

## **Frank Foyston**

Frank Foyston began his professional hockey career with the Toronto Blueshirts of the National Hockey Association (the precursor to the NHL) in 1911-12. The Minesing, Ontario native played three seasons with the Blueshirts, winning the Stanley Cup in 1914. Prior to the start of the 1915-16 season he and five of his Toronto teammates jumped their contracts, heading out west to skate in the Pacific Coast Hockey Association. Foyston, along with Eddie Carpenter, Harry Holmes, Jack Walker and Cully Wilson formed the nucleus of the PCHA's newest franchise, the Seattle Metropolitans (known locally as the "Mets").

After a 9-9 inaugural season, the Mets moved to the top of the league in 1916-17. Foyston, a forward who split his time between center and right wing, was the second leading scorer on the team with 36 goals in only 24 games, winning the league MVP award in the process. The PCHA title earned the club the right to host the Montreal Canadiens of the NHA for the 1917 Stanley Cup championship. After dropping the opening game 8-4, the Mets took the next three straight to win the best-of-five series. Foyston's seven goals were the second most in the series behind teammate Bernie Morris, who scored an amazing 14 goals in four games.

The Mets made two more trips to the Stanley Cup Finals, playing to a draw against Montreal in 1919 (the series was cancelled prior to the deciding game by local health officials due to a flu epidemic) and losing in five games to Ottawa in 1920. Foyston was the backbone of the team, consistently ranking in the top three in team scoring and leading the PCHA in goals twice. He played with the Mets during all nine seasons the team was in Seattle, becoming the all-time franchise leader in games played (202), goals (174) and points (227). His 26 playoff game appearances, including 14 Stanley Cup Finals games, and 30 postseason goals are also club records.

The Mets folded in the spring of 1924 and Foyston spent the next two seasons with the Victoria Cougars, winning a third Stanley Cup in 1925. He later spent four seasons in Detroit, skating with the Cougars of the NHL from 1926-28. It was in Detroit that he first took up coaching, acting as a player-coach with the amateur Detroit Olympics.

Returning to Seattle in the fall of 1933 he put his coaching experience to use, becoming the bench boss of the newly formed Seattle Sea Hawks of the professional Northwest Hockey League. After finishing in the league cellar in 1933-34, he led the club to the top of the standings the following season with a 20-9-3 record. A disappointing overtime loss to Vancouver in the fifth and deciding game of the 1935 NWHL finals cost Foyston his job, and he was replaced by player-coach Art Gagne for the start of the 1935-36 season. Gagne wasn't up to the challenge, and chants of "We want Foyston!" rang throughout the Civic Arena as the Sea Hawks got off to a lousy 3-7-0 start. The fans got their wish in the middle of December when Gagne was released and Foyston returned behind the bench. The Sea Hawks rallied under their old coach, going 17-7-6 over the remainder of the season and finishing atop the standings. For the second straight year they faced Vancouver in the finals, but this time they won the series and the league championship, the first title for a Seattle club since the 1920 Mets on which Foyston was a player.

Foyston stayed on with the Sea Hawks for one more season before retiring in 1937, leaving with an impressive 73-54-15 coaching record with Seattle. He continued to make regular appearances at the Arena to watch the club play, but spent most of his time on his local turkey farm. He was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1958, and remained in the Seattle area until he passed away in 1966 at the age of 74.

*Jeff Obermeyer is a 13-year season ticket holder with the Thunderbirds. His new book, "Hockey in Seattle", chronicles the history of hockey in Seattle from 1915 to the present day. It is available at the souvenir stands or through his website at*

*<http://www.seattlehockey.net>.*