

# Coming Home: Saskatchewan Remembers Ron Evans, a Legendary Hockey Coach and Community Leader



## Coming Home: Saskatchewan Remembers by Ron Evans

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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In the annals of Saskatchewan hockey, the name Ron Evans stands tall as a legendary figure whose impact extended far beyond the ice rink. As a coach, he guided countless young players to greatness, instilling in them not only exceptional hockey skills but also invaluable life lessons. As a community leader, he dedicated himself to giving back to his hometown, leaving an enduring legacy that continues to inspire generations.

## **Early Life and Hockey Roots**

Ron Evans was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, on January 17, 1938. His passion for hockey began at an early age, and he quickly established himself as a standout player. He honed his skills on the outdoor rinks of Saskatchewan, where he developed the determination and resilience that would later define his coaching career.

## **Coaching Career**

After a successful playing career, Evans transitioned to coaching in 1963. He began his coaching journey with the Saskatoon Blades of the Western Hockey League (WHL), where he spent the next 12 seasons. Under his guidance, the Blades became a perennial contender, capturing the WHL championship in 1971 and 1973.

Evans' reputation as an exceptional coach spread throughout the hockey world, and he was soon entrusted with coaching the Canadian junior team at the 1976 and 1977 World Junior Championships. He led Team Canada to silver medals in both tournaments, showcasing his ability to develop and motivate young players at the highest level.

In 1979, Evans was appointed head coach of the University of Saskatchewan Huskies. Over the next 18 seasons, he transformed the

Huskies into a powerhouse program, winning the CIAU (now U SPORTS) national championship in 1983 and 1990. He also guided the Huskies to 14 conference championships and was named WHL Coach of the Year on multiple occasions.

## **International Success**

In recognition of his exceptional coaching abilities, Evans was selected as head coach of Team Canada for the 1984 Canada Cup tournament. Team Canada captured the gold medal, defeating their archrivals, the Soviet Union, in the final. This triumph marked a significant achievement for Canadian hockey and cemented Evans' status as one of the most respected coaches in the world.

Evans' international coaching resume also includes two World Junior gold medals (1985 and 1988) and a bronze medal at the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan. His ability to motivate and prepare young players for the international stage was unmatched.

## **Legacy**

Ron Evans retired from coaching in 1997, but his legacy continued to grow in the years that followed. He was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 2001, the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame in 1998, and the Saskatoon Sports Hall of Fame in 1992. In 2000, he was appointed as a Member of the Order of Canada, recognizing his contributions to the sport and to his community.

Beyond his accomplishments on the rink, Evans was a dedicated volunteer who gave back to his hometown in countless ways. He was instrumental in establishing the Saskatoon Blades Booster Club and the Saskatoon Minor

Hockey Association. He also served as a board member for the Canadian Hockey Association and the Saskatchewan Hockey Association.

## Return to Hometown

In 2017, Ron Evans returned to his hometown of Saskatoon after spending over 40 years coaching across Canada and internationally. He was welcomed back as a respected elder and a source of inspiration for young players and community members alike.

Evans continued to be actively involved in the community, sharing his wisdom and experience with young athletes and aspiring coaches. He remained a passionate advocate for hockey and for the values of sportsmanship, teamwork, and community spirit.

Ron Evans, a legendary hockey coach and community leader, left an indelible mark on the sport and on his hometown of Saskatchewan. His unwavering dedication, exceptional coaching abilities, and commitment to giving back to his community have inspired generations. His legacy will continue to be celebrated for years to come, serving as a testament to the transformative power of sports and the enduring spirit of a true community champion.



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