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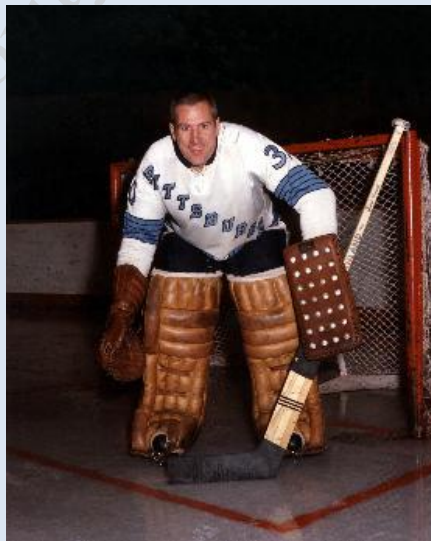
Les Binkley



Like the great Johnny Bower, Les was buried in the minors for many seasons and didn't make his NHL debut until he was in his thirties. Les actually began his life in hockey as a trainer. The reason – his eyesight was poor. A strange twist of fate got Binkley into the nets of the Cleveland Barons of the AHL. An injury to their regular goaltender thrust Les into the nets and he never was a trainer again.

His break came with 1967 expansion in the NHL when the Pittsburgh Penguins picked up his contract. Les was the first number-one goaltender in the history of the Pittsburgh Penguins. He played 104 games during the club's first two years and later tutored youngsters like Jim Rutherford and Al Smith. Les became the first goaltender in the NHL to wear contact lenses due to an inability to see long shots.

He played 5 seasons for the Penguins before signing with Ottawa of the WHA for a season and then moving on to the Toronto Toros for three seasons.



Canada:
RR#5, 13332 Tenth Line,
Georgetown, ON L7G4S8 Canada
Phone: 954-330-6362 Fax: 905-873-8334

United States:
49 N. Federal Hwy. #264
Pompano Beach, FL 33062 U.S.A.
Phone: 954-330-6362 Fax: 954-353-1962

www.sportscelebs.com