

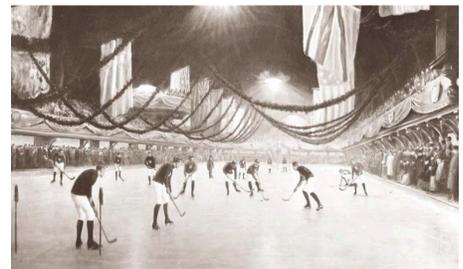
# *A Hockey Viewer's Guide*

This viewer program lists *some* modern Ice Hockey fixtures that were introduced in the game's "early" era, which we have defined as beginning in Halifax no earlier than the winter of 1749-50 and concluding in Montreal on May 4, 1926. This list is not to be regarded as final. Its main purpose is to lend insight into much of what one views when watching all versions of modern Ice Hockey. More details can be found in my free book, [\*The Four Stars of Early Ice Hockey\*](#).

Mark Grant January 2026 ; [www.hockey-stars.ca](http://www.hockey-stars.ca)

## **THE STAGE**

Today's activities will be based on a template that was introduced at Montreal's Victoria Skating Rink, (built in 1863). At 200 × 80 feet, the "VSR's" rectangular ice surface is strongly believed to have inspired both the North American and European-International hockey dimensions of 200 × 85 feet and 200 × 100 respectively. If this presumption is correct, then every hockey rink on planet earth traces back to the sheet of ice shown in this photo.



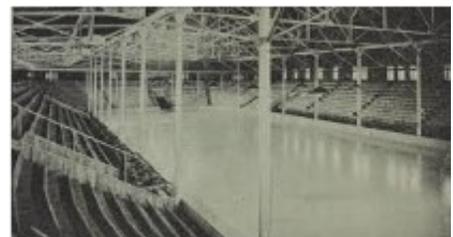
## **ARTIFICIAL ICE**

Performers will be playing on artificial ice, first introduced to elite hockey in Victoria, British Columbia on January 2, 1912, in a contest between the Pacific Coast Hockey Association's (PCHA) New Westminster Royals and Victoria Aristocrats, in a contest won by the visitors, 8-3.



## **BOARDS**

Festivities will be confined within high boards and rounded corners that were introduced to elite hockey at Montreal's Westmount Arena on December 31, 1899 (Montreal Hockey Club vs. Montreal Shamrocks). These innovations allowed the 'rimming' of pucks, portending the flow of the modern game since prior to this time, pucks would tend to stop when sent to the (ninety-degree) corners.



## **RULES**

The version of Ice Hockey you are watching will be based on rules that were introduced through the original Amateur Hockey Association of Canada rules. The first AHAC charter was drafted at the

Victoria Skating Rink on December 8, 1886, and published in the **Montreal Gazette** a few weeks later. Since **all** hockey organizations borrow from the AHAC, such as the NHL, the Olympics, and all of the IIHF's member nations, this document may be regarded as [the “Magna Carta” of modern Ice Hockey](#).

## THE PERFORMERS

Teams will perform **three Acts of twenty minutes, in parties of six**. Three-period hockey was introduced at the Westmount Arena, January 5, 1910, when the Montreal Wanderers played the Edmonton Hockey Club in a Stanley Cup challenge.

Six-player teams were introduced in Quebec City, December 30, 1911, in a game between the Montreal Wanderers and the Quebec Bulldogs, also known as the Quebec Hockey Club.

## THE PLOT

Contestants will seek to score goals with a **rubber puck**, first introduced to elite hockey in Halifax, ca. 1872.

## THE GOAL

**Goal posts and the goal's dimensions** were defined in Montreal, soon after James Creighton introduced Montreal to Halifax hockey around 1872-73.\* **Red goal lines** were installed in the December 5, 1913, in a Vancouver contest in played between the New Westminster Royals and the Vancouver Millionaires. At first the red goal lines only extended from post to post.



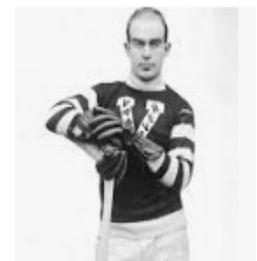
## THE GOALIE

The **leg pads** you see were introduced to Stanley Cup hockey on February 14, 1896, when Winnipeg's goalie showed up at the VSR wearing cricket pads in a match against the Montreal Victorias. **Diving saves** were introduced at the December 5, 1913 match in Vancouver, won by New Westminister 7-5.



## THE ASSIST

Ten minutes into the same match, **elite Ice Hockey's first assist** was awarded to Cyclone Taylor, on a goal scored by Smokey Harris of Vancouver. **Blue lines** were introduced in the same contest, to **reintroduce the forward pass**, another significant effect was that the new 'neutral zone' made elite Ice Hockey even faster. Perhaps the game's biggest speed upgrade since the Westmount's introduction of rounded boards.



## THE STICK

Contestants will navigate the puck using an ice-adapted stick with a **‘flat thin blade.’** This device was introduced to lineal hockey by the Kjipuktuk Mi’kmaq around 1749–50, whenever they met up with the first Halifax settlers whose descendants would later transfer to Montreal. The Mi’kmaq people call Halifax Kjipuktuk. The Mi’kmaq famously made their sticks from tree roots (*radix* in Latin) and are credited with introducing **the stick that “tamed the puck”** bringing order and the potential for evolution on ice. It has proved indispensable ever since.



## THE SKATE

The skates you see are based on a design introduced by the Starr (*stellaris*) Manufacturing Company around 1863. Dartmouth’s Acme skate would go on to be world-famous, due to how its spring mechanism gave the user much greater leverage on ice. It offered what proved to be an essential advantage in hockey played on ice: **weaponized turning**, which has been preserved ever since its introduction a few miles away from Tuff’s Cove. Shown in the nearby photo, Dartmouth’s John Forbes is credited with creating Nova Scotia’s world-famous skate.



## THE PERFORMERS

The players you watch all rely on two technologies that produced the 19th-century’s dominant player, **Radix Stellaris**, as we have called him. Everywhere Radix Stellaris went, he redefined how ‘hockey on ice’ was to be played and rendered extant sticks and skates extinct.

Perhaps one day Radix Stellaris’ competitive advantages will be explored on ice, since we have the ability to reinvent Acme skates and those they replaced, as well as the various sticks that the Mi’kmaq stick conquered. As of now, the most under-served era in the history of early Ice Hockey is that of Halifax-Dartmouth-Kjipuktuk during the ca. 1863 to 1872 *pre-Montreal* era. The question hockey people must ask, is how good Halifax’s finest players got after playing ten years of *competitive radix stellaris* hockey, with Montreal’s Winter Carnivals providing a very good hint.

## THE BROADCAST

Unless you have the sound off, you will be hearing a person call the game you are watching. This tradition dates back to the aforementioned Stanley Cup match of 1896, when runners went back and forth between the VSR and the telegram office to provide fans in Winnipeg with live updates of the game. Thousands are said to have gathered near the telegram office in Winnipeg, which lays claim to the first Stanley Cup parade. These things indicate how extraordinarily popular elite hockey had become since the Halifax-to-Montreal transfer of 1872-73. Featured here is Foster Hewitt, Order of Canada Officer. Winnipeg lays claim to the first Stanley Cup parade.



## THE BODY CHECK

Expect to see **predatory hitting** if you are watching men's hockey, to degrees that are partly determined by season. This tradition dates back to soon after the 1872–73 Halifax transfer, when the founding fathers of Montreal ice hockey decided to make Halifax hockey more like rugby. This likely encouraged other forms of illegal body contact, in a narrative that the Westmount Arena's high boards may have contributed to significantly. We call this variation of the Halifax game *radix stellaris* **hittem hockey**.



It is presumed that many modern penalties can be traced back to the Montrealers' decision to make the puck-carrier *legislated prey*. The same holds true for things like the “face wash”, the “love tap,” the “toothless grin” and the eventual institutionalization of “jails” more commonly known as penalty boxes. What people think of as **“playoff” hockey** – when the referees relax the rules and ‘let the players play’ **is more fittingly called Montreal hockey** in the historic-lineal sense. From the time of its introduction, Stanley Cup hockey was predatory hitting hockey. In the photo are the first Stanley Cup champions, Montreal H.C. .



## SHIFT HOCKEY ; NUMBERED JERSEYS

Throughout today's game, you will see players jumping in and out of play while the game is on, with jersey numbers on their backs. These innovations were introduced in Vancouver on December 5, 1913. It took some time before shift hockey was used as attrition warfare, added a new layer of cruelty to the punishing Montreal game, at the Canadiens' great expense in the 1925 Stanley Cup finals – the last time a non-NHL team won the Stanley Cup. For these contributions and others mentioned, this December 5, 1913 match between the New Westminster Royals and the Vancouver Millionaires at the Denman Arena (in Coal Harbour) is one of the most historically significant contests in Ice Hockey's early era.



## THE PENALTY SHOT

Should circumstances require, play will be halted and a penalty shot will be awarded to the aggrieved team. The first penalty shot goal was scored by Tommy Dunderdale at the Denman Arena on December 12, 1921, in a match between his Victoria Cougars and the Vancouver Millionaires.



## MISCELLANEOUS

\* The origins of the hockey *net* appear to be disputed, with Ontario and Nova Scotia having claims.

### FIRST INDOOR GAME MYSTERY

Contrary to what many have been led to believe, the first indoor hockey game was **not necessarily** played at the Victoria Skating Rink in Montreal. The VSR is one of two contenders, the Halifax Skating Rink being the other. Both arenas opened ten days apart: the VSR December 24, 1862, and the HSR January 3, 1863.



It may seem likely that at least one hockey match was played at the HSR (featured in the nearby photo) during the 12-year period that preceded the 1875 Montreal match. However, this remains speculation with the VSR's March 3, 1875, match being the undisputed host of Ice Hockey's first recorded indoor game.

### CLOSING COMMENTS

To learn more about the early game of Ice Hockey, check out my free book at [hockey-stars.ca](http://hockey-stars.ca). My "Encore" edition contains several important primary source documents from the early era, so they don't get lost the general public again.

There you will also find a music piece called [1972: Ode to the Original Team Canada](#).

Thank you, and please consider sharing.

Mark Grant, January 2026.

