

# John Mariucci: Godfather of American Hockey

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The inscription for John Mariucci at the United States Hockey Hall of Fame begins with this statement:

The name of John Mariucci is indelibly etched into the history of American Hockey as well as that of his native Minnesota. He has, in the words of an old but appropriate cliché, become a legend in his own time.

John P. Mariucci was born in Eveleth, Minnesota, on May 8, 1916. For more than four decades, his career has impacted American hockey on all levels, both amateur and professional. He is the only one to have been inducted into the United States Hockey Hall of Fame as a player and the National Hockey League Hall of Fame as a builder. Mariucci is also a winner of the NHL's Lester Patrick Award and a recent enshrinee of the United States All Sports Hall of Fame.

During his fourteen years at the University of Minnesota, he coached 11 players to All-America honors and numerous others became U.S. Olympic players.<sup>14</sup>

In 1956, he coached the United States Olympic Team to a silver medal. Instrumental in the hockey careers of such figures as 1980 U.S. Olympic Coach Herb Brooks, Calgary Flames Coach Bob Johnson, and North Stars General Manager Lou Nanne, the list of Mariucci proteges is long and varied.

John Mariucci's hockey career began in Eveleth, Minnesota, a small iron mining town in northern Minnesota, where he was inspired by the Canadian professionals on the city's hockey team.

Despite his family's discouragement, Mariucci played hockey whenever he had free time. After high school, he attended the University of Minnesota, where he lettered in both football and hockey, leading his hockey team to an undefeated AAU Championship in 1940, and winning All-America honors that same year.

Turning down offers to play in the National Football League, Mariucci joined the handful of Americans in the National Hockey League, and played defense for the Chicago Blackhawks.

Following his professional career, he became head hockey coach at the University of Minnesota, where he is credited with having revived a dying sport statewide.

During this time, he also coached the 1956 United States Olympic Hockey Team and received no compensation for an entire year's work.

In 1985, the Williams Arenas rink at the University of Minnesota was renamed in his honor.

Mariucci is currently Assistant General Manager for the Minnesota North Stars of the National Hockey League.

Throughout his career, John Mariucci has been the champion of the American player and has devoted himself to promoting and upgrading American hockey. He is indeed deserving of the title "Godfather of American Hockey."