

Bobby Bauer

While Bobby Bauer distinguished himself as a professional hockey player, it is the way the elegant right winger played with the rest of his line - the famous “Kraut Line” of the Boston Bruins - that set him apart.



Bauer, together with centre Milt Schmidt and left-winger Woody Dumart, made up the Kraut line that led the Boston Bruins to two Stanley Cups in 1939 and 1941. They were the top three scorers in the league in the 1939-40 season.

But it was more than mere skill and athleticism that brought these young men success. There was a symmetry to their play that was forged in part by their common German heritage and shared home. Bauer was raised in Waterloo and Schmidt and Dumart grew up in Kitchener.

When Bauer died suddenly in 1964 at the age of 49, Schmidt remembered his friend fondly, “Bobby was my right arm in hockey, the brains of the Kraut Line. Bobby was more like one of my immediate family than anyone else”.

The role of sibling was a familiar one for Bauer who grew up with five brothers playing hockey on a rink in the backyard of the Bauer home on King and Allen Streets in Waterloo.

Later, when Bauer was posthumously inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1996, Dumart said of his linemate:

“He had a knack of getting between the boards and the opposing winger and making a play. He had a good shot, was a good skater and stickhandler and had a way of finding holes. He and Milt would pass the puck back and forth. I got the garbage goals.”

Only 5-foot, 6-inches and 150 pounds, Bauer’s grace on the ice was enhanced by his sportsmanship. He won the Lady Byng Trophy for gentlemanly play three times in 1940, 1941 and 1947.

The Second World War interrupted the professional careers of all three players and they became the first big-league players to join the Royal Canadian Air Force. Their last game before entering the service was February 10, 1942. Schmidt remembered it as a highlight of his career with the Kraut Line.

“We beat the Montreal Canadiens 8-1. Our line got eight scoring points, and when the game was over the players from both teams picked us up and carried us off the ice while the organist played *Auld Lang Syne*.”

Initially, they were based in Ottawa where they played for the Ottawa Commandos and won the Allan Cup championship. The three returned to the Bruins after the war, with Bauer playing strongly.

He retired that season and returned to the area to coach the Guelph Biltmore juniors and later played with the senior Kitchener-Waterloo Dutchmen, bringing them to the OHA finals three years in a row in the late 1940s.

Bauer came out of retirement to play one final game with the Bruins on March 18, 1952. It was a Dumart-Schmidt appreciation night and Schmidt was heading into the game against Chicago with 199 career goals. Not only did Bauer score that night, but he assisted Schmidt on his 200th career goal.

The real thrill for Schmidt that night was hearing the announcers say:

“Boston goal by Schmidt, assists from Dumart and Bauer!”

Photo courtesy of *The Waterloo Chronicle*