



Northwestern Ontario Sports Hall of Fame
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Northwestern Ontario Sports Hall of Fame Announces 2017 Inductees

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Four (4) Athletes and two (2) Builders make up the 2017 slate of Inductees to enter the Northwestern Ontario Sports Hall of Fame at the 36th Annual Induction Dinner and Ceremonies set for September 30th in Thunder Bay.

John Jones (Athlete) of Thunder Bay enjoyed a successful auto racing career which included podium finishes as the 1983 and 1984 Canadian Formula Ford 2000 champion and 1985 IMSA GTO winner and as a top finisher in the F-3000 series in Europe. Joining the Championship Auto Racing Teams (CART) Indy Car series he earned the 1988 Rookie of the Year title and an 11th place finish at the 1989 Indy 500 before retiring in the late 1990s.

Bob 'Battleship' Kelly (Athlete) developed his athletic abilities growing up in Fort William during the 1960s, advancing through the hockey ranks. A sturdy left winger, he was selected 16th overall in the 1967 NHL draft, going on to skate in over 800 professional games, including over 400 in the NHL. Spending the majority of his NHL career with the Pittsburgh Penguins and the Chicago Blackhawks, he made it to the playoffs in five of his six seasons, before retiring in 1980.

Lou Kok (Athlete) began his wrestling career at Lakeview High School in Thunder Bay during the 1970s claiming early success as an OFSAA champion and national junior medalist. Wrestling throughout the 1980s he served as a member of Canada's National Team and claimed multiple national and international medals, including silver medals in both freestyle and greco-roman at the 1987 Pan-American Games.

Chris Pronger (Athlete) of Dryden, one of hockey's most decorated defensive stars, went 2nd overall in the 1993 NHL Draft and enjoyed a professional playing career that spanned 1993-2012 and included appearances in 1167 regular-season games with five teams, recording 157 goals and 541 assists. The winner of the 1999-2000 Hart and Norris trophies, he won the Stanley Cup with Anaheim in 2007, won gold for Canada at the 1997 World championships and 2002 and 2010 Olympics and was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 2015.

Ab Cava (Builder) began his over half a century of involvement in hockey as a player with Port Arthur teams during the 1950s and 60s. Moving behind the bench in the mid 1960s, he successfully led such junior squads as the Port Arthur North Stars and Marrs and Thunder Bay Vulcans and Case Eagles, helping to develop a number of future NHL players, and serving as a role-model for future coaches. The 1980s and 90s were spent in senior hockey serving as a coach and president of the Thunder Bay Twins and as a president and governor of the Thunder Bay Senators and Thunder Cats.

Irene MacLeay (Builder) has been involved in swimming since the early 1970s serving in a number of volunteer capacities and as a highly respected official for over forty years. Starting out with the YMCA and moving into the Thunderbolt swim program, in 1974 she became the first female in Ontario to earn Master Official status and has dedicated herself to helping to train and mentor officials, as well as serving in such capacities as the Chair of Officials for Canada, Swim Ontario board and committee member, and as an official at various national and international meets, including the 1986 Commonwealth Games.

The 2017 slate of Inductees will be officially inducted into the Northwestern Ontario Sports Hall of Fame on the evening of Saturday, September 30th at the Valhalla Inn. Lakehead University will be holding their 2017 Wall of Fame inductions on campus during the afternoon, making it a full day of celebrations of our region's rich and proud sports heritage.

Tickets for the Northwestern Ontario Sports Hall of Fame 36th Annual Induction Dinner and Ceremonies can be ordered by calling 622-2852 or via email at nwosport@tbaytel.net or dropping by the Hall at 219 May Street South.