

Ted Lindsay Award

PRESENTED TO THE "MOST OUTSTANDING PLAYER"
AS VOTED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE NHLPA

Ted Lindsay – Hockey Biography

Ted Lindsay was born on July 29th, 1925 in Renfrew, Ontario, and from birth he seemed destined to be a hockey player. His father, Bert, played professional hockey as a goaltender for several teams in the National Hockey Association, as well as for a pair of NHL teams, before retiring after the 1918-19 season. When the Great Depression hit in 1929, the Lindsay family moved north from Renfrew to Kirkland Lake, Ontario, so that Bert could work in the gold mines. It was in Kirkland Lake where Ted grew up, went to school and began to develop the hockey skills that would ultimately lead him to his career as a star player in the NHL.

Upon receiving his first pair of skates from a childhood neighbour, the discomfort from them being too big was no match for his zeal to be on the ice. By the time his father found enough money to buy a proper pair, Ted was already hooked on the thrill of backyard rinks and frozen ponds. Hockey quickly became his childhood passion, and he was involved in the game in Kirkland Lake right through 1941-42 when he helped lead his hometown juvenile team to an Ontario Minor Hockey Association provincial title. The following year, Ted, accompanied by another future NHL player in teammate Gus Mortson, went to play junior hockey in Toronto for the St. Michael's Majors. It was during his time with the Majors that Carson Cooper, the chief scout for Detroit, came to him for the first time expressing interest in making him a Red Wing.

Before reaching the professional ranks, Ted was added to an Oshawa Generals lineup that would capture the 1944 Memorial Cup – emblematic of major junior hockey supremacy in Canada. That championship would be the final chapter in Ted's amateur hockey career, as he earned a spot in the Red Wings' line-up as a 19-year-old the following season. He spent the next 13 seasons as a left winger for Detroit, helping to build the team into an NHL powerhouse.

From 1944-45 to 1956-57, Ted was part of a Red Wings team that won four Stanley Cups and boasted the top line in the league, of which he was a key part of, along with Gordie Howe on the right wing and Sid Abel at centre. The "Production Line" as they were known, did just that, with "Terrible Ted" serving as a fiery contributor who could fill up the score-sheet with goals and assists, as well as play a tough, physical brand of hockey. For his play in the 1949-50 season, Ted was crowned the Art Ross Trophy winner as the league's leading scorer with 78 points in 69 games. In typical Ted Lindsay fashion, the 141 penalty minutes he wracked up that season revealed nearly as much about the type of player he was as the offensive output did.

Ted only stood 5'8" and weighed 168 pounds in his playing days, but despite being small in stature, he gave nothing away to any other player in the league. He fought for his space



on the ice, as well as for his teammates, and his on-ice skirmishes are the stuff of hockey legend. He did whatever it took to win. During his first 13 seasons wearing the “Spoked Wheel”, Ted would score 321 goals and add 403 assists, while being named a first-team All-Star eight times. The final season of his first tour of duty with Detroit, 1956-57, saw him establish a new career-high in points (85), while leading the league in assists (55). His involvement in starting the original National Hockey League Players’ Association in 1957, however, saw him traded to Chicago as punishment by management. The once proud captain had been shipped to one of the bottom-feeding teams in the pre-expansion NHL, a Blackhawks team that had only been to the playoffs once in the previous 11 seasons. Ted played for three seasons in a Blackhawks uniform, helping lead them to the postseason in his final two years with the club.

Following the 1959-60 season, Ted announced his retirement and moved on to other pursuits away from hockey. After a few years away from the game, he approached former linemate Sid Abel, then Red Wings’ general manager and coach, to express his interest in doing colour commentary, just to be involved with the team. Abel asked him to come back and play, instead. Ted, always one to keep himself in good shape, went against the advice of family and friends, making a comeback at the age of 39 for the 1964-65 season. His desire to retire in a Red Wings uniform proved too great for him to resist any longer, and he proved all doubters wrong that he could still play the game at a high level, including then commissioner Clarence Campbell. Ted retired from his playing days for a second and final time after the end of the season, but what meant the most to him was wearing the Detroit jersey one more time – the last jersey he would wear as a player.

Not long after retiring, Ted was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1966, in recognition of a career that saw him record totals of 379 goals, 472 assists and 851 points in 1,068 games. He would eventually serve as the team’s coach and general manager, and has enjoyed having an eternal bond with the fans of Detroit as one of its most cherished alumni. On November 10, 1991, Ted’s #7 jersey was retired by the Detroit Red Wings on the same night as former teammate Alex Delvecchio’s #10 jersey was raised to the Joe Louis Arena rafters.

Following the conclusion of his playing days, Ted has remained in the Detroit area with his wife Joanne, and has become a fixture around Joe Louis Arena and the Red Wings organization.

