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Night to remember for the great Orr

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OSHAWA -- He will forever be synonymous with wearing No. 4, but when he played for the Oshawa Generals, the great Bobby Orr wore No. 2.

Last night, Oshawa Generals fans reminded Orr that in their hearts, he always will be No. 1.

The Generals officially retired Orr's No. 2 Oshawa jersey in a stirring 50-minute ceremony before they beat the Peterborough Petes 5-1 in front of 6,253 fans that crammed into the General Motors Centre to salute quite simply the greatest General of them all.

From the moment he entered the arena in a 2009 GM hybrid car, until Hockey Night in Canada icon Don Cherry and other guests saluted him with speeches and gifts, Orr smiled and choked back tears before he addressed the crowd moments before a banner bearing his face and number was hoisted to the rafters.

"I'm thrilled to be back, I have a lot of friends here in Oshawa," Orr said.

"This is where my career started and to be honoured like this here, well I'm thrilled to be a part of it.

"I came here at 14 and I was well looked after. Anytime you are honoured in this manner it's a thrill, it really is, and something I'll always remember."

Cherry was a surprise guest, unbeknownst to Orr until he walked on to the ice to an enthusiastic reception from the delighted crowd.

"He's the greatest player in hockey history, period," Cherry said.

"A great hockey player has to be able to score, to pass, to skate, to hit, to fight ... Bobby Orr could do everything.

"You really had to have seen him play to understand just how great he was. He changed the game with the way he played. Boy, he was really something special."

Orr came to Oshawa and made an immediate impact, being selected to the league's second all-star team in his rookie season despite playing against players four and five years older.

In the final of his four seasons with the Generals, he led the team to the league title and a berth in the Memorial Cup before starting his illustrious NHL career.

TOP DEFENCEMAN

Despite being hobbled by knee injuries and numerous surgeries, Orr was the greatest defenceman of his generation.

He captured the Norris Trophy eight consecutive seasons and was a nine-time NHL all-star.

The only defenceman to win the Art Ross Trophy as scoring champion -- he did it twice -- Orr also won the Hart Trophy three consecutive times and compiled a remarkable 915 points in just 657 regular-season games.

He led the Bruins to two Stanley Cups and was the tournament MVP at the 1976 Canada Cup, in what would turn out to be his swan song. Immediately upon his retirement he became the youngest player to be inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame at the age of 31.

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