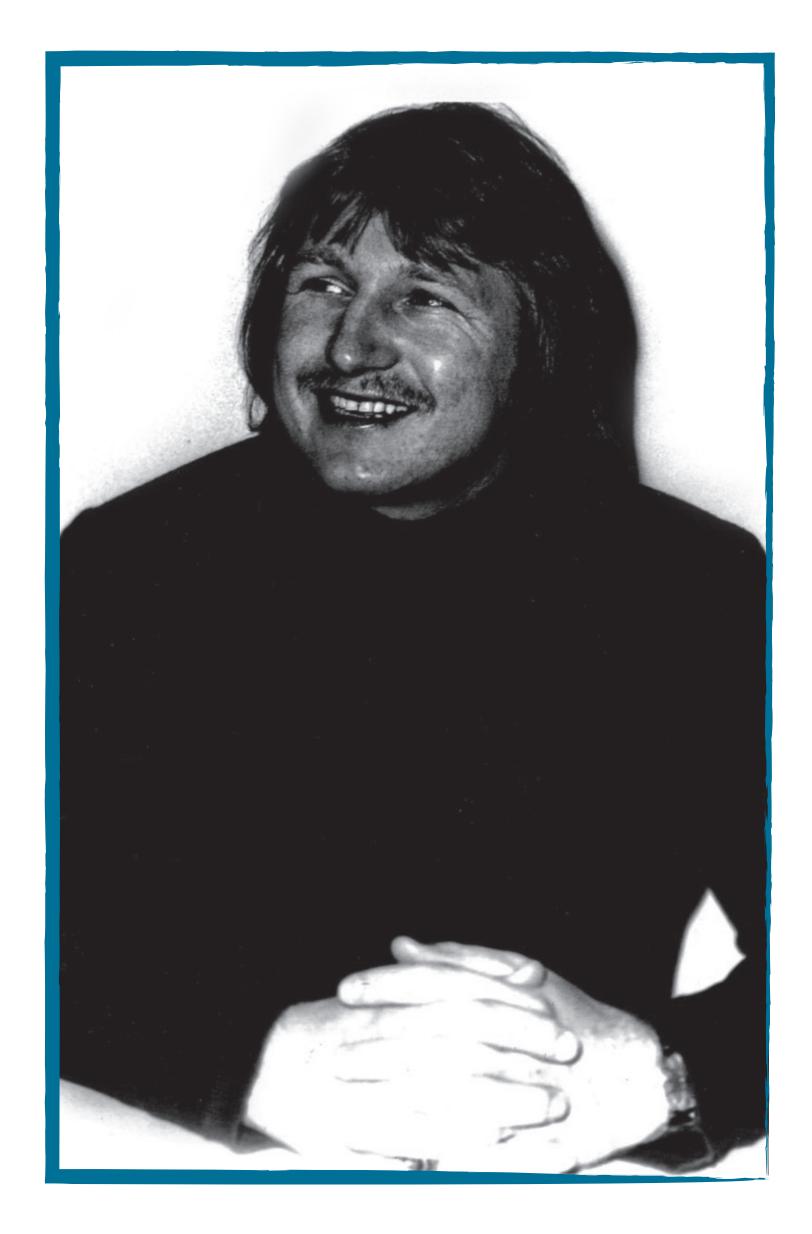# National Hockey League

Dennis O'Brien

A Tough and Feisty Rearguard!

Dennis Francis O'Brien, who was **a native of Port Hope**, got off to a good start in his hockey career, playing with the league champion *Cobourg Cougars* in the 1967-68 season. The next season he was with the *St. Catharines Black Hawks* of the Ontario Hockey League (a team that included future NHL Hall-of-Famer Marcel Dionne). There **he scored 20 points and accumulated 235 penalty minutes** in 52 games as his team advanced to the OHA finals. They lost to a very strong *Montreal Jr. Canadiens*, considered by many to be the greatest Junior team of all-time.

O'Brien was selected 14th overall by the *Minnesota North Stars* in the 1969 National Hockey League Amateur Draft and moved quickly though the Minnesota farm system. In 1971 he joined the big team full-time and **for the next 6 years was a steady regular.** He played in 70 or more games in 5 of those 6 seasons, scoring 24 goals, 95 points and 775 penalty minutes during that span. He was noted for his ability to **"clear the front of the net"** and to be an intimidating presence when his team played tough outfits like the *Philadelphia Flyers* and *Boston Bruins*.

During the 1977-78 season O'Brien was on the move. Traded from the *North Stars* to the *Colorado Rockies*, then to the *Cleveland Barons* and finally to the *Boston Bruins*, **he set an NHL record for the most teams played for in a single season.**

O'Brien's final two years in professional hockey were spent with the Bruins' franchise. Following his retirement during the 1979-80 season, like his fellow Port Hoper, Paul Terbenche, Dennis was employed at Cobourg's Brookside Youth Centre. He is now retired in his home town.

O'Brien's nephew, Shane, has also travelled the NHL circuit, spending time with each of Anaheim, Tampa Bay, Vancouver, Nashville, Colorado, Calgary and Florida.

Shane O'Brien with the Vancouver Canucks