

PROFESSIONAL HOCKEY PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION

CELEBRATING



YEARS

IN 1967, DOUG MESSIER and his Portland Buckaroos teammates formed a benevolence society of players from around the Western Hockey League to secure proper health coverage for Canadian-born players living in the United States whose pregnant wives would otherwise have to go home to give birth in Canada. Little did he know that this collective group would one day grow into the second largest player union in terms of Membership in North American professional sports, and serve as the only minor league players association within a major league sport.

PHPA 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Established 50 years ago, the Professional Hockey Players' Association (PHPA) is now the certified collective bargaining representative for players in the American Hockey League (AHL) and ECHL, representing over 1,800 players each season situated across 57 teams throughout North America. Given that nearly 90% of current NHL players first developed in the minor leagues before graduating to the NHL, along with the amount of player movement between the NHL – AHL – ECHL (last season 353 players played in both the NHL and AHL; 368 played in both the AHL and ECHL) the PHPA's role in the sport has quietly become paramount across the professional hockey landscape. Not surprisingly, they are often referred to by hockey insiders as one of the best kept secrets in all of pro sports.

Headquartered in Niagara Falls, Ontario in a building which they own, and with a dedicated staff of nine full-time employees led by Executive Director, Larry Landon, the primary function of the PHPA is to negotiate various terms and conditions of player employment through collective bargaining. Both the AHL and ECHL have separate and distinct collective bargaining agreements with the PHPA which determine health care benefits, on-ice and off-



“On behalf of all past, present, and future Members, I sincerely want to thank all those who served as Player Representatives and Executive Committee Members. Your courage, vision, and unselfish dedication for a better tomorrow were paramount to the PHPA's success in advancing and protecting the rights of professional hockey players over the past 50 years.”

—LARRY LANDON, PHPA Executive Director

members who may need assistance dealing with any off-ice issues ranging from addiction and depression to relationship and parenting advice.

ice insurance, workers' compensation protection, travel and trade relocation expenses, per-diem, housing allowances, playoff shares, licensing rights, revenue sharing, development rules, and other player programs. Many terms within the agreements must also be congruent with the NHL-NHLPA CBA given the amount of player movement between leagues.

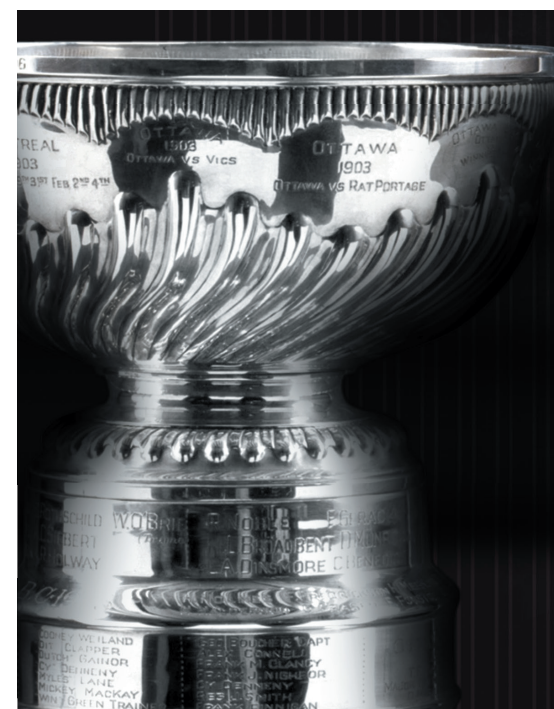
Through the PHPA, players and their families also have access to a number of non-collectively bargained programs and resources. Perhaps the most popular is the Association's Career Enhancement Program which helps players prepare for life after hockey. Since the program was implemented in 1997, nearly 1,700 players have either taken online courses through the program to further their education or have participated in marquee programs such as the Fire and Emergency Services Training Institute (FESTI) which provides professional fire fighting certification and accreditation.

Other programs include a free, confidential counseling service branded as the Redline Program available 24/7/365 to players and their family members who may need assistance dealing with any off-ice issues ranging from addiction and depression to relationship and parenting advice.



Doug Messier (above) of the WHL's Portland Buckaroos was the first to envision a players' association for minor league hockey players, in collaboration with the late Curt Leichner, who are considered to be the "Founding Fathers" of the PHPA.

Recently, the PHPA launched a formal Alumni Network as a means to provide networking and mentorship support to any former PHPA Members who may lack a large business network following their hockey career and who may need assistance in some form to launch their post hockey career. The program is run almost exclusively by former PHPA Members, who since retiring, have built successful careers and are eager to help and support members of the hockey family. ▶



THE NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE
CONGRATULATES

THE PROFESSIONAL HOCKEY
PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION

ON THEIR 50TH ANNIVERSARY



He would soon be elected to the PHPA Executive Committee, and even while playing in the NHL with Montreal and later Toronto, continued to assist players at the AHL level. After suffering a career-ending hip injury while with the Leafs, Landon worked for the PHPA on a part-time basis. Then in 1991, upon Leichner announcing his intentions to retire, a group of players approached Landon about becoming the new Executive Director. Although he declined initially, Landon agreed to become Leichner's successor and was named Deputy Executive Director in 1991 and then Executive Director in 1993. As the PHPA had been headquartered out of Leichner's Portland law office, Landon, upon approval from the Executive

Committee, relocated the PHPA to his hometown, where it has remained ever since.

"When I took over in 1993, financially, the Association wasn't in good shape. On top of that, I was like the skunk at the garden party at every NHL or AHL event I attended," said Landon. "It took some time to build a solid financial foundation, hire a team of advisors, attorneys, and staff, add new player programs, and build a trust and rapport with

“ I THINK THE PHPA PLAYS A VERY STABILIZING ROLE IN OUR SPORT... THEY ALWAYS SEEM TO KEEP THEIR PLAYERS HAPPY... AND THAT'S BEEN A REAL BENEFIT TO US. ”

-BILL DALY, NHL Deputy Commissioner

management and key stakeholders where we could be viewed as problem solvers, not problem creators."

Since that time, Landon and the PHPA have gained a favorable reputation among hockey executives for working together with key stakeholders to help build relationships and advance initiatives that serve in the best interest of past, present, and future PHPA Members.

"I think the PHPA plays a very stabilizing role in our sport," says NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly who has interacted with the PHPA on various issues over the past 20 years. "They take care of their business quietly, they always seem to get things done, and they always seem to keep their players happy while trying to reach the NHL, and that's been a real benefit to us."

Echoing those comments is Brian Burke, who over the years has dealt with the PHPA as an Agent and as an NHL General Manager. "The PHPA's reputation is excellent. They're viewed as a professional group that does a good job on behalf of their players. Their first line of attack is always a solution. Minor league players need an advocate more than anyone. My view is that players are far better off with the PHPA leading and protecting them than they would be otherwise."

Today's professional hockey landscape and player development model is a much more stable environment now than it has been in the past. All 31 NHL teams utilize an AHL Club as their primary development affiliate, while all 27 ECHL teams are affiliated with an AHL and NHL Club.

The origins of such can be pinpointed to a watershed moment when the AHL absorbed the 6 remaining franchises from the struggling IHL in 2001. The outcome of that expansion and addition of markets such as Chicago, Manitoba, Grand Rapids, and Milwaukee can now be seen in a healthy 30-team league, with a 31st team scheduled to be announced later this season.

Similarly, the consolidation of the Central Hockey League with the ECHL in 2014 solidified the AA level of the sport. The ECHL added seven teams from the CHL and now sit at 27 member Clubs, with Portland, Maine set to join the league next season.

In both instances, the PHPA played an important role in ensuring that expansion and

consolidation was seamless from a collective bargaining process.

Mark Chipman, Chair of True North Sports and Entertainment which owns the NHL's Winnipeg Jets, owned the Manitoba Moose when they were an IHL franchise and recalls working with the AHL and the PHPA during the expansion process. "When we merged with the AHL, that took a lot of work, and the PHPA was a big part of that. I don't know where the leagues would have been or ended up if we hadn't taken that step at that time."

Chipman, who also Chairs various sub committees as a member of the NHL's Board of Governors, knows first hand the often under appreciated impact the minor leagues have on the NHL. "The NHL is really dependent upon those development leagues, and not just their existence but that they're run



well and that there's a strong relationship between players and ownership that can be consistent and relied upon. I think combined, the ECHL and AHL, and the PHPA have done a really remarkable job of providing a very stable level of hockey in which countless numbers of NHL players have been developed."

Just as the AHL and ECHL develop the next wave of NHL players, the PHPA plays an integral role in helping acclimate players to a unionized environment before they become NHLPA Members. Bob Goodenow, who served as Executive Director of the NHLPA from 1992 - 2005, likens the PHPA as a training ground of sorts for the NHLPA.

"You have to appreciate the interaction with players as they move between leagues and from one CBA to the next. The PHPA helps establish the culture of being a professional hockey player. They're highly respected because they represent players on so many teams over a broad area. Having an informed Membership is key, and I would suggest that the digital world has really improved the dissemination of information."

With a transient Membership base of over 1,600 players at any given time, where the majority of players are typically in their early twenties, the PHPA has embraced technology and different means of communicating with players. This includes a restricted access players only website (Alumni are granted access as well), players mobile app including push notifications, a membership e-newsletter, and periodic email blasts. The Association is also active on social media, and helps educate players on how they can leverage social media to build their personal brand.

Each Fall, Landon and other Hockey Operations staff travel across North America, meeting with players from each of the 57

teams they represent for a one hour presentation on how the PHPA can be of service to them. The annual Fall Enrollment Tour, which starts in mid-October typically extends to early December until all team meetings are complete. "You can't beat the face-to-face interaction with players," said Landon. "It helps us keep our fingers on the pulse of what is going on, while bringing players up to speed on all aspects of the PHPA and their respective Collective Bargaining Agreement."

The PHPA will also heavily rely on involvement from players, and enlists one Player Representative from each team to serve as a liaison between the PHPA and their teammates. The PHPA often boasts the fact that prominent executives from around the sport such as Claude Julien, Ken Holland, Ted Nolan, Kevin Cheveldayoff and others once served as PHPA Player Representatives which helped prepare them for careers in management.

Each June, all 57 Player Representatives gather in Orlando, Florida for the Association's Annual Meeting of Player Representatives, a week long series of meetings where over 200 attendees take part in the opportunity to review the previous year, while providing input and direction with respect to the Association's strategic plan. Many of the Association's staff, consultants, attorneys, sponsors and other key stakeholders help educate players on the programs available to them.

CONGRATULATIONS

Professional Hockey Players' Association

ON YOUR

50TH ANNIVERSARY

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT



HOCKEY CANADA

During the most recent meetings this past June, Rob Striar, a former PHPA Member who is now the Founder and Principal at MStyle Marketing, a global strategy firm specializing in marketing and branding for top sports, entertainment, and consumer brands, who also developed the PHPA's 50th Anniversary logo, spoke about the PHPA as a brand.

"The PHPA to me goes far beyond what people would consider minor league hockey. It's the brand where all hockey players come from and extends beyond the grassroots level. The players and brand are in arenas throughout Canada and the US and are really at the heart of minor league hockey. If you're a brand looking to align yourself with ▶

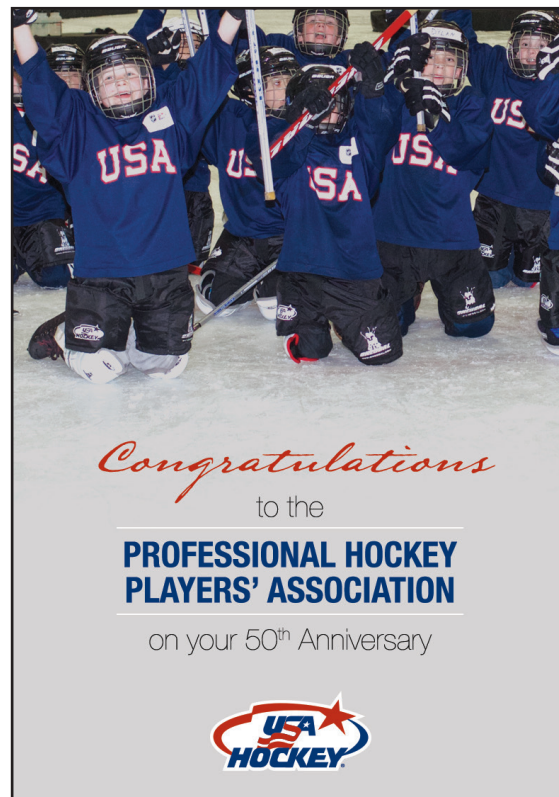
Congratulations from the



on your 50th Anniversary!



OVER 600 PHPA MEMBERS WHO STARTED IN THE ECHL HAVE PROGRESSED TO THE NHL



Indeed, the PHPA has come a long way since its humble beginnings in 1967, when Doug Messier approached attorney Curt Leichner, who was based out of Portland, Oregon, to legally form the Association. "There was no backlash from the owners because we weren't really challenging them on anything," recounts Messier. "The players were interested in the group insurance plan as well as a pension fund. During our first meeting with the owners, there were really no issues as the pension fund and healthcare plan were being funded by the players which wasn't costing the owners anything. The healthcare problems experienced by the players and their families was taken care of and we were able to grow a few things from there like per diem."

The following year, AHL players, who often played against WHL teams due to interlocking schedules heard about the benefits being enjoyed by players in the WHL. After a vote, AHL players legally joined the Association.

In 1969, with Messier nearing the end of his playing career, Leichner assumed the role of PHPA Executive Director, and remained in that position until his retirement in 1993, during which the PHPA had grown to represent players in the Central Hockey League (CHL), and International Hockey League (IHL).

It was also during that time, in 1981, when a rookie with the Nova Scotia Voyageurs by the name of Larry Landon first became involved with the PHPA as a Player Representative. A native of Niagara Falls, Ontario, Landon was drafted by the Montreal Canadiens while on a hockey scholarship at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI).

MERIDIAN
IS A PROUD
PARTNER
OF THE
PHPA.



Happy 50th
Anniversary
to the PHPA.

Meridian is Ontario's
largest credit union,
helping to grow the lives
of more than a quarter
of a million Members.

Meridian™

™Trademarks of Meridian Credit Union Limited.



PHPA 50TH ANNIVERSARY

grassroots hockey in a real tangible way, these players are out there working hard every night with a blue collar mentality trying to chase their dream and move up to the NHL. These players are the guys interacting with communities, going into schools, speaking to kids, and really working within their communities. As we developed the PHPA's 50th Anniversary mark, it was important to have that strength and unity in-

“THESE PLAYERS ARE THE GUYS INTERACTING WITH COMMUNITIES, GOING INTO SCHOOLS, SPEAKING TO KIDS AND REALLY WORKING WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES.”

-ROB STRIAR, MStyle Marketing, Founder

corporated throughout, and come up with a mark that players would be proud to wear.”

The PHPA proudly boasts a stable of corporate partners who share the same values, and who work directly with players to help advance and enhance their quality of life. Partners such as Meridian - the Association's official Financial Institution helps players with any number of financial situations from cross-border banking, mortgages, opening savings accounts, investment advice, as well as the upcoming launch of the new Visa affinity card for players. Other partners such as BioSteel and CCM Hockey help provide the tools and support for players to reach the next level. The PHPA and AHL have a joint licensing agreement with the Upper Deck Company which produces an immaculate annual trading card set featuring 150 of the top prospects within the AHL. All AHL and ECHL players are also showcased within the award winning annual EA Sports NHL franchise video game.

“The PHPA makes better use of their resources than any other sports union in my opinion,” said long-time NFLPA General Counsel Richard Berthelsen. “I think minor league players probably need a union more than their major league counterparts, but at the same time, it's harder for them to stand up to management. But that's another reason I have so much respect for the PHPA. They've been able to organize against some stiff competition. It's a real testament to the players. Contrast that to baseball.”

The PHPA serves as a measuring stick of sorts for minor league baseball players who do not have a collective bargaining representative. In baseball, AAA players, which is the equivalent of AHL players, play twice as many games, make on average only 25% of what an AHL player makes, while per diem (travel money) for AHL players is three times the amount of minor league baseball

players. AHL players receive post season playoff bonuses and proper healthcare in addition to formal grievance procedures.

“It's a pretty easy comparison when you see someone that is playing AAA level baseball and is living with a billet family and they're living off fast food every day,” said PHPA Member Mike McKenna, who has been a member of the PHPA Executive Committee for nearly ten years. “It's amazing to

us that people endure that to play professional sports. That shows you what a union can do for you. Collective bargaining has allowed us to earn a nice living and to have great working conditions, and we don't have to worry about what happens when you get hurt and if you're going to be taken care of. We know we are going to be protected by the union and that the team is going to take care of you if something happens. It's just such a night and day difference from what you see in baseball.”

50TH ANNIVERSARY

The PHPA is celebrating its 50th Anniversary over the course of the 2017-18 season which was formally launched at the PHPA's 50th Annual Meeting of Player Representatives this past June in Orlando, Florida. Calgary Flames General Manager, Brad Treliving, was recognized during the event as the 2017 recipient of the PHPA Curt Lechner Distinguished Member Award for his contributions as a player in leading ECHL players to become represented by the PHPA in 1995. The PHPA also unveiled a six-minute video featuring remarks and comments from some of the most influential names in hockey including Gary Bettman, Don Fehr, Lou Lamoriello, Dave Andrews, and others on what the PHPA has meant to the sport over the past 50 years. The video can be viewed on the PHPA's official YouTube account.

Throughout the year, the PHPA will be selling tickets for a chance to win a custom built PHPA branded Harley-Davidson motorcycle with all proceeds being split evenly in support of various hockey charities including Hockey Fights Cancer, the Hockey Canada Foundation, USA Hockey Foundation, Heartland Forest, and the Staal Family Foundation. The bike was recently featured at the

PHPA 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Rogers Hometown Hockey event in Niagara Falls and will be showcased throughout the year at various motorcycle shows and hockey events. A limited number of tickets are available for \$100 each and can be purchased by calling 289-296-5561 or by visiting PHPA.com.

The Association will conclude its 50th Anniversary celebrations in August, 2018 with a golf tournament in St. Catharines, Ontario featuring various past and present PHPA Members and other hockey celebrities.

When put into perspective, given there are no other minor league player associations in professional sports despite several attempts, the PHPA and its Membership should be proud of what they have. NHLPA Executive Director, Don Fehr, who also served as Executive Director of Major League Baseball's Player Association from 1985 - 2009 congratulated the PHPA on 50 years of service to players at the minor league level.

“When you have an organization like the PHPA, which is in an environment which the employers are not making fortunes, it's a tough environment to negotiate in. You are dealing

“THE ADVANCEMENTS MADE OVER THE PAST 50 YEARS WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE IF NOT FOR THOSE PLAYERS WHO MADE A COMMITMENT TO CREATE A BETTER WAY OF LIFE FOR THEM, THEIR TEAMMATES AND OTHERS...”

-LARRY LANDON, PHPA Executive Director

with individuals (players) who come in and out of the bargaining unit in a matter of a year or two or three, or four. You are dealing with individuals who are in their late teens / early twenties. In large part, it's a difficult task to be able to do that successfully for five decades.



Tickets are available for the custom PHPA Harley-Davidson motorcycle. All proceeds benefit 5 different charities.

To be able to first earn and then keep the trust of the members for that period of time, and you have to earn that trust on an ongoing basis to be respected for what you do and what you try to do even if people are battling with you all the time. It's an enormous compliment

Director, Landon gave a plaque to each player which read, “The greatest thing in this world is not so much where we are...but in which direction we are moving.” That statement holds true 24-years later as the Association celebrates its 50th Anniversary healthy as ever.

“I have been proud to serve as leader for the greatest athletes in the world, and feel privileged that I was handed the torch by Curt Lechner to advance and protect the rights of minor league hockey players,” said Landon. “The advancements made over the past 50 years would not be possible if not for those players who made a commitment to create a better way of life for them, their teammates, and others who have passed through the Association. Your courage, vision, and unselfish dedication for a better tomorrow was instrumental to the PHPA's success in advancing and protecting the rights of professional hockey players over the past 50 years.” ■

to the organization and the people that have been involved in making decisions and one can only hope that they'll continue this pattern for the next 50 years.”

In 1993, at his first PHPA Annual Meeting of Player Representatives as Executive

The NHLPA Congratulates the PHPA on 50 Years of Representing Players

