

Special Commentary by **JOHNNY BOWER**



THE GREATEST GOALIES OF ALL TIME WITHOUT FEAR

KEVIN ALLEN AND BOB DUFF



WITHOUT FEAR

The Greatest Goalies of All Time



Kevin Allen and Bob Duff

Special Commentary by
Johnny Bower


TRIUMPH
BOOKS

Text copyright © 2002, 2012 by Kevin Allen and Bob Duff

All photos courtesy of the following sources except where indicated otherwise:

Imperial Oil-Turofsky/HHOF

London Life-Bereswill/HHOF

Frank Prazak/HHOF

O-Pee-Chee/HHOF

Dave Sandford/HHOF

Doug MacLellan/HHOF

Hockey Hall of Fame archives

Additional images courtesy of:

AP Images: Pages ix, 74, 115, 180, 210, 231, 272, 287, 295, and 304

Getty Images: Pages vi, viii, 2, 88, 112, 116, 178, 228, 232, 282, 284, 292,
293, 296, 297, 299, 301, and 302

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher, Triumph Books LLC, 814 North Franklin Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Allen, Kevin, 1956–

Without fear : the greatest goalies of all time / Kevin Allen and Bob Duff.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-1-60078-612-9

1. Hockey goalkeepers—Biography. 2. Hockey goalkeepers—Rating of.

I. Duff, Bob. II. Title.

GV848.5.A1A44 2012

796.9620922—dc23

[B]

2012021812

This book is available in quantity at special discounts for your group or organization. For further information, contact:

Triumph Books LLC

814 North Franklin Street

Chicago, Illinois 60610

(312) 337-0747

www.triumphbooks.com

Design by Nick Panos

Printed in the China

ISBN 978-1-60078-612-9

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION | v

THE RANKINGS | 1

INNOVATORS | 13

Patrick Roy, Glenn Hall, Jacques Plante, Tony Esposito, Clint Benedict,
Cecil “Tiny” Thompson, Vladislav Tretiak, Hugh Lehman, Percy LeSueur, Ron Hextall

WINNERS | 69

Martin Brodeur, Turk Broda, Grant Fuhr, Billy Smith, Gerry Cheevers, Harry “Hap” Holmes,
Mike Vernon, Riley Hern, Henrik Lundqvist, Cam Ward

PERFECTIONISTS | 121

Dominik Hasek, Bill Durnan, Ken Dryden, George Hainsworth, Frank Brimsek,
Johnny Bower, Alex Connell, Ed Belfour, Davey Kerr, Mike Richter, Ryan Miller

TRAGIC HEROES | 183

Terry Sawchuk, Georges Vezina, Bernie Parent, Charlie Gardiner,
Al Rollins, Lorne Chabot, Roger Crozier, Chuck Rayner,
Tim Thomas, Jean-Sebastien Giguere

UNDERAPPRECIATED PLAYERS | 237

Gump Worsley, Tom Barrasso, Harry Lumley, Roy Worters, Chris Osgood,
Rogie Vachon, Eddie Giacomin, Roberto Luongo, Bill Ranford

THE NEXT 50 | 280

Curtis Joseph, Jiri Holecek, Paddy Moran, John Vanbiesbrouck,
John Ross Roach, Nikolai Khabibulin, Marc-Andre Fleury, Jose Theodore,
Normie Smith, Gerry McNeil, John Bower "Bouse" Hutton, Charlie Hodge,
Andy Moog, Don Simmons, Frank McCool, Johnny Mowers, Andy Aitkenhead,
Mike Karakas, Pelle Lindbergh, Kelly Hrudehy, Richard Brodeur, Mike Liut,
Olaf Kolzig, Glenn Resch, Sean Burke, Dan Bouchard, Felix Potvin,
Tomas Vokoun, Ilya Bryzgalov, Marty Turco, Pete Peeters, Miikka Kiprusoff,
Bert Lindsay, Arturs Irbe, Gilles Gilbert, Gilles Meloche, Wilf Cude,
Evgeni Nabokov, "Sugar" Jim Henry, Cesare Maniago, Mike Palmateer,
Gary Smith, Bob Sauve, Don Edwards, Seth Martin, Peter Lindmark,
Hal Winkler, Jimmy Foster, Kirk McLean, Ed Johnston

INTRODUCTION

Once, at a sponsor's luncheon at Madison Square Garden during the 1976–77 National Hockey League season, broadcaster Marv Albert asked New York Rangers goalie Gilles Gratton why he was nicknamed the Count.

“Well,” Gratton said, “in my last life I was a Spanish count.”

Giggles rippled across the room, and Albert pressed for another answer.

“No, I was,” Gratton insisted. “One of the things I did was line up commoners along the wall and stone them. I enjoyed it. But now God got me back, because in this life I’m a goaltender.”

Former Rangers goalie John Davidson, Gratton's teammate that season, says the story is true, and he often retells it to illustrate how eccentric goaltenders could be in years gone by. “Guys were different, because you were worried about getting killed in practices or games,” Davidson recalled. “Equipment was just bad. It was fun. It was a great position. You were in the NHL. But it was dangerous.”

Gratton said he believed in reincarnation, claiming he was a foot soldier during the Spanish Inquisition who was killed in combat when he was run-through with a lance. Did he believe that? Or was he merely planting the seed with coaches about why they shouldn't use him?

“He was eccentric more than crazy,” Davidson said. “He could play a 12-string guitar and he could play classical piano...he could play like it was Beethoven or Bach. He was very bright. He was talented. I remember guys would take slap shots from the blue line and he would turn around and catch them behind his back. But I'm not so sure he really enjoyed playing the position.”

Davidson took note that Gratton always seemed to find reasons why he shouldn't play. And who could blame him? Philadelphia goalie Bruce Gamble had suffered a heart attack either during, or immediately after, an NHL game in 1972. In 1963–64, Eddie Johnston was the last goalie to play every minute of the season, enduring four broken noses to achieve perfect attendance.

“I broke it once Wednesday and played on Friday,” Johnston recalled. “I broke it Saturday, got fixed up, and played Sunday.” Twice, his eyes were swollen shut, and doctors applied leeches to suck out enough blood to open his eyes and allow him to play. Johnston played that season without a mask. “And no brains, either,” he joked after he retired.



Once, Davidson stopped more than 100 shots in back-to-back games against Philadelphia, and the team doctor became alarmed when he noticed Davidson’s body was covered in bruises.

The doctor was concerned that Davidson might have a blood disorder, or even leukemia. What Davidson had was equipment that was protective as a pile of dust rags. “The equipment had not caught up to the velocity of the shot,” Davidson said.

In that era, Davidson said every goalie had two missions each time he strapped on pads: “To stop the puck, and not to be killed stopping the puck.”

Maybe Gratton’s belief in reincarnation was his way of coping, like Glenn Hall’s vomiting before every game or Jacques Plante’s knitting.

Hall used to preach his own personal gospel during practices when pucks were whizzing past his nose. “I’m the only one here going to heaven and you shooters are all going to hell,” Hall would bellow when slap shots would rise too high for his liking.

When Hall was in the midst of his streak of playing 502 consecutive games, he was vomiting before most games. During the streak, Hall had his mouth ripped open by Jim Pappin’s shot and needed 40 stitches to stay in the game. Another time, Hall suffered a gruesome cut in the exposed skin above his pad. “I don’t know how deep the cut was, but you could have put your finger in it,” teammate Stan Mikita said.

By the time Hall reached the NHL in 1952–53, the tradition of goalies playing through painful injuries was well established. In research for this book, we uncovered a story about Philadelphia Quakers goalie Wilf Cude ignoring a cut to his face to continue playing a game in 1930–31. Montreal Canadiens superstar Howie Morenz drilled a shot off his chin. After a few minutes to repair and bandage the wound, Cude was back at his post. It wasn’t as if this was an important game for the Quakers, who posted a miserable 4–36–4 record that season. When Cude was asked about coming back to the game, he replied, “I didn’t want to be puck shy.”

Truly the real miracle on ice is that no National Hockey League goaltender was ever killed in the performance of his duties. Bobby Hull told us he was frankly stunned that he hadn’t killed one. Remember that, in the days before accurate radar guns, Hull’s slap shot was listed at 118.3 mph in the *Guinness Book*

of Records. The chatter in the '60s was that his shot was 35 mph faster than the average player's. We couldn't determine whether that assessment of Hull's shot was accurate or even how that conclusion was reached, but goalies didn't need an understanding of physics to appreciate that Hull's wicked riser could test Hull's theory. Hull won't deny that he liked to spray a few high shots at the net just to give goalies something to think about.

Says Hull, "Looking back at the equipment in those days, it was crap. It was unbelievable what they wore. The equipment was held together by dust. Kids' equipment today is better than what they were wearing."

It was clear that to play in an NHL net required a man to be without fear. That was particularly true in years gone by, when a goalie's armor had all of the protective qualities of an extra sweater.

Trying to explain why a man would play goal in the NHL is like trying to explain why a police officer would aspire to join the bomb squad. Maybe they crave danger. Maybe they just want to be in the center of the action. Maybe they never entertain the notion that they could be seriously injured. Whatever the reason, goaltenders clearly have always led the league in bravado. Clint Benedict wore a mask briefly after an injury, but it wasn't until Jacques Plante donned a primitive mask in 1959 that goalies began to think it was a reasonable idea to cover their faces. And it wasn't until 18 years later, when Andy Brown retired from the World Hockey Association, that the last maskless wonder was gone.

The price players have paid to be NHL goaltenders for the past nine decades has been ghastly. In 1989, Buffalo Sabres goalie Clint Malarchuk almost bled to death when a skate cut his throat. When Frank Brimsek was playing minor league hockey in Pittsburgh, he once played with an eyelid so badly cut that he could see with his eye closed. Goalies essentially did whatever it took to stay in the lineup.

Goaltender is a unique position in sports. A coach can spend hours fine-tuning a defensive strategy, but if his goalie surrenders a couple of soft goals, the coach's labor is rendered useless. Likewise, a coach can spend days ratcheting up his power-play efficiency, but if the rival goaltender is at the top of his game, that labor is also wasted.

"Goaltending is the one factor a coach has no control over," says former NHL coach Al Arbour, who earned four Stanley Cup championship rings with the New York Islanders. "You can't control how well your goalie plays, and you can't control how well their guy does, either."

If there is but one trait that unifies all goaltenders, it is an indomitable competitive spirit. No one illustrates that more than Johnny Bower, who agreed to provide technical analysis of the goaltenders in this book. Bower was 45 when he wore the pads for the final time in an NHL game in the 1969–70 season. Leafs coach/general manager Punch Imlach called him the "world's greatest athlete," and Bower was indeed a rare physical specimen. His combination of longevity and impenetrability earned him the nickname the China Wall.

Greatness in goal can be defined by myriad factors, not the least of which is performing well at the most opportune time.

In the 1940s, *Montreal Gazette* sportswriter Dink Carroll asked Canadiens center Murph Chamberlain to explain what it takes to become a good NHL goaltender.

“My idea of a good goaltender is this,” Chamberlain offered. “Suppose the score is 2–1 in your favor and the other team has the heat on. They get in for two or three shots, but your goaltender makes the big saves. Then you get a breakaway and score. So instead of being 2–2, it’s 3–1 in your favor. It’s the guy who doesn’t bend under pressure that wins games for you.”

Chamberlain’s description of quality goaltending is as true today as it was almost 70 years ago.

We believe that *that*, by itself, is a talent. All goaltenders give up bundles of goals. But what separates quality goalkeepers from the exceptional goalies and the exceptional goalies from the legendary goalies is the ability to bar the door at precisely the right time.

In ranking the top 100 goaltenders of all time, we interviewed scores of folks and looked over a mountain of statistics. We weighted several key factors, including, but not restricted to, Stanley Cup championships, Vezina Trophies, All-Star selections, goals-against averages, save percentages (when available), and, to a lesser extent, longevity. We also considered reputation, stature, and aura. But in the end, the selection process came down to just one simple question: if you were in Game 7 of the Stanley Cup Final, who would you want between the pipes?

Of course, we all sat and watched the brilliance of Los Angeles Kings star Jonathan Quick in the 2012 Stanley Cup Finals and wondered how high he will soar over the next few seasons. With his 1.41 goals-against average and .946 save percentage, he was posting playoff numbers in 2012 that put him in the company of greats such as Jacques Plante and Frank Brimsek.

At 26, Quick already owns a Conn Smythe trophy, a championship ring, and 131 wins. He seems to possess an aura of greatness, but it’s too soon to put him on the list. If this book is reissued in five years, he likely will have his place on the list of top 50—who knows how high.

In the next book, it might also be time to determine the list of the greatest female goaltenders of all-time. Manon Rheaume is the only woman to wear an NHL



jersey, having played for the Tampa Bay Lightning in a preseason game against the St. Louis Blues in 1992. Where does she rank on that list? Or, should she be considered for a place among the top 100 men simply because of her status as a pioneer? That's a debate we can have in a future printing of the book.

Clearly, many will disagree with us. Who do you like as the greatest impact player in baseball? Babe Ruth? Mickey Mantle? Ted Williams? How about the No. 1 quarterback of all time? Joe Montana? Or, are you partial to Tom Brady or Johnny Unitas? That's the same struggle that we face in determining a ranking for men who played in different eras, under different rules, and with different equipment. Today's goalies have personal coaches, nutritionists, and fitness trainers. They even consult sports psychologists, while goaltenders of yesteryear were primarily self-taught.

"Gump Worsley told me that he never had any coaching at all," says former Montreal broadcaster Dick Irvin Jr., son of the late NHL coach Dick Irvin. "Neither did Glenn Hall or Terry Sawchuk, or any of the guys from that era. Gump told me that when he came to Montreal, he was thinking, 'Now I will be able to talk goaltending because I have Toe Blake, and this guy is a genius.' The first time that something went wrong he went to Toe and asked him, and Toe said, 'Don't ask me. I don't know anything about goaltending,' and walked away."

That wasn't uncommon. "When I was growing up, I remember thinking my father knew everything about hockey," Irvin says. "When he told me he knew absolutely nothing about goaltending, I was shattered."

Modern goaltenders will seek advice on every aspect of the game, from how they hold their stick to precisely where to drop the puck behind the net for a defenseman. "The position of goaltender today is very mechanical,"

St. Louis coach Ken Hitchcock said. "Goaltenders play percentages now. The technical aspect of goaltending is now just so elevated from where it was before. It's not the same as it was when it was very athletic, like in the days of Glenn Hall, Roger Crozier, and others."

We tried to judge the men, not the equipment or the era. And rather than looking at the hardships each man endured, we preferred to judge these athletes on their ability to handle hardship, regardless of what form it came in.

When our list was drawn up, we looked for the common thread that bound the group together. It wasn't size, strength, style, or nationality. We had big goalies, small goalies, floppers, and stand-up guys. We also had goalies from every NHL era. The only common trait of all of our goalies was confidence in their ability to prevent the other team from pushing a puck past them. When it came to believing in themselves, the goalies on our list were all without fear.





1

50

12

27

THE
RANKINGS

34

46

1 MARTIN BRODEUR

The NHL's all-time leader in wins and shutouts also owns an NHL-record eight 40-win seasons. He's the only NHL goalie with multiple Stanley Cups (three) and Olympic gold medals (two). He might handle the puck better than any goalie in league history.

2 PATRICK ROY

With his incredible focus and devotion to technique, Roy was the yardstick by which all other goaltenders were judged. His greatest single talent was his ability to win at all times, regardless of circumstances or challenges. He won in Montreal. He won in Colorado. His regular season *and* playoff win totals put him in rarefied air.



3 TERRY SAWCHUK

The NHL's all-time leader in games played and shutouts when he died in 1970, Sawchuk put up astonishing numbers during his first five full NHL campaigns—56 shutouts, 195 wins, and a 1.93 goals-against average.

4 GLENN HALL

Probably the most indestructible goalkeeper in NHL history, Hall blended durability, moxie, and an unorthodox style to earn the apt nickname “Mr. Goalie.” Including junior and minor pro, he started an amazing 502 consecutive games.

5 JACQUES PLANTE

In the early years goaltending attracted thrill seekers. Plante viewed goaltending as a craft. He studied it and worked to improve the position, including using a mask and playing the puck outside his goal crease.

6 DOMINIK HASEK

The Dominator (1996–97 and 1997–98), Jose Theodore (2001–02), and Jacques Plante (1961–62) are the only goalies in NHL history to win the Hart and Vezina Trophies in the same season. He even played two more seasons of pro ball in Europe and Russia after retiring from the NHL.

7 BILL DURMAN

Durnan won the Vezina and was a first All-Star choice in each of his first four NHL campaigns. He helped the Montreal Canadiens win their first Stanley Cup in 13 years as a rookie in 1943–44.

8 KEN DRYDEN

While it would be impossible to prove that Dryden was the most intelligent man ever to play between the pipes, he clearly was the first to intellectualize the position. He is capable of writing a doctoral thesis on goaltending, and essentially did in a book titled *The Game*. Dryden also served as a Canadian member of parliament.

9 GEORGE HAINSWORTH

Hainsworth retired as the NHL shutout leader in 1936–37 with 94 and held the honor until Terry Sawchuk shattered it in 1964. He also won the Vezina Trophy the first three seasons it was awarded.

10 GEORGES VEZINA

Vezina took the Canadiens to consecutive Stanley Cup Finals in 1923–24 and 1924–25. When illness ended his career the following season, Montreal missed the playoffs. He held the NHL consecutive games played record well into the 1930s.

11 BERNIE PARENT

The only NHL goaltender to be Stanley Cup MVP in consecutive seasons, Parent grew up idolizing Jacques Plante and shared goaltending duties with him in Toronto. Only Martin Brodeur, with 48 in 2006–07, won more games in an NHL season than the 47 victories posted by Parent in 1973–74.

12 TURK BRODA

Toronto's fabulous fat man was the first goalie in NHL history to backstop his team to three successive Stanley Cups. Broda backstopped the Leafs to Stanley Cup Final appearances in three different decades.

13 GRANT FUHR

While facing the Edmonton Oilers' ferocious offense in the '80s, opponents never lost sight of the fact that Grant Fuhr was the best goalkeeper in the world during that period. He could dive across the net like lightning rippling across the horizon.



14 FRANK BRIMSEK

With his shy, unassuming nature and handsome face, Brimsek looked more like a Fuller Brush man than an NHL goaltender. But six shutouts in his first eight starts with the Boston Bruins in 1938–39 proved how competitive he was.

15 BILLY SMITH

Battling Billy could beat opponents both literally and figuratively. A feisty, highly combative athlete, he was just as likely to use his goal stick like a hatchet to cut down forwards as he was to make saves with it. His 17 seasons with the team are a New York Islanders record.

16 TONY ESPOSITO

Espo's 15 shutouts in 1969–70 remain a mark for rookie goalies and are tied for the second-highest total by a goalie in a single season in the NHL's modern era. His Calder Trophy win that season was the first by a net-minder since Boston's Frank Brimsek in 1938–39.

17 CLINT BENEDICT

Benedict left the NHL in 1930 as the all-time leader with 15 Stanley Cup shutouts. He led the NHL in shutouts in each of the league's first seven seasons. Benedict was the first NHL goalie to win back-to-back Stanley Cups.

18 CHARLIE GARDINER

Gardiner's peers selected him as the starting goalie in the 1934 Ace Bailey Benefit Game in Toronto, the first NHL All-Star Game. Montreal Canadiens legend Howie Morenz rated Gardiner as the toughest goalie he ever faced.

19 JOHNNY BOWER

Bower turned pro during the Truman administration and was still stopping pucks at the NHL level in the midst of Richard Nixon's presidency. At 44 years, four months, and 29 days, Bower remains the oldest goalie to play in a Stanley Cup game.

20 GUMP WORSLEY

The Gumper came out of retirement three times and played in five Stanley Cup finals, even though he didn't win a playoff series until he was 36. Worsley played in five different pro leagues before making the New York Rangers in 1952.

21 CECIL "TINY" THOMPSON

The Boston Bruins finished in first place in six of the 10 seasons that Thompson manned their goal. He was a winner in his first five Stanley Cup games. Thompson played both forward and goal up until the junior ranks.

22 GERRY CHEEVERS

Perhaps the world's worst practice goalie, Cheevers was at his best when it mattered most, winning titles in junior hockey, the minors, and the NHL. Made the goalie mask an art canvas by sketching stitch marks on his whenever he took a puck to the face.

23 ALEX CONNELL

Recognized by the familiar black cap that always adorned his head, Connell posted 50 shutouts during his first four NHL seasons. Served with the Ottawa Fire Department during the off-season.

24 VLADISLAV TRETIAK

An intimidating presence in international hockey, Tretiak forced the National Hockey League to recognize that Europe also boasted high-caliber goaltenders. He is undeniably the most dominant figure in international hockey history.

25 TOM BARRASSO

Barrasso's ability to jump directly from high school to the Buffalo Sabres and win the Rookie of the Year award in 1983–84 helped change the way NHL scouts viewed the draft. Although Barrasso started his career as a high-profile player, his contributions to Pittsburgh's back-to-back Stanley Cup championships in 1990–91 and 1991–92 sometimes get lost in the glare of the Penguins' offensive brilliance.

26 HARRY LUMLEY

Lumley made the NHL at 17 and helped the Detroit Red Wings win a Stanley Cup in 1949–50, at age 23. Although his accomplishment might not be on par with Tigers slugger Al Kaline winning a batting title at age 19, it is certainly one of the significant stories in Detroit sports lore.

27 ED BELFOUR

Once he harnessed his nuclear intensity, Belfour earned a reputation as one of the league's best big-game goalies. This introvert never endeared himself to the media and probably never received all the accolades he deserved.

28 HARRY "HAP" HOLMES

Holmes came up big at the most important time of the year. He posted a playoff goals-against average below 2.00 in six of his ten pro seasons. Holmes led teams from three different leagues to Stanley Cup titles.

29 ROY WORTERS

Worters won every trophy a goalkeeper could win in his era except the Stanley Cup. Worters won the Memorial Cup as a junior. Off the ice, he was a tireless worker for charitable causes.

30 AL ROLLINS

Rollins might have accomplished even more had he not played for the dismal Chicago Black Hawks in the early '50s. (The Black Hawks changed the spelling to Blackhawks in 1986.) Some might argue that his ability to lead the Hawks to the playoffs in 1952–53 was a greater achievement than his helping the Toronto Maple Leafs win a Stanley Cup in 1950–51.

31 CHRIS OSGOOD

Only Terry Sawchuk has won more games and posted more shutouts than Osgood in Detroit Red Wings history, and no Detroit netminder has more Stanley Cups than Osgood. Also shares the New York Islanders single-season wins record (32) with Billy Smith and Rick DiPietro.

32 MIKE VERNON

The list of storied Calgary Flames players starts with the diminutive and well-spoken Vernon. He is second on the Flames' all-time wins list and was in net for the franchise's only Stanley Cup championship in 1988–89. He entertained fans with his stinky netminding and wit.

33 RILEY HERN

The father of professional goaltending, by some accounts, Hern knew how to take care of business on and off the ice. He was the first to translate sports fame into profitability, serving as an NHL official and goal judge.

34 ROGIE VACHON

While most of the hockey world was sleeping, Vachon produced some of the NHL's most spectacular goaltending in the '70s with the Los Angeles Kings. He is underrated, primarily because Ken Dryden erased memories of Vachon's Stanley Cup championships in Montreal, and the results of Kings games rarely were carried in East Coast papers.



35 LORNE CHABOT

Referred to frequently during his era as having “mournful eyes,” Chabot probably had as much misfortune as any goal-keeper who has ever donned the pads. But he had enough accomplishments in the '30s to be considered one of the greats of the game.

36 DAVEY KERR

Rebelling because of his belief that the New York Rangers management was treating him like an indentured servant, Kerr retired early—otherwise his statistics would be more eye-catching. His pride might have cost him a place in the Hall of Fame.

37 ROGER CROZIER

Defying conventional wisdom that goalies should set up for shots as if they were standing at attention, Crozier left crowds gasping with his acrobatics around the goal crease. He was like an Olympic gymnast between the pipes.

38 MIKE RICHTER

If a coach had a century of professional goalkeepers to choose from, Richter might be the one they'd use to face anyone on a breakaway. Throughout his career with the New York Rangers, he used his elasticity and quickness to frustrate many breakaway artists.

39 CHUCK RAYNER

NHL fans and players from the '40s have fond memories of seeing Rayner bolt from his New York net to chase down the puck. He didn't just trigger offensive rushes with his puckhandling; occasionally he would lead the rush. He was one of the most respected goaltenders of that era.

40 EDDIE GIACOMIN

Another goalie who didn't feel he needed to be tethered to his net, Giacomin could both excite and petrify fans when he skated after the puck. He clearly was one of the most popular players in New York Rangers history.



41 HUGH LEHMAN

Lehman jumped to the Pacific Coast Hockey Association when it was organized in 1911 and played every season until the Western league folded in 1926. He was the first former NHL goalie to coach an NHL team when he took over the Chicago Black Hawks in 1927.

42 PERCY LESUEUR

LeSueur was a thinking man's custodian, a goalkeeper in the era when rules prohibited netminders from lying down, sitting, or kneeling to stop the puck. Became a netminder in senior hockey when the club's regular goalie fell ill before a game.

43 TIM THOMAS

Drafted 217th overall by the Quebec Nordiques in the 1994 NHL entry draft, Thomas never played for the team and didn't make it as an NHL regular until he was 28, serving stints in Finland and Sweden. But with the Boston Bruins he's won a Stanley Cup, a Conn Smythe Trophy, and a pair of Vezina Trophies.

44 RON HEXTALL

When Hextall arrived with the Philadelphia Flyers in 1986, he was viewed as the prototype for the 21st century supergoalie. He was tall and powerful, and he skated like a defenseman. He also handled the puck more smoothly than many defenders.

45 ROBERTO LUONGO

Leading Canada to Olympic gold in the home of his NHL team at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Games, Luongo added to an international resume that includes two world titles and a World Cup. Runner-up for the Hart Trophy in 2006–07, with 339 wins and 60 shutouts, he's steadily moving up both all-time lists.

46 JEAN-SEBASTIEN GIGUERE

Led the Anaheim Ducks to the Stanley Cup final in his first playoff appearance, also earning the Conn Smythe Trophy as postseason MVP. Set a Stanley Cup record for most saves by a goalie in his first Stanley Cup start, blocking 63 shots in a 2–1 win over Detroit.



47 HENRIK LUNDQVIST

The only European goalie to lead his team to Olympic gold since 1998, King Henrik guided Sweden to glory in 2006. The only goalie in New York Rangers history to win 30 games in each of his first seven seasons.

48 RYAN MILLER

The only goalie among his legendary Michigan hockey family—which has sent five members to the NHL—Miller won the Hobey Baker Award as the top NCAA player in 2001. He was named tournament MVP at the 2010 Winter Olympics as he led Team USA to a silver medal.

49 CAM WARD

In the spring of 2006, Ward tied Patrick Roy's Stanley Cup record for wins by a rookie (15) and became the first rookie goalie since Ron Hextall in 1987 to win the Conn Smythe Trophy. He won 30 games in each of his first three seasons as a No. 1 goalie.

50 BILL RANFORD

For a brief spell in the early '90s, Ranford was considered the game's best netminder. He jumped right from the junior ranks to the NHL. Ranford won World Championship and World Cup titles and performed the on-ice scenes as USA goalie Jim Craig in the 2004 movie *Miracle* about the 1980 "Miracle on Ice" Olympic gold medal win.



PATRICK ROY

GLENN HALL

JACQUES PLANTE

TONY ESPOSITO

INNOVATORS

CLINT BENEDICT

CECIL "TINY" THOMPSON

VLADISLAV TRETIAK

HUGH LEHMAN

PERCY LESUEUR

RON HEXTALL



2

PATRICK ROY

BORN: Quebec City, Quebec, October 5, 1965

CATCHES: Left	HEIGHT: 6'2"	WEIGHT: 192 lbs.
Stanley Cups: 4	Vezina Trophies: 3	
Conn Smythe Trophies: 3	Jennings Trophies: 5	
NHL First All-Star Team: 4	NHL Second All-Star Team: 2	
NHL All-Star Games: 11		

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS: Only NHL player to win three Conn Smythe Trophies; second in NHL in career wins; second player to win Stanley Cup and Conn Smythe Trophies as a rookie; one of only six NHL goalies to play 900 games (Martin Brodeur, Terry Sawchuk, Ed Belfour, Curtis Joseph, Glenn Hall); holds the NHL record for most 30-win seasons (13); one of four goalies with seven consecutive 30-win seasons (with Tony Esposito, Martin Brodeur, and Henrik Lundqvist); NHL All-Rookie Team selection, 1985–86; leader in Stanley Cup playoff wins (151), shutouts (23), and minutes (15,209); tied for most consecutive playoff wins in one season (11, with Ed Belfour and Tom Barrasso); third-youngest goalie to win 300 NHL games (the two younger being Brodeur and Sawchuk); holds a 2.30 playoff goals-against average.

Johnny Bower's Commentary on Roy

“Patrick Roy was one of the greatest competitors of all time. He hated losing, and sometimes people misunderstood that intensity and considered him temperamental. But I believe that he had the right attitude to win. He pushed himself to be the best and it showed, because he seemed to get better with age. That’s why he was the backbone of both of his NHL teams. Roy was a butterfly goaltender who had some of the quickest feet in the game. He was a solid skater who was able to go post to post in an instant and make key saves. He could be beaten top shelf, but that was a lot easier to say than do, especially with the speed of his glove hand.”

Second Opinion: Former Montreal Coach Jacques Demers on Roy

“Patrick is just a winner. He wasn’t perfect. I knew if he made a mistake, he would work that much harder to make up for it. You are never going to get Patrick to lose his concentration—even if he makes a bad play. That’s what happened in the [2001] Stanley Cup final [against New Jersey]. He made a bad puckhandling play, but that just made him stronger. In 1993, when we won the Stanley Cup, we were down 2–0 against Quebec and [Quebec goaltender coach] Daniel Bouchard said, ‘We found a weakness in Patrick Roy.’ Boy, did that get him going. He wanted to prove Daniel wrong. One thing you don’t ever want to do if you are Patrick’s opponent is to challenge him. He always wants to prove you wrong. And he will.”

Former Colorado Avalanche general manager Pierre Lacroix once said that if Patrick Roy hadn’t been a world-class goalkeeper he might have been an award-winning sportswriter.

Roy didn’t just enjoy playing hockey. He enjoyed the sport’s culture, politics, and heritage. He was millionaire athlete who collected hockey cards, and he spent hours reading the backs of the cards just to see what he could learn. “Even when he was a young goaltender he knew all of the stats,” Lacroix says. “He was always interested in the history of the game.”

When his Montreal Canadiens won the Stanley Cup in 1993, there was a celebration at Roy’s home with the Cup making an appearance. Seeing the Cup’s keeper talking to his wife and friends, Roy snatched the trophy off a table and transported it into the garage with the urgency of teenager misappropriating the contents of his parents’ liquor cabinet. He recruited Lacroix to join him on the misadventure.



Patrick Roy won his first Stanley Cup as a rookie with the Montreal Canadiens.

“He took a screwdriver and unscrewed the bottom [of the Stanley Cup],” Lacroix recalled. “He just wanted to see what was inside. To him, that was a very big deal. He was like a kid in a candy store.”

Roy has to know everything about the game—even what was scrawled in the underbelly of the Stanley Cup. Roy was a player who could cite statistics as if they were passages from the Holy Scripture. He worshiped the game’s traditions and pageantry. He adored the game’s psychology and enjoyed playing the game within the game, such as the time he told his Montreal teammates in 1993 that if they would score two goals they would win because he wouldn’t surrender more than one goal. He liked dancing in the middle of the stage.

All the trappings that distract others only seemed to heighten Roy’s awareness. The more immersed he became in hockey’s culture, the better he seemed to perform.

“He’s one of those guys who, when he’s not playing, is in here reading *The Hockey News*, or looking at stats, or watching how other players are playing,” says former Colorado teammate Aaron Miller. “He knows what happened before just as much as what is going on around him now. A lot of what he does [on the ice], he does with his mind.”

When a biography on Terry Sawchuk hit the bookstores, Roy was there because he wanted some insight on the man whose records he chased.

As much as everyone in the hockey world understood that Patrick Roy was not omniscient, there was a sense that he knew all and saw everything. He seemed to be able to predict movements of forwards before they actually



occurred. He was blessed with a sixth sense for locating the puck in traffic when others couldn't seem to find it. His focus was panoramic. While some goalkeepers struggle to maintain their concentration on the play, Roy was able to take in every event in the building. His observation skills rivaled those of a New York City beat cop. Nothing escaped Roy's notice.

"The popcorn guy could drop a bag in the second period and Patrick [saw] it," says former NHL player Peter McNab, now the Colorado Avalanche's broadcast analyst.

No disrespect is intended toward Roy's athleticism or his mastering of the "butterfly" style that has been copied by hundreds—perhaps thousands—of young goaltenders, but a case can be made that Roy's mental game, more than his physical tools, are what put him in position to retire with 551 career wins. That is why he is viewed as one of hockey's all-time greatest netminders.

It became a game to those around Roy to test the outside limits of his awareness. His mind is almost like a video camera, able to record every moment of every game in every season.

"I [would] try to pick up the most obscure thing that happened," says McNab, "[and] I would say to him, 'Did you notice that a player dropped his stick for just a second in the game?' And he will say, 'Oh, yeah, it led to two scoring chances. Dominik Hasek made a great save on one, and we almost scored on the second one. But then they came down, and we made a defensive mistake.'"

There was definitely an aura about Roy that everyone felt after he won the Stanley Cup as a rookie with the Montreal Canadiens in 1985–86. What he said and how he acted defined him as much as how he performed on the ice. It seemed to fuel how he performed. Telling Jeremy Roenick he couldn't hear his razzing because he had two Stanley Cup rings in his ears explains Roy's success as much as the fact that when he kneeled in his butterfly position, the bottom portion of the net seemed to have been boarded up and nailed shut.

"I knew Patrick was a fearless competitor," former teammate Ray Bourque says. "But [after I got to Colorado] I saw what a competitor he really is. He's just a winner and doesn't accept anything else."

Roy was the one who called Bourque and told him he wouldn't be sorry if he agreed to play for the Avalanche after 21 seasons in Boston. "If Patrick Roy was a forward or a defenseman, he would be a great captain," coach Bob Hartley says.

NHL rules prevent goaltenders from being commissioned as official captains, but Roy always held the unofficial rank. In the midst of the battle, he would seize command and find a way to rally the troops. "He knows when it's time to shake things up," Bourque says. "I'm impressed at how well he picks his spots."

“Especially in the playoffs, he changes his character,” Miller says, smiling at the memory. “I remember we were playing Detroit in the playoffs. We were up 5–1 going into the third period and we ended up winning 5–2. We had a bad third period, and he just snapped. You could just see how upset he was at how we played in that third period. That’s how competitive he is.”

On the ice, Roy’s biggest change through the years was how he handled the puck. He liked to move out of his net and play the puck like a defenseman, a style that fit well with his desire to be as involved as possible.

“In Montreal, they didn’t like me handling the puck very much,” Roy says, smiling. “Here they accept my mistakes more. I might make six or seven mistakes a year, and I try to cut down on them. But I know that I also might save a couple of injuries a year because the defenseman doesn’t have to get hit playing the puck. And I might save a few goals a year by coming out to play.”

That’s how Roy approached the game. Details were as important to him as the brand of pads and stick he used. He was usually even more proficient when he was challenged or when his team wasn’t favored. “Patrick may be the best pressure goaltender in the history of the league,” McNab says.

In 1986, the Canadiens had the NHL’s seventh-best regular season record and Roy, then 20, posted a 1.92 goals-against average to help them win the Cup. In 1993, Montreal had the sixth-best record, and Roy had a 2.13 goals-against average to help the team win. In 2001, a horrid puckhandling mistake, which led to a New Jersey goal, seemed like it would cost Colorado the series. But he kept his composure. That’s the secret of his success: confidence in the face of chaos.

But Roy was anything but a robot. For all of the composure he displayed on the ice, he was a caldron of emotions away from it. As much as he loved playing in Colorado, there was still some Canadiens blood in him. According to his agent, Bob Sauve, Roy long regretted the circumstances of his departure from Montreal.

“As a French Canadian, you can’t play for the Montreal Canadiens and have the success Patrick Roy did and just say, ‘I’m walking away, that’s it,’” Sauve said while Roy was playing with Colorado. “Most of him is with the Avalanche; there is a part still in Montreal.”

Roy had a public meltdown on December 2, 1995, when he was left in for nine goals of an 11–1 blowout by the Detroit Red Wings. He brushed past coach Mario Tremblay and told team president Ronald Corey that he had just played his last game with the Canadiens. Roy was traded on December 6 to

Colorado, along with Mike Keane, for Jocelyn Thibault, Andrei Kovalenko, and Martin Rucinsky. The Montreal newspapers covered those events as if they were the start of World War III.

The transition from Montreal to Denver wasn't easy for Roy, who appeared to thrive in the media frenzy of Montreal. He seems to love the roller coaster, not the merry-go-round. When he first came to Denver, he could walk down the streets without being recognized, and he didn't like it.

"What you also have to remember," says Sauve, "is that the reason that some players are good is because they love that attention. Superstars thrive on that stuff. That's why I was glad he ended up with a contender."

In 2008, Roy and the Canadiens made their peace when Roy's No. 33 was hung from the rafters. "To see my jersey retired by the Montreal Canadiens means a lot to me," said Roy, a Quebec native. "It's an organization with a great history and great tradition. I've seen them play when I was younger, and then watching games every Saturday and then going downstairs to play hockey because we were excited and we wanted to do the same thing that they were."

He was often asked if he'd like a do-over for December 2, 1995. "You always have some regrets," he said. "Nobody's perfect. When you love to compete—and that's the way I was—[there's a] good side of it and bad side of it. But I don't think I would have the career I had if I was not that type of person."

Roy Was an Innovator Because . . .

His classic butterfly style is now a standard by which others are judged.



