



Fred Sasakamoose

While his NHL career lasted only 11 games, Fred's impact on the game, and on his community, was impactful. Fred was the first full-blooded Native to play in the NHL in 1953-54. He played his 11 games with the Chicago Blackhawks, interestingly, the team with the "Indian head" crest on the front of their jersey.

Fred was born on the Sandy Lake reserve in Saskatchewan. He left home to play junior in Moose Jaw and was considered to be the best player in the Western Hockey League by 1954. After playing with the Blackhawks, Fred was unhappy in the minors and chose to take a taxi the 1,000 kilometers from Calgary back to his home and wife.

Fred became a band chief in 1980 and in 1994 was inducted into the Saskatchewan Indian Hall of Fame. Fred discusses the difficulty of overcoming his residential school experience, his battle with alcohol as a young man, and the work he now does to heal substance abuse in his community. He also works with the NHL's Diversity Committee and runs an annual hockey camp for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal kids.

Fred is a true trailblazer for all First Nations children.