



The O'Brien Cup, Canada's highest hockey award until retirement

Photo: Hockey Hall of Fame
by Harry Hinchley

In February, 1910 MJ O'Brien presented this magnificent silver cup for competition in the newly formed National Hockey Association. It was quite in order for him to do so because of the seven franchises in the league, O'Brien interests controlled four. Furthermore, he owned a silver mine.

This O'Brien mine supplied the silver for the cup. It was a handsome specimen of the silversmith's art. The base was surmounted by figures of two hockey players bending over the puck and the side

carried a scene of two teams scrambling before the goal.

Renfrew never won the cup. They did come within striking distance in 1910 but the Montreal Wanderers came out ahead. However, Renfrew did have the satisfaction of defeating this team in post-season exhibition play in New York City.

In 1911 the O'Brien Cup was won by Ottawa. Before they could obtain possession they had to post a \$1,500 bond with the league. They placed it on exhibition in the window of a Sparks Street jeweller where it remained for some time.

The cup is shown, along with the Stanley Cup in group photos of the champion Quebec City teams of 1912-13, Montreal Canadiens, 1916, Toronto St Patricks, 1918 and Montreal Maroons, 1926. After that it was retired and is now on exhibition in the Hockey Hall of Fame, Toronto.

Some years ago when Renfrew wanted a photograph of the O'Brien Cup for display in the rink a request for one was made to the Hockey Hall of Fame, Toronto. Word came back that a photo of the Cup, had never been made and if Renfrew

wanted one they would have to bear the expense of having one taken.

Then in almost the next mail came another letter stating that they had changed their mind and a photograph was being made and a copy was going to Renfrew with the compliments of the Hockey Hall of Fame.

And so the photograph of the O'Brien Cup was placed in the Renfrew rink along with one of the Stanley Cup together with the picture of the Renfrew Millionaires, 1910 who tried so hard to win both trophies but did not quite make it.