



William Osser Xavier "Bill" Cook was the first player signed by the New York Rangers on their entrance to the NHL in 1926 as well as the team's first captain, thus earning him the title "The Original Ranger." Playing right wing on the prolific "Bread Line" with his brother "Bun" and centerman Frank Boucher, Cook went on to lead the NHL in goals (33) and points (37) that inaugural season and helped the team to Stanley Cup titles in 1928 and 1933.

William Cook

HHOF 1952

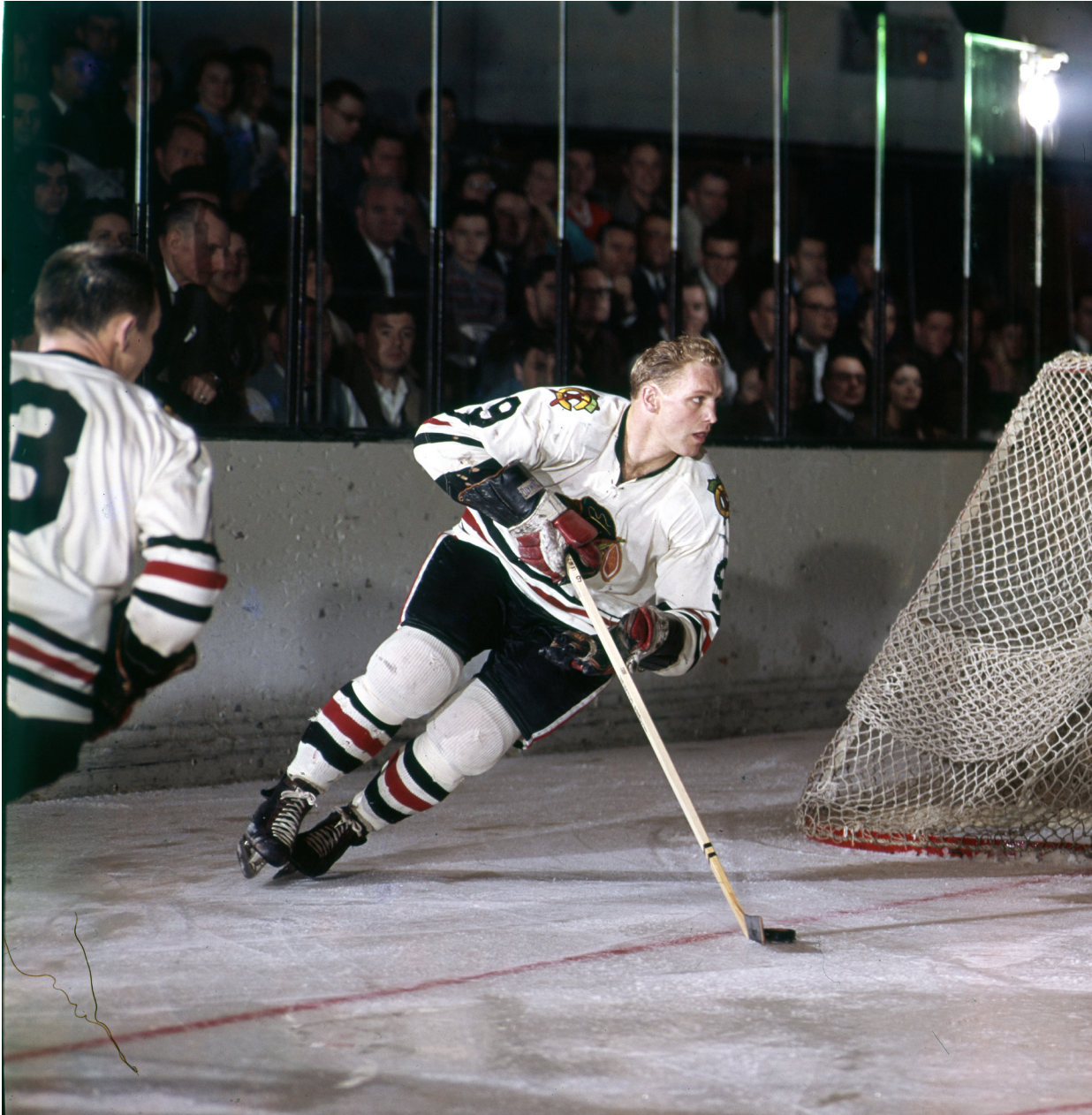
OUR HEROES

They come in different shapes and sizes, from different eras, and even different countries, displaying different skill sets, and enthraling fans in different cities, be it with their breathtaking ability, sheer determination, raw power, or a combination thereof. These are hockey's heroes, the players that inspired us from childhood: They are the legends of the game, the foundation upon which it was built, the larger-than-life figures that captured our collective imagination... and gripped it firmly. From the NHL's first stars to future Hall-of-Famers, see them here, sometimes lost in the moment, in deep concentration, or perhaps cast in a different light.

Of course, the NHL has brought us many more heroes than those featured on the pages that follow. These photos were selected to represent a variety of players, teams, styles and eras. But, perhaps more importantly, they were chosen for what they and their subjects shared: greatness.

What does Michael "King" Clancy, born in Ottawa, Ont., in 1903, have in common with Patrik Laine, born in Tampere, Finland, some 95 years later? What links Pavel Bure, who won the Calder Trophy with the Vancouver Canucks in 1992, with Chicago's Jonathan Toews, who scored 24 goals in his rookie season a decade and a half later? It's a passion for the game, perhaps best described as a certain look in their eyes, that shines through in these often rare shots, whether they were taken with a heavy Graflex camera favoured by early news photographers or a state-of-the-art digital single-lens reflex camera with a 400 mm objective, in the heat of battle, formally posed, or simply caught un-awares.

Remembering Our Heroes.



Is it any wonder that Bobby Hull was the "stock star" of his generation? The speed, strength, good looks — and that hair — all combined to ensure all eyes were on the Golden Jet whenever he touched the puck, including in this wonderful photo of him powering up from behind the net.

Bobby Hull

HHOF 1983



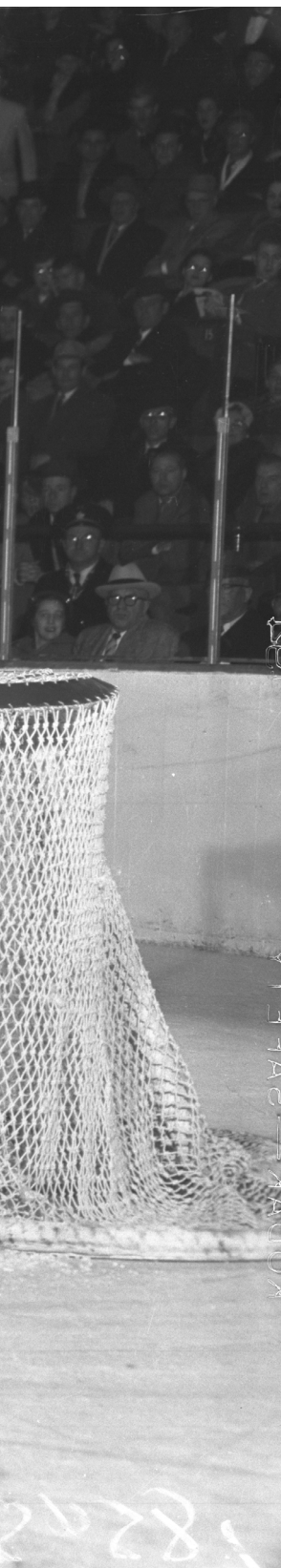
Mario Lemieux splits Rich Pilon and Jeff Norton before beating goaltender Kelly Hrudy in a 5-3 Pittsburgh defeat of the New York Islanders on December 20, 1988. The play was immortalized in a 10-foot, 4,700-pound bronze statue called "Le Magnifique" that was unveiled in March 2012 outside the then Consol Energy Center, across the street from the old Pittsburgh "Igloo."

Mario Lemieux

HHOF 1997



Maple Leaf Gardens · Toronto, ON | Year  Michael Burns Sr. | B/W · acetate · 4" x 5"



The Rocket never took it easy. His opponents employed all manner of tactics, legal and otherwise, to slow him down, but from 1942-60, through injury and fatigue, he played every one of his NHL shifts at top speed — something Tim Horton (background) would experience.

Maurice Richard

HHOF 1961



A rugged defenceman for nine NHL seasons, John Brian Patrick "Pat" Quinn, looked and sounded for all the world like a stereotypical tough Irish cop. And those characteristics would serve The Big Irishman, as he was known, very well in a legendary coaching career that lasted exactly 1,400 games. Quinn, who did double-duty as coach and GM in both Vancouver and Toronto, won Olympic gold Medal as the coach of Team Canada in 2002.

Patrick Quinn

HHOF 2016



Although his name today is synonymous with the Maple Leafs, Francis Michael "King" Clancy played 10 seasons with his hometown Ottawa Senators before joining Toronto via a trade in 1930. A scoring defenceman acknowledged as one of the finest to ever play the game, Clancy incredibly worked as an NHL referee for 11 seasons following his playing career, before moving onto coach the Maple Leafs for three years. The King Clancy Memorial Trophy for leadership qualities was created in his honour.

Francis Clancy

HHOF 1958

Location · City, ON | Undated | Turofsky | B/W · glass · 4" x 5"



There was nothing like witnessing “The Russian Rocket” in flight. Pavel Bure used his trademark blazing speed to score 34 goals and win the Calder Trophy as Rookie of the Year in 1992 and followed that up with two consecutive 60-goal seasons. After a trade sent him to the Florida Panthers in 1998, Bure enjoyed seasons of 58 and 59 goals in 1999-00 and 2000-01. He retired at age 32 in 2003 due to chronic knee injuries.

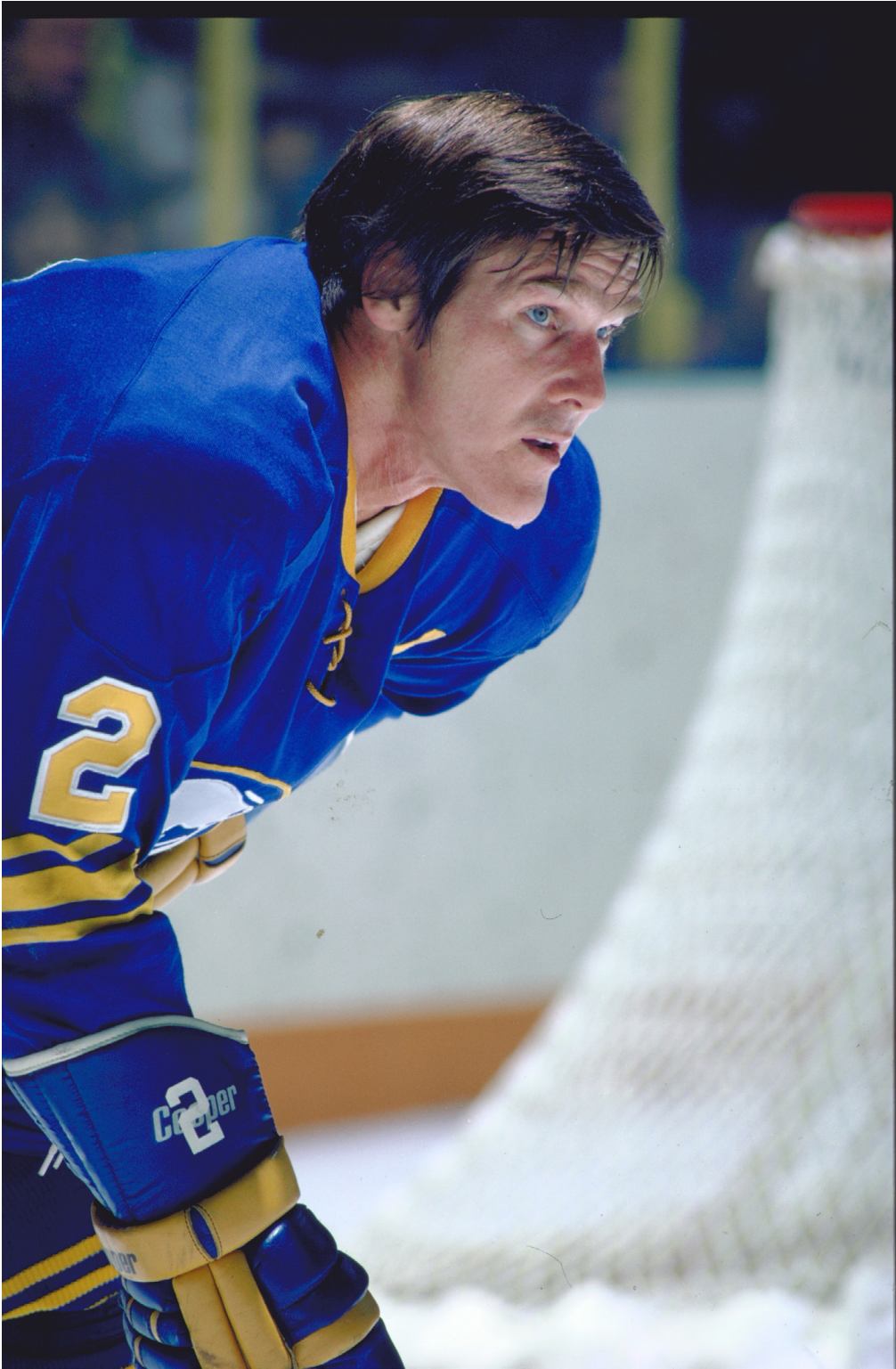
Pavel Bure

HHOF 2012



Jonathan Toews eludes a stick check from Edmonton's Sam Gagner. The man Chicago Blackhawks fans have dubbed "Captain Serious" is among the NHL's most respected players. The bilingual Winnipeg native has helped lead the Blackhawks to three Stanley Cup Championships since being named team captain in 2008-09 and was a key part of two Olympic gold-medal-winning teams with Canada.

Jonathan Toews



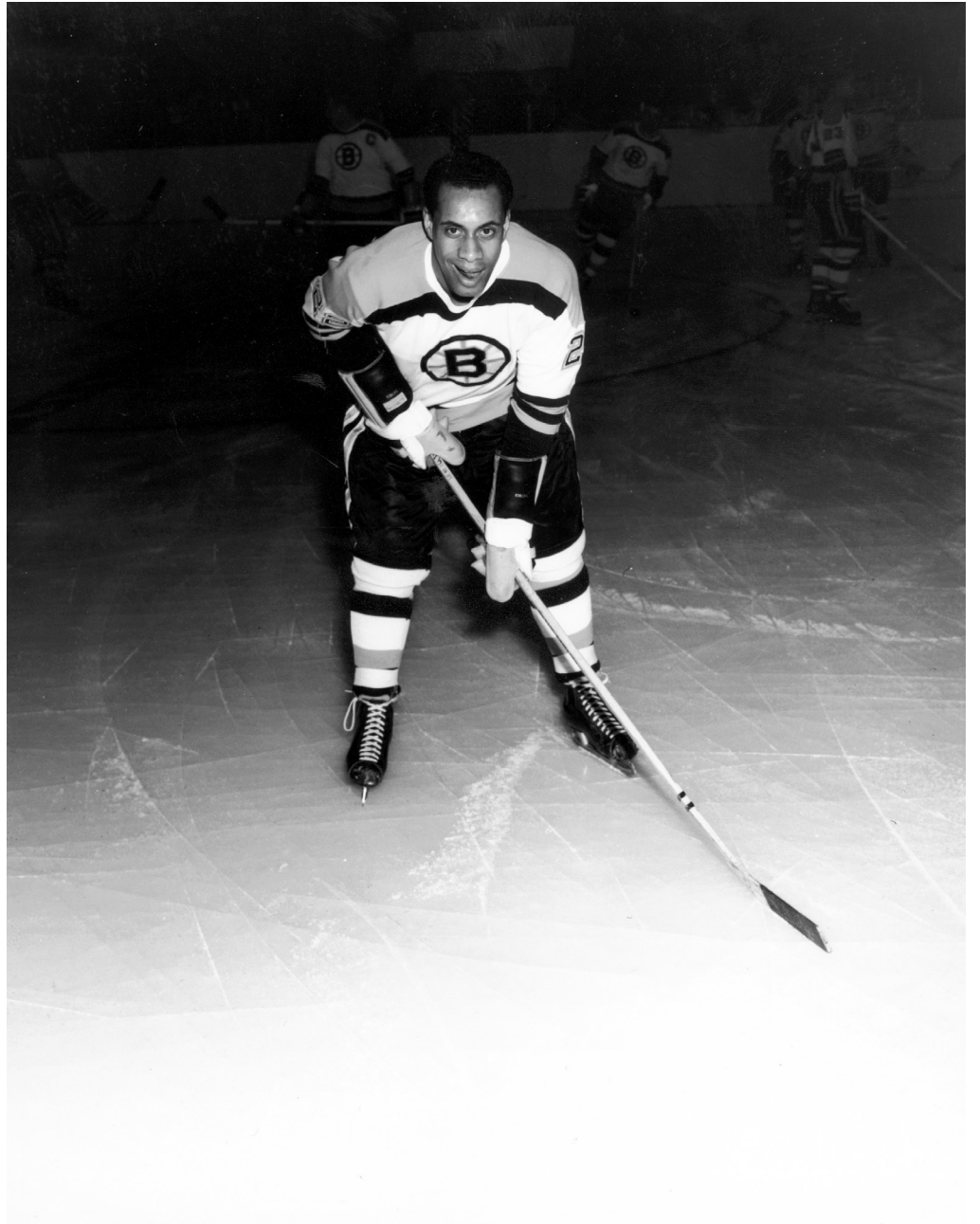
You could argue that no one has been in more Canadian hockey rinks than Cochrane, Ontario native, Tim Horton, first as a player for 22 NHL seasons and then as the namesake of the coffee and snack food of choice for hockey players and their families. A defenceman renowned for his physical strength and considerable offensive skill, Horton played 18 full seasons for the Toronto Maple Leafs, winning four Stanley Cups. He opened the first Tim Horton donut shop, in Hamilton, Ontario, in 1964. Horton passed away in a tragic car accident while playing for the Buffalo Sabres, in 1974. He was 44.

Tim Horton

HHOF 1977

A native of Fredericton, New Brunswick, Boston Bruins winger, Willie O'Ree, became the first black player to take part in an NHL game on January 18, 1958, in Montreal. O'Ree, who had lost most of the vision in his right eye in a minor-league game two years earlier, played again in a Canadiens-Bruins rematch the following night. He then bounced around the minor leagues for four years before finally playing 43 more NHL games for Boston in 1960-61.

Willie O'Ree





The pride of Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia, Sidney Crosby became the youngest captain in NHL history when he succeeded Mario Lemieux in that role in 2007-08. Well on his way to being one of the most decorated players in the game, "Sid the Kid" had precociously captured three Cups, two Conn Smythe trophies as playoff MVP and numerous other awards — all before the age of 30.

Sidney Crosby



It didn't take long for the Vancouver Canucks to regret trading the player they chose in the first round, ninth overall of the 1983 NHL Entry Draft to the Boston Bruins in 1986. In his first season with the Bruins, the 6'1", 220-lb native of Comox, B.C., scored 36 goals on his way to becoming one of the greatest power forwards of his time. In 1992, playing in only 49 games due to one of the injuries that would plague his career, Neely scored a remarkable 50 goals.

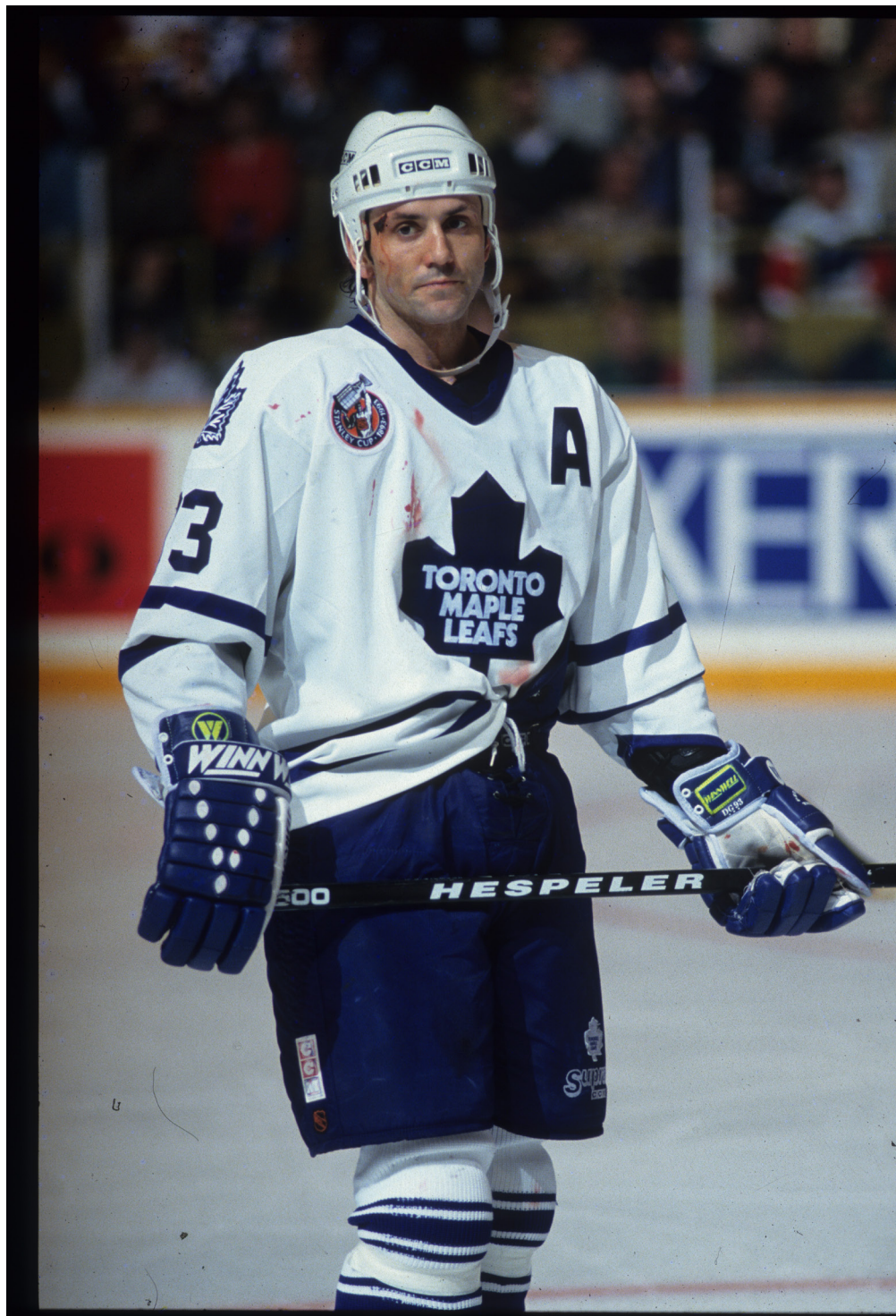
Cam Neely

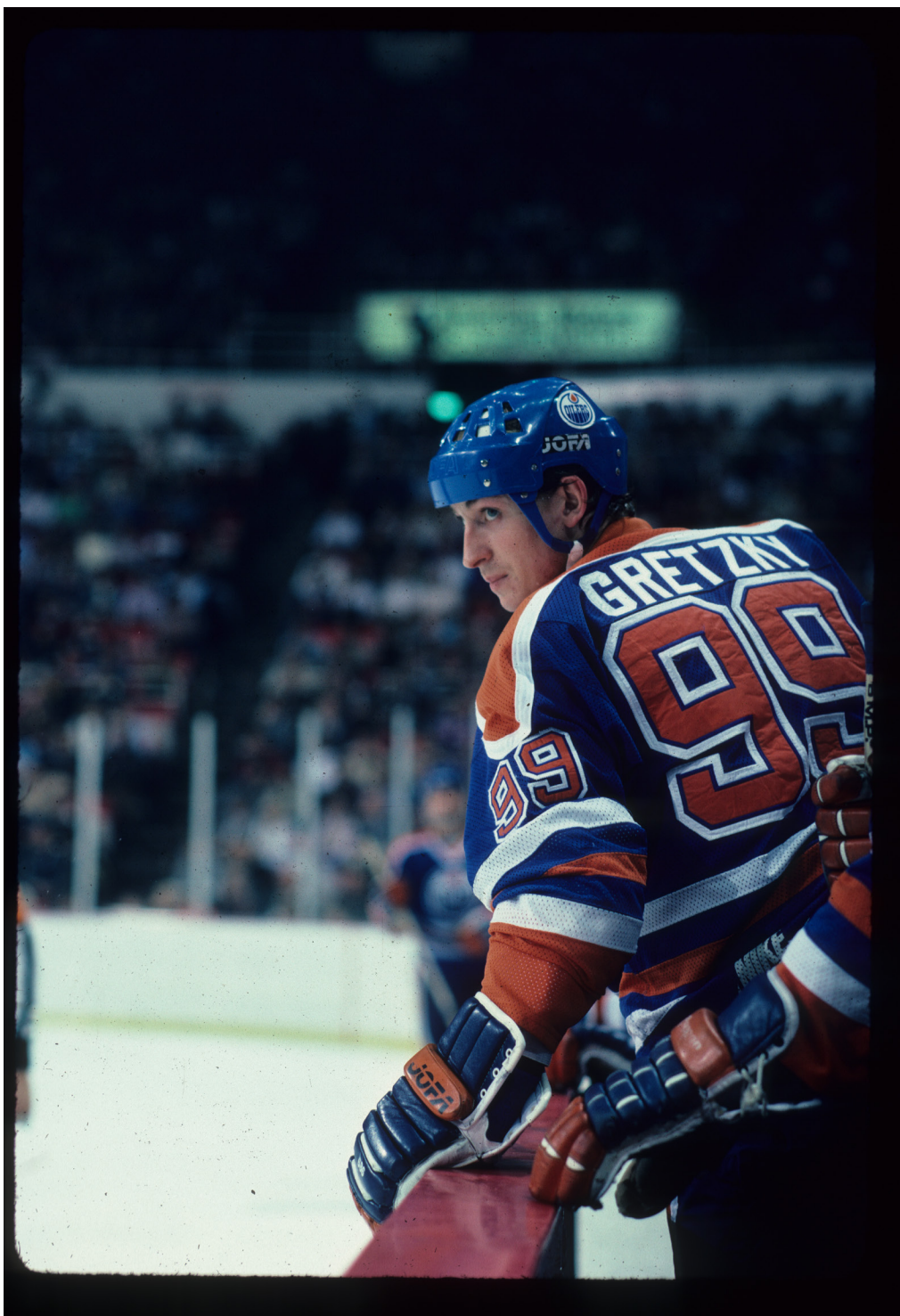
HHOF 2005

Killer is a bit of an odd nickname for a player who confessed to only weighing 175 pounds “soaking wet.” Kingston, Ontario native, Doug Gilmour, was given his deadly moniker by St. Louis Blues teammate, Brian Sutter, for his apparent resemblance to one notorious murderer and his surname being similar to that of another. Gilmour’s skill, passion, fearlessness and gritty determination made him one of the best players in hockey. In 1992-93 and 1993-94, he led the Toronto Maple Leafs in scoring and on long playoff runs with seasons of 127 and 111 points respectively. He retired in 2003 with 450 goals and 964 assists.

Doug Gilmour

HHOF 2011





You would think that the player who owns the NHL's record book also possessed the best tools in the game — speed, strength, size. He didn't. What set Wayne Gretzky apart from all others, however, was his vision and imagination. This poignant shot of "The Great One" shows him getting ready to enter the fray, already strategizing his next improbable move.

Wayne Gretzky

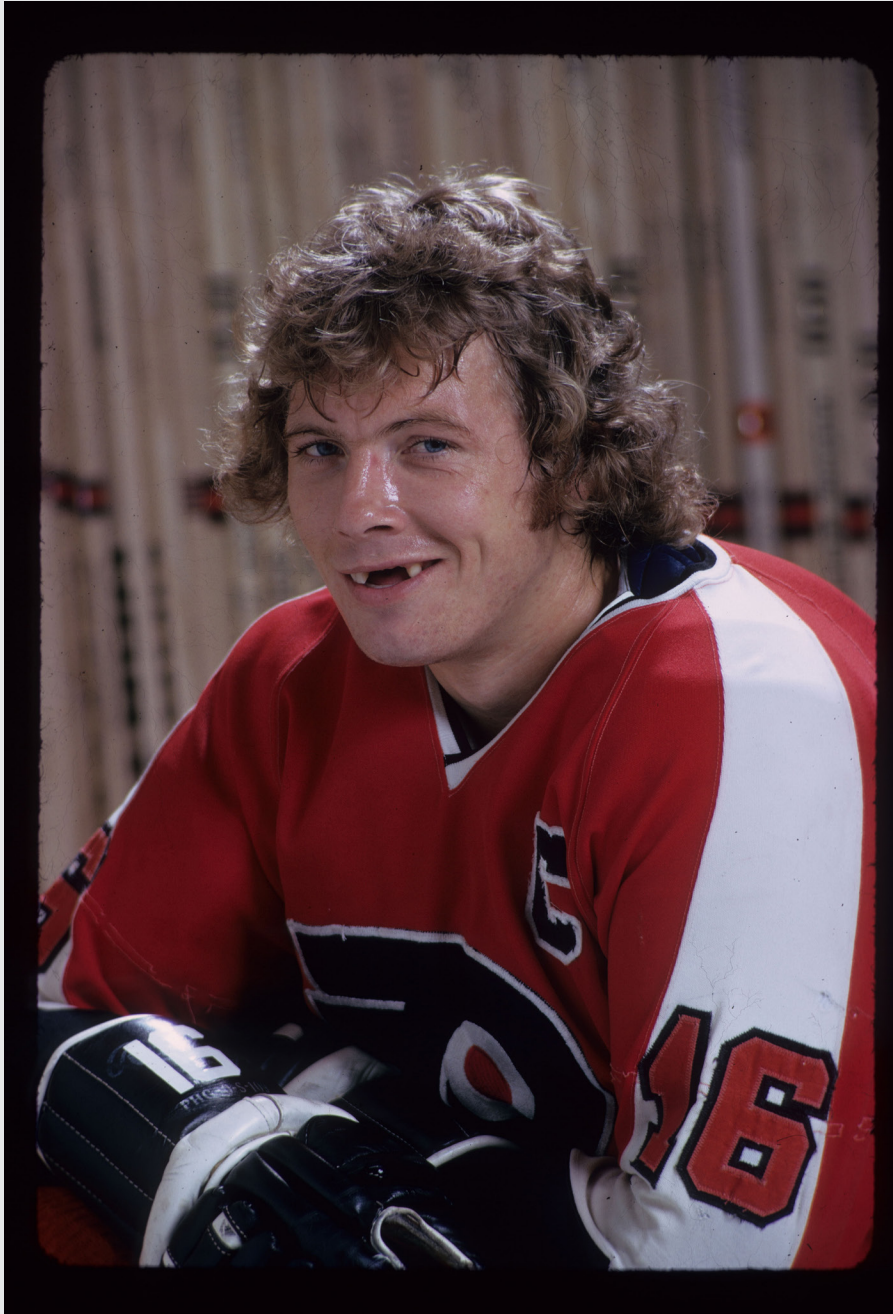
HHOF 1999



The old and the new: Chicago veteran, Marian Hossa, staves off a check from Winnipeg rookie sensation, Patrik Laine, during the 2016-17 NHL season. Laine, a native of Tampere, Finland and the second-overall pick in the 2016 NHL Entry draft, would go on to score 36 goals in his debut campaign. Hossa, the Slovakian star who played his first game in 1997, scored his 500th NHL goal in the fourth game of the season.

Patrik Laine & Marian Hossa

CLASSIC PHOTOS



For all his success as one of hockey's ultimate — and gritty — leaders, Philadelphia Flyers' famous captain Bobby Clarke might be best remembered for his toothless "hockey" smile, captured here in this classic shot.

Bobby Clarke

🌸 HHOF 1987 🌸

Location · City, State | September, 1973 | John Harlan | colour · slide · 35mm