

Saturday Section

ROGAE FLYERS, OLYMPIC CHAMPIONS OF 1948

RCAF 'Flyers', Olympic Champions

'The late Governor General betrayed more than a passing interest in hockey,'

says Pat Guzzo
(who played left wing)

At the winter Olympics of 1948, the Canadian hockey team — the RCAF Flyers — was undefeated. We won six games, and tied one with Czechoslovakia. Canada allowed only two goals to be scored against it — one by Sweden, and one by Italy, which latter game we won 21 to 1.

Canada had to surmount many obstacles to win the championship at St. Moritz, Switzerland that year.

To start with, there was no artificial ice and playing conditions varied unbelievably from day to day depending on the weather. Then we were also affected by the altitude — 6,800 feet; and the somewhat different international rules; and the inexperience of the referees.

That the team — which had left Canada under a barrage of criticism — should have overcome all these difficulties speaks highly not only of the spirit of the players, but particularly of the leadership of Manager (Squadron Leader) Sandy Watson and Coach (Sergeant) Frank Boucher.

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THE 1948 OLYMPIC hockey games were marred from the outset. There was a dispute over which team from the United States should be allowed to compete. The matter should have been settled long before the games got under way. The International Olympic Committee had ruled that hockey would not be part of the games. But two days before the games were to begin, in fairness to those countries which had already entered the competition in good faith, the Committee reversed its ruling and restored hockey as an official event.

vicious by some segments of the European press.

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ON THE OTHER HAND, the Canadian team also received many flattering tributes, particularly when we were touring Europe playing exhibition games.

When we were leaving Czechoslovakia, for example, it was the height of the Communist coup. And yet a special paper was put out with the picture of the whole team on the front page and the caption in very large letters said, "Goodbye Canada, you are good sports."

In Sweden, one official said jokingly that Canada didn't need to send trained diplomats to improve relations. "Just send back the RCAF hockey team," he said.

We played 44 exhibition games in Europe, two of them among we players ourselves. Of the remaining 42, we won 31, lost five and tied six.

We travelled some 15,000 miles and played in seven countries before some 350,000 spectators, and it cost the CAHA \$9,000 to send the team to compete that year.

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ONE OF THE highlights of the tour was our visit to Paris.

While there, on March 4, the Canadian team was entertained by General Georges P. Vanier who was Canadian Ambassador to France. It was on that occasion that the accompanying photo was taken at the Canadian Embassy.

But it was only two years ago that I requested the late Governor General to autograph the photograph for me.

Even though it was 19 years ago, I remember the genuineness of his pleasure at being able to entertain us at a small reception.

He and Madame Vanier and the children, however, were



With General Georges

Kneeling, left to right: Frank Boucher, coach: Orval Gravelle, Louis LeCompte, Roy Forbes, Pat Guzzo, Frank Dunster, Ross King.

Standing: Ted Hibberd, Group Capt. D. Edwards, Hubert Brooks, Dr. Sandy Watson,

and restored hockey as an official event.

Hockey in Europe is played with little body contact, and any roughness results in a penalty, which is immediately increased if the offender talks back to the referee. This was the first lesson we had to learn on arriving in Europe.

During the games, some of our players were criticized for being rough, and sometimes we were given numerous penalties, and these of course were played up by the newspapers. But, by our standards, we never saw what we considered a rough game.

Wally Halder, who played through his entire Toronto University career without a single penalty, was nicknamed "The Brute" and described as

He and Madame Vanier and the children betrayed more than a passing interest in hockey and they all took in the game between Canada and the Paris Racing Club team, which was made up of Canadians.

We won that game 5 to 3, the first team to beat Paris that year.

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SCORES OF 1948 HOCKEY GAMES

Canada, 3; Sweden, 1

Canada, 3; England, 0

Canada, 15; Poland, 0

Canada, 21; Italy, 1

*Canada, 12; U.S., 3

Canada, 0; Czecho'ia, 0

Canada, 12; Austria, 0

Canada, 3; Switzerland, 0

*This game did not count.



PAT GUZZO holds autographed team photo, enlarged above.



With General Georges P. Vanier in Paris

Kneeling, left to right: Frank Boucher, coach; Orval Gravelle, Louis LeCompte, Roy Forbes, Pat Guzzo, Frank Dunster, Ross King.

Standing: Ted Hibberd, Group Capt. D. Edwards, Hubert Brooks, Dr. Sandy Watson,

manager; General Georges P. Vanier, Irving Taylor, George McFaul, Andy Gilpin, Reg Schroeter, Ab Renaud.

Missing from picture: George Mara, Wally Halder, Murray Dowey, Andre Laperriere, Pete Lechnitz.

Where they are and what they're doing now

Ted Hibberd, Metropolitan Life, Ottawa;
Hubert Brooks, RCAF;
Dr. Sandy Watson, eye specialist, Ottawa;
Irving Taylor, Merivale Hockey Arena;
George McFaul, RCAF, Ottawa;
Andy Gilpin, RCAF, Summerside, PEI;
Reg Schroeter, Civil Service, Ottawa;
Ab Renaud, Civil Service, Ottawa;
Frank Boucher, RCAF, Uplands;
Red Gravelle, RCAF, Winnipeg;

Louis LeCompte, aerial photographer, Nairobi;
Roy Forbes, Canadian Army;
Pat Guzzo, sporting goods, Ottawa;
Frank Dunster, Boyd Security and Storage;
Ross King, RCAF;
George Mara, liquor importing, Toronto;
Wally Halder, businessman, Toronto;
Murray Dowey, Toronto Transport Commission;
Andre Laperriere, commercial artist, Montreal;
Pete Lechnitz, CGE, Toronto.