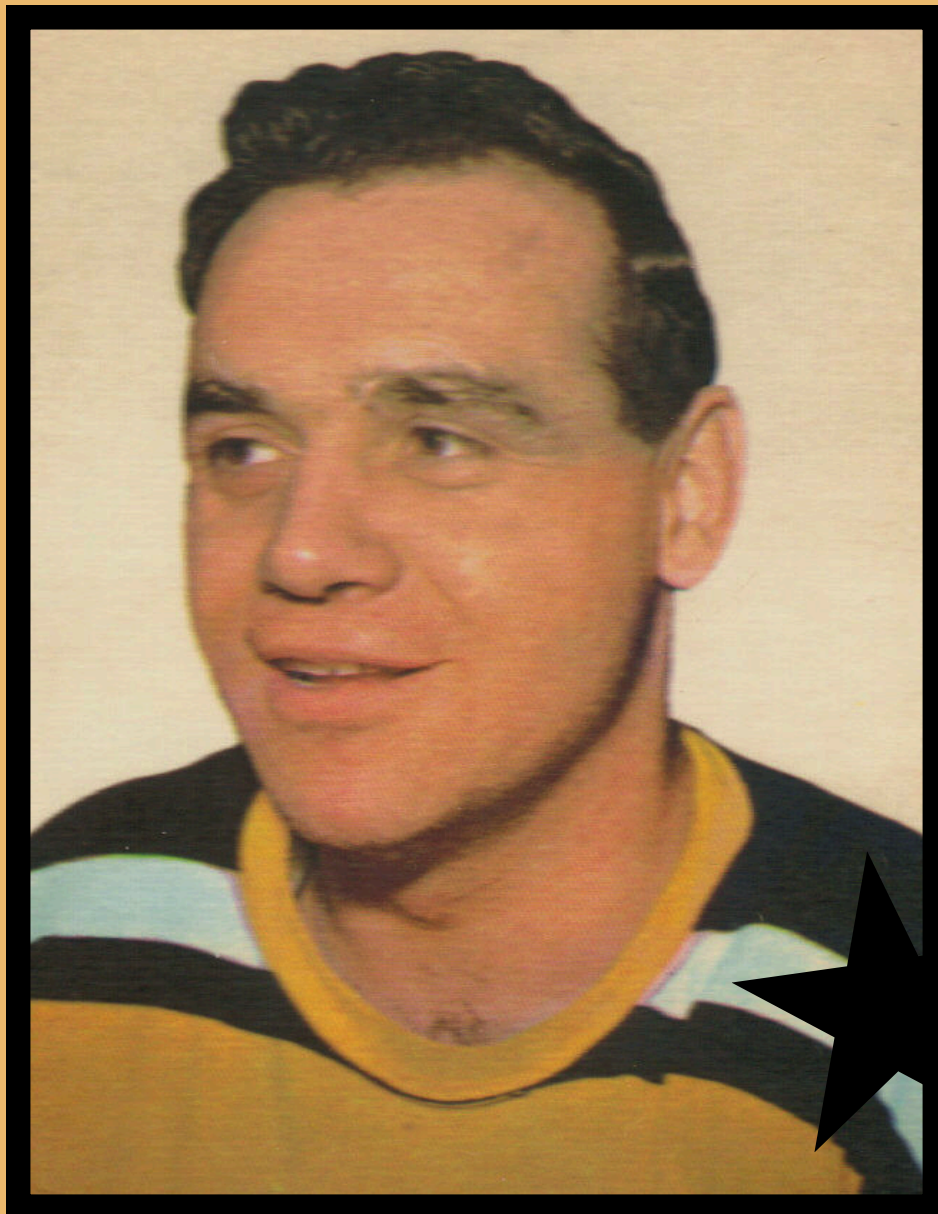




# The Career Of Leo Boivin

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**A Career Retrospect of a Hockey Legend**



# Early Beginnings

Arguably one of the most famous people from Prescott was that of Leo Boivin. Born in 1931 in Prescott Ontario. Boivin would get his start in hockey by playing with local children on the St. Lawrence River ice rinks in Prescott Ontario, around the age of 7, and would join the towns local youth hockey team shortly later.



## Inkerman Rockets

**HOCKEY**  
O.D.H.A. JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP  
TONIGHT AT 8.30  
SATURDAY - 2.30 P.M.  
INKERMAN ST. PATRICK'S  
**ROCKETS vs. COLLEGE**  
Reserved: \$1.25 - \$1.00 - .75  
Rush End: Adults .50; Students .25  
Phone 3-6292 for Reservations  
**AUDITORIUM**

At 17, he joined the Inkerman Rockets of the Ontario Valley Junior Hockey League during their 1948-49 season. That same season he went on to be a starting player during the 1949 Canadian Junior Hockey Memorial Cup Tournament, where he scored two goals in the four games that he played. The Inkerman Rockets missed the finals of the round robin tournament that year. During his time playing for the Inkerman Rockets, he was scouted by The Boston Bruins and would sign a minor league contract with the Bruins organization heading into the 1949-1950 season.

# Port Aurthur Bruins

During his two years with The Boston Bruins minor league hockey team the Port Aurthur Bruins (of the Thunder Bay Junior Hockey League), he scored a total of 20 goals, 15 assists, 35 points, and 69 penalties, and competed in the Canadian Junior Hockey Memorial Cup twice, (also missing the finals of the tournament).

# Pittsburg Hornets

Standing at 5'8 and weighing 180 pounds, Boivin was a short but aggressive player that was catching the eyes of many of scouts across the NHL, and before the start of the 1951-1952 season was traded to the Toronto Maple Leaf's organization as they were looking for a replacement for their defenseman Bill Bariko who passed away in a plane crash during the 1950-1951 off season.

During the 1951-1952 season, Boivin played for the Pittsburgh Hornets of the AHL league (a Leaf's affiliate team), where he scored 2 goals and 3 assists in 30 games played, where the Hornets won the championship that season beating the Providence Reds 4-2. Boivin would miss a few games of the Hornets season as he was called up to play for the Maple Leaf's on March 8th, 1952. In his first game, the Leaf's were up against the Detroit Red Wings at Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto. In his first few minutes of action, he gained one assist in the first period off Cal Gardener's goal, helping the team to a 6-3 victory of Detroit. He played one more game with Toronto during the 1951-1952 season before being called back to the AHL for the remainder of the season.

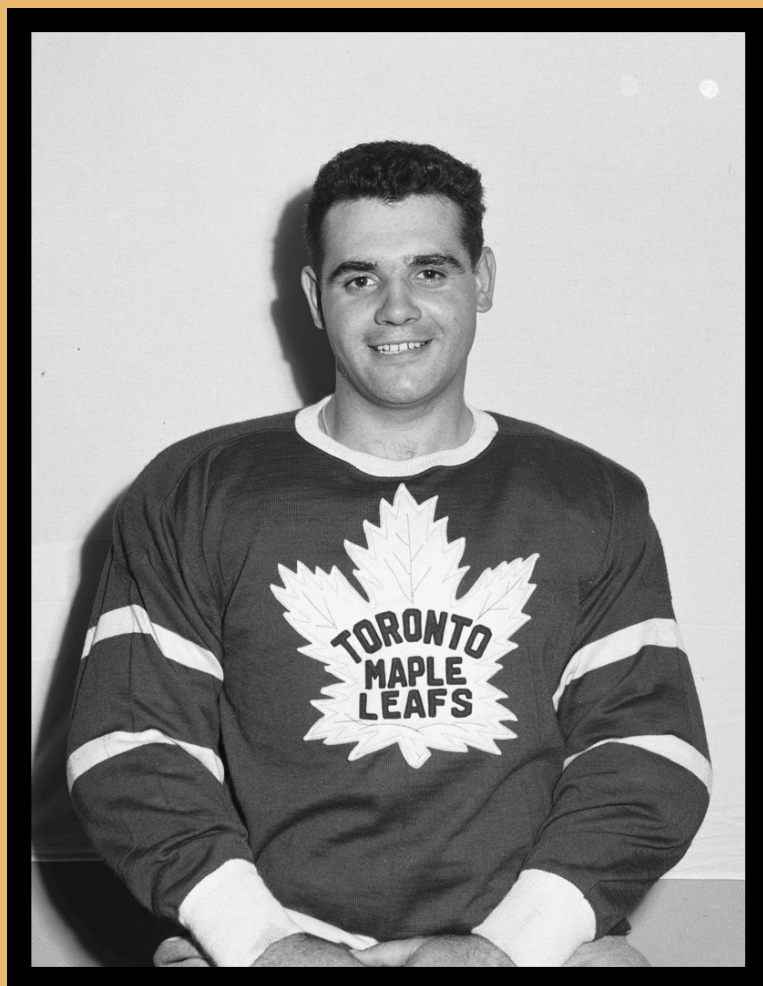
# The Toronto Maple Leafs

## 1951-1954

### Debut Year

#### 1952-1953

Donning the number 18, during that season he played in all 70 games that season, where he scored 2 goals, have 13 assists, and 15 points, and spent 97 minutes in the penalty box (the fifth most of every player in the NHL during the season, joining the likes of his teammates Tim Horton, and Fern Flaman who also were in the top spots for most amount of penalties). The team missed the playoffs that season with a 27-30-13 record.



### 1953-1954 Season

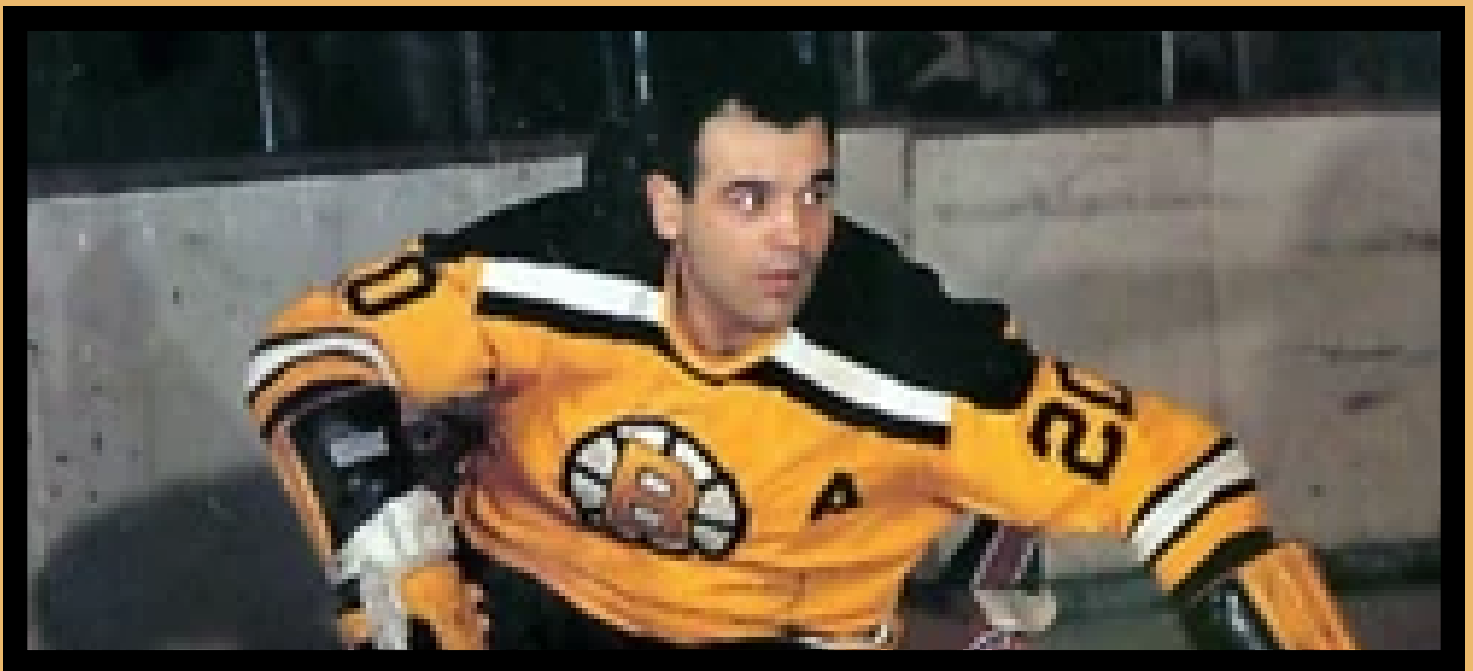
He played one more season as a Leaf, and during the 1953-1954 season ended the year off with 1 goal, 6 assists, 7 points, and 81 penalty minutes in 58 games played, once again leading in a top spot for most penalties. During the season, he missed 12 games during November and December of 1953 after sustaining an injury playing against Detroit (a team where he was notoriously rough against). He made his post season debut that year, playing in all five games of the first round, although he did not get any points during the Leaf's 1954 playoff run. Ahead of the 1954-1955 season Boivin was heavily involved in trade rumors as the Toronto Maple Leaf's were looking to freshen up the team after a disappointing few season His third season as a Leaf would only last a total of seven games, as on November 9th, 1954, he was traded back to the Bruins Organization in exchange for Joe Kluklay. In his seven games for the Leaf's during the 1954-1955 season.

# **The Boston Bruins**

## **1954 - 1966**

### **1954-1955 Season**

**Boivin made his official debut for the Boston Bruins on November 13th, 1954, playing against the Montreal Canadiens. During Boivin's first season with the Bruins, he played in 59 games: earning himself 6 goals, 11 assists, and 17 points, and making the top 10 with the most penalty minutes. During the season he became a crucial bench player for the Bruins, and with his help the team just barely clinched the final spot of that season's playoffs. However, it was not the Bruins year as they were beaten in clean order by the Montreal Canadiens. Boivin went on to be benched at the end of the final game of the series between the Bruins and Canadiens, in place of a rookie Don Cherry (which was the only NHL game he played in his career). Although the Bruins lost that season there was much talk about a promising future for the team, and how Boivin (who had been making headway as being one of the league's most aggressive defenseman), would be a key factor if the team wanted to go far into the playoffs in future seasons.**



## **1955-1956 Season**

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**By the start of the following season the Bruins started a rebuild of the team, naming Fern Flaman their new head captain of the team, and making Boivin the unofficial captain of the second line, as well as fill in for Flaman and Bill Quackenbush when either player was out with an injury. During the 1955-1956 season he scored 4 goals, 16 assists and gain 20 points in 68 games played. Boivin also drastically cut down the amount of time in the penalty box, making it the first season in his career where he was not in the top 25 of most minutes in the penalty box. The Bruins missed the playoffs, landing 5th in the standings, and although the Bruins had a disappointing season, it was the start of a series of dominance for the next decade to follow**

## **1956-1957 Season**

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**The second year of the Bruin's rebuild looked promising. Boivin, who was in his third year with the team, was still catching the eyes of fellow competitors and high up officials within the league. The Bruins started the season off going 11-5-3 and showed heavy dominance through the first few months of the season. Boivin contributed to this success by playing well on defense, only getting called on penalty twice out of all 19 games in the first two months of the season. The Bruins had a decent rest of the season; however, they were hit hard by the end of the season with injuries, Boivin being one of them. In total Boivin missed 15 games that season when he got injured on the January 26th, 1957, game against the New York Rangers. Boivin returned by the end of the season where he went on to score 2 goals and 8 assists in 55 games played. The Bruins made it to the finals of the Stanley cup championship where they lost 4-1 to the Montreal Canadiens. Although Boivin and the Bruins would not win a championship that year, he would get his first two goals of the post-season in his career and earn 5 assists in the ten games he played.**

## **1957-1958 Season**

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**The following season saw the Bruins have the same amount of success as the previous year, although Boivin would not participate in a majority of the season due to an injury cause by a retaliation play from Danny Lewicki of the New York Rangers on their October 31st, 1957, game in Boston. Boivin returned from injury at the New Year's Day game of 1958 against the Montreal Canadiens, where he gained his first assist of the season. In 33 games played, Boivin scored 4 assists during the regular season and 3 more during the Bruins playoff run of the 1957-1958 season. Once again losing to the Montreal Canadiens in the Stanley cup finals. Boivin, a person who was never soft when it came to defense, he earned himself 21 penalty minutes (the record for that season) during the playoffs**

## **The Terror of Boivin**

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**During the 1958-1959 season, Boivin scored 5 goals, earned 16 assists, and get 21 points in all 70 regular season games. However, he once again found himself in the top 10 for most times spent in the penalty box (the last time, he made the top 25 in his career). With Boivin becoming older and more rookies called up to the team, he started taking on a mentorship role for the younger players and would be the head of the second line through most of the season. During the season he drew attention from then captain Fern Flaman for his dedication to guiding the younger guard, often be praised for his showmanship towards older hockey players at the time (although he was still said to be one of the nastiest defensemen in all of the league at the time). For his hard work he was then promoted to the first line of the team, spending the final dozen games of the season starting games alongside Fern Flaman, Johnny Bucyk, Vic Stasiuk, and Don McKenny, (however this was not a permanent move). Once again, the Bruins would be back in the fray for the Stanley Cup, with Boivin scoring the game winning goal of the sixth game of the series against the Toronto Maple Leaf's. Then beaten by 3-2 in game seven of the series and once again back to the drawing board.**

# **The Terror of Boivin Continued**

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**The Bruins' disaster years would start during the 1959-1960 season where it would be announced that many key players were leaving the team due to trades or retirement. By the start of the 1959-1960 season the Bruins only had around 4 veteran players and were not looking that promising heading into the season. Boivin being one of the veteran players alongside captain Fern Flaman, Bob Armstrong and Leo Labine, were having to pick up the slack among a roster of rookies. The 1959-1960 year ended on a sour note for Boston where they ended the season 5th in the standings. Boivin on the other hand had an incredible year, being the only Bruin's player to play in all 70 games of the season, earning 4 goals, 21 assists and 25 points by the end of the season. He would be a star player on defense with having the lowest amount of penalty minutes for all defenseman that year (from those who played all 70 games) and was in the top 20 for most time spent on the ice as a defenseman.**

## **1960-1961 Season**

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**The 1960-1961 season had the same outcome as the previous season with the Bruins placing last in the league. With even more veteran players retiring and longtime captain Fern Flaman announcing that the 1960-1961 season would be his last. With that announcement, veteran players of the team were fighting to prove that they had what it takes to be the next captain of the team, Boivin included. During the 1960-1961 season, he scored 6 goals and 17 assists in 57 games. Boivin was injured on the March 2nd, 1961, game against the Detroit Red Wings after a hard collision into the boards and would miss the remainder of the season. Outside of regular season he was appreciated by both fans and players as being a top defenseman, and for being one of the toughest and grittiest guys in the league at the time. Due to his work as a defenseman, he was named as a finalist for the James Norris Memorial Trophy, coming 5th in the voting. Boivin was also named as an All Star for the NHL's 14th annual All Star Game where he played second line in a 3-1 winning effort against the Chicago Black Hawks.**

# Unofficial Captain Boivin

The 1961-1962 season, like the previous two, would not start out promising, when it was announced that Don McKenny . Although McKenny statistically was one of the best players among that year's team, his inexperience when it came to leadership (and vocal desires to be traded to a better team) did not sit well among many in the locker room. Boivin, the oldest player on the team, would become the unofficial assistant captain and often spent his free time between games coaching and practicing the younger stars of the Bruins. Boivin for the first time in his career moved permanently to the first line of Bruins and would go on to be a starter in 58/65 games that he played that season. That year he scored 5 goals and 18 assists and earn his second All Star selection. His second All Star appearance seen him start the game for team All Star in a 4-1 losing effort against The Toronto Maple Leafs.

## 1962-1963 Season



As the season started the Bruins would start making trades, giving Don McKenny his wish, trading him to the New York Rangers. The Bruins organization decided to continue the season without a team captain, however internally younger players of the team would refer to Boivin as the unofficial captain due to his good leadership skills, and his willingness to help his teammates. Although Boivin was busy helping his teammates wherever he could, he still was able to score 2 goals and 24 assists in 62 games worth of action (in which he started all 62 games). By the end of the year, he was a respected player among his peers and the Bruins new head coach Milt Schmidt.

# Captain Boivin

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The 1963-1964 Bruins season started to show some promises of hope where the team (for the first time in a few seasons) had one consistent manager and captain through the duration of the season. Although having no internal disputes was a good start, the team still placed last for the third season in a row. Boivin, however, had one of the best seasons of his career. The 32-year-old player (who was thought to be soon out of the league due to the average age of retiring from the NHL being 30 at the time), scored 10 goals and 14 assists and statistically had the best offensive season of his career. Defensively Boivin effortlessly kept up with his younger counterparts where he had his best year when it came to penalties, only accumulating 40 minutes in the box through the 65 games that he played. In addition to being a good hockey player, he was gaining more respect from his teammates and although he was pulled from the last 5 games of the season (as the Bruin's did not want him to get injured as they were out of the playoff contention), Boivin would stick around in Boston and coach his younger teammates. That season he got snubbed from that year's All Star game which became a major talking point among hockey fans and even start a small protest in his hometown of Prescott, Ontario; however, Boivin was noble and stated that his focus was on building the Bruins rather than the All-Star game.

## 1964-1965 Season

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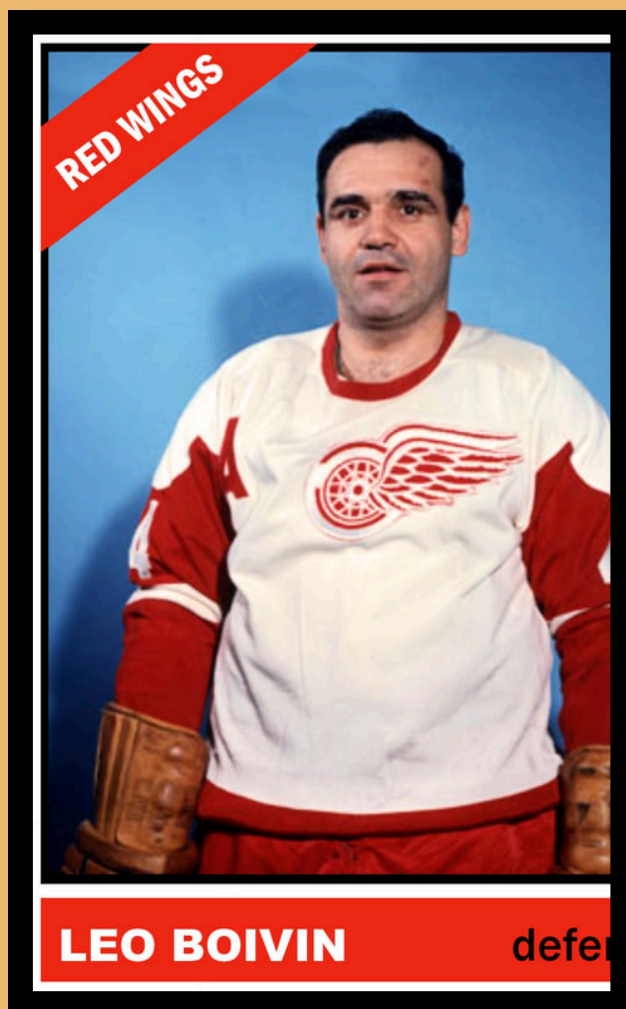
Boivin spent much of his time coaching the likes of rookie players such as Wayne Cashman, Bill Goldsworthy and Joe Watson who all went on to be cup champions later in their careers. As for Boivin, his offense numbers dwindled with him only scoring 3 goals and 10 assists in 67 games played during the season. For the third and last time in his career, he was named an All-Star and played in the starting lineup against the Toronto Maple Leafs. Once again, he was pulled from the remainder of the games at the end of the season to let the younger guys get more ice time.

# The Detroit Red Wings

Heading into the 1965-1966 season Boivin's name was once again heavily involved in trade rumours as he was one of the most valued veteran players still left on the mostly rookie Bruins team. Boivin hit a major dry spell on his offense, putting up the worst offensive numbers in his career during the 1965-1966 season, with him only getting 5 assists during the first half of the season. His defensive numbers however were some of the best of his career and would be the saving grace for him that season where he was in the top 10 with least amount of penalty calls as a defenseman (this statistic alone keeping him from getting benched for younger stars of the team). Although he was having a mild year, he once again was in trade talks come the second half of the season when it was reported that the Detroit Red Wings were interested in getting a new defenseman. After a few weeks of deliberating a trade was made between the Red Wings and Boston that sent Boivin, along with left wing Dean Prentice to the team in exchange for Gary Doak, Bill Lesuk and Ron Murphy to the Bruins. This trade came as a shock for both the fans and Boivin also. The team would lose one of their longest tenured players with the team, who was a devoted captain for the last two and a half seasons. While Boivin got traded to one of the top teams in the league, fully surrounded by people he had spent the last decade purposefully being a menace against on defense. After the trade went through on February 16th, 1966, Boivin officially became a member of the Red Wings organization. The team to Boivin's surprise, welcomed him with open arms, developing friendships with players like Gordie Howe, Norm Ulman, and Alex Delvecchio. This change of scenery looked to be a positive for Boivin as in the last 12 games of the regular season he got another 5 assists and end the season on a multi-game streak of saving a goal per game. The year would not be over for the Red Wings as they got the last spot in the playoffs and go on to beat the Chicago Blackhawks 4-2 in the first round, then losing 4-2 against Montreal in the finals of the playoffs. Although the season turned out to be quite the ride for Boivin, that did not deter him from putting in the work heading into the following year, however it would be at this point in his career that bad luck followed Boivin wherever he went.

## 1966-1967 Season

Switching from the number 24 to 4 jersey ahead of the new season, one might say that this change caused some bad luck for the team as the 1966-1967 season was a disappointing one for the Red Wings. Although a majority of their players such as the likes of Gordie Howe, and Alex Devincio , along with Boivin were getting up there in years they were still playing consistently and putting out good statistics. Boivin continued playing in the first line and scored 4 goals and 17 assists in 69 games worth of play, also being in the top 25 with the most short-handed assists with 3 on the season.



It was announced that for the 1967-1968 season the NHL was expanding by doubling the number of teams in the league. Before the end of the 1966-1967 season, it was rumored that Boivin was being scouted as a role player for one of these six teams, as he was still wishing to play in the league for a few more years. Scouts of the newly formed Pittsburgh Penguin's organization could be seen at Red Wings games near the end of the season. In the offseason, he was selected 40th overall in the draft and was set to be the head defenseman for the Penguins in their inaugural season. Many questioned why Boivin, who was a beloved member of the Red Wing's was not selected to the team's protected list, however that was just a testament as to how good that team was, and how difficult the decision was on who each team could keep on their roster. For Boivin, who was at that point in his career considering hanging up the skates for good soon, he felt that it was a good opportunity, and one last time to make history before he called it quits.

# The Pittsburgh Penguins



**His run as an original member of the Pittsburgh Penguins was one that many could say was indeed a good decision, as the then 36-year-old defenseman went on to play some of the best games of his career during that 1967-1968 season. The Penguins just barely missed the playoffs, having two less overtime games than both the St. Louis Blues and Minnesota North Stars. Boivin, wearing the number 4, had a successful season scoring 9 goals and 13 assists all the while playing off the bench for the new team. Although he was moved back to the bench, Boivin was still a heavily talked about player and was often praised for the physical game he still played on defense for being in his mid-thirties, although one could say that his copious amounts of minutes in the penalty box made up for time that would usually be spent resting.**

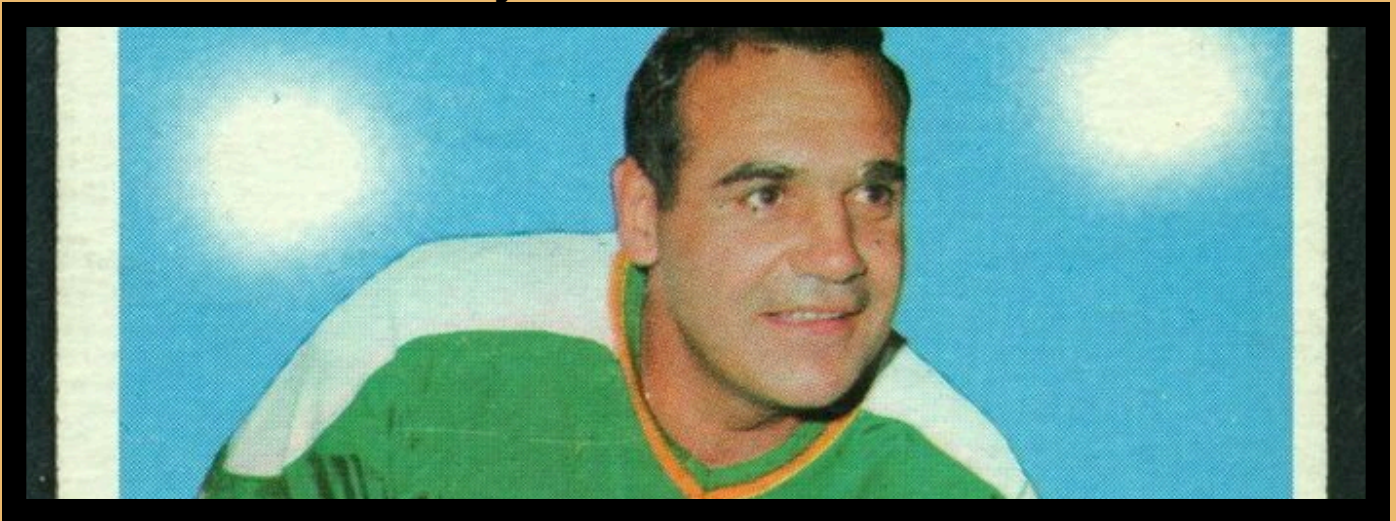
## **1968-1969 Season**

**His second season with the Penguins was like the inaugural one. An okay team, the Penguins were starting to worry in the last third of the season. With only being down a couple of games from the Philadelphia Flyers, the team was starting to get desperate to make any sort of change that would bump the team up to the last spot in the playoffs. In one of these desperate attempts, this saw Leo Boivin get traded to the Minnesota North Stars for Duane Rupp.**

# The Minnesota North Stars

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Now donning the number 5, Boivin would once again be playing on a team that was dead last in their division. This trade gave him the opportunity to mentor the younger players of the league like Walt McKechnie and Danny Grant. Off the bench between his time in Pittsburgh and Minnesota, Boivin scored 6 goals and 19 assists in 69 games played and avoided the penalty box well compared to other defenseman with only 42 minutes' worth of penalties. After the end of the season Boivin was highly rumored to be retiring as he was a free agent and felt as though no team would want to hire a 38-year-old defenseman, he was later convinced to come back for one more season which officially was his last season in the NHL.



## The Last Season

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Ahead of the 1969-1970 season there was much talk whether Boivin would be able to keep up with his younger counterparts, he then went on to prove them wrong. With his leadership as an unofficial team captain the North Stars were able to get to the playoffs where they lost to the St. Louis Blues in the quarter finals of the 1970 Stanley Cup playoffs. A successful end to Boivin's career, which was accompanied by a final 3 goals and 12 assists in his final 69 games played. At the end of the season the NHL was once again expanding with the Vancouver Canucks and Buffalo Sabers, with Boivin being offered a one-year contract from the latter. He declined the offer and officially played his last game on April 16th, 1970, in a losing effort against the St. Louis Blues in game 6 of the series.

# Life After The League

Although his years on the ice were now over, that did not mean that Boivin's love of hockey suddenly disappeared. After a season away from the hockey world, he returned to the sport, being named the head coach for the Ottawa 67s of the OHL, a position he had from 1972-1974. After a few years away from the NHL he was asked by the NHL to serve as the head coach for the St. Louis Blues for their 1975-1976 season and an assistant coach during their 1976-1977 season. Boivin would agree and went on to mentor and develop the ever-struggling team to a playoff berth in 1976 (being eliminated in the wild card round against the Buffalo Sabers 2-1), and in 1977 where they lost in the first round of the playoffs against the Montreal Canadiens 4-0. After that season Boivin would get tired of the life on the road and became a scout for teams such as the Minnetonka North Stars, St. Louis Blues, and the Hartford Whalers, from 1979 to his retirement in 1993. During his time as a scout, he assisted future hall of famers such as Ron Francis, Chris Pronger, and Dennis Potvin to name a few players

For many years there were campaigns between local fans and former teammates of Boivin who believed the defenseman deserved to be in the Hockey Hall of Fame, In September 1986 it was made official when Boivin was inducted as a member of the 1986 class alongside longtime Leaf's center David Keon and Canadian's defenseman Serge Savard. To commemorate the honor the Town of Prescott held a ceremony on September 16th, 1986, to rename the town's recreation center in his honour. The ceremony was attended by Leo Boivin and his family, then-mayor Sandra Lawn, and over 500 residents of Prescott who gathered to celebrate the occasion. As of 2024; 38 years since the community center was named in Boivin's honour, it has gone through many changes, and in 2018 was converted to a recreation complex and has seen new life in recent years being used for dances, markets, and a sporting venue for pickleball and basketball. After the completion of the Alaine Chartrand Community Centre in 2023, the ice rink inside the complex was also named in Boivin's honour.

Since 1974, Prescott has hosted the Leo Boivin Showcase tournament, a U18 AAA hockey tournament that sees teams from across the globe compete against each other to determine who was the best U18 team. A Hockey Canada inspired event; the tournament sees some of the best upcoming hockey players from across the globe in a round robin style tournament. Originally an 8-team event, the showcase was originally for local U18 teams, however as the years went by the event expanded to 16 teams and in the 2000's opened nationally, while the 2010's saw it open internationally. In its 50-year history the event has seen teams from across Canada, as well as countries such as the United States, Latvia and Austria, compete. The multi-day event spans from Thursday to Saturday during the last week of March. The event draws in many spectators from across Eastern Ontario and, in partnership with the ROW organization, has earned hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of donations in the showcase's history. In the tournament's history many future NHL players have laced up their skates for the tournament, with notable names being Ben Hutton, Slater Koekkoek, Kris Draper, and Doug Gilmore to name a few players.

After his retirement Boivin spent much of his time in his hometown of Prescott, Ontario with his children and grandchildren. On October 16th, 2021, Leo Boivin would pass away at the age of 90. However, his legacy and impact on Prescott will forever live on.

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