

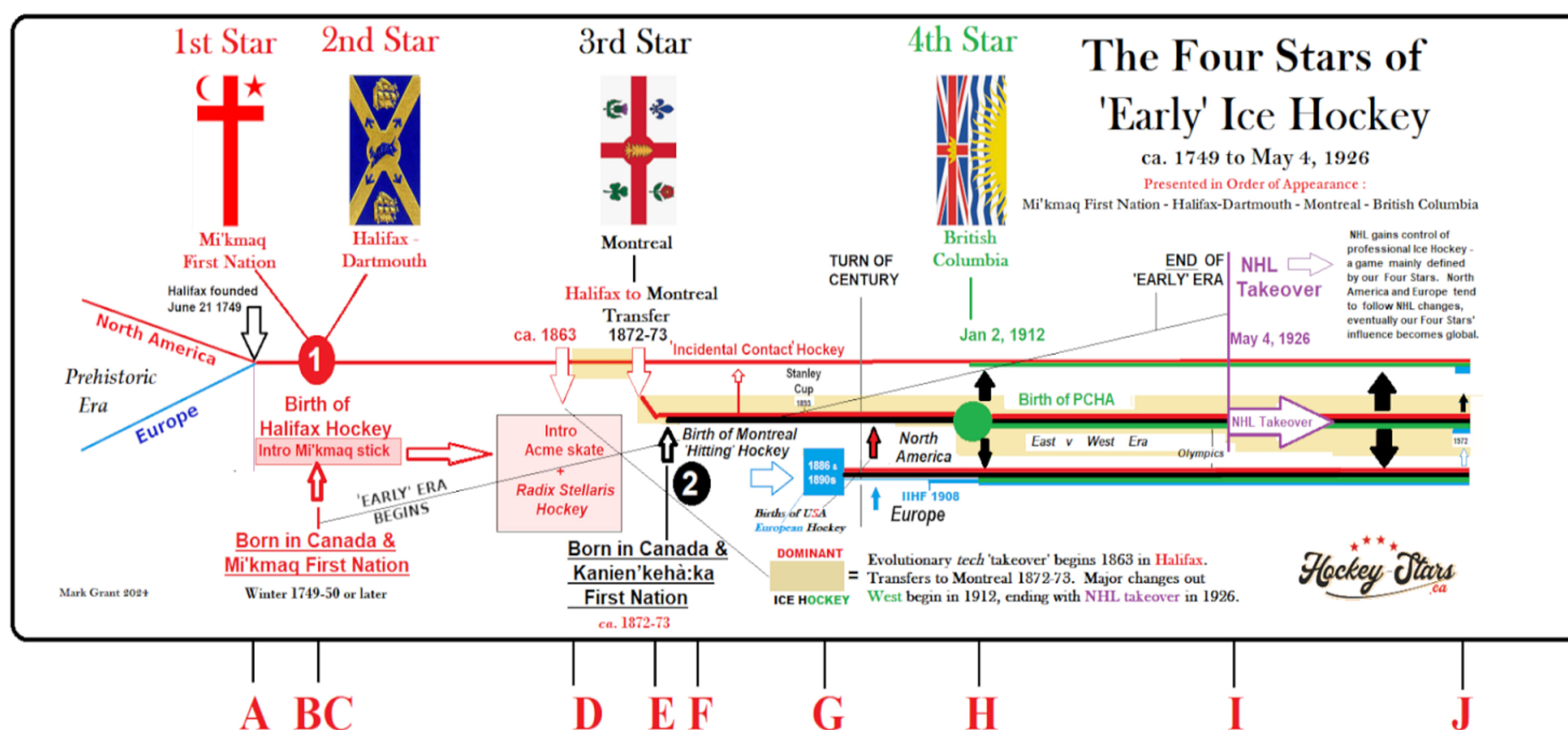
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The Four Stars of Early Ice Hockey

Mark Grant 2024

The above image is based on a composite photo taken in 1893 at Montreal's Victoria Skating Rink. The VSR Victorias are playing the blue team, HC Montreal, who will become the very first winners of the Stanley Cup in a matter of weeks.

The births and early evolution of Ice Hockey



A. The birth of "the" stick game that became Ice Hockey had to wait for a meeting involving players from two continents, North America and Europe. That meeting took place no earlier than the winter of 1749-50 in the greater Halifax, Nova Scotia, area.

B. The first meeting involved the colonists of Halifax and/or Dartmouth and Mi'kmaq First Nation members who called Halifax "Kjipuktuk." Together, these partners gave birth to Halifax ice hockey (Red circle "1"). Therefore, "the" stick game that became Ice Hockey was a Canadian-Mi'kmaq game born in Canada and the Mi'kmaq First Nation.

C. Halifax hockey's first evolutionary advantage was the Kjipuktuk Mi'kmaq's stick which had a "flat thin blade. This was ideal for controlling objects on ice, especially compared to British sticks which were primarily used for grass.

D. Next, around 1863, the Dartmouth colonists introduced a new kind of skate to Halifax hockey. The Acme is said to have been a superior kind of skate. The union of the Mi'kmaq stick and the Dartmouth skate produced a superior version of "hockey" that would become dominant in Canada (gold line) by the end of the 1800s. After its 1863 introduction, this new game evolved for ten years in Halifax, generally unseen.

E. In 1872-73, Halifax's James Creighton shared Halifax hockey with a group of Montrealers. When this occurred, Ice Hockey's mantle of "dominance" was transferred to Montreal, owing to things like the Montrealers' ambition, their city's Winter Carnivals, the Stanley Cup, and frontier Canadians' insatiable demand for Halifax's skates and sticks (or their imitations).

F. Soon afterwards, the Montrealers introduced 'hitting' Ice Hockey (Black circle "2"). Their second version of Ice Hockey, hitting Ice Hockey, was born in Canada and the Kanien'kehà:ka First Nation. It proved to be a smash hit in Canada and was transferred to the USA and Europe as the 1800s came to a close.

G. Going forward, the Americans tended to follow the Montreal-Canadian game, which became "North American" hockey after Europe's 1908 introduction of the International Ice Hockey Federation IIHF (blue square). Over the next several decades, the IIHF would tend to align with the rules of dominant North American hockey, so affecting European, Olympic and "international" hockey in the process. Europe's own innovations are indicated by the new blue line. Initially, they were generally not accepted into the dominant North American stream.

H. In 1912, the Patrick Brothers introduced a new professional hockey league in British Columbia (the green circle) that challenged the national hegemony of Montreal hockey. From that time forward, dominant North American hockey became a red-black and green game that tended to also define European, Olympic, international, and "incidental contact" Ice Hockey. This is indicated by the four solid black arrows.

I. In 1926, Montreal's National Hockey League finally eliminated the Western challengers, ending Ice Hockey's Early era. Over the coming decades, the NHL would tend to define how Ice Hockey was played in general and on various levels.

J. Ice Hockey's next great evolutionary shift occurred on September 2, 1972. That was when Europe's then-great power, the Soviet Union's national team, entered the neighborhood where James Creighton had introduced Montreal to Halifax ice hockey around 100 years earlier.

For what happened that month and later, modern Ice Hockey has increasingly become a North American-European (red-black-green-blue) game.

NOVEL CONCLUSIONS, as of era 2024, plus one novel THEORY

1. The known birth of Montreal ice hockey, in 1872-73, is what locks fact-based narrative in place.
2. If Canada's Land Acknowledgement agreements are to mean anything, the stick game that became Ice Hockey was born in two nations at once, literally.
3. This occurred twice, based on formal Ice Hockey's strict distinction between 'hitting' and 'incidental contact' hockey.
4. Incidental contact Ice Hockey was introduced in Halifax, or in Canada and the Mi'kmaq First Nation.
5. Hitting Ice Hockey was introduced in Montreal, in Canada and the Kanien'kehà:ka First Nation.
6. Both are Canadian-Mi'kmaq game in terms of national provenance.
7. Our theory: this timeline can be primarily explained by Halifax's technological advantages, Dartmouth's Acme the Kjipuktuk Mi'kmaq's stick.