

The Fife Flyers arrived on the hockey scene as the decade was dwindling and they entered a sport which was in a vastly different place to how it had begun the 1930's.

In 1929 the Scottish National League was formed and it consisted of ten teams based out of the Crossmyloof Ice Rink in Glasgow. Bearsden, Achtungs, Queens, Glasgow Mohawks, Kelvingrove, Glasgow Skating Club, Glasgow University and Dennistoun were the City teams whilst two teams, Doonside (the original hockey club in Ayr) and Bridge of Weir, were not based in Glasgow but still played out of Crossmyloof.

In its inaugural season the ten teams started by playing in a Points Competition. The five top teams in the standings went on to play in the First Division, while the bottom five finishers formed a Second Division. The Glasgow Mohawks won the First Division and became the first Scottish Champions.

By season 1935-36 Doonside, Achtungs, Bearden, Glasgow Skating Club, Queens, Dennistoun and Bridge of Weir had all disappeared off the map. However, two new teams - the Glasgow Mustangs and Glasgow Lions - were formed.

A momentous event in UK hockey history occurred in February 1936 at the Garmisch-Partenkirchen Winter Olympics in Germany. The British national ice hockey team pulled off a major upset when they won the gold medal. Great Britain made history as the first team ever to win an Olympic, World, and European (their second) Championships and the first to win all three in the same year. They were the first team to stop Canada from winning the Olympic ice hockey gold, following Canada's four previous consecutive gold medals. Great Britain also became the first European nation to win the World Championships, following eight wins by Canada and one by the United States.

It is worthwhile recapping the victorious team as the dynamics within the GB selection for the tournament were about to influence Scottish hockey and the Fife Flyers in the very near future.

Carl Erhardt (Captain) – English born defenceman who went on to become a ref and life-time president of the British Ice Hockey council and of course for whom there has been an Elite League conference named.

James Foster – Glasgow born goalie who emigrated at aged 7 to Canada

Gordon Dailley – Canadian born defenceman who moved to England when he was in his early 20's, Canada protested that he and Jimmy Foster were not properly registered to play but this was turned down

Archibald Stinchcombe – English born right wing who played his entire career in the UK

Edgar Brenchley – English born right wing who moved to Ontario Canada when just a child, after playing he scouted for the Washington Capitals and was assistant coach with the Pittsburgh Penguins

John Coward – English born left wing who was trained in Canada after emigrating and was with the Richmond Hawks at this time

James Chappell – Born in Huddersfield but emigrated at age 10, centre with the Earls Court Rangers at this time and later joined the Flyers in their inaugural season.

Alexander Archer – Scottish parents, born in England but emigrated at age 3, right wing who was a member of the Wembley Lions and later coached at Murrayfield.

Gerry Davey – Canadian born right wing who came to England at aged 16 and played with Streatham at the time, he then joined the Falkirk Lions in their inaugural season and coached them the following year

James Borland – English born defenceman who learned his hockey in Montreal, he was with the Brighton Tigers at this time

Robert Wyman – English born and trained defenceman playing for Richmond Hawks

Jack Kilpatrick – English born left wing who was trained in Canada, played for the Wembley Lions

Arthur Child – English born goalie who moved to Canada aged 4, he played for the Wembley Lions and as back up he did not ice and did not then receive a medal, later became a politician in Ontario, Canada



Back row, left to right: Percy Nicklin (Coach), Bob Wyman, Archie Stinchcombe, Carl Erhardt (Captain), Jack Kilpatrick, Gordon Dailley, Gerry Davey, Jimmy Chappell, Edger "Chirp" Brenchley, Johnny Coward. Front row, left to right: Jimmy Borland, Art Child, Jimmy Foster, Alex "Sandy" Archer.

The now five team Scottish National League finally expanded beyond the confines of Crossmyloof Ice Rink for the 1936-37 season, with the formation of the Perth Panthers, who played at the Central Scotland Ice Rink. The league, which had been strictly amateur at its outset, saw the first signs of semi-professionalism creep in this year, as Perth paid small "expenses" to obtain Canadian imports. A new rule, stipulating that the first placed team was required to finish at least three points ahead of any challengers, or face a playoff, was introduced this year. Glasgow Mohawks won the regular season by six points over the Glasgow Mustangs.

A second team in Perth, the Perth Black Hawks, joined the Scottish National League in 1937-38. The two Perth teams, aided by their semi-professional players, finished first and second in the league, with the Panthers three points ahead of the Black Hawks.

The transition to semi-professionalism was complete by 1938-39, as the league further expanded, admitting the Dundee Tigers, Falkirk Lions, and the Fife Flyers, all of whom paid to acquire talent from Canada and England. Three teams folded prior to the season, the Glasgow Mustangs, Glasgow Lions, and the Perth Black Hawks. With the extensive amount of roster and team changes, the Points Competition was re-introduced this year to serve as a "settling in" period prior to the commencement of the league championship for the Canada Cup.

The Flyers first appearance coincided with the opening of the Kingsway Ice Rink in Dundee 24 hours earlier than the opening of the Auld Barn here in Kirkcaldy.

It is reported that the Flyers first took to the Kirkcaldy ice on the evening of Sunday 18th September to test the newly completed rink in what was an unofficial practice. From the quick-fire exchanges between defence and attack it was made clear that Mr J. C. Rolland, manager of the rink, had got together a good ice-hockey team. Relatives and friends of the directors, who afterwards took to the ice, included Miss Sheila Anderson, daughter of one of the directors and the first lady to use the ice. In today's era of the zamboni the ice crew would have something to say about the various coins, ranging from sixpence to half a crown, which had been placed under the ice by well-wishers hantelling the rink.

The man who was charged with managing the rink and also that of forming the first Flyers team, in modern day terms he would have been the General Manager, was local business man Mr John C. Rolland, from Milton Road Kirkcaldy. It had been reported in March 1938 that Mr Rolland was retaining his position on the board of directors, and he would take up his new duties when the rink was completed in the autumn. Elder son of the late ex-Provost J. C. Rolland he was widely known both in Leven and in Kirkcaldy, where he had been in business as a painter and contractor for ten years. Mr Rolland at that time spent time touring English ice stadiums looking for new recruits. The family were well known in Fife golfing circles, and ex-Provost Rolland was a former president of the Scottish Golf Union. Efforts made to appoint a coach resulted in the hiring of Les Lovell from Perth and that the team to take to the ice later that year would be known as the Fife Flyers. There is nothing certain about how the name was arrived at, it seems certain that it has no aviation connotation but simply an alliteration formed from the sense that the speed of the game had players 'Fly' around the rink.

MEET THE PLAYERS

So, let's introduce the first Fife Flyers, who were heralded as "those ice wizards who are going to put Kirkcaldy on the ice hockey map!" and "according to form at any rate, the Kirkcaldy Ice Rink is going to be the venue of a serious challenge to other teams in Scotland". Incidentally the team, we were advised in the weeks leading up to the first games, would sport colours of light royal blue, white and gold.

The team, "who should be a force to be reckoned with" consisted of six Canadian and four home trained players.

Goalie - Chic Kerr, one of the personalities of the game, who graduated in the Canadian team of North Battlefield Beavers. He was reputed to be one of the smallest keepers in the game but previous performances, especially with Streatham proved him to be a real live wire. He had turned 21 years of age just a few weeks ago.

Left Defence - Les Lovell, formerly of Perth Blackhawks, Perth Panthers and Brighton Tigers. The 25 year old was to be player coach and the first of three generations of Lovell to play for Fife. He played for Scotland in representative games and also helped complete the building work on the new rink.

Right Defence - Jack Stover, was 22 years of age, six feet two inches in height and weighed over 14.5 stones, he played in junior ice hockey with the Chatham, Ontario, club then graduated to the intermediate stage with Queen's Athletic club. The previous year he played with the Chatham Maroons who were finalists in the Michigan-Ontario league.

Right Defence - Alec Fullerton, one of the leading personalities in Scottish ice hockey circles. 29 years of age and over six feet. A stalwart in his customary position of right defence, a Scottish-trained player, having played for Kelvingrove in seasons 1932-35; Mohawks, 1935-37; and Mustangs, 1937-38. He played twice for Scotland against England, and also appeared in representative matches against Wembley Canadians, Richmond Hawks, and Manchester.

Left Wing - Norman McQuade was a former Wembley Monarchs player and prior to a few games for the Perth Panthers the previous season the 29 year old had been coaching in Germany.

Centre - Len McCartney, Canadian born who had been one of the mainstays of the Perth Panthers for the last two seasons and played for the Port Arthur club before heading over the Atlantic.

Right Wing - Tommy Durling a very fast lad who like Chick Kerr came originally from North Battlefield Beavers and besides playing for Streatham had been coaching in Zurich and yet he was only 22 years old.

Left Wing - Tommy McInroy, 21 years old and the third of the Scottish born players, he hailed from Blairgowrie and was Perth trained where he was a member of the Black Hawks.

Centre - Jimmy Chappell the previous three seasons had been with the Earl's Court Rangers. the crack London team. 23 year old who was born in Huddersfield went to Canada at the age of 10 and learned the game in Oshawa Ontario where he progressed through the junior ranks to play with the Oshawa Collegiates and the Whitby Intermediates between 1931 and 1934. The Flyers Olympic, World and European gold medallist on the team.

Right Wing - Billy Fullerton, brother of Alec was quoted as having tremendous speed and also held the Scottish Ice Rink Championships title for speed and distance racing for some time. He was 24 years old.



Back Row L-R Jack Stover, Alec Fullerton, Norman McQuade, Les Lovell, Jimmy Chappell

Front Row L-R Len McCartney, Tommy McInroy, Billy Fullerton, Tommy Durling, Chic Kerr

The game today as we know has seen many changes in recent years, so it's worth looking back to the rules back in the day.

RULES OF THE GAME

The field play is divided into three zones, and of course at each end are the goals. The centre zone is the neutral zone and the remainder are the teams' zones in which attack and defence takes place. The goals themselves are four feet in height, six feet wide and nearly two feet in depth at the bottom. The puck, or disc, is made of solid rubber, three inches in diameter, one inch thick and weighs about 5 ½ ounces. While the players sticks are made entirely of wood without any notches or projections. They are limited in size to a 53 inches handle and a 14 ½ inches blade, except in the case of the goaltender who may use a heavier and wider stick.

The duration of the game is three periods of fifteen or twenty minutes actual playing time with rest periods of ten minutes. A goal is scored by the puck being driven fairly into the net or across the goal line by a stick. If the puck is kicked or thrown by hand into the net the goal is disallowed.

Three or four alternative players may enter into the play when the game is stopped, but no substitution may be made unless the actual player to be relieved has left the ice. Only six players from each team are allowed on the ice at the same time. As far as penalising players is concerned, the referee may do this for infringements of the rules according to the severity of the offence. Players are penalised by being sent off the ice for various periods, and no substitute may be put on for a penalised player until the penalty has expired. Only three players may be in their own defence zone when the puck is outside that zone, and if an attacking player is tripped when in a scoring position in front of goal other than the goaltender, in addition to penalising the offending player, the referee shall award a special penalty shot.

Commencing on each period and after a goal has been scored, the puck shall be faced by the referee dropping it between the sticks of the two centre-forwards, with each team closer to their own goal than that of the opposing side. Other face-offs are made, so far as possible, where a misplay originated. The offside rule lays down that a player may be in any position in any zone with the following exception: He may only be in the attacking zone while the puck is in that zone. A player may only enter the attacking zone in line or behind the puck carrier or puck. He may not take a pass from a team-mate who is, at the moment of passing, in another zone. A player may stop the puck with hand, body or skate at any time and in any position. He cannot, however, push the puck forward except with his skate stick.

Not significantly different to today but crucially this was all new to folks who came through the Auld Barn doors in their thousands.

OPENING MATCHES

Interesting to note that the week before their first match the Flyers were making headlines in the area news sections of the Fife Free Press, this entry was under the Gallatown heading "Hockey Player Injured.— While the Fife Flyers were practising on Thursday forenoon, one of the players was the victim of a mishap which was fortunately not of a serious nature. Three pucks were being used during the practice and two shots were sent in to Chic Kerr, the goaltender, at the same time. One of them struck him on the head above the eye and he had to have the injury stitched". The Flyers were to suffer a further training accident that led to Billy Fullerton sitting out the opening games when he injured his collar bone.

So on to that first weekend of the Flyers existence. With both the Dundee and Kirkcaldy ice rinks opening over the same weekend it made perfect sense that each would stage an ice hockey match and that the teams competing at both would be the Dundee Tigers and the Fife Flyers.

The Flyers made the trip north of the Tay on Friday September 30th to face the Tigers.

It was unsurprisingly a full house but even so the directors and management were taken by surprise by the extraordinary crowds which practically fought for admission to the gala opening. The rink held a capacity of 4000 people, and at least 1000 more were turned away. A queue stretched four deep along the Kingsway for 150 yards, and the start of the ice-hockey match had to be delayed for a few minutes in order to allow spectators time to reach their seats. Many motored to the rink, and from soon after seven o'clock a line of cars, in most places two deep, stretched along the Kingsway and round the traffic circus into Strathmartine Road as far as the junction of Nevill Street. At least 500 cars were accommodated in the rink car park. Corporation tramcars on the Downfield route did capacity business. Though the ice-hockey was merely a friendly encounter between two of the newcomers to the Scottish game, the crowd left no doubt of their enthusiasm for a sport which was completely new to them. The Tigers had the satisfaction of winning their first match by 5 goals to 2, though not finding their best form until the last period. During the first two periods, which were featured by some slack play on both sides, the Flyers were generally on top, but the Tigers' speed and combination were too much for the visitors the closing session. Tigers were well served in goal by Scotty Milne, loaned for the evening by Perth Panthers. Chic Kerr in the Flyers also got a great hand, especially when he resumed after a goalmouth spill with a large patch of plaster on his forehead. The match was not without its keen passages, and the "cooler," or penalty-box, had four occupants for brief spells. Al Rogers, Tigers' skipper, scored the rink's first goal in 10 minutes, finishing a solo run with an oblique shot from the right, which Kerr turned into the net. Five minutes later McQuade smacked in a smart shot, which Milne parried, and Len McCartney hit the return first-time to equalise for Flyers. The Flyers first ever 'road goal'. The Flyers showed distinct improvement in the second period, and Jimmy Chappell squeezed the puck home just behind the post. Tigers play was much faster in the last period, and there was great excitement when Merrick Cranstoun levelled the scores from close in after a shot from Biff Smith had been saved. Tigers went all out, and George McNeil got through to score the best goal of the match. Now well on top, Tigers added further goals through Jimmy Shannon, who streaked about 40 yards down the centre of the ice to net an unsavable shot, and a Jimmy Lightfoot hook shot from an almost incredibly acute angle. The Teams were

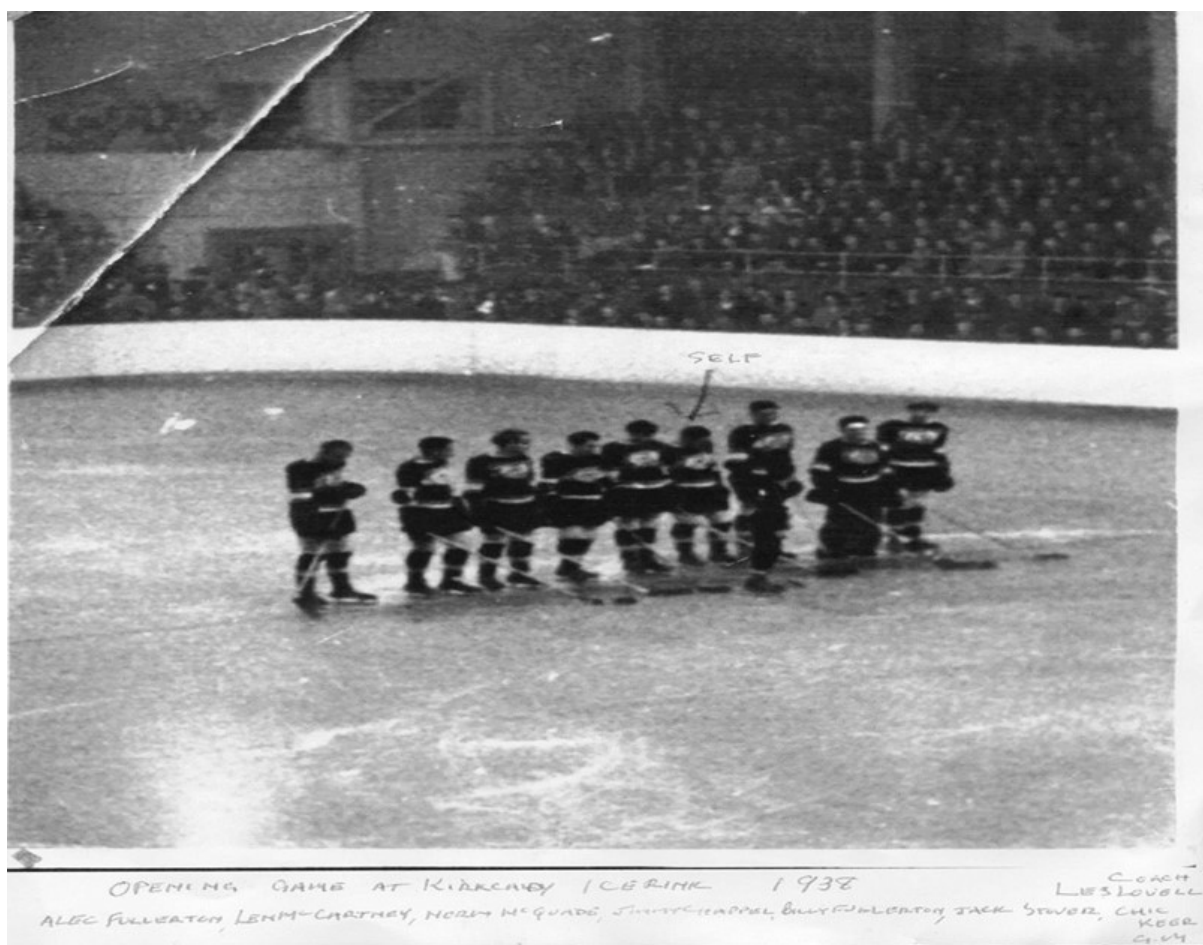
Dundee Tigers - Scotty Milne (1) George McNeil (2) and Biff Smith (3) Jimmy Shannon (9) Al Rogers (5) Merrick Cranstoun (6) Reserve defence, Doug Mitchell (4) Reserve attack - Jimmy Lightfoot (7) Fred Hill (8) Glen Braid (10).

Fife Flyers - Chic Kerr (1) Les Lovell (2) Jack Stover (3) Norman McQuade (7) Len McCartney (8) Tommy Durling (5) Reserve defence, Alex Fullerton (9) Reserve attack - Tommy McInroy (4) Jimmy Chappell (6).

Referee - J. O. McCabe, Glasgow.

After the game full advantage was taken of the general skating with well over 500 skaters on the ice.

The following night, Saturday October 1st, the Kirkcaldy public got their first taste of ice hockey when the Tigers deservedly defeated the Flyers in the return exhibition match following similar celebrations to open the new rink. Two miles of cars and thousands of persons seeking admission reflected the enormous interest in the rink. Traffic to Gallatown was particularly heavy, and buses were packed. By the time the programme was due to commence at the rink, an audience of 4625 had assembled. Billy Fullerton was due to compete in one of the speed skating events but was left as a spectator as he had injured his collar bone in a training accident. The Flyers were then announced individually by Mr Graham from Les Lovell, captain and coach down to "Wee Smith", the future legendary Bert Smith who was on this occasion as a young laddie was the team's mascot.



The visitors, although they lost the first goal, were always the more enterprising team, and it was not long before they were on even terms. The delightful manner in which the Dundee team combined was most effective, and it was on very few occasions that a pass went astray. On the other hand the Flyers were more or less dependent upon individual efforts, and although they succeeded on many occasions in penetrating the visitors defence their shooting was not on the same par as their opponents. Perhaps the lack of combination was due to the players not having played together long enough as a team although the opposition it was understood were expected to have one of the finest teams Scotland this season. The Kirkcaldy team took all the honours in the first session, and if it had not been but for the brilliance of Mac Ross in the Dundee goal they might well have been in the lead. It was midway through this period that Norman McQuade, receiving a pass from Tommy Durling, went through on his own and gave the goal-tender no chance with shot from well out. To McQuade then went the honour of Flyers first home goal. However, a few minutes later Dundee were on even terms when Smith netted following a brilliant individual effort. In the second period Dundee did the bulk of the attacking, but although the Flyers defence was hard pressed they always succeeded in frustrating the visiting efforts. They showed themselves to better advantage in the latter stages of this session and on two occasions Thomson was rather lucky to effect clearances from Durling and McQuade when all seemed lost from the visitors point of view. The final session proved a thrilling affair. Right from the face-off Rogers worked his way down the left side and slammed in a terrific angular shot which Kerr did well to stop. Lovell, who was showing a keen appreciation of openings, dispossessed Braid, and darted through on his own but his parting shot went past. After four minutes' play the visitors took the lead when Smith smacked home a pass from Cranstoun which gave Kerr no chance. Following a melee in the home goal zone Rogers further increased the visitors' lead. Kerr, who was unsighted made no effort to save. Nearing time Dundee

got a fourth goal when Shannon sent the puck into the net from the neutral zone following a face-off for a previous infringement. The Flyers tried hard to reduce the leeway but met with little success as the visitors' defence was in tip-top form. McQuade, Durling and McCartney put in some wonderful stick-work but were inclined to be too selfish. Lovell was a strong resourceful defender and originated most of the attacks, while Kerr gave a grand display in goal. Outstanding for the visitors were McNeil, Rogers and Lightfoot.

Flyers – Chic Kerr (1) Les Lovell (2) Jack Stover (3) Jimmy Chappell (6) Tommy Durling (5) Tommy McInroy (4), reserve attack – Norman McQuade (9) Len McCartney (8) reserve defence - Alec Fullerton (9)

Tigers – Mac Ross (1) George Neil (2) Biff Smith (3) Jimmy Lightfoot (7) Al Rogers (5) Merrick Cranstoun (6) reserves – Doug Mitchell (4) Shannon (9), Glen Braid (10) and Fred Hill (8)

Referee—B. Bernie. Glasgow.

In the Dundee team was centre Al Rogers, Al would later become the coach of the Flyers in 1946 and lead them to a number of honours in the late 40's whilst himself winning the Coach of the Year accolade three times before the decade was out.

So, the Flyers were off and skating. Their first competitive fixture was just 5 days away with those inaugural hockey nights in Kirkcaldy being a Thursday evening, 8pm.

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The Flyers first competitive fixture was at Kirkcaldy on Thursday 6th October when the other newcomers to hockey, the Falkirk Lions, visited. The Lions took a two goal lead before Norman McQuade scored the Flyers first competitive goal to set up a rousing finish. The Lions however

extended their lead to win the encounter 3-1. The following Tuesday the Flyers gained their first points when they returned from Glasgow after a 2-2 tie with Kelvinside after goals from McQuade and McInroy had given them a two goal lead. A couple of nights later at home to Perth Panthers, the Flyers had their first win, a McCartney double, McInroy and Lovell goals gave the Flyers a comfortable 4-2 win. Their game against the Falkirk Lions on 10th November was reported in the local paper as sold out a week ahead of the date, the Kirkcaldy public were captivated by the new team in town. The Scottish Points competition essentially took place over the first half of the season with each team meeting twice home and away for a total of 20 games. The Flyers finished their fixtures in early January and finished 3rd in the table, 6 points behind winners Falkirk Lions, with a record of **P20 W 10 L 6 D 4 F 75 A 62 Pts 24**

The “proper” season then began with teams repeating the fixtures as they competed for the league title crowned with the Canada Cup.

In late January the Flyers were to receive their first International honours with the confirmation of the Great Britain squad to compete in Switzerland for the World and European Championships.

Fife Flyers’ Tommy McInroy, from Blairgowrie and Billy Fullerton, the flying Scot from Glasgow, were included in the list of thirteen players chosen by the British Ice Hockey Association after the final trial at Harringay. Joe Collins, Kelvingrove was also selected, and the three Scots would travel for the World and European Ice Hockey Championships which took place in Basle and Zurich between February 3rd and 12th. When they turned out in the trial against the Harringay Racers, who were National League Champions, the three Scots impressed British team coach Percy Nicklin and their selection was beyond doubt.

Mr John Ahearne, secretary of the B.I.H.A had something complimentary to say about Collins, McInroy and Fullerton and Scottish ice hockey in general at the conclusion of the trial game. “If they are examples of ice hockey training in Scotland, England could well take a leaf out of their notebook. They show natural ability for team work and their play in their own league matches will be sufficient to keep them in trim until they join us at Croydon on February 2nd” he remarked.

The thirteen players who were chosen to go to Switzerland were: Jimmy Foster (Harringay Greyhounds) Gordon Dailley and Jimmy Kelly (Wembley Monarchs) Stan Simon (Earls Court Redwings) Robert Wyman (Prince’s) Joe Collins (Kelvingrove) Billy Fullerton (Fife Flyers) ‘Pete’ Halford (Prince’s) Tommy McInroy (Fife Flyers) Tommy Grace (Earl’s Court Marlboroughs) Art Ridley (Earl’s Court Redwings) Art Green (Wembley Terriers) Ken Perrin (Earl’s Court Redwings).

There were no Canadian-born players in the above selection, and only three major league players—Foster, Dailley and Kelly were included. Britain had won the European championship for the last three years but how would they fare with this all-British side? The answer was that although they progressed from their qualification group, they then lost all three games in the second round and finished 8th of 13 overall (6th best European team)

Whilst the selection of these two players was indeed an honour for the fledgling Flyers team it also raised a political hot topic that interestingly has been a discussion point throughout the eras and to this very day opinions and solutions have an array of different points of view.

The selection of McInroy and Fullerton had a bearing on the Flyers bid to have the ‘seven-Canadian’ rule altered. Strictly speaking, of course, the absence of these two home-bred players should have been dealt with by replacing them temporarily with two other Scots but homebred players of the standard of McInroy and Fullerton were scarce. Flyers, at the time were endeavouring to get matters adjusted with the S.I.H.A so that they could register eight Canadians instead with the intention to nominate only seven for any one game. This wasn’t the only scenario that they were using as their basis of appeal. George Horn had been brought from Mohawks to take the place of Jack Stover as

earlier in the season he had broken his wrist. Stover's registration had to be cancelled to allow Horn to play, and now that Jack Stover was ready to play again Flyers would have to cancel another Canadians registration before Stover could be re-introduced. To do so they argued would be "ingratitude at its worst" and the Kirkcaldy management had no desire to do anything of the kind hence their application the S.I.H.A.

An observer also noted that "The youngsters here will come on by leaps and bounds, but restricting the numbers of Canadians will not help them any. Leave the Canadians alone, free from any restrictions and when Scotland has players of her own in sufficient numbers and up to the requisite standard, then the importation of Canadian talent will automatically decrease in proportion. In the hockey world a Free Trade policy will pay. Ability, not nationality should be the deciding factor".

A week later it was reported that the S.I.H.A. sub-committee had agreed to recommend to the parent body that the number of imported players in each club be increased to eight, with the proviso that only seven of them may be nominated for each game. The Flyers had won the first round of their fight. The committee also recommended that in future players of Scottish parentage born in other countries should be considered home Scots provided they had lived in Scotland for a few years, and also provided they were willing to accept the lesser expense given to home Scots. At present Canadians got almost double the figure, some £4 per week.

From the 14th of January to the 27th April the Flyers completed their league fixtures and the final table read as follows:

	GP	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
Dundee Tigers	20	12	2	6	102	64	30
Perth Panthers	20	11	6	3	80	46	25
Fife Flyers	20	10	7	3	91	75	23
Kelvingrove	20	5	8	7	56	86	17
Glasgow Mohawks	20	5	11	4	68	95	14
Falkirk Lions	20	3	12	5	76	107	11

There were a number of also a number of Cup competitions played for during 1938-39 in what ended up being a 66 game season.

The **Coronation Cup**, donated by Mrs Fan H. Montgomery of St. Andrews, it was stated that "This knockout tournament is expected to develop into the premier national competition among ice-hockey clubs, this being the first trophy that has been presented on those lines". The tournament was staged in Perth every year until 1940. The Flyers crashed out 3-2 to the hosts.

A couple of nights later the Flyers travelled to Tayside to meet the Tigers in the **Airlie Trophy**. The Airlie Trophy was first contested this season and served as a minor rink tournament hosted at the Kingsway Rink in Dundee. It was donated by the Earl of Airlie. The Tigers romped the game 13-6 on their way to winning their own trophy against the Perth Panthers.

The Flyers clearly not making a name for themselves in cup competitions next entered the **President's Puck** when they met the Panthers in the semi-final at Crossmyloof. It was a Scottish Cup competition introduced in 1933 to fill up the fixture schedule. Then Scottish Ice Hockey Association president, Frank Stuart, purchased and offered to award silver-plated ceremonial pucks to the winner.

The tournament went on to be contested annually through the 1938-39 season and the Panthers beat the Flyers 5-1 in their one and only venture in the competition.

The **Mitchell Trophy** was seen as a premier cup competition in Scotland from its inception in 1929-30 until its final edition in 1938-39. It was a single-elimination knockout tournament throughout its history, a total of seven different teams won the cup but the Flyers in their one and only shot didn't get their name on it but did advance one round after beating Perth Panthers. They then fell to the

eventual winners the Dundee Tigers in the semi- final in what was their first ever game to go beyond regulation, Tigers winning 6-4 after overtime.

The Flyers eventually secured their first silverware. The **Simpson Trophy** was originally a competition between representative Glasgow Select and Perth Select sides. James Simpson, for whom the competition was named after, donated the trophy to be competed for on a two-leg basis by the two squads. Glasgow won the 1938 Simpson Trophy.

The Simpson Trophy became a Scottish-wide competition in 1938-39, but was still officially an inter-city competition, with one team representing each city. Each city faced one another on a home and away basis. The city with the best aggregate score over the two games received two points and one win in the standings. The Flyers defeated the Dundee Tigers 7-6 on aggregate (5-3 in the first leg, 2-3 in the second) in the final game to win the tournament with 4 aggregate wins and 8 points.

Another rink based tournament, this time in Falkirk saw the Flyers lose 5-2 in the first round of the **Bairns Trophy** to the host Lions.

No surprise that Kirkcaldy also hosted a cup competition, the **Anderson Trophy** (also sometimes referred to as the John Anderson Trophy) and the Flyers won the inaugural competition winning their semi-final against the Falkirk Lions and then defeating the Perth Panthers 1-0 in the final.



Les Lovell received the Flyers first ever piece of silverware.

The season also saw the first visits of touring teams to Kirkcaldy. The Bristol Bombers visited on 16/2 and very spookily the scoreline was 16-2 in favour of the Flyers who spent a large part of the game trying to set up Jack Stover to score his first ever Flyers goal, to no avail. Here's how the pregame notes suggested the Flyers would fare. "The Bristol Bombers, all-Canadian outfit trek North with a formidable record. They have twice run into double figures, 13 against Bournemouth Stags and 10 against a London Select, their greatest problem has been to find opposition worthy of their attention. The Bombers only defeat was handed out by a Wembley side that included five National League men

and five of the best men in London Provincial sides. All of which points to the fact that the Flyers won't have a holiday by any means".

A month later the Trail Smoke Eaters visited. Remember the GB team above who went to Switzerland to play in the World and European Championships, well the Smoke Eaters were a team from Trail, British Columbia, who represented Canada at the tournament and were coming to Fife as World Champions after winning all of their games, including a 4-0 second round win against GB, and did so only losing a single goal.

The interest in the match, against a Scottish select side that included four Flyers, was unprecedented. The rink could easily have been sold out twice over leaving many disappointed that a second game in Kirkcaldy could not be arranged. The Flyers chosen to play were Horn, Durling, McCartney and McQuade and the game also saw a two ref system used for the first time, no linesmen in those days. The Select battled hard but were downed 3-0, a couple of nights later in Ayr the Smoke Eaters won 4-2 against another Scottish Select, McCartney and McQuade who assisted on both goals were the Flyers representatives.

There was further geographical expansion of the game in Scotland for 1939-40 season as the Ayr Raiders and Dunfermline Vikings came aboard although the Glasgow Mohawks and Kelvingrove disbanded. There was great uncertainty naturally at this time and it took until late October/early November for the S.I.H.A and the clubs to arrange some semblance of a hockey season and at one time ice hockey prospects seemed about as frozen as the surface on which the players career and cavort. Rather than the original plan of 10 clubs the opening of a six-club league competition was heralded by various friendlies in which the players from different clubs had been doing the rounds in order to make up the numbers of these depleted sides. Art Grant, Flyers' new netminder from Winnipeg, for example, had already helped Falkirk Lions, while the Flyers themselves had to be assisted by players from other clubs. With all the chopping and changing of players amongst the teams a misunderstanding then developed amongst some of the fans, who had the idea that this sort of thing was going to continue all season, and they would as a result have no team that they could really call their own. This definitely was not the case. When the league started each team roster would be completed by the "pooling process" and from then on each team would carry on with the players allocated. Well that was the plan at the outset at least!

It is hard to say what longer term impact there was from the outbreak of war on the young game of hockey in Scotland. Had there been no international complications the season would have started off with a ten-club league, including the opening of the rink at Murrayfield and the barometer would have been set fair with prospects of still brighter days to come. In Kirkcaldy, as elsewhere, the new game caught on in a big way during its initial season, and there was little doubt at that time that given a fair break this grand Canadian game would have rapidly developed into one of our own national sports. Though war however had changed things a bit the thrills of the fastest game in the world continued to attract enthusiastic audiences and it was said in topical terms that the blue line would attract as much attention as the Siegfried Line.

In those early days it was a difficult job being a referee, a point that can still be argued to current times, as was referenced by the Flyers manager Jack Wake that "the refereeing problem seems likely to be settled for good as it has been confirmed that there will be an English referee for the games this season and, without casting any aspersions against the whistlers we had with us last season, we must admit we are glad to hear it"

The initial Flyers team allocated from the pooling process was as follows: Art Grant, Les Lovell, George Scotland Horn, Glen Morrison, Frank Chase, Arnie Pratt, Frank Ney, Jimmy Shannon.

The process was in place to attempt to ensure parity between the teams in terms of the talent recruited and this was done on behalf of the teams by the SIHA in an independent process.

Within the opening week there some changes with Frank Chase going to Perth whilst Tommy McInroy returned to Fife. Former Falkirk player 'Red' Thomson replaced Lovell as Horn's partner in defence. French-Canadian Paul Rheault another Winnipeg native who had played the previous two years with the Wembley Lions replaced Jimmy Shannon.

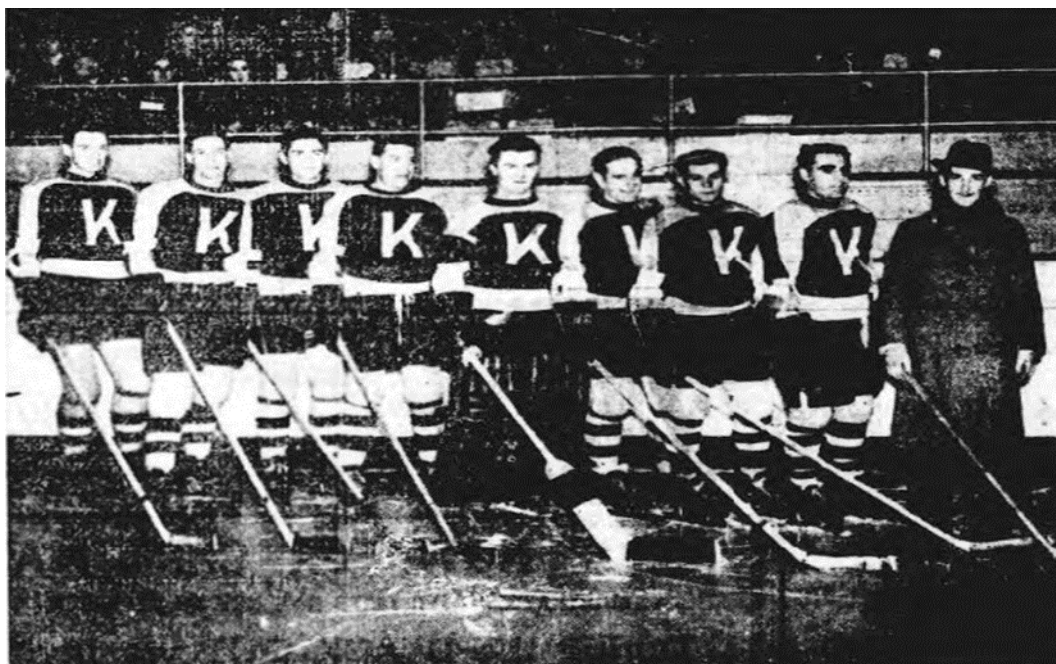
Grant was considered the best goaltender in the league. Forwards Pratt and Morrison both played well in their initial appearance. All were well known with the exception of Ney, who was a right-winger and joined up after a season in Poland a year ago. Previous to that, Ney played for Glasgow Mustangs and was described as a well built and robust type of player.

Nelson McCuaig was appointed as non-playing coach and was a former Falkirk Lion.

Flyers players that moved to other clubs were Durling, Chappell and McQuade to Dunfermline, where Durling was manager of the newly formed Vikings.

The games at Kirkcaldy remained Thursday evenings but with a 30 minute earlier 7.15 p.m. start. There was to be no standing room but a number of seats were to be provided at a shilling so that those paying the "humble bob," would not be excluded but, on the contrary, be better provided for than before. A clock and a scoreboard were also unveiled at a newly refurbished rink which included the removal of seats down along the boards.

The teams were now to be known as Kirkcaldy, Dundee, Dunfermline, Perth, Falkirk and Ayr, "war-time economy" apparently being responsible for the dropping of the "livestock" in the shape of Tigers, Lions and Panthers, "war material," such as Flyers, Raiders and old historical seadogs like the Vikings. However, as far as the enthusiasts were concerned, there was no official ban on the use of these colourful cognomens, even although the Flyers would now appear in jerseys with a large "K" on the front of it.



From left to right: Red Thomson, Arnie Pratt, Frank Ney, George Horn, Art Grant, Tommy McInroy, Paul Rheault, Glen Morrison and Coach Nelson McCuaig

The Points Competition was once again contested to begin the season, followed by the league championship.

The Flyers finished second, six points behind winners Perth Panthers, in the Points Competition but then went on to narrowly win the regular season but not the Canada Cup which had been retired as the league Championship trophy prior to the season.

	GP	W	L	D	GF	GA	Pts
Fife Flyers	20	14	6	0	120	88	28
Falkirk Lions	20	13	6	1	103	88	27
Dundee Tigers	20	9	6	5	110	75	23
Perth Panthers	20	7	11	2	55	69	16
Ayr Raiders	20	7	12	1	76	97	15
Dunfermline Vikings	20	4	13	3	84	119	11

To decide the overall Scottish League Champions the Flyers and Panthers met on what was originally scheduled a best of 5 game series but was decided over 3 games. The first game in Kirkcaldy ended in a 4-4 tie with the Flyers then winning narrowly 4-3 in Perth in the second game. The Flyers first play off honours were secured on the 9th of May at home with a 5-4 win to be crowned Scottish League Champions.

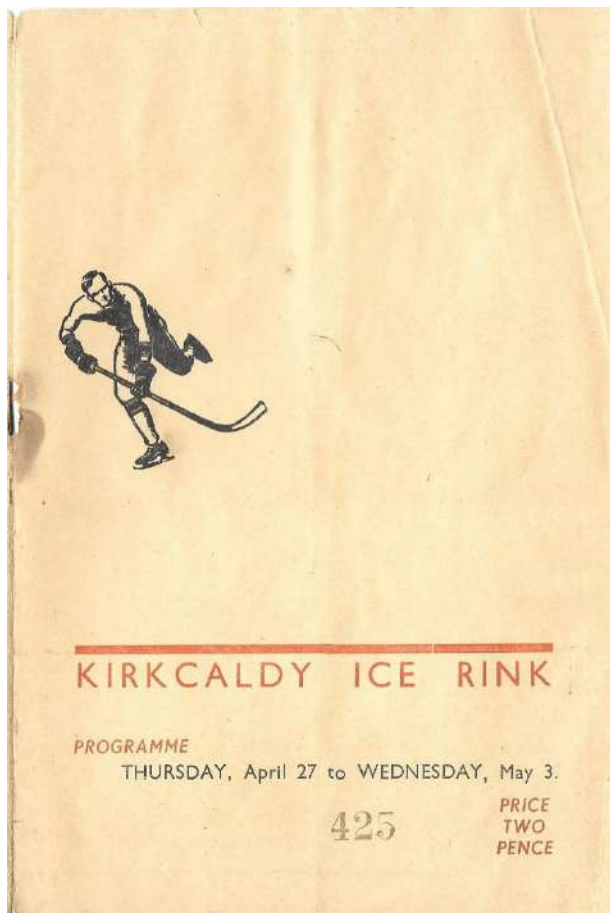
The Flyers Championship winning line up was – Art Grant, George Horn, Frank Ney, Glen Morrison, Paul Rheault, Arnie Pratt, Red Thomson, Jack Schofield, Eddie McMillan

The Flyers had added a couple of players during the season. 21 year old Eddie McMillan was yet another from Winnipeg, Eddie had been considering working at his fathers' gas station when he got the offer to join the Flyers in February. Earlier in December Jack Schofield, formerly of Perth and Dundee, was added to the roster.

In Cup competitions there was to be some additional silverware added to the trophy cabinet. The John Anderson Trophy was retained and in the Consolation Cup, which was contested by the two first round losers in the Scottish Cup, The Flyers defeated the Dundee Tigers. As mention there was a first round exit from the Scottish Cup as well as the Simpson trophy whilst a mid table position resulted in the Airlie Trophy which was now contested as a league where games were played as three separate periods with points awarded for each period win.

Remember those early season sentiments expressed about the men in charge, so how did that work throughout the season? Well referee Jim Foley who refereed all Flyers' games - or at least practically all of them - was never a popular figure at Kirkcaldy. A new referee was clamoured for frequently by those who thought the breaks were going too much against the home team. This being so one would have thought that Frank Chase, who deputised for Jim late in the season would have been welcomed with open arms. But what actually happened was that some of the crowd were soon declaring that they wanted referee Foley? Whilst this was undoubtedly tough on Frank, it just shows that no matter who is referee the fans will never be pleased. Something that endures to this day.

A closing note on the season is served from the pages of the Flyers final programme which it was suggested a copy should have been sent to Lord Haw Haw. In the issue manager Wake thanked the boys individually for their good work in the past season and gave Coach McCuaig a deserved pat the back. But the bit that was of particular interest was the last sentence, "Don't forget that the Flyers will be on the ice again next October, until then 'Au Revoir' and on behalf of all ice hockey fans we may say that Haw Haw can put that in his pipe and smoke it!"



War broke out and hockey was put into cold storage for six seasons across Scotland, Lord Haw Haw wasn't around when it returned!!