

## REMEMBERING ONE OF HOCKEY'S BEST

By

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Only readers with an interest in Manitoba hockey history may recognize the name of Clarence (Sonny) Rost, who died in England in 2008. Born in Winnipeg in 1914, Rost played Midget hockey for St. Pauls College and Junior with the Kenora Thistles. Future Hockey Hall of Fame members Babe Pratt and Jake Milford were two of his team mates on the 1933 – 34 Manitoba Junior Champions. Following their junior careers, Rost and Milford headed to England on the ASCANIA. The trip took 14 days.

In an interview for the book “Champions on Ice”, Rost told authors Phil Drackett and Dennis Fill that “conditions were bad in Canada and fellows were glad to cross the ocean”.

“At the time, New York Rovers (a farm team of the Rangers) were offering a player \$25.00 a week, while over here they were paying \$50.00”, Rost said, “For a kid fresh out of Winnipeg, coming to play ice hockey at the (Wembley) Empire Pool when it opened in 1934 was like some fantastic dream come true”.

A fearless defenceman, Rost became a fan favorite while playing for Wembley. His image was plastered over billboards in London Piccadilly Circus that advertised Gillette Razor blades. At the time he was paid more than the top footballers of the day. In the 1936 film “Olympic Honeymoon”, he had a role as a hockey player.

Rost played more than 1000 games over three decades and was able to line up on the same ice as his son John. Sonny was inducted into the British Ice Hockey Hall of Fame in 1955 and when John joined him in 1991, they became the first Father-Son duo in the Shrine. His grandson, Warren, was considered one of the best British born defencemen of the modern era and coached the National Under 16 Team.