

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 Ontario Hockey Association team (a precursor 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 particular 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 throwing 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 National Hockey League players at Maple Leaf Gardens who netted three in a game.

The story goes that Chicago Blackhawks 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 actually originated in the sport of cricket.

The popular British team sport has existed 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 wickets 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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