

Jack Walker

Jack Walker had already established himself as a professional hockey player before coming out west, skating professionally in three seasons with Moncton and Toronto of the National Hockey Association and winning a Stanley Cup in 1914. Just prior to the start of the 1915-16 season he and five of his Toronto teammates jumped their contracts to join the Pacific Coast Hockey Association. Walker, along with Frank Foyston, Eddie Carpenter, Cully Wilson and Harry Holmes ended up in Seattle and formed the nucleus of the new franchise known as the Metropolitans.

Walker spent the next nine seasons in Seattle (he missed the majority of the 1917-18 due to military commitments), winning three PCHA titles and a Stanley Cup in 1917. He was solid offensively, but his main contribution to the team was his aggressive defensive play. Many sources credit him with “inventing” the hook check. While it isn’t clear if he actually invented the maneuver, it is certainly true that he was considered an expert in its use and popularized it on the west coast.

Over the course of 185 career games with the Mets Walker scored 82 goals and 140 points, good for third all-time in franchise history in both categories. He led the Mets in assists in 1922-23 with 10, and the following season led the club in both goals (18) and points (23). Perhaps even more impressive than his offensive statistics are his penalty minute totals. Walker earned a meager 31 penalty minutes with Seattle, for an average of about one minor penalty per 12 games played. Given his commitment to defensive play, that’s quite an accomplishment.

When the Seattle club folded in the spring of 1924, Walker’s rights were transferred to the Victoria Cougars, and he won his third career Stanley Cup with that club in 1925. The league dissolved in 1926, and Walker headed to Detroit where he played two seasons in the NHL.

Hockey was slated to return to Seattle in the fall of 1928, and Walker obtained his release from Detroit to return to the west. One of the owners of the new franchise (known as the Eskimos) was Pete Muldoon, Walker’s coach during his previous stint in

Seattle. Muldoon was savvy enough to know that the forward was still popular with local hockey fans and would be a great draw for the team. Though slowed some by age (he was now 40 years old), the veteran Walker was still good enough to play on a regular basis. He scored the first goal in franchise history during the season opener in Portland and led the entire league in assists in both the 1929-30 and 1930-31 seasons.

When the Eskimos folded in the summer of 1931, Walker headed south to California where he spent a couple of seasons as a player and coach in Hollywood and Oakland. Professional hockey returned to Seattle in the fall of 1933 and Walker returned with it, only this time he was on the ice as an official and not a player. He was both a linesman and referee over the next 10 years, officiating in both the professional Pacific Coast Hockey League as well as the amateur City Hockey League.

Walker passed away on February 16, 1950 at the age of 61. In recognition for his outstanding career and three Stanley Cups, he was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1960.

Jeff Obermeyer is a 13-year season ticket holder with the Thunderbirds. His new book, "Hockey in Seattle", chronicles the history of hockey in Seattle from 1915 to the present day. It is available at the souvenir stands or through his website at <http://www.seattlehockey.net>.