff hockey was really all about. “They were battered and bruised and had ice bags and heat packs all over their bodies. Meanwhile we were in great shape, ready to go another playoff round,” Gretzky said. “Seeing them like that told us, ‘Okay, we learned a lot from the previous year – how hard the playoffs are, and how disciplined and focused you have to be. But to win the Stanley Cup, you have to take it to another level.’”⁴⁶³

Arbour was not the only one who benefited from Bob Goldham’s experience and knowledge. Goldham worked for many years as an analyst on *Hockey Night in Canada*, explaining to viewers what was happening during games and earning notice for his insightful commentary.⁴⁶⁴ Prior to that, he coached junior hockey as former teammate Kennedy had done, and in fact they were rival coaches in the OHA Junior A league in 1957-58, with Goldham behind the bench of the Toronto St. Michael’s Majors.

One of his players, Dave Keon, was a Leafs prospect who was blessed with great offensive talent but did not believe that he needed to be able to play a two-way game. Goldham, along with Majors’ team manager Father David Bauer, worked to not only convince Keon but also to teach him how to check, believing – and publicly stating – that he would not be successful in pro hockey unless he mastered the skill. “He has a lot to learn, if he’s going to make a living out of hockey,” Goldham said during Keon’s last junior season. “I keep telling him he has to use the body. You don’t have to kill anybody but you have to lean on a few guys in the NHL. Dave can do it, too. And he probably will. He’s an improving player.”⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶³ Gretzky with Day, *99 Stories of the Game*, p. 342.

⁴⁶⁴ Canadian Press, “Goldham proving popular with Hockey Night viewers,” *Regina Leader-Post*, April 10, 1969.

⁴⁶⁵ Jim Proudfoot, “Advice From Tod Sloan Has Guided Dave Keon,” *Toronto Daily Star*, February 20, 1960.

Keon did learn, and he became one of the best two-way players who ever skated in the NHL. He played twenty-two professional seasons, won four Stanley Cups with the Leafs, and served as the team's captain. He has been cited more than once as the greatest player in the franchise's history, the most recent such accolade coinciding with the unveiling of his statue on Legends Row outside the Leafs' arena.⁴⁶⁶ "The biggest influences I ever had in hockey were with the Majors: Father David Bauer and Bob Goldham," Keon said in a 2013 interview.⁴⁶⁷

Day's influence on Goldham was obvious, but Bauer, who had played junior with St. Michael's at Maple Leaf Gardens in the 1940s, had also learned from Day. Bauer blended scoring and tenacious checking as a player – his biographer wrote that Bauer had once been dubbed a "human fly" for his ability to stay with opponents he was checking – and when he became a coach, he made sure defence was always the primary consideration.⁴⁶⁸ Transferred to Vancouver by his religious order, the Basilian Fathers, he took over the University of British Columbia's hockey team in 1962. "I'm going to stress fundamentals and try to build a strong defence for a base to work with," he told a reporter from the UBC student newspaper. The reporter also quoted Bauer as saying that "a combination of a Toronto defence under Hap Day and an offence under Toe Blake would be the best team hockey has ever seen."⁴⁶⁹

Bauer quickly turned the UBC team from a chronic loser into an elite club that advanced to the final of the first Canadian university championship tournament in 1963 and formed the nucleus of the first national team to represent Canada in international hockey; Bauer coached that team at the 1964 Winter Olympics and managed it for most of the rest of that decade. He helped

⁴⁶⁶ Bob Duff, "Keon named top Maple Leaf of all time," *Ottawa Citizen*, November 7, 2007; Kevin McGran, "Keon as Leafs' franchise king has a nice ring," *Toronto Star*, October 15, 2016.

⁴⁶⁷ Gare Joyce, "Greatest Maple Leafs: No. 1 Dave Keon," *Sportsnet*, December 31, 2013, <https://www.sportsnet.ca/hockey/24-7/greatest-maple-leafs-no-1-dave-keon/>

⁴⁶⁸ Greg Oliver, *Father Bauer and the Great Experiment: The Genesis of Canadian Olympic Hockey* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2017), p. 40.

⁴⁶⁹ Bert MacKinnon, "Back to fundamentals with Bauer in charge," *The Ubyyssey*, January 5, 1962.

pioneer formal instruction for coaches in Canada in the early 1960s and was actively involved in the first national coaching clinic, which took place in Montreal in 1966.⁴⁷⁰ He is also credited as a driving force behind the establishment of the National Coaches' Certification Program in the 1970s.⁴⁷¹ Anyone who has coached organized hockey in Canada at any time in the past fifty years has felt Father David Bauer's influence in some way, as has anyone who has represented Canada in international hockey since 1964. For those people he personally mentored, including players who went on to play and coach in the NHL, they felt Hap Day's influence too.

Day's expertise was not limited to hockey tactics. He pioneered two innovations that became far more commonplace in the years and decades after he retired. One was the practice of using game films as a training tool, which appears to have never been done before by an NHL team. After the Second World War, Conn Smythe hired one of his former soldiers, Don "Shanty" McKenzie, to work as the building superintendent at Maple Leaf Gardens, and one of McKenzie's duties there was to operate a 16-millimetre camera high in the stands during home games.⁴⁷²

Media reports of the time said that Smythe used the films to impress upon sportswriters and NHL president Clarence Campbell that the Leafs were not as dirty as other teams alleged and in fact, he claimed, were more likely the victims of unfair treatment.⁴⁷³ This is no doubt true, but other articles reported that Day used the films to assess his players and to help them improve their play, something Howie Meeker also attested to in his interview with Jack Batten. Michael McKinley, who wrote the official history of *Hockey Night in Canada*, concurred with Meeker:

⁴⁷⁰ Bill Powers, "Coaches face tough grind," *Calgary Albertan*, August 23, 1965; Canadian Press, "100 hockey coaches at national clinic," *Ottawa Citizen*, August 13, 1966.

⁴⁷¹ Oliver, *Father Bauer*, p. 265.

⁴⁷² McKinley, *Hockey Night in Canada: 60 Seasons*, p. 45.

⁴⁷³ Gordon Walker, "Penalties, Scoring, Prez Raked by Conn's Ack-Ack," *Toronto Daily Star*, November 30, 1946; "Movies Reveal Ezinicki Stopped Edgar Laprade With Legal Bodycheck," *The Globe and Mail*, November 13, 1947.

“Day would make sure (the players) saw their mistakes – prefiguring the ‘teaching’ use of video that became common in the NHL and other sports in the 1970s and 1980s.”⁴⁷⁴

Other sports had beaten hockey to the punch in this area. It was not unusual for sports teams to create films to aid in training; college football teams in the United States were doing this on an informal basis as early as 1928, if not before, and for game preparation no later than 1930. It soon became a regular practice among pro clubs as well, and at least two Canadian football teams had adopted the tactic by 1939.⁴⁷⁵ But it appears that Day’s Leafs were the first NHL team to do this with any consistency and likely were the first to do it at all. This research uncovered no reporting, contemporaneous or otherwise, that established that any of Day’s rivals were also studying game films in the 1940s or earlier.

There was one instance in the fall of 1946 when Frank Selke arranged for a Canadiens-Leafs game to be filmed to prove his charges of excessive violence against Toronto. The game proved rather anticlimactic and Selke said after the game that the film would be used for training purposes, but there is no record in the *Montreal Gazette* or the *Montreal Daily Star* that this ever happened.⁴⁷⁶ Jack Adams suggested in 1947 that all teams film their games but, again, there seems to have been no follow-up and there is no readily available evidence that either Adams or his successor, Tommy Ivan, used the tool themselves with the Red Wings.⁴⁷⁷ At the league’s annual meeting in 1949, there was a consensus among the governors that film was of little use to

⁴⁷⁴ Jim Vipond, “Hornets Cry for Help! Puck Tags Harry Taylor,” *The Globe and Mail*, November 15, 1946; Jim Vipond, “Leafs Must Improve Defense Style For Tonight’s Game With Montreal,” *The Globe and Mail*, January 15, 1948; Batten, *The Leafs in Autumn*, p. 19; McKinley, *Hockey Night in Canada: 60 Seasons*, p. 45.

⁴⁷⁵ “Texas Football Team To See Action Pictures,” *Austin American*, October 11, 1928; Bernard Swanson, “Vanderbilt’s Motion Pictures of Every Gopher Move Aid in Victory,” *Minneapolis Star*, October 6, 1930; “Players View Trojan-Irish Grid Pictures,” *San Francisco Examiner*, December 24, 1932; “Riders See Grid Movie,” *Regina Leader-Post*, November 2, 1939.

⁴⁷⁶ “Cameras Click Leafian Action For Mr. Selke,” *Montreal Daily Star*, November 2, 1946.

⁴⁷⁷ Canadian Press, “Adams Advocates Movies of Games,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, November 15, 1947.

hockey teams because, according to a sportswriter who was at the meeting, “hockey is too fast for proper display and for following the puck by television.”⁴⁷⁸

Subsequent Leafs coaches continued to use films after Day left the bench. Left-winger Sid Smith publicly credited films with helping the team to yet another Stanley Cup in 1951, by which time the Leafs were reportedly spending eight thousand dollars a year to operate two cameras for every home game and have the images processed by the next day so that the players could see what they had and had not done correctly. “The taking of moving pictures of the games is one of the highly important developments in big-time hockey today,” Smith said in remarks reported by the *Globe and Mail*. The article added that the Leafs were still the only NHL team using films for training, “although one or two others are said to be toying with the idea.”⁴⁷⁹ If these other teams did take up the practice, it can be accepted that Day’s influence, as demonstrated through the Leafs’ continuing success, was a significant factor.

Punch Imlach made extensive use of film with the Leafs in the 1960s, an important element in the construction of the franchise’s second dynasty, and in 1968, he had a playback machine installed that allowed him to watch replays between periods of games rather than waiting until the next day to see the evidence.⁴⁸⁰ By the 1970s, coaches with other teams had finally begun to realize the potential of film, or video, as it was now being called, as a teaching tool; Emile Francis of the Rangers, Scotty Bowman of the Canadiens, and Al Arbour of the Islanders were three prominent bench bosses who were noted in the media for taking the technology seriously. “That type of teaching method is going to be a big factor in the future,”

⁴⁷⁸ W.R. Wheatley, “NHL Decides to Allow Extra Player for Teams in 70-Game Schedule,” *The Globe and Mail*, June 2, 1949.

⁴⁷⁹ Al Nickleson, “Films Big Factor In Cup Victories Sid Smith Says,” *The Globe and Mail*, January 8, 1952.

⁴⁸⁰ Jim Vipond, “Imlach Sees 5-Game Set: Leafs Sojourn in Peterborough,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 22, 1960; Dick Bacon, “Double Feature Movie Imlach’s Answer to Loss,” *Ottawa Journal*, April 2, 1964; Canadian Press, “A Picture is Worth 1,000 Words,” *Edmonton Journal*, May 2, 1967; Jim Coleman, “NHL coaching stands still, Russian tactics are far superior,” *Ottawa Citizen*, February 26, 1968.

Bowman said. “We’ve been doing it but we don’t use it as much as we should.”⁴⁸¹ Bowman did not say what his particular inspiration was for adopting the technology, and he may not have known of Day’s pioneering work in this field, but clearly he and other like-minded coaches were following the trail Day had blazed.

It is interesting to note that after Roger Neilson was hired to coach the Leafs in 1977, sportswriters in Toronto and elsewhere reported on his heavy reliance on video in game preparation as if it were a novel concept.⁴⁸² Neilson’s methods proved so strangely fascinating to these writers that he became known by the sardonic nickname “Captain Video,” a handle that remained with him for the rest of his life and beyond. Neilson’s story is another example of how a narrative is created and perpetuated and eventually becomes accepted as a historical fact. After his death in 2003, some in the hockey media incorrectly credited him with having pioneered the use of video in the sport, an accolade that, while false, nevertheless stuck with him just as effectively as his nickname did.⁴⁸³ But the primary evidence demonstrates that if there was a single pioneer in this field, it was Hap Day, who brought it to the NHL three decades before Neilson’s arrival.

Today, of course, hockey has embraced technology to a significant degree. Coaches can use handheld electronic devices to watch instant replays at the bench, including multiple angles, during stoppages in play. In fact, NHL teams now employ coaches who are mainly if not entirely responsible for video analysis. The Leafs employed a nine-person coaching staff during the

⁴⁸¹ Dick Yerg, “Ranger game films assist in homework,” *Rockland County Journal-News*, April 10, 1973; Al Strachan, “Forum echoes die and Scotty muses over team’s future,” *Montreal Gazette*, May 10, 1975; John Gilbert, “Hockey,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 2, 1976.

⁴⁸² Canadian Press, “Neilson learning about Leafs watching them on videotape,” *St. Catharines Standard*, August 20, 1977; Frank Orr, “Leafs will encounter ‘different’ coach,” *Toronto Star*, September 17, 1977; Canadian Press, “Off-beat training plan pays off,” *Montreal Star*, November 1, 1977; Rex MacLeod, “The Neilson ratings,” *Toronto Star*, December 9, 1978.

⁴⁸³ William Houston, “Hockey coach who changed the game,” *The Globe and Mail*, June 23, 2003; Eric Duhatschek, “Hockey’s biggest shift: Fifty years of evolution in NHL coaching,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 10, 2017.

2023-24 NHL season, and two of those people held the titles of “video and coaching coordinator” and “video coordinator and statistical analyst.” Prior to the 1970s, the term “head coach” was rarely used in hockey because teams generally did not employ full-time assistant coaches. The Leafs in 2023-24 had a head coach, four assistant coaches, a goaltending coach, and a coaching development consultant, in addition to the two video coordinators.⁴⁸⁴ It is a far cry from the era when Day did all these jobs alone.

Day’s other unique innovation that allowed him and the Leafs to gain a competitive advantage over their rivals was the morning skate. For many years, the morning skate has been an NHL tradition, with teams often suiting up for a short practice on the day of a game. Many articles have been written about this tradition, and many coaches have been credited with its introduction. Michael Traikos, in the *Montreal Gazette*, speculated that it may have started after the 1972 Summit Series, or that it came about later in the 1970s due to the need to test newer skates and ensure they were in good condition. Philadelphia Flyers defenceman Joe Watson told a *New York Times* writer that Flyers’ coach Fred Shero initiated the practice after being inspired by the Soviets. Scotty Bowman told two different writers that coach Rudy Pilous of the Chicago Black Hawks introduced the morning skate to the NHL in the early 1960s, an opinion that broadcaster Dick Irvin Jr. concurred with.⁴⁸⁵

Gary Meagher of the NHL’s public relations office confirmed to Steve Politi of the *Raleigh News and Observer* that Day had originated the idea. Meagher said that in the 1940s, teams were left to their own devices when they went on road trips and had to have their skates

⁴⁸⁴ Jennifer Redenbach, et al., eds., *Toronto Maple Leafs Media Guide 2023-24* (Toronto: Toronto Maple Leaf Hockey Club, 2023), pp. 14-18.

⁴⁸⁵ Michael Traikos, “To practise or not to practise?” *Montreal Gazette*, February 11, 2017; Dave Caldwell, “With Players in Better Shape, the Sun is Setting on the Morning Skate in the N.H.L.,” *New York Times*, January 23, 2016; Jim Jamieson, “Morning skate had a Russian influence,” *Vancouver Province*, January 25, 2009; Stu Cowan, “Canadiens legend Bowman was never a fan of morning skates,” *Montreal Gazette*, December 8, 2017; Sean Gordon, “Game-day skate may have outlived its usefulness,” *The Globe and Mail*, May 5, 2012.

sharpened in opponents' arenas. If a player found during a game that his skates were not up to par, Meagher said, he would have to leave the ice and have his skates fixed. This invariably took far longer than Day thought was acceptable. He began insisting that his players arrive early to the rink to test their skates before games, which they did while still wearing suits and ties.⁴⁸⁶

Day was able to institute this practice because the Leafs, under his direction, became the first NHL team to travel with an employee who would be regarded today as an equipment manager. Tommy Naylor had been responsible for the maintenance of Toronto players' skates since the late 1910s, and he had a reputation as the best in the business. Jim Coleman wrote in a 1975 column that Day brought Naylor along for the 1945 playoffs, and Naylor brought with him a portable skate sharpener, a new piece of equipment that he had commissioned from hockey equipment manufacturer CCM. "Coach Hap Day demanded 'skate help' when the Maple Leafs went into the Montreal Forum to defeat Les Canadiens in the 1945 Stanley Cup playoffs," Coleman wrote. "Tommy got the CCM people to build a portable machine to his specifications and the Maple Leafs took it with them to Montreal. Now, such machines are standard equipment for pro hockey clubs."⁴⁸⁷

Unlike with the Pete Muldoon curse that he may have invented, Coleman can be believed in this instance because the archives show that he had written about Naylor's role contemporaneously in his coverage of the 1945 playoffs. "The Leafs didn't skate today but relaxed completely and planned to use their skates at the Forum tomorrow before the game," he wrote in *The Globe and Mail*. "Tommy Naylor (sic), the continent's foremost skate-sharpener, is travelling from Toronto to Montreal to put the final edge on the blades."⁴⁸⁸ Once again, Day had

⁴⁸⁶ Steve Politi, "'Morning skate' part of an NHL player's routine," *Raleigh News and Observer*, October 30, 1997.

⁴⁸⁷ Jim Coleman, "Quiet little Tommy Leafs' senior citizen," *Hamilton Spectator*, December 24, 1975.

⁴⁸⁸ Jim Coleman, "By Jim Coleman," *The Globe and Mail*, March 20, 1945.

been at the forefront of an innovation that NHL coaches would adopt later, whether they knew of his influence or not.

If they did not know, Howie Meeker could have told them at any time up until his death in November 2020 at age ninety-seven. The former Leaf player and coach was the most prominent conduit to Day, and for decades he had a national platform from which to espouse the virtues of his favourite coach. Working as a colour commentator and analyst primarily on *Hockey Night in Canada* on CBC, Meeker was easily the show's most famous broadcast personality in its pre-Don Cherry era. He had a distinctive high-pitched voice and a tendency to shout colourful exclamations like "Golly gee!" and "Jumpin' Jehoshaphat!" when he got excited on the air, which was often.⁴⁸⁹

He was opinionated and blunt, but he backed up his opinions with keen insight and his pioneering use of a telestrator during intermissions. The telestrator allowed Meeker to draw on the screen as he enthusiastically dissected replays, showing viewers exactly what had happened and why – even if it meant singling out a player who had made a mistake, which was previously unheard of among hockey broadcasters. "He was the first colour guy to be outspoken and critical," Gord Cutler, a producer with The Sports Network, said when Meeker retired from that network in 1998. "He always called it the way it was. You have no idea the passion for the game the guy has."⁴⁹⁰

But Canadians did know. Meeker frequently expressed his displeasure over the state of hockey in Canada, particularly in the coaching of children. He started operating his own hockey camps and, in the wake of the Summit Series, he parlayed his *Hockey Night in Canada* fame into

⁴⁸⁹ Iain MacIntyre, "Jumpinjehosiphath! It's Meeker bowing out, telestrator and all," *Vancouver Sun*, March 6, 1998.

⁴⁹⁰ MacIntyre, "Jumpinjehosiphath!"; Jack Miller, "Howie Meeker, the pied piper of hockey," *Toronto Star*, December 29, 1973; Lyndon Little, "A legend on the ice and behind the mic," *Vancouver Sun*, November 9, 2020.

a little media empire. *Howie Meeker Hockey School* was broadcast nationwide on CBC for several years beginning in 1973, featuring Meeker instructing kids in basic hockey fundamentals.⁴⁹¹ A companion book, *Howie Meeker's Hockey Basics*, was published that same year, with a second book, *More Hockey Basics from Howie Meeker*, following in 1975. Meeker acknowledged Day in the credits of the second book, which focused on checking drills, most of which Meeker said Day had taught him.⁴⁹²

Several years after Meeker retired, he briefly returned to prominence when the *Literary Review of Canada* published a list of what it considered to be the one hundred most important Canadian books and included *Howie Meeker's Hockey Basics* on the list. It was the only hockey book selected. *Ottawa Citizen* columnist Richard Bercuson was pleasantly surprised by its inclusion, noting that it had not been the first hockey instructional manual published in Canada. "Evidently, someone on the *Literary Review* is a hockey fan with a long memory, or has more than a passable understanding of the book's importance to how we teach the game," Bercuson wrote.

He added that Meeker's book differed from other instructional books partly because of his fame but also due to "its insistence on the value of basic skills instruction before attempting anything else . . . To put it in perspective, it was the hockey equivalent of a teacher showing students that grammar, spelling and syntax were inexorably linked to later success in written communications." The state of hockey instruction in Canada is still not ideal in many respects, but it is taken much more seriously now than it was before Meeker began to speak out. "Mr. Meeker's book deserved its lofty selection," Bercuson wrote. "We owe him."⁴⁹³

⁴⁹¹ Frank Orr, "Meeker TV show stresses new coaching methods," *Toronto Star*, September 19, 1973.

⁴⁹² Howie Meeker, *More Hockey Basics from Howie Meeker* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1975), n.p.

⁴⁹³ Richard Bercuson, The teacher, *Ottawa Citizen*, November 22, 2005.

The headline of Bercuson's column was simply, "The teacher." As his own mentor did, Meeker taught lessons about hockey that resonated and have lasted. It must be noted that Meeker, Anatoli Tarasov, Harry Sinden, Fred Shero, Scotty Bowman, Al Arbour, and Father David Bauer have all been honoured by the Hockey Hall of Fame for their contributions to the sport; Meeker received the Foster Hewitt Memorial Award for broadcasting and the others were inducted into the Hall as builders in recognition of their coaching achievements.⁴⁹⁴ These men, along with Lloyd Percival, Bob Goldham, and Hall of Fame players Turk Broda and Teeder Kennedy, are only some of the individuals who were influenced by Hap Day and who have passed his lessons along to others who followed in their footsteps, as they followed in his. Day was not simply a coach – he was a teacher in the truest sense, as historian Henry Adams might have recognized, and sport psychologist Coleman Griffith would surely have recognized. For as long as hockey is played, Day's effect on the game will remain eternal.

⁴⁹⁴ "Foster Hewitt Memorial Award Winners," *Hockey Hall of Fame*, <https://www.hhof.com/general/fosterhewittmemorialaward.html>; "Builder Inductees," *Hockey Hall of Fame*, <https://www.hhof.com/honouredmembers/builderinductees.html>

GAME 6 – HOCKEY IMMORTALITY

The concept of immortality is so seductive. The chance to live forever is what fuels many people, from kings to assassins, from poets to parents. The two-month Stanley Cup season is not about work or money but about permanence, the chance to leave a skate run in the sands of time. The memories fade and the clippings yellow, but a name engraved on a Cup will endure as long as people still keep score. They play for the honor of the damned thing.⁴⁹⁵

– Pat Hickey, journalist

Hockey immortality, as it probably is in any professional sport, is a curious thing in that it lasts yet may be fleeting at the same time. Eighty or one hundred years from now, will anyone really remember Wayne Gretzky's name as we do today, or will it be merely a historical curiosity as early twentieth-century great Cyclone Taylor's name is now? And then there is Ambrose O'Brien. His name adorns a trophy that was awarded for many years by the National Hockey League (NHL) to its playoff champion and, later, to the runner-up in the Stanley Cup Final. The NHL stopped awarding the O'Brien Cup, which now resides in the Hockey Hall of Fame, to which O'Brien himself was inducted in 1963 as a "builder" of the game. Yet few people today would be able to identify him as a founder of the NHL's predecessor league, the National Hockey Association, and of the Montreal Canadiens.⁴⁹⁶

Still, O'Brien will be in the Hall of Fame for as long as it exists, as will the trophy that was named for him, and consequently hockey fans in the future will be able to learn about him and his importance to the game of hockey, if they so choose. That is what commemoration does

⁴⁹⁵ Pat Hickey, "Gil Stein's hall of shame," *Montreal Gazette*, August 18, 1993.

⁴⁹⁶ Vern DeGeer, "Hockey Builder J.A. O'Brien Dies," *Montreal Gazette*, April 25, 1968; Kelly Egan, "Renfrew sets its sights on its hockey birthright," *Ottawa Citizen*, April 18, 2002.

for people – it honours them and hopefully offers opportunities to learn about them and what they did that was deemed worthy of remembrance. Commemoration has taken on many forms in the NHL, and this chapter will explore some of them. In this return to the theme of heritage and commemoration, this chapter will also establish that any time anyone receives – or is denied – a special honour like a Hall of Fame induction, the retirement of their jersey number, or a likeness in bronze, it is the result of a subjective process that may say as much about who is spearheading that process, and their aim, as it does about the person who is being commemorated.

Being awarded a place in the Hockey Hall of Fame is seen as an ultimate example of hockey immortality, along with having one's name engraved on the Stanley Cup. Much as the Cup is fiercely contested on an annual basis, the Hockey Hall of Fame is regularly fought over as well, in a different way. Every year when it announces the names of its latest inductees, it sparks not physical contact but vigorous debate among sportswriters and fans over who gets in and who does not. Some will never hear the names of their favourite players, and there is no shortage of angst regarding these perceived oversights, as in the recent case of Alexander Mogilny, to cite just one example.

The Russian forward, who defected from the Soviet Union to play in North America, scored more than five hundred goals and one thousand points during his NHL career, including the playoffs, and won a Stanley Cup. Many of his peers with similar or, arguably, lesser accomplishments were inducted years ago. “The continued exclusion of Alexander Mogilny, despite his utter brilliance as a hockey player and status as a trailblazer, is nothing less than a crime against the accurate history of the game,” *Toronto Star* columnist Damien Cox wrote after the Hall announcement in June 2023.⁴⁹⁷ (Mogilny was overlooked again in 2024.) But even for

⁴⁹⁷ Damien Cox, “We’re again left to ponder how selection panel thinks,” *Toronto Star*, June 22, 2023.

those players who get in, there are often questions related to the timing – should they have been inducted sooner, or later, or perhaps not at all? It is an even thornier situation regarding those chosen for induction as builders of the game, sometimes for no reason other than they owned an NHL team and had influence over the selection committee.

Honouring the famous is a practice seemingly as old as time, as we know from art that has survived from ancient civilizations. Historian Evan Friss has written that the Pantheon in Rome is an early example of what we might recognize as a hall of fame, dating to the second century AD, although it was dedicated as a shrine to the gods rather than to mortal people. Its name was co-opted by the French for what is now the Panthéon in Paris, which Friss described as a more secular structure with the mandate to “immortalize exceptional achievement.” He similarly characterized Walhalla in Bavaria, which King Ludwig I commissioned “to honor Germany’s greatest writers, scientists, philosophers, and statesmen” with a series of busts.⁴⁹⁸

Ludwig’s second such creation was the Ruhmeshalle, built in 1853 in Munich. Ruhmeshalle literally translates to “hall of fame,” and this may have been the first use of that term. While Walhalla was intended to commemorate distinguished people from all parts of Germany, Ludwig commissioned Ruhmeshalle to honour people who were specifically from Bavaria. Henry Mitchell MacCracken, the chancellor of New York University (NYU), was inspired by Ruhmeshalle – and by the Panthéon in Paris and Westminster Abbey in London – to create something similar in the United States. He called it the Hall of Fame for Great Americans and established it on NYU’s main campus in the Bronx.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁸ Evan Friss, “From University Heights to Cooperstown: Halls of Fame and American Memory,” *Journal of Archival Organization*, vol. 3, no. 4 (1995), pp. 88-89.

⁴⁹⁹ Henry Mitchell MacCracken, “The Hall of Fame,” *The American Monthly Review of Reviews*, vol. 22 (1900), p. 563.

Individual and team sports had been gaining popularity in the United States in Canada since the second half of the nineteenth century, but the modern concept of athletes as heroes dates to the early part of the twentieth century, soon after MacCracken's initiative came to life. Historian Colin Howell has written that sport had gained respectability and "a new legitimacy as a pleasurable mass leisure pursuit," which, aided by exposure in newspapers and on the new medium of radio, helped it to gain tremendous stature in popular culture in the wake of the First World War.⁵⁰⁰ This stature was exploited and further aided by advertisers of consumer products, who learned the value of promoting not only their goods but also lifestyles to which the impressionable public could hope to aspire. Howell called this the emergence of "the cult of the sporting hero," noting that such figures "were the idols of a consuming society and were themselves to be consumed and emulated."⁵⁰¹ It is a trend that has lasted; advertisers continue to use star athletes in their promotions, and athletes are keenly aware of the value of endorsements and of the ability to capitalize on their personas.

Baseball was the first modern sport to seek to immortalize its stars, which is fitting since it had long been commonly referred to in the United States as the "national pastime," and the biggest star of baseball's first postwar era, George Herman "Babe" Ruth, transcended sport like few others ever have. This thesis will not delve into the absolute fiction that the game of baseball was invented by a man named Abner Doubleday in Cooperstown, NY, in 1839, other than to note that it is a perfect example of how a narrative can be manipulated by people and institutions seeking to shape the future by seizing control of the past. What is pertinent here is that in the 1930s, the people of Cooperstown recognized that they had an opportunity to capitalize on the

⁵⁰⁰ Colin D. Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers: Sport and the Making of Modern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 2001, p. 91.

⁵⁰¹ Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers*, pp. 95-96.

forthcoming (purported) one hundredth anniversary of baseball's invention. They found an enthusiastic partner in organized baseball, as Ford Frick, president of the National League, had recently visited the Hall of Fame for Great Americans and felt the concept would work for the sport. With that institution serving as an inspiration, the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum was built in Cooperstown and opened in time for the "anniversary" in 1939.⁵⁰²

Frick was correct that a hall of fame works in the context of sport. Certainly, because they often also serve as museums, halls of fame are excellent examples of how sport history is preserved and how sport heritage may be presented. Sociologist Eldon Snyder has written that the presentation is the main thing that makes sports halls of fame popular, because they "create the past that is appropriate for nostalgic feelings."⁵⁰³ Those feelings may be private, engendering personal memories of certain times and places, or they may be collective because they bring back a sense of community remembrance of specific occurrences; from a hockey standpoint, Snyder cited as an example the United States men's hockey team's 1980 Olympic triumph, colloquially known as the Miracle on Ice. Some nostalgia, he stressed, may of course be both private and collective.⁵⁰⁴ In the case of the Miracle on Ice, Snyder's reference to collective nostalgia recalls Benedict Anderson's concept of an imagined community that may exist only in the context of remembering Mike Eruzione's goal that clinched the Americans' win over the Soviet Union in the semifinal of the Olympic tournament.

Snyder also wrote that sport can be compared to religion because of the devotion it inspires in its followers, who may consider sport venues and associated sites to be sacred places

⁵⁰² Friss, "From University Heights to Cooperstown," pp. 97-99.

⁵⁰³ Eldon E. Snyder, "Society of Nostalgia: Sport Halls of Fame and Museums in America," *Sociology of Sport Journal*, vol. 8, no. 3 (1991), p. 237.

⁵⁰⁴ Snyder, "Society of Nostalgia," pp. 230-231, 235.

where they may make pilgrimages.⁵⁰⁵ Because of this, he argued, halls of fame are modern-day shrines, or “secular temples dedicated to the sport muses – gods and goddesses and the spiritual world of sport.”⁵⁰⁶ In this way, then, halls of fame are directly connected to their earliest inspirations, such as the Pantheon in Rome, where gods were likewise honoured. Additionally, athletes who earn Hall of Fame induction are often said to have achieved “immortality.” This is an interesting point because of a religious connotation that has somehow been attached to the Stanley Cup; it has long been referred to as “hockey’s Holy Grail,” often in upper case as demonstrated here.⁵⁰⁷ (It is amusing to note that an NHL team called the Devils has won this particular Holy Grail three times while the team from Los Angeles, which translates to “The Angels,” has only won it twice.)

Hockey administrator James Sutherland took note of the establishment of the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown and may have been the first person to suggest the creation of a Hockey Hall of Fame. A native of Kingston, Ontario, and a former president of both the Ontario Hockey Association (OHA) and the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association (CAHA), the well-connected Sutherland began lobbying for a hockey equivalent to be established in his home city, promoting the Cooperstown-like notion that Kingston had been the sport’s birthplace. Support steadily grew for the concept until September 1943, when the NHL and the CAHA agreed to support a hall of fame which would be built in Kingston.⁵⁰⁸ At that time, with *Hockey Night in Canada* radio broadcasts having brought the country together as few things had done before or

⁵⁰⁵ Snyder, “Society of Nostalgia,” p. 228.

⁵⁰⁶ Snyder, “Society of Nostalgia,” p. 237.

⁵⁰⁷ “Bruins Set to Chase Hockey’s Holy Grail,” *Boston Evening Globe*, April 8, 1970; Grant Granger, “Stanley came to Winnipeg: Hockey’s Holy Grail is no stranger to Muddy Waters,” *Winnipeg Sun*, December 12, 1999; “The Cup is still the Holy Grail,” *Toronto Star*, April 7, 2012.

⁵⁰⁸ Eddie Lee, “Hockey Hall of Fame Awarded to Kingston,” *Kingston Whig-Standard*, September 13, 1943; Canadian Press, “C.A.H.A. Approves Hall of Fame Site,” *Montreal Daily Star*, September 21, 1943.

have done since, it made sense to have a hall of fame devoted to Canada's national sport and to the stars who had excelled at playing it.

The Baseball Hall of Fame began announcing the names of honourees before there was a building, which helped to publicize the institution and generate momentum for its eventual opening. Hockey again followed baseball's path, to a degree, announcing its first nine names in May 1945.⁵⁰⁹ One difference was that while four of the first five players named to the Baseball Hall were alive, and were all present to be officially inducted in 1939, all nine of the players who were first named to the Hockey Hall were already dead.⁵¹⁰ Another difference was that the physical site in Cooperstown was built and opened on schedule, while the Hockey Hall languished for more than a decade with little or no progress being made, although its officials continued to select players and builders to be honoured.

Understandably, work on building the Hockey Hall of Fame could not begin while the Second World War was on, but the end of the war later in 1945 did not bring a facility any closer to reality. Sutherland had given up on it by 1955, saying that although he had been collecting memorabilia and storing it in the basement of his home, only \$39,000 had been raised toward the construction and maintenance of a building. "He spoke of a lack of co-operation from hockey's governing bodies as a blow to his ambition of establishing a hockey landmark," said an article in the *Montreal Gazette*.⁵¹¹ Sutherland's death later that year seemed to sap any remaining momentum the project still had; no new members of the Hall of Fame were announced between 1952 and 1958.

⁵⁰⁹ Canadian Press, "Howie Morenz Leads List Hall of Fame Selections," *Montreal Daily Star*, May 1, 1945.

⁵¹⁰ Fred Kerner, "Sport Snapshots," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, May 7, 1945.

⁵¹¹ "Hockey Hall of Fame Not for Kingston, Ont. Says James Sutherland," *Montreal Gazette*, June 6, 1955.

In the latter year, the NHL finally withdrew its support for the Kingston plan and took control of the Hall of Fame, declaring that it would instead be built in Toronto at the site of the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE). Frank Selke of the Montreal Canadiens emerged as the new public face of the project, along with NHL President Clarence Campbell. A new selection committee was named at the same time, and it was dominated by NHL and CAHA officials, along with a handful of sportswriters and one broadcaster.⁵¹² Announcements of new names to be added to the Hall of Fame picked up again a few months later, with more than twenty new members added in 1958 alone.⁵¹³ Taking control of the past, as often happens in heritage, gave the NHL control of the future.

The first controversy over Hockey Hall of Fame selections arose the same year that the original nine players were chosen. Later in 1945, it was announced that a slate of “builders of hockey,” defined at the time as “men associated in an official capacity with development of the ice sport in Canada,” would also be inducted. Conn Smythe objected, telling Andy Lytle of the *Toronto Daily Star* that he had believed the Hall of Fame would be maintained for players only. “Can anyone present give me the playing records of any of these selectees?” he asked.⁵¹⁴ But that was mild compared to the controversies ahead. With the new building’s official opening in 1961 came the realization that finally the Hall of Fame was a tangible thing, and questions were soon being asked about why certain individuals had been ignored. It became clear that in some cases, personal connections and preferences mattered more than actual accomplishments did.

In December 1962, *Montreal Gazette* columnist Vern DeGeer asked why Leo Dandurand, the former longtime owner, manager, and coach of the Canadiens had not been

⁵¹² Canadian Press, “Hockey’s Hall of Fame To Be Built at CNE,” *Toronto Daily Star*, January 31, 1958.

⁵¹³ Red Burnett, “21 New Hall-of-Famers,” *Toronto Daily Star*, April 28, 1958.

⁵¹⁴ “Outstanding Builders of Hockey Given Places in Hall of Fame,” *Kingston Whig-Standard*, October 17, 1945; Andy Lytle, “Speaking on Sports,” *Toronto Daily Star*, October 24, 1945.

honoured as a builder. DeGeer said Selke had asked Art Ross the same question, with Ross allegedly replying that he, Lester Patrick, and Dandurand had formed an early version of the Hall of Fame's selection committee, and that Ross and Patrick had been "too busy putting ourselves in the Hall at the time. Lester put me in. I named Lester. Jointly we were going to elect Leo later," Ross was quoted as saying. "But the NHL put Clarence Campbell in charge after Sutherland died, and our committee never got together again."⁵¹⁵

The timeline does not work if that version of the story is to be accepted. Patrick was selected in 1947, followed by Ross in the next cohort, in 1949. There were other cohorts in 1950 and in 1952, and Dandurand could have been named in either of them, but he was not. Sutherland did not die until 1955 and the NHL did not officially take over the process until 1958 – so when exactly would Ross and Patrick have lost the trail on Dandurand? This is not to say that Ross and Patrick did not deserve induction – they would have merited induction as both players and builders, if that were possible. But it seems improper that they would successfully nominate each other in the manner of a backroom deal, if that is in fact how it transpired, and it seems unforgivably shallow that they would simply forget about putting forward another person they had reportedly both agreed should be in. As if on cue, though, Dandurand was chosen as one of the next group of honourees four months after DeGeer's column was published.⁵¹⁶

At the same time DeGeer raised the issue of Dandurand, he also made a compelling case for Jack Marshall, a player who had been so dominant in the early years of the twentieth century that hockey historian Charles Coleman told DeGeer his absence from the Hall of Fame was unconscionable. "It is astonishing to read that certain prejudices apparently have excluded Jack Marshall from the Hockey Hall of Fame when you consider the record of this great player,"

⁵¹⁵ Vern DeGeer, "Why Has Jack Marshall Been Overlooked For Hall?" *Montreal Gazette*, December 18, 1962.

⁵¹⁶ "Dandurand On New Slate to Hockey Hall of Fame," *Montreal Star*, April 19, 1963.

Coleman said.⁵¹⁷ He did not elaborate on what he thought those prejudices were, but it is imaginable that bias did exist because Marshall was not selected for induction until 1965, shortly before his death. DeGeer, in announcing that Marshall had finally been honoured, publicly thanked Selke and fellow Montreal columnist Baz O'Meara for what he believed was their role in facilitating it.⁵¹⁸

It can be imagined that bias existed in Marshall's case because it is known to have existed in others. A particularly ugly example of it began to play out during the time when Marshall waited to be chosen, but in this instance, the bias and the person behind it were both well known. Harvey "Busher" Jackson had been an important member of the Leafs' Kid Line during the 1930s. He led the NHL in points in 1931-32 and was named to the First All-Star Team four times. O'Meara had cited him as a certain Hall of Famer as early as 1943, while he was still an active player.⁵¹⁹ When Jackson retired a year later, only four players in the history of the league had scored more goals than he had.⁵²⁰ He was indeed a Hall of Famer by almost anyone's standard – except Conn Smythe's. And by the time the Hall of Fame got around to inducting the members of the Kid Line in the early 1960s, Smythe, who had been inducted as a builder in 1958, had become a powerful figure in the Hall's operation.

Jackson, despite his on-ice achievements, was an alcoholic, and an irresponsible one who lost two marriages and numerous jobs due to his disease. He repeatedly let down family and friends who tried to help him. Smythe was among those who tried to be of assistance – his son Hugh, a physician, treated Jackson for free in the days before Medicare – but he still saw

⁵¹⁷ DeGeer, "Why Has Jack Marshall Been Overlooked."

⁵¹⁸ Vern DeGeer, "Good Morning with Vern DeGeer," *Montreal Gazette*, June 9, 1965.

⁵¹⁹ Baz O'Meara, "The Passing Sport Show," *Montreal Daily Star*, September 25, 1943.

⁵²⁰ Canadian Press, "Busher Jackson Retires From Hockey," *Ottawa Journal*, November 7, 1944.

Jackson's condition as a failure of character.⁵²¹ Jackson's linemates, Charlie Conacher and Joe Primeau, earned Hall of Fame recognition in 1961 and 1963, respectively, but Jackson was deliberately left out. Newspaper columnists questioned his glaring absence; Smythe, in responding to Dick Beddoes of *The Globe and Mail*, pointed to a paragraph in the Hall's bylaws that said prospective inductees would be judged "on the basis of playing ability, integrity, character and their contribution to their team and the game of hockey in general." The paragraph, Smythe added, was "self-explanatory, and as far as I am concerned (Jackson) does not meet these specifications."⁵²² Smythe's biographer, Kelly McParland, wryly noted that Smythe's efforts to help Jackson in private "while abusing him in public" was "a characteristic contradiction" of the man.⁵²³

The Beddoes column was one of many published in Canadian newspapers in the spring of 1966 after Jackson was snubbed again. Beddoes, along with Hal Walker in the *Calgary Herald* and Hal Malone in the *Victoria Daily Times*, pointed out that integrity and character had seemingly not been a consideration when Chicago Black Hawks co-owner Jim Norris was chosen for induction in 1962 as a builder despite his well-known underworld connections. Beddoes and Malone also noted that one member of the new 1966 cohort, former Leaf Babe Pratt, had once been expelled from the NHL for betting on games.⁵²⁴ "Others have passed the threshold of that crammed Valhalla down there in the CNE grounds without possessing a voucher for a Temperance Hall of Fame, or an order of monks," Beddoes wrote. "Where, one may justifiably ask, is the selectors' sense of consistency?"⁵²⁵

⁵²¹ Hal Walker, "Hal Walker," *Calgary Herald*, May 10, 1966.

⁵²² Dick Beddoes, "Many are called, one not chosen," *The Globe and Mail*, June 16, 1966.

⁵²³ McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, pp. 311-312.

⁵²⁴ Beddoes, "Many are called"; Walker, "Hal Walker"; Hal Malone, "Hal Malone Looks at Sports," *Victoria Daily Times*, June 30, 1966.

⁵²⁵ Beddoes, "Many are called."

Jackson died in June 1966, shortly after the Hall's latest announcement. Selke, the chair of the Hall's selection committee, said later that he would have approved Jackson's induction if not for Smythe's intransigence.⁵²⁶ This was a disappointing demonstration of cowardice from a man who should have stopped deferring to Smythe twenty years earlier when he quit the Leafs, but it emphasized the shallow capriciousness of the Hall's selection process. Integrity and character ultimately mattered only to one person in Jackson's case and, ironically, that person showed little character of his own in his petty judgment of Jackson's fitness for a place in the Hockey Hall of Fame.

It was not until 1971 that Jackson was finally chosen to be inducted. Smythe, who by then was the Hall's chairman, was incensed that he had been overruled and his narrative had been superseded, insisting that Jackson still did not meet the necessary criteria. "All I can say is that the standards are dropping if they let in a man like Jackson," said Smythe, who immediately resigned his chairmanship in protest.⁵²⁷ He held a grudge for the rest of his own life, spitefully claiming in his posthumously published memoirs that in addition to his personal failings, Jackson had been overrated as a player. "I fought for years to keep Busher Jackson out of the Hall of Fame," he said. "I'm a hero worshipper myself and he wasn't a good enough person to earn the hero worship of kids."⁵²⁸ Smythe believed he was proving a point and being principled in resigning from the Hall of Fame in defence of that point, but what he really proved, again, was that it did not matter what a hockey player did on the ice if a prevailing narrative could be created – and, more importantly, maintained – that they did not deserve to be honoured for reasons that had little or nothing to do with ability and performance.

⁵²⁶ McParland, *The Lives of Conn Smythe*, p. 323.

⁵²⁷ "Conn Smythe critical of Busher's selection," *The Globe and Mail*, June 10, 1971; "Smythe quits Fame Hall post, laments drop," *The Globe and Mail*, June 11, 1971.

⁵²⁸ Smythe with Young, *If You Can't Beat 'Em in the Alley*, p. 98.

Ken Dryden, the Hall of Fame goaltender-turned-author, has felt the negative aspects of hero worship, and he might have empathized with Jackson because of it. In his first book, *The Game*, Dryden made a distinction between celebrities and heroes, claiming that he and other hockey players qualified as the former but not the latter. They are celebrities, he wrote, because they “are common threads between husbands and wives, parents and kids, friends . . . our images and names are reported on, gossiped about, carried over great distances by cable or wave – and we renew our celebrity each time we play.”⁵²⁹ Dryden also wrote that he understood why celebrity translates to heroism in the minds of the public. For one thing, athletes are surrounded by people and entities with vested interests in making them look good – “a whole symbiotic industry of journalists, commentators, biographers, award-givers,” he wrote. “(Y)ou think I am better than I am – brighter than I am, kinder, more compassionate, capable of more things, as good at life as I am at the game – and I’m not. Off the ice, I struggle as you do, but off the ice you never see me, even when sometimes you’re sure you do.”⁵³⁰ He went on:

We are not heroes. We are hockey players. We do exciting, sometimes courageous, sometimes ennobling things like heroes do, but no more than anyone else does. Blown up on a TV screen or a page of print, hyped by distance and imagination, we seem more heroic, the scope of our achievement seems grander, but it isn’t, and we’re not . . . Instead, we are no more than examples, metaphors because we enter every home, models for the young because their world is small and we do what they do. But by creating celebrity and mistaking it for substance, too often we turn celebrity into hero, and lose again.⁵³¹

Dryden’s words are easier to understand now than when he wrote them because we have access to far more information on a far greater basis, and consequently we can have a clearer

⁵²⁹ Ken Dryden, *The Game – 20th Anniversary Edition* (Toronto: John Wiley and Sons), 2003, p. 177.

⁵³⁰ Dryden, *The Game*, pp. 178, 181.

⁵³¹ Dryden, *The Game*, p. 182.

picture of the foibles and flaws in the players we watch. Myths are harder to create and even harder to maintain. This should be a positive thing, because it means that we should be able to judge sports figures on their merits, meaning their performance and accomplishments. If that had always been the case – and there is no good reason why it was not – Jackson would have been recognized while he was still alive and able to appreciate it.

Doug Harvey was briefly hindered by the same attitude that victimized Jackson. During an NHL career that lasted from 1947 to 1969, mostly in Montreal, he played for six Stanley Cup-winning teams, was chosen the league's best defenceman seven times, and was named to the First All-Star Team on ten occasions. He established himself as not only the game's best defenceman but also, in some people's eyes, as the standard by which future defencemen would be judged. As an example, the phrase "another Doug Harvey" was sometimes used to describe Bobby Orr as a young player.⁵³²

But he too drank to excess, and he had a rebellious nature that did not always endear him to his employers. Among his transgressions was his involvement in the formation of the first National Hockey League Players' Association in the 1950s, an initiative that was crushed by the league, with many of its leaders punished by being traded away from their teams under less than ideal circumstances; Harvey was sent to the lowly New York Rangers.⁵³³ He was eligible to be elected to the Hall of Fame in 1972, having completed a supposedly mandatory three-year waiting period following his retirement, and he showed up at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal for the announcement in June of that year, expecting to hear his name called. But Selke, the former Canadiens' GM, claimed to not be aware that Harvey had been away from the

⁵³² Doug McConnell, "Orr Stays on Defence," *Kingston Whig-Standard*, September 16, 1966; "Orr Draws Ovation, Big M a Suspension," *Victoria Daily Times*, October 24, 1966; Tom Fitzgerald, "Folksy Homecoming for Bobby Orr," *Boston Sunday Globe*, July 5, 1970.

⁵³³ Lynn McAuley, "Doug Harvey has travelled a rough and rocky road," *Hamilton Spectator*, January 14, 1986.

game for the required three years and thus eligible for enshrinement. Harvey, it emerged that day, had not even been nominated, much less elected.⁵³⁴

He was upset and embarrassed. Selke tried to make it up to him in the moment but only made matters worse. “We’ll get you in next year,” Selke told Harvey within earshot of *Montreal Gazette* reporter Tim Burke, adding, “but you’ve got to help me.” Burke wrote that Selke had spoken “portentously,” and Harvey’s interpretation of Selke’s words was that he needed to curtail his drinking. He believed that his drinking and his past involvement with the Players’ Association were the real reasons why he had not been considered for the Hall of Fame in a year when he should have had no trouble being elected. And he reacted, on the spot, in a way that Busher Jackson never did. “I’m not interested in getting into the Hall of Fame,” Harvey said. “I don’t want any part of an outfit that bends the rules for their own convenience – where you have to be one of the establishment or you don’t qualify.”⁵³⁵

A rule had in fact been bent that day, as the Hall chose Jean Beliveau, Harvey’s former teammate, and Gordie Howe for induction. They had both retired from the NHL in 1971 – in Howe’s case it turned out to be a temporary retirement – and the Hall of Fame had waived the three-year waiting period in both of their cases.⁵³⁶ Such measures had been taken before with other deserving players – it had happened the previous year when the late Terry Sawchuk was inducted, and two years prior to that with Leonard “Red” Kelly, to name only two examples.⁵³⁷ But it did not happen in Harvey’s case, even though his resume would have warranted it. Even

⁵³⁴ Tim Burke, “Snubbed by Hall of Fame, Doug Harvey toasts his defiance,” *Montreal Gazette*, June 8, 1972.

⁵³⁵ Burke, “Snubbed by Hall of Fame.”

⁵³⁶ Howe returned to the ice in 1973, joining the Houston Aeros of the World Hockey Association, a rival pro league, so he could play with his sons, Marty and Mark. Coincidentally, his comeback was engineered by Doug Harvey in his capacity as the Aeros’ chief scout and assistant coach. See: Canadian Press, “Hull, Howe nearly became linemates,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 12, 1973.

⁵³⁷ Kevin Shea, *The Hall: Celebrating Hockey’s Heritage, Heroes and Home* (Montreal, Griffintown Media, 2018), p. 70.

Howe expressed misgivings about what had happened. “There’s no reason why we should be in,” he said regarding himself and Beliveau, “and not Doug Harvey.”⁵³⁸ But Selke, not Howe and certainly not Harvey, was in control of the narrative.

Harvey was elected the following year, but his hurt feelings had not dissipated. He told a reporter that he would not accept the honour. “I’m not sure when the induction ceremonies are, but whenever they are, I plan to be out fishing,” he said, adding that he saw the Hall of Fame as “nothing but politics, and that’s one game I’ve never played.” Harvey added.⁵³⁹ True to his word, he did not show up for his induction; his name was mentioned, but Clarence Campbell did not read out his accomplishments and did not comment on his absence.⁵⁴⁰ In choosing to induct Harvey against his wishes and then to not acknowledge his absence, the establishment made its one last move to demonstrate to Harvey who was really in charge.

Whatever emphasis the Hall of Fame still put on character and integrity was clearly long gone by 1977, when it inducted Leafs’ owner Harold Ballard as a builder despite his sordid past, which included fraud and theft convictions and a prison sentence related to misappropriation of funds belonging to Maple Leaf Gardens. It has never been clear what Ballard built while he owned the franchise, or what he had done to deserve induction. “Nobody could ever quite comprehend why,” *Toronto Star* columnist Jim Proudfoot wrote after Ballard’s death in 1990. “He had seized control of the Leafs and the Gardens six years before and by the time of his enshrinement he was well on his way toward destroying both institutions.”⁵⁴¹

Indeed, the Leafs went through their darkest period while under Ballard’s control, earning an ignominious reputation for futility that still plagues them today. Ballard’s main talent as

⁵³⁸ Dick Mackey, “Doug Harvey on Outside Looking In,” *Kansas City Star*, June 8, 1972.

⁵³⁹ Associated Press, “Harvey to miss his own induction,” *Montreal Gazette*, July 19, 1973.

⁵⁴⁰ Canadian Press, “Harvey inducted into hockey hall,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, August 24, 1973.

⁵⁴¹ Jim Proudfoot, “Don’t weep for buccaneer Ballard,” *Toronto Star*, April 12, 1990.

owner was boorish behaviour that gained him media attention but little respect.⁵⁴² He alienated many of the team's star players and alumni, captains Dave Keon and Darryl Sittler among them.⁵⁴³ Employees he fired were sometimes the last to know, only learning their fate when arriving at the Gardens to find that they no longer had a parking space, an office phone, or, in the case of Stafford Smythe's son Tom, an office at all.⁵⁴⁴ Ballard called the Leafs' Stanley Cup banners "dust collectors" and turned them into drop cloths when the Gardens was renovated and painted; they were presumably then thrown away.⁵⁴⁵ Also discarded was Foster Hewitt's historic broadcast booth, popularly known to millions of Canadians as "the gondola." Ballard ordered it dismantled and incinerated, to Hewitt's shock and dismay.⁵⁴⁶ Because of Ballard, the Leafs went through the 1970s and 1980s consistently demonstrating an appalling lack of respect and appreciation for their own history and heritage.

Ballard had come to own the Leafs through his friendship with Stafford Smythe. The two men teamed up with Toronto media magnate John Bassett to buy the Gardens and its hockey team from Conn Smythe in 1961. It was Stafford Smythe who served as president of the team as it enjoyed its last great period of success, winning four Stanley Cups between 1962 and 1967. Ballard, an executive vice-president on the business side of the franchise, had nothing to do with the hockey operations.⁵⁴⁷ But while the Leafs were winning, Smythe and Ballard began using the Gardens as a slush fund, diverting money to themselves for various personal expenses.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴² Rex MacLeod, "End of an era: Farewell, Pal Hal," *Toronto Star*, April 12, 1990.

⁵⁴³ Rosie DiManno, "Bitter Keon to stay home," *Toronto Star*, February 12, 1999; Jay Greenberg, "The Rocky Road to Philadelphia," *Philadelphia Daily News*, February 17, 1982.

⁵⁴⁴ Rick Fraser, "Ex-GM Imlach loses parking spot," *Toronto Star*, December 3, 1981; Frank Orr, "Leafs bid farewell to a legend," *Toronto Star*, October 1, 1996; Jan Wong, "Smythe loses Gardens – wins game," *The Globe and Mail*, November 4, 2000.

⁵⁴⁵ Neil MacCarl, "Proud pennants now paint rags at the Gardens," *Toronto Daily Star*, October 30, 1968.

⁵⁴⁶ Rick Boulton, "Oh no! Ballard's trashed Hewitt's gondola," *Toronto Star*, September 20, 1979.

⁵⁴⁷ Damien Cox and Gord Stellick, *'67: The Maple Leafs, Their Sensational Victory, and the End of an Empire* (Toronto: John Wiley and Sons), 2006, p. 180.

⁵⁴⁸ Cox and Stellick, *'67*, pp. 191-192.

The Gardens, however, was a publicly traded corporation, and Smythe and Ballard faced numerous criminal charges when they were caught. Bassett, who was not involved or implicated in the scandal, tried to force Smythe and Ballard out, but he failed in his power play and sold out to them instead in September 1971.⁵⁴⁹ Smythe unexpectedly died shortly thereafter, before he could stand trial. But he had named Ballard as the executor of his will and gave him the first right of refusal on Smythe's shares in the Gardens. Ballard exercised that right and emerged as the majority owner, then was found guilty at his trial and went to prison for a year.⁵⁵⁰

Interestingly, although Ballard ended up in the Hall of Fame, Stafford Smythe was never inducted even though it is believed that the Leafs' success in the 1960s was due at least in some part to his role in having developed the players on the roster.⁵⁵¹ Certainly, he would have been a more deserving recipient of the honour than Ballard, or Bruce Norris, the longtime owner of the Red Wings who inherited that franchise and oversaw its degradation through his ineptitude and arrogance. When Norris was inducted into the Hall as a builder in 1969, Jim Coleman mocked both him and the institution. "A builder of WHAT?" he asked in his column, adding that he found the selection to be a "hilarious spectacle."⁵⁵² One must conclude that the only thing Norris and Ballard did to merit Hall of Fame induction was own their teams long enough and gain enough influence to persuade the right people that they should be in. Dying early, as Stafford Smythe did, left his candidacy to chance, and he remains unrecognized because of that.⁵⁵³

Humour, as Coleman demonstrated, is probably the most positive way to consider the Hall and its mysterious selection process. Paul Henderson is not in the Hall of Fame despite

⁵⁴⁹ Cox and Stellick, '67, pp. 198-199.

⁵⁵⁰ Cox and Stellick, '67, pp. 198-202.

⁵⁵¹ Neil Stevens, "Short end of a legacy," *National Post*, October 31, 2000; William Houston, "Curses, Smythe says, as Leafs snub family again," *The Globe and Mail*, February 20, 2007.

⁵⁵² Jim Coleman, "Bill Gadsby a victim of Norris arrogance," *Edmonton Journal*, October 22, 1969.

⁵⁵³ Conn Smythe undoubtedly would have been able to get his son into the Hockey Hall of Fame had he not petulantly resigned from its board four months before Stafford's unexpected death.

having scored arguably the most famous goal in hockey history, which is a source of aggravation to many hockey fans, but not to the man himself. “I just sit back and laugh about it,” he said in 2005, during an ultimately unsuccessful fan-led campaign designed to pressure the Hall to finally enshrine him.⁵⁵⁴ In a separate interview in 2012, he joked that his induction would be “the worst thing that could happen to me” because without the annual arguments about his perceived worthiness or lack thereof, “everybody would forget about me. I’m a lot better on the outside and then nobody forgets about it.”⁵⁵⁵

The Hockey Hall of Fame has never officially commented on Henderson’s candidacy, because almost everything about its selection process is secretive. The members of the selection committee are known, but their discussions are private. Jim Gregory, while co-chair of the eighteen-member committee, said in 2010 that each member signs a confidentiality agreement and is only permitted to talk about the lucky few who are chosen each year. He explained that nominations used to be public, but this changed many years ago out of “compassion” to spare unsuccessful candidates from embarrassment.⁵⁵⁶ This could be seen as wanting to avoid another Doug Harvey scenario, but it is also a way of avoiding deeper public scrutiny of what is clearly still a flawed selection process in which hockey immortality is often granted or denied based on subjective arguments and the ability to persuade one’s peers that your preferred candidate is somehow more deserving than theirs.

Halls of fame are examples of heritage because the decisions made regarding what and whom to honour are subjective. Historian Eric Hobsbawm would have recognized this, as he would also have classified halls of fame as invented traditions. They meet his definition in that,

⁵⁵⁴ Jonathon Jackson, “Drive on to put Paul in the Hall,” *Owen Sound Sun Times*, November 24, 2005.

⁵⁵⁵ Stu Cowan, “Put Henderson in Hall of Fame,” *Montreal Gazette*, September 1, 2012.

⁵⁵⁶ Bruce Arthur, “Opening doors to Hall of Shame,” *National Post*, June 23, 2010.

among other things, they “attempt to establish community with a suitable historic past,” the implication being that “suitable” is also subjective.⁵⁵⁷ In addition, halls of fame are invented traditions because the narratives being presented are, as Hobsbawm wrote, “not what has actually been preserved in popular memory, but what has been selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalized by those whose function it is to do so.”⁵⁵⁸

Another invented tradition in sports is the jersey retirement. This honour is bestowed upon a player by their former team when their uniform number is officially taken out of circulation, usually as part of a ceremony. The Leafs were the first professional team in any sport to do this, retiring No. 6 for Irvine “Ace” Bailey in February 1934 after he was critically injured during a game, resulting in the premature end of his playing career.⁵⁵⁹ The retirement ceremony took place before a benefit game for Bailey that the Leafs played against a team of NHL all-stars; Conn Smythe presented Bailey with the sweater he had worn that season before his injury and announced that no Leaf would ever wear his number again.⁵⁶⁰

The tradition now in the NHL is that a banner emblazoned with the player’s name and number is raised to the rafters inside the team’s home arena. Some players have seen their number retired by more than one franchise, such as Mark Messier, whose No. 11 was honoured by the New York Rangers and the Edmonton Oilers. Some teams have retired the same number for two different players, such as the Montreal Canadiens’ No. 12, retired for Dickie Moore and

⁵⁵⁷ Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” p. 1.

⁵⁵⁸ Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” p. 13.

⁵⁵⁹ Frank Fitzpatrick, “Retiring numbers are on the rise,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 3, 2020.

⁵⁶⁰ Bert Perry, “Maple Leafs Beat All-Stars in Bailey Testimonial Game,” *The Globe and Mail*, February 15, 1934. Bailey’s number did return in 1968, at his request, for Ron Ellis, a young Leaf player he admired. When Ellis retired, the number was withdrawn from circulation again and was officially re-retired in 1992. See: “Ace Bailey foresees great future for Ellis as he revives Maple Leafs’ sweater No. 6,” *The Globe and Mail*, September 25, 1968; Bob McKenzie, “Tragically Hip’s haunting tune pays homage to Leafs’ Barilko,” *Toronto Star*, October 14, 1992.

Yvan Cournoyer in the same ceremony.⁵⁶¹ The Leafs, after decades of commemorating numbers but inexplicably declining to retire them, with only two exceptions, finally bowed to pressure in 2016 and retired the numbers of sixteen players in one ceremony.⁵⁶² Hap Day's No. 4 was one of them; he shared the honour with Red Kelly, who had also worn that number.⁵⁶³

Like the Hockey Hall of Fame, there is no firm criteria for a hockey player to be chosen for a number retirement. It is left up to each franchise to decide on its own. Most often, it is a tribute to a noteworthy career. The sudden end of a career due to injury or death is sometimes the impetus, as in the case of the Leafs' Ace Bailey and Bill Barilko.⁵⁶⁴ Other examples include the No. 19 of Bill Masterton, the only player to die from injuries sustained during an NHL game. His team, the Minnesota North Stars, retired his number after his death in 1968 and raised a banner in a ceremony in 1987.⁵⁶⁵ The North Stars moved to Dallas in 1993 and are now known as the Dallas Stars, yet Masterton's number remains retired.⁵⁶⁶

Teams may retire jerseys for more unusual reasons. When the Ottawa Senators entered the NHL as an expansion team in 1992, they somewhat dubiously claimed the history of the original Senators franchise, which had ceased operations six decades earlier. In claiming that history, they raised nine Stanley Cup banners on the night of their first game and posthumously retired the No. 8 of Frank Finnigan, who had been the last surviving member of Ottawa's most

⁵⁶¹ John Dellapina, "Mess, Garden in '11' Heaven, *New York Daily News*, January 13, 2006; David Howell, "A day for Messier fans' fond memories," *Edmonton Journal*, February 27, 2007; Red Fisher, "12: Men of Honour," *Montreal Gazette*, November 12, 2005.

⁵⁶² Dave Feschuk, "Leafs right in honouring – no, retiring – best," *Toronto Star*, October 16, 2016.

⁵⁶³ Chris Johnston, "Maple Leafs retire all honoured numbers and Dave Keon's No. 14," *Sportsnet*, October 15, 2016, <https://www.sportsnet.ca/hockey/nhl/maple-leafs-retire-honoured-numbers-dave-keons-no-14/>

⁵⁶⁴ Barilko scored the Stanley Cup-winning goal for Toronto in 1951 and died in a plane crash in the summer following that triumph. The Leafs removed his No. 5 from circulation and officially retired it in 1992. See: Bob McKenzie, "Tragically Hip's haunting tune."

⁵⁶⁵ Jerry Zgoda, "Bellows' two goals lead Stars past Blackhawks," *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, January 18, 1987.

⁵⁶⁶ Mike Heika, "Bill Masterton's death changed hockey," *Edmonton Journal*, January 19, 2008.

recent championship club, from 1927.⁵⁶⁷ More importantly, Finnigan had been a strong public supporter of the city's bid for a new franchise prior to his death in 1991.⁵⁶⁸ The Senators chose to not similarly recognize any other players from the earlier era, although there were many worthy names they could have chosen, including several Hockey Hall of Fame members. Finnigan is not in the Hockey Hall of Fame, but he remains the only member of the original Senators with his number retired in Ottawa. Technically, his number was retired by a team for which he never played, a distinction also held by Wayne Gretzky, whose famous No. 99 was retired league-wide by the NHL on the day of his final game in 1999.⁵⁶⁹

When the Minnesota Wild joined the NHL in 2000, they retired No. 1 prior to their first home game in honour of their fans.⁵⁷⁰ Similarly, the Seattle Kraken marked their debut in 2021 by retiring No. 32 to symbolize their status as the league's thirty-second franchise and the thirty-two thousand ticket deposits placed by fans on the first day of their availability.⁵⁷¹ Poignantly, the Vegas Golden Knights retired No. 58 at the end of their own first season in memory of fifty-eight people killed in a mass shooting that had happened in Las Vegas. The banner the Knights raised holds fifty-eight gold stars and the victims' names.⁵⁷² These simple acts of tribute assuredly helped to establish these new teams in their communities and are positive signs that they consider commemoration a responsibility to be taken seriously.

⁵⁶⁷ John MacKinnon, "A Night of Hockey History," *Ottawa Citizen*, October 9, 1992. The Senators continued to revamp their heritage and, with the NHL's approval, added two more Stanley Cup banners from bygone days to their collection, for a total of eleven. The current franchise has never won a Cup of its own. See: Randy Boswell, "Hockey history rewritten for 'The Silver Seven,'" *Ottawa Citizen*, March 1, 2003.

⁵⁶⁸ John MacKinnon, "Goodbye, Frank," *Ottawa Citizen*, December 27, 1991.

⁵⁶⁹ Canadian Press, "NHL retires No. 99," *Brantford Expositor*, April 19, 1999.

⁵⁷⁰ Tom Jones, "Point Made," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, October 12, 2000. Note: The *Star and Tribune* was renamed the *Star Tribune* in August 1987. See: "Star Tribune sale: Through the years," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, July 1, 2014.

⁵⁷¹ Dan O'Leary, "Kraken retire No. 32 before home opener to honor fans," *National Hockey League*, October 24, 2021, <https://www.nhl.com/news/seattle-kraken-retire-number-32-before-home-opener-327186108>

⁵⁷² Mike Johnston, "Golden Knights retire No. 58, raise banner to honour shooting victims," *Sportsnet*, April 1, 2018, <https://www.sportsnet.ca/hockey/nhl/golden-knights-retire-no-58-raise-banner-honour-shooting-victims/>

Not all NHL teams appear to feel this way, and sometimes number retirements are not forever. The Vancouver Canucks retired No. 11 after the 1974 death of player Wayne Maki, who had been forced to retire due to a brain tumour that eventually killed him. Newspaper articles published less than a week after Maki's death were clear that his number was being retired, adding that although No. 11 had been briefly worn by another player, Chris Oddleifson, he would switch to a different number and the Canucks would present Maki's jersey to his family.⁵⁷³ But a banner was never raised in his honour at the team's arena, the Pacific Coliseum, and by the early 1990s the Canucks claimed to not know if No. 11 had been officially retired. *Vancouver Sun* columnist Mike Beamish wrote in 1991 that there was "no physical evidence at the Coliseum to remind people that Wayne Maki existed."⁵⁷⁴ This is especially galling given that Canucks' president and general manager Pat Quinn had been Maki's teammate.

The matter came to a head in 1997 when the Canucks signed Mark Messier and gave him a jersey with the No. 11 that he had previously worn in Edmonton and New York. Maki's family appealed to Quinn and the Canucks to at least acknowledge that the number had been retired, even if it was being reinstated for Messier's use. The Canucks refused to do this, claiming the number had merely been removed from circulation. They offered instead to install a plaque at their arena in Maki's memory.⁵⁷⁵ Currently, there are six banners for retired numbers in that arena, the most recent ones having been raised in 2020.⁵⁷⁶ Although No. 11 has not been worn again since Messier left the Canucks, it is not on one of those banners.

⁵⁷³ "Canucks retire Maki's number," *Vancouver Province*, May 18, 1974; "Number 11 is retired," *Vancouver Sun*, May 18, 1974.

⁵⁷⁴ Mike Beamish, "Mike Beamish," *Vancouver Sun*, March 15, 1990; Mike Beamish, "One of a kind," *Vancouver Sun*, November 2, 1991.

⁵⁷⁵ Elliott Pap, "Maki jersey status unresolved," *Vancouver Sun*, October 17, 1997; Elliott Pap, "Canucks offer plaque to Makis," *Vancouver Sun*, October 18, 1997.

⁵⁷⁶ Patrick Johnston, "Sedins' numbers raised to rafters during touching retirement tribute," *Vancouver Sun*, February 13, 2020.

A similar fate befell the No. 6 of Red Wings stalwart Larry Aurie, whose number was retired on the orders of team owner James Norris Sr. when Aurie himself retired in 1938. His death in 1952 brought about a recollection of that fact in the *Detroit Free Press*.⁵⁷⁷ Aurie's sweater was displayed for years in the team's arena, Olympia Stadium, and the number was only returned to circulation briefly in the late 1950s, so that his cousin, Cummy Burton, could wear it. No one has worn No. 6 for the Wings since the 1958-59 season.

The Wings had not raised a banner for any of their retired numbers until 1984, when Gordie Howe became the first player to receive the distinction.⁵⁷⁸ Between 1991 and 1995, the team honoured four other players with banners.⁵⁷⁹ But when Aurie's family asked the franchise to do the same for him, they were turned down and not given a reason. "Red Wings senior vice president Jimmy Devellano acknowledges that Aurie's number is retired," Bernie Czarniecki wrote in the *Free Press* in 1997. "But he said the team has no desire to hoist a banner in Aurie's honor, leaving family members disappointed."⁵⁸⁰ Devellano has remained with the team as a senior vice president, but his words have apparently been forgotten and the Wings' heritage has been revised again; the team's 2022-23 media guide, the most recent one available, does not list No. 6 among the franchise's retired numbers.⁵⁸¹ Somehow, and no one appears to know why, Larry Aurie fell out of favour with the only NHL team he ever played for, and the hockey immortality that was bestowed upon him in 1938 has officially slipped away.

⁵⁷⁷ Marshall Dann, "Aurie Was Still Living Hockey When Death Came at 47," *Detroit Free Press*, December 13, 1952.

⁵⁷⁸ John Castine, "Wings will finally hang Howe's number," *Detroit Free Press*, November 21, 1984.

⁵⁷⁹ Steve Crowe, "Numbers hung for Ted, Alex," *Detroit Free Press*, November 11, 1991; Ken Kraemer, "Sawchuk's No. 1 will be retired," *Detroit Free Press*, February 22, 1994; Keith Gave, "Together Again," *Detroit Free Press*, April 17, 1995.

⁵⁸⁰ Bernie Czarniecki, "Forgotten Wing," *Detroit Free Press*, February 19, 1997.

⁵⁸¹ Todd Beam, Alex DiFilippo, and Thomas Roth, eds., *2022-23 Detroit Red Wings Media Guide* (Detroit: Detroit Red Wings, 2022), pp. 275-287.

Jersey retirements, the Hockey Hall of Fame, and other commemorative efforts are made possible by collective memory, which is at the heart of what historian Pierre Nora has called “*lieux de mémoire*, or sites of memory.” These are deliberately tangible reminders of moments in time and the people who created those moments, and they exist in place of “*milieu de mémoire*, or real environments of memory,” in Nora’s words.⁵⁸² “If we were able to live within memory, we would not have needed to consecrate *lieux de mémoire* in its name,” he wrote.⁵⁸³ The deliberate nature of *lieux de mémoire* stems from Nora’s contention that “spontaneous memory” does not exist, and so we must purposefully create monuments of moments and people that we have deemed to be important, lest they be forgotten.⁵⁸⁴

“(W)ithout commemorative vigilance, history would soon sweep them away,” Nora wrote, adding that the ever-present clash between history and memory is what “produces *lieux de mémoire* – moments of history torn away from the movement of history, then returned; no longer quite life, not yet death, like shells on the shore when the sea of living memory has receded.”⁵⁸⁵ Nora might agree that when the Canucks and the Red Wings took on the responsibility of honouring and protecting their heritage by retiring the numbers worn by Maki and Aurie – in both cases, they were the first number retirements in franchise history – they had a responsibility to conduct this commemorative vigilance. They did not, and the numbers in question and the memories of the players who wore them were allowed to be devalued and mischaracterized.

Sites of memory do not have to be physical locations, but they do require a physical state of being. That is one of the three interconnected elements Nora identified in all *lieux de mémoire*: they are material, symbolic, and functional. Material refers to physical existence,

⁵⁸² Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux des Mémoire*,” *Representations*, no. 26 (1989), p. 7.

⁵⁸³ Nora, “Between Memory and History,” p. 8.

⁵⁸⁴ Nora, “Between Memory and History,” p. 12.

⁵⁸⁵ Nora, “Between Memory and History,” p. 12.

symbolic means representation of a ritual, and functional means an appeal to memory.⁵⁸⁶ Scholar Amy Ransom has explicitly connected Nora's work with the NHL by examining the *lieux de mémoire* of the Montreal Canadiens and their two longtime home arenas, the Montreal Forum and, since 1996, the Bell Centre. The Canadiens are the most storied franchise in hockey history, with a record twenty-four Stanley Cups to their credit and the retired numbers of eighteen players hanging in the rafters of the Bell Centre. They are, Ransom wrote, a "sports dynasty rivaled only by the New York Yankees."⁵⁸⁷

Ransom used Nora's words to posit that the Canadiens, who have a long tradition of celebrating their heritage, are themselves a site of memory, "where memory crystallizes and secretes itself . . . where a sense of historical continuity persists."⁵⁸⁸ Specifically, she cited as part of her argument the team's centennial anniversary in 2009, when the Canadiens constructed La Place du Centenaire, or Centennial Plaza, which featured "statues of its history's great players in the courtyard outside the Bell Centre . . . (seeking) to preserve a cultural phenomenon that has begun to exceed the limits of lived memory."⁵⁸⁹ It was a well-received commemorative effort. However, within a year of the publication of Ransom's article, the Canadiens announced they would relocate the plaza and its statues to make room for a condominium development.⁵⁹⁰

The team did keep its word and built a new plaza for its statues. Not so fortunate was the Canadiens Hall of Fame, which had been established in the lower lever of the Bell Centre to also mark the team's centenary. The facility measured ten thousand square feet and opened in January 2010, and it was acclaimed by *Montreal Gazette* writer Dave Stubbs as a "wonderful tribute to

⁵⁸⁶ Nora, "Between Memory and History," pp. 18-19.

⁵⁸⁷ Amy J. Ransom, "*Lieux de mémoire* or *Lieux du dollar*? Montreal's Forum, the Canadiens, and Popular Culture," *Québec Studies*, vol. 51 (2011), p. 24.

⁵⁸⁸ Nora, "Between Memory and History," p. 8; Ransom, "*Lieux de mémoire* or *Lieux du dollar*?" p. 25.

⁵⁸⁹ Ransom, "*Lieux de mémoire* or *Lieux du dollar*?" p. 23.

⁵⁹⁰ Mike Boone, "Condos to displace Habs' legends," *Montreal Gazette*, July 17, 2012.

the storied history of the Canadiens . . . a living, breathing, time-stands-still tribute to a century.” It contained photos, jerseys, equipment, and hundreds of other artifacts. One highlight was a faithful reproduction of the Canadiens’ dressing room from what is arguably their greatest season, 1976-77, when they won or tied seventy-two of their eighty regular season games and needed only two playoff games more than the minimum to win the Stanley Cup.⁵⁹¹

More than two hundred thousand fans visited the Hall of Fame before the team closed it permanently in August 2015, less than six years after it opened. The reason for the closure, according to a team executive quoted in Stubbs’ article, was “to enhance the fan experience . . . to offer new amenities to fans and clients during games.” Unfortunately, as Stubbs acknowledged, the team had “an entire generation of fans who couldn’t care less about the sepia-hued history of this club . . . the fan experience is what the modern game is all about, and this Hall of Fame’s very short life is being snuffed out to make room for that.”⁵⁹² The article did not indicate what would constitute a more attractive fan experience, only that the team’s executive leadership believed a hall of fame and museum could not continue to provide it.

The Hall of Fame’s attendance numbers did pale in comparison to those of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, which attracted more than one million visitors in 2014 alone.⁵⁹³ But that should not matter because the Canadiens were not trying to compete with that museum anyway. There remains enough of a heritage presence at the Bell Centre to serve as a *lieu de mémoire* – the banners that represent twenty-four Stanley Cups and eighteen honoured players see to that – but it is discouraging that there was insufficient demand for more elaborately presented heritage, or that the team simply did not think it was worthwhile to keep trying, or both. Heritage is many

⁵⁹¹ Dave Stubbs, “Improving ‘fan experience’ at Bell Centre closes a door,” *Montreal Gazette*, August 15, 2015.

⁵⁹² Stubbs, “Improving ‘fan experience’ at Bell Centre.”

⁵⁹³ Kate Taylor, “Quelle surprise! Montreal has the most arts museum visitors,” *The Globe and Mail*, May 9, 2015.

things, but one thing it is not is immune to commercial factors that clash with it, as the closure of the Canadiens Hall of Fame and the relocation of Centennial Plaza have proven.

When teams move from their existing facilities, leaving behind buildings and locations where they made history, this is itself a commercial consideration that always takes precedence over sentiment. “Older venues have poor sightlines and limited parking and concessions, and they are difficult or impossible to retrofit with the private boxes and suites that have outstripped regular seating as a money generator,” sociologist John Hannigan wrote. “Equally, if not more important, team owners are able to develop new revenue sources: from the sale of naming rights and seat licenses, from sponsorship deals and in-stadium advertising, and playing cities off against one another in order to secure infrastructure improvements and tax breaks.”⁵⁹⁴

There was no danger in the 1990s that the Canadiens would leave Montreal, but they did leave the Forum, as the Toronto Maple Leafs also abandoned Maple Leaf Gardens at the end of that decade. The Leafs now play at Scotiabank Arena, next to Union Station in downtown Toronto. The transition eventually led to the adaptive reuse of the Gardens, which became, in part, an athletic facility with an ice rink owned and operated by what is now known as Toronto Metropolitan University. This reuse and the Gardens’ historic designations – by the City of Toronto under the Ontario Heritage Act in 1990-91 and by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in 2007 – allow it to serve as a *lieu de mémoire* for the team that no longer plays there.⁵⁹⁵ It remains a physical entity, it is symbolic, and it is functional.

⁵⁹⁴ John Hannigan, “From Maple Leaf Gardens to the Air Canada Centre: The Downtown Entertainment Economy in ‘World Class’ Toronto,” in *Artificial Ice: Hockey, Culture, and Commerce*, eds. David Whitson and Richard Gruneau (Toronto: University of Toronto Press (2012), pp. 201-202.

⁵⁹⁵ Susan Reid and Jim Lewis, “Maple Leaf Gardens ‘historic,’ council reaffirms,” *Toronto Star*, December 13, 1990; “Notice of Passing of By-Law No. 44-91,” *Toronto Star*, January 15, 1991; Ontario Heritage Trust, “Maple Leaf Gardens,” *Ontario Heritage Trust*, <https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/en/pages/our-stories/exhibits/snapshots-of-ontarios-sport-heritage/connection-between-community-geography-and-sport/maple-leaf-gardens>; Parks Canada, “Directory of Federal Heritage Designations – Maple Leaf Gardens National Historic Site of Canada,” *Parks Canada*, n.d., https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=11840

The Gardens, as Scott Weir wrote in 2019, is a “‘cathedral of hockey’ whose value is tied both to the history of use as a hockey arena and public forum, and to its architectural form within the city.” Weir is an architect who specializes in heritage conservation, heritage planning, and advocacy for heritage buildings, and he was involved with the transformation of the Gardens. “This might be the only building that I’ve worked on where the client and consulting team including the mechanical and electrical engineers were as excited about the heritage value of the place as the heritage architects,” he wrote.⁵⁹⁶

When the Leafs moved in February 1999, they commemorated it in the form of two elaborate events staged a week apart – the final game at the Gardens and the first game at what was then called the Air Canada Centre – which were *lieux de mémoire* in and of themselves. The move also resulted in the formal establishment of what Hannigan called a “mediated community to describe a constructed discourse wherein management, in conjunction with a compliant media, sells the notion of a ‘nation’ of fans who are united in their collective devotion to the team as both a cultural touchstone and a lifestyle.” Hannigan wrote that mediated community was a term he originated after becoming familiar with what scholars John Nauright and Phil White had dubbed “mediated nostalgia.”⁵⁹⁷ Hannigan did not also cite Benedict Anderson, but he could and perhaps should have. What he described calls to mind Anderson’s work on what he had called an imagined community, comprised of people who may never meet but who share a deep common interest that is driven by collective memory.⁵⁹⁸

The mediated/imagined community that Hannigan described is Leafs Nation. This thesis established in an earlier chapter that Leafs Nation is rooted in the fan base that grew around

⁵⁹⁶ Scott Weir, “Adapting Maple Leaf Gardens,” *ACORN*, vol. 44, no. 1 (2019), p. 2.

⁵⁹⁷ Hannigan, “From Maple Leaf Gardens to the Air Canada Centre,” p. 205.

⁵⁹⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 6.

Foster Hewitt's nationwide radio broadcasts in the 1930s, when the team became a truly Canadian phenomenon rather than simply a hockey team based in Toronto. Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment, which owns the team and its arena, began actively promoting this imagined/mediated community while planning to leave the Gardens and move to the Air Canada Centre. It created a slogan, "Memories and Dreams," which became the title of the postgame ceremony that marked the closing of the Gardens immediately following the last game played there. The slogan adorned a flag that was circulated among present and past Leafs players on the ice, culminating with a handover from Red Horner, the only surviving member of the team that had played at the Gardens when it opened in 1931, to current Leafs captain Mats Sundin.⁵⁹⁹

Horner was fortunate to have been present for the ceremony because he may not have been mentioned otherwise, despite his status as a former Leafs captain and a member of the Hockey Hall of Fame. As Stephen Brunt of *The Globe and Mail* pointed out, the Memories and Dreams motif did not put sufficient focus on memories on the night the Gardens closed. "Not nearly enough mention was made of departed immortals, such as Charlie Conacher, and Turk Broda, and Syl Apps. There was no line of captains," Brunt wrote, adding that past coaches were likewise ignored. He alluded to the team's recent history of alienating its players: "Striking was the fact that of the relatively modern heroes present, almost none of them finished their careers in a Toronto uniform."⁶⁰⁰

Historian Russell Field concurred with Brunt in an article he wrote about the event. "This was a ceremony that celebrated healthy, alive, present bodies, choosing largely to ignore the deceased or absent," he wrote. "Hall of Famers were honoured, but only those still alive and

⁵⁹⁹ Stephen Brunt, "Despite the memories, it's time for a change of scenery," *The Globe and Mail*, February 15, 1999.

⁶⁰⁰ Brunt, "Despite the memories."

present. During this segment, the considerable number of absent or deceased former Maple Leafs who have been inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame went unrecognized.” He added that when banners representing honoured players were subsequently unveiled at the Air Canada Centre, “no mention was ever made of these men, their achievements, or their contributions to the community.”⁶⁰¹ This may have been intended as a callback of sorts to Hap Day’s era when most of his players were not all-stars and none were bigger than the team itself. But since the franchise had decided to unveil banners that singled out certain players who had obviously made significant contributions to what was now being called Leafs Nation, it is reasonable to suggest that it owed its fans an explanation of who those players were.

And yet, as Field wrote, the closing of the Gardens “clearly intertwined the Maple Leafs, their arena, and their fans within a single community. If fans were unsure of what membership in this community meant, or what they, as the audience, were intended to take away from this evening, the ceremony left no doubt of as to the values privileged by this community.” A video showing the Leafs’ 1960s dynasty was presented, with a voiceover narration that identified the players, collectively, as “hardworking, unselfish players who defined the very essence of the Leafs, the Gardens, this whole country . . . They won through sheer effort, strength of heart, and will. And they taught everyone who watched a little bit about *team*.”⁶⁰² This overt emphasis on team, rather than individual players, means that the lack of recognition for honoured players at the Air Canada Centre cannot have been a coincidence. But it raises the question again – why honour individual players at all?

⁶⁰¹ Russell Field, “Manufacturing Memories and Directing Dreams: Commemoration, Community, and the Closing of Maple Leaf Gardens,” *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 35 (2007), pp. 81-82.

⁶⁰² Field, “Manufacturing Memories,” p. 79. The emphasis in the quote is Field’s based on his analysis of the video.

To be fair, up to that point the Leafs had been making greater efforts to honour their history and their alumni. These efforts had started in 1993 – after Harold Ballard died, it must be noted – when the team contacted Teeder Kennedy and asked if he would consent to allow his No. 9 to be honoured, although not retired. Kennedy would not agree to receive the honour prior to it being granted to Syl Apps, who had preceded him as the Leafs’ captain, so the team chose to commemorate both players together.⁶⁰³ Between then and 2012, the Leafs similarly honoured fourteen other players with banners while leaving their numbers in circulation; Day’s No. 4 was honoured in 2006.⁶⁰⁴ The idea was that these special numbers would serve almost as torches to be passed from player to player. Brendan Shanahan, who became the Leafs’ president in 2014, said he liked the concept, but he did not actually see it being put into practice. More to the point, he said, nobody could explain why.⁶⁰⁵

One important person who also could not get answers but, unlike Shanahan, found the concept “embarrassing” was Dave Keon, a former captain who had been estranged from the franchise since the Ballard era. A Hockey Hall of Fame member and the most valuable player of the 1967 playoffs, Keon refused all requests from the team to allow his No. 14 to be honoured.⁶⁰⁶ It was not until Shanahan changed the team’s policy and facilitated the retirement of all honoured numbers in 2016 that Keon came back into the fold, and his number was also retired at that time. It was the same week Keon received his statue on Legends Row and was officially proclaimed the greatest player in franchise history.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰³ Frank Orr, “Leafs to honor former greats Apps, Kennedy,” *Toronto Star*, October 13, 1993; Mark Zwolinski, “Some Leaf numbers are strictly off limits,” *Toronto Star*, September 24, 2010.

⁶⁰⁴ Michael Traikos, “Old Leafs given new life in the rafters,” *National Post*, October 5, 2006; Kevin McGran, “Tribute ‘really flattering,’ Sundin says,” *Toronto Star*, October 30, 2011.

⁶⁰⁵ Feschuk, “Leafs right in honouring – no, retiring – best.”

⁶⁰⁶ Cox and Stellick, ‘67, pp. 222-225.

⁶⁰⁷ Kevin McGran, “Keon as Leafs’ franchise king has a nice ring”; Mark Zwolinski, “Keon ceremony long time coming,” *Toronto Star*, October 16, 2016.

The team had created a committee comprised of thirty “prominent members of the hockey community” – it did not identify these people – and added a public fan vote that counted as the committee’s thirty-first member. In coming up with what the team called “The One Hundred,” each committee member turned in a list of one hundred names. A first-place vote on each list was worth one hundred points, second place was worth ninety-nine points, and so on down the scale. Although point totals were not released, the Leafs announced that 141 of 949 eligible players had received at least one vote. Keon placed first in the overall ranking, with Apps coming second and Kennedy third.⁶⁰⁸

Keon’s statue absolutely belonged on Legends Row, which was inaugurated in 2014. According to historians Kevin Shea and Jason Wilson in the team’s “Official Centennial Publication,” published in conjunction with what the Leafs claimed was their one hundredth anniversary – somewhere along the way they had decided that they were not founded in 1927 after all, as claimed in their 1976 retrospective entitled *The Leafs: The First 50 Years* – planning for Legends Row had begun in 2012 and it was decided early in the process that the exhibit would consist of “a row of statues around a representation of a player’s (sic) bench.” Those who had witnessed the Gardens’ closing and the Air Canada Centre’s opening would have recognized the theme expressed by the Legends Row concept. “The greatest teams in Leafs history had always been more about the team than about any individual,” Shea and Wilson wrote. “Legends Row would, therefore, be a snapshot of a team, composed of the franchise’s greatest players from across the generations, standing together.”⁶⁰⁹

When the four most recent additions to Legends Row were announced in February 2017, reportedly filling it out, the entire exhibit was almost a complete rehash of the greatest players

⁶⁰⁸ Jennifer Redenbach, et al., eds., *Toronto Maple Leafs Media Guide 2023-24*, p. 190.

⁶⁰⁹ Obodiac, ed., *The Leafs: The First 50 Years*; Shea and Wilson, *Official Centennial Publication*, p. 345.

list. Of the fourteen players immortalized in bronze, all had finished in the top fifteen in voting for The One Hundred. Only Doug Gilmour, who had placed an unlucky thirteenth, was left off Legends Row; Wendel Clark, who was fifteenth, made it instead. Hap Day placed seventeenth and King Clancy was eighteenth; they and Gilmour were the only Leafs with retired numbers who finished in the top twenty in voting but did not also receive a statue.

The voting, and the decisions regarding who belonged on Legends Row, are more proof of John Bodnar's argument that collective memory is susceptible to time. The outcomes of both tributes were always going to be dominated by those players whose achievements are more recent. Six of the fourteen on Legends Row – George Armstrong, Johnny Bower, Tim Horton, Red Kelly, Keon, and Frank Mahovlich – played for the Leafs' 1960s dynasty. Four of the fourteen – Clark, Borje Salming, Darryl Sittler, and Mats Sundin – played between the 1970s and the 2000s and none of them won a Stanley Cup anywhere, let alone in Toronto. Three of the fourteen – Apps, Turk Broda, and Kennedy – were of the 1940s dynasty. And only one, Charlie Conacher, had been with the Leafs in their first Stanley Cup season at the Gardens and when Foster Hewitt started broadcasting their games across Canada's airwaves.

In truth, although Day is in the Hockey Hall of Fame as a player, he may not belong on Legends Row in that capacity. It was thought at one point that coaches might someday stand behind the players in the manner of an actual team bench, which would be perfect for Day, not to mention Punch Imlach and probably also Conn Smythe.⁶¹⁰ This thesis has made it clear that Day's accomplishments and his influence as a coach warrant greater recognition from the team that to date has only honoured him as a player. Quite simply, his contributions on the ice, even as the team's captain, were not nearly as significant as what he contributed from behind the bench.

⁶¹⁰ Mark Zwolinski, "Legends Row grows to 10 former Leafs stars," *Toronto Star*, October 13, 2016.

But Shanahan seems to have closed the door on that possibility, stating in August 2017 that the bench was never meant to include anyone other than players. “The concept behind Legends Row, which was decided before I came here, was as a players bench . . . not the right spot for a builder or management,” he said, apparently forgetting that during his own NHL career, which lasted twenty-one seasons, not once did he ever occupy a bench that had been restricted to players.⁶¹¹ When asked by a reporter what the team planned to do to properly honour its important builders – the reporter suggested Imlach, Smythe, and Foster Hewitt, conspicuously but predictably leaving out Day – Shanahan said only that the team had not decided to do anything.⁶¹² Seven years later, the team has still done nothing in that regard.

Historians Murray Phillips, Mark O’Neill, and Gary Osmond were not referring to Legends Row when they wrote about the importance of monuments to sport history, but they might as well have been. “Monuments are especially apt at constructing and disseminating myths. Myths narrate versions of the past by accentuating selected aspects of it while marginalizing others,” they wrote. “Viewing these *lieux de mémoire* as communicating narrative versions of the past, rather than faithfully recording it, highlights the importance myths have in framing the past in the present.”⁶¹³ This thesis has established that the Toronto Maple Leafs have been creating and perpetuating myths for decades. In maintaining control of the past, they continue to shape the narrative and the future as they wish, much to the detriment of those whom they choose to marginalize.

⁶¹¹ Kevin McGran, “Final four: Maple Leafs fill out Legends Row,” *Toronto Star*, February 19, 2017; Lance Hornby, “Leaf builders won’t have home on Legends Row,” *Windsor Star*, August 30, 2017.

⁶¹² Hornby, “Leaf builders.”

⁶¹³ Murray G. Phillips, Mark E. O’Neill, and Gary Osmond, “Broadening Horizons in Sport History: Films, Photographs, and Monuments,” *Journal of Sport History*, vol. 34, no. 2 (2007), pp. 285-286.

GAME 7 – THE FINAL SCORE

Hockey legend Clarence “Hap” Day led the Toronto Maple Leafs to six Stanley Cup championships as a player and coach. The former National Hockey League star died yesterday at home at the age of 88.⁶¹⁴

– Jack Lakey, journalist

Hap Day was a legend on the ice, a future Hockey Hall of Fame member and the captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs when they became the most popular hockey team in Canada. He was a legend behind the bench, guiding the Leafs to five Stanley Cups and becoming the first coach in hockey history to win that many championships. He was rightly called a legend in newspaper headlines and stories across the country after he died.⁶¹⁵ He was a legend everywhere it mattered in the world of hockey. So why is he not enshrined on Legends Row in Toronto?

The answer is not known outside of the Leafs organization. What is known is that the Leafs have been in control of their narrative and of the public history exhibit that is Legends Row, and they have exercised that control in denying Day legendary status. This thesis was intended as a challenge to that narrative. It established that Day, in his era, became the most successful coach in National Hockey League history. It confirmed that, nearly seventy-five years after he coached his last game, he remains the most important and successful coach in Leafs’ franchise history. It examined his methods and his results and determined that he was a significant influence on many other acclaimed coaches. This thesis is an appeal to change the mindset that has seen Day’s accomplishments and influence downplayed and dismissed.

⁶¹⁴ Jack Lakey, “Hockey legend ‘Hap’ Day led Leafs to six Stanley Cups,” *Toronto Star*, February 18, 1990.

⁶¹⁵ Canadian Press, “Hockey legend ‘Hap’ Day dead at 88,” *Montreal Gazette*, February 18, 1990; “Maple Leafs legend Hap Day dead at 88,” *Edmonton Journal*, February 18, 1990; “Leaf legend Hap Day dies,” *Calgary Herald*, February 18, 1990; “Toronto mourns Leaf legend Day,” *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, February 19, 1990.

The purpose of this thesis was to explore commemoration and heritage as it pertains to the NHL and to demonstrate how it is manipulated by people and institutions who desire to control agreed-upon narratives. It was built around a biographical narrative case study of Hap Day, the longtime captain and coach of the Leafs. The use of a biographical narrative in an academic paper offered the opportunity to combine scholarly theories and arguments with a storytelling flair that is a hallmark of long-form journalism. It was an opportunity that I felt uniquely able to capitalize on due to my professional experience as a sportswriter prior to attending university.

Hockey's history in written form often takes the form of books which are written by sportswriters and popular historians who may not have formal training in the discipline of history. Many of the stories these writers use as the basis for their books originated as newspaper articles and columns, which may be affected by various biases. The result is that stories that enter the public record and become accepted as history may not have been properly vetted for accuracy or even truthfulness. Unfortunately, the newspaper articles and columns in question are often the only primary sources academic historians can rely on. When possible, they can be compared to each other to reach a conclusion that may be considered objectively true. If this is not possible, the historian must use their judgment to decide whether to accept or reject the source. It makes it difficult to conduct a formal literature review for a thesis, because scholars have not paid a great deal of attention to sport, especially hockey, in the past. This is changing, thankfully, and this thesis will be an important contribution to that field.

Canadian historians such as Richard Gruneau, David Whitson, and Andrew Holman, along with U.S.-born historian Stephen Hardy, among many others, have written that it is important to write about hockey from a scholarly viewpoint because of the sport's importance to

this country's heritage. It has united Canadians as few things have ever done, helping to make us what Benedict Anderson would call an imagined community. Most members of an imagined community will never meet each other but are bound through shared interests. Because Canada is so vast and most of its citizens will never see the entire country, much less meet everyone in it, we need these mutual interests to be able to identify with each other as Canadians.

Hockey accomplishes this for us. It was the first truly national sport and grew as the country did, moving with the railways and establishing itself in new villages and towns. After hockey was commercialized into competitive leagues and eventually professionalized, it became an even greater phenomenon due to the medium of radio that linked the country even more deeply than the railways had. At the heart of this phenomenon was the Leafs, made famous by Foster Hewitt in his broadcasts, which were among the first radio programs that could be heard from coast to coast.

The related themes of public history, collective memory, and heritage are expressed through commemoration. Legends Row in Toronto is a prominent example of commemoration and was a focus of this thesis. Legends Row is a collection of bronze statues outside Scotiabank Arena in Toronto, where the Leafs play their home games. Each statue represents a chosen hockey hero who played for the Leafs, meaning decisions were made regarding who had played well and/or meaningfully enough to deserve to be honoured in this way. Fourteen players were selected for the honour; Hap Day was not among them.

Day was primarily a defenceman during his playing career in the NHL, which was spent almost entirely with Toronto during the time when they achieved nationwide popularity. He was the captain of the Leafs when they won the Stanley Cup in 1932, but it was his only championship as a player because the Leafs were too often more concerned about scoring goals

than preventing them. Day was a well-regarded player who was eventually inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame for his ability. He developed theories about playing his position and the importance of defensive excellence, and after retiring as a player he put his theories into practice as the Leafs' coach beginning in 1940.

His ten-year tenure was an unprecedented triumph, as the Leafs won the Stanley Cup five times, almost always defeating opponents who were superior on paper. Day, the first NHL coach to win five championships as well as the first to win three consecutive titles, was an expert at teaching his players how he wanted them to play and at getting the most out of them during important games. He was hindered at times, though, by an overbearing boss who craved the spotlight and consequently often received credit for Day's successes. Day's coaching career ended in 1950 and was followed by brief and disappointing tenures as the Leafs' assistant manager and manager, after which he left hockey entirely and went into private business.

Day became less relevant to the public for four reasons: first, his coaching career ended before the era of television began in Canada, meaning most hockey fans never saw his team in action; second, his lack of success as an executive led to his complete withdrawal from hockey, taking him out of the spotlight; third, he had never been comfortable with the spotlight in the first place; and fourth, the Leafs embarked on another period of sustained success soon after he left. But Day was still making an impact on hockey through the players he had coached who were now passing his lessons along to others. Ted "Teeder" Kennedy, Bob Goldham, and Howie Meeker were some of the players he had trained, and their influences were later felt by people like Scotty Bowman and Al Arbour, who likewise became acclaimed coaches, each with multiple Stanley Cup wins. Meeker, who became one of the most famous people in Canada due to his television exposure on *Hockey Night in Canada* and other platforms, was renowned for his

passion and his ability as a coach and advocate of young players. This thesis established those connections, along with others that have allowed Day's influence to continue to be felt, long after he ceased active involvement in the game.

Commemoration in the NHL has been practised through such avenues as halls of fame, number retirements, the historic designation of buildings, and the erection of statues, among others. In Toronto, where the Leafs declined for many years to retire the uniform numbers of their greatest players, they have made improvements in expressing their heritage, but there is more they must do. Legends Row has taken the form of players on a bench, as if they were inside the arena, at ice level. What the Leafs have failed to understand is that every hockey bench needs a coach; no team at any level of organized hockey has ever won anything of note without someone directing them. By refusing to change their narrative and properly honour the greatest coach in the history of their franchise, or merely to explain why they have ignored Day and other figures who worked off the ice to make this team what it was, and is, the Leafs have shown that they do not appreciate and perhaps do not even fully comprehend the responsibilities that come with being a responsible custodian of heritage.

I expressed in the introductory chapter of this thesis a hope to do what historians Hardy and Holman accomplished with their truly impressive book, *Hockey: A Global History*; they did indeed present a lively and interesting story. This project, a labour of love, has presented Hap Day's narrative in the best way I knew to tell it from my unique academic and journalistic perspective. As Hardy and Holman and many other scholars have assisted me through this journey, my new hope is that I may help future scholars who find this thesis and consider it a valuable resource.

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