The Evolution of The “Hat Trick”
From Britain to Guelph to Toronto

If you ask any longtime Guelph hockey
fan about where the hat trick came from,
they’ll tell you the term originated
within the boards of a Guelph arena.

But, while the Royal City has a major
stake in the evolution of the hat trick, there
are others who lay claim to bringing the
term to hockey.

It was 1947 when the Guelph Biltmore
Mad Hatters were revived after a hiatus
during the Second World War. The On-
tario Hockey Association team (a precu-
sor to the Ontario Hockey League), was
sponsored by Guelph-based hat company
he would give him a hat. Kaleta delivered
and then some. He scored not just a hat
trick, but four goals in the Jan. 26, 1946
game. Kaleta’s performance in that par-
ticular game is noted on the Chicago
Blackhawks’ team website, as well as in
Hockey’s Book of Firsts by James
Duplacey, as “the first hat trick with a hat.”

The Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto
also credits Taft with bringing the term to
hockey in the 1930s, although Kelly
Masse, spokesperson for the Hall of Fame,
said it’s hard to say when the term started
being used in hockey.

The hat trick has evolved over time. In the 1970s, NHL fans started throw-
ing their ball hats on the ice when a player scored three goals in a game,
a tradition that continues in hockey arenas today.

Biltmore Hats. In the 1950s, Biltmore took
advantage of its hockey team sponsorship
to market its fedoras and gave them away
to league players who scored a hat trick.

Guelph has competition, however, from
another hatter who’s also laid claim to
originating the term.

The late Sammy Taft, who sold hats
from his shop in Toronto, rewarded Na-
tional Hockey League players at Maple
Leaf Gardens who netted three in a game.

The story goes that Chicago Black-
hawks winger Alex Kaleta walked into
Taft’s shop, but couldn’t afford a hat.

Taft told him if he scored three goals in
that night’s game against the Maple Leafs,
No matter when the term was adopted
for hockey, however, the hat trick actu-
ally originated in the sport of cricket.

The popular British team sport has ex-
isted for centuries, but the first formal rules
were written in 1744.

The first use of the term hat trick in
cricket was in 1858, and its use is recorded
in the Extended Oxford Dictionary. HH
Stephenson, of the All-England Eleven,
was awarded a hat after taking three wick-
ets in three balls, or in other words, he hit
the wicket behind the batter three times
in three consecutive bowls.

— excerpts from “Guelph’s Tricky Claim” by
Janet McLeod, Guelph Mercury, Mar. 21, 2009

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