

EDMONTON **hockey** MAGAZINE

WINTER 2020

WEYLAND SIBLINGS
SUPPORTING EACH OTHER
ON & OFF THE ICE!

Feature Interviews With:

COLE MILLER

FROM KC TO THE WHL

WES MCCAULEY

NHL'S TOP REFEREE



DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

Hockey participation offers families value beyond making an individual player a better player or even a better athlete. The game of hockey is a powerful platform for participants to build **character**, foster **positive values** and develop important **life skills**. These benefits are available to all players, desirable to every family and transcend the game.

WE BELIEVE

- Hockey should be an enjoyable family experience; all stakeholders-organizations, players, parents, siblings, coaches, referees, volunteers and rink operators-play a role in this effort.
- Hockey's greatest value is the role it plays in the development of character and life skills.
- All hockey organizations, regardless of size or level of competition, bring value to players and families in their ability to deliver a positive family experience.
- Physical activity is important for a healthy body, mind and spirit.
- There are significant benefits of youth participation in multiple sports.
- Hockey programs should be age-appropriate for all players, accounting for each individual's physical, emotional and cognitive development.
- There is great value in all forms of hockey, both on and off the ice.
- All hockey programs should provide a safe, positive and inclusive environment for players and families regardless of race, colour, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and socio-economic status. Simply put, hockey is for everyone.

We believe in our ability to improve lives and strengthen communities globally through hockey. We believe that by living by these principles will provide a health, balanced, and enjoyable experience for all and inspire impactful service beyond the rink.



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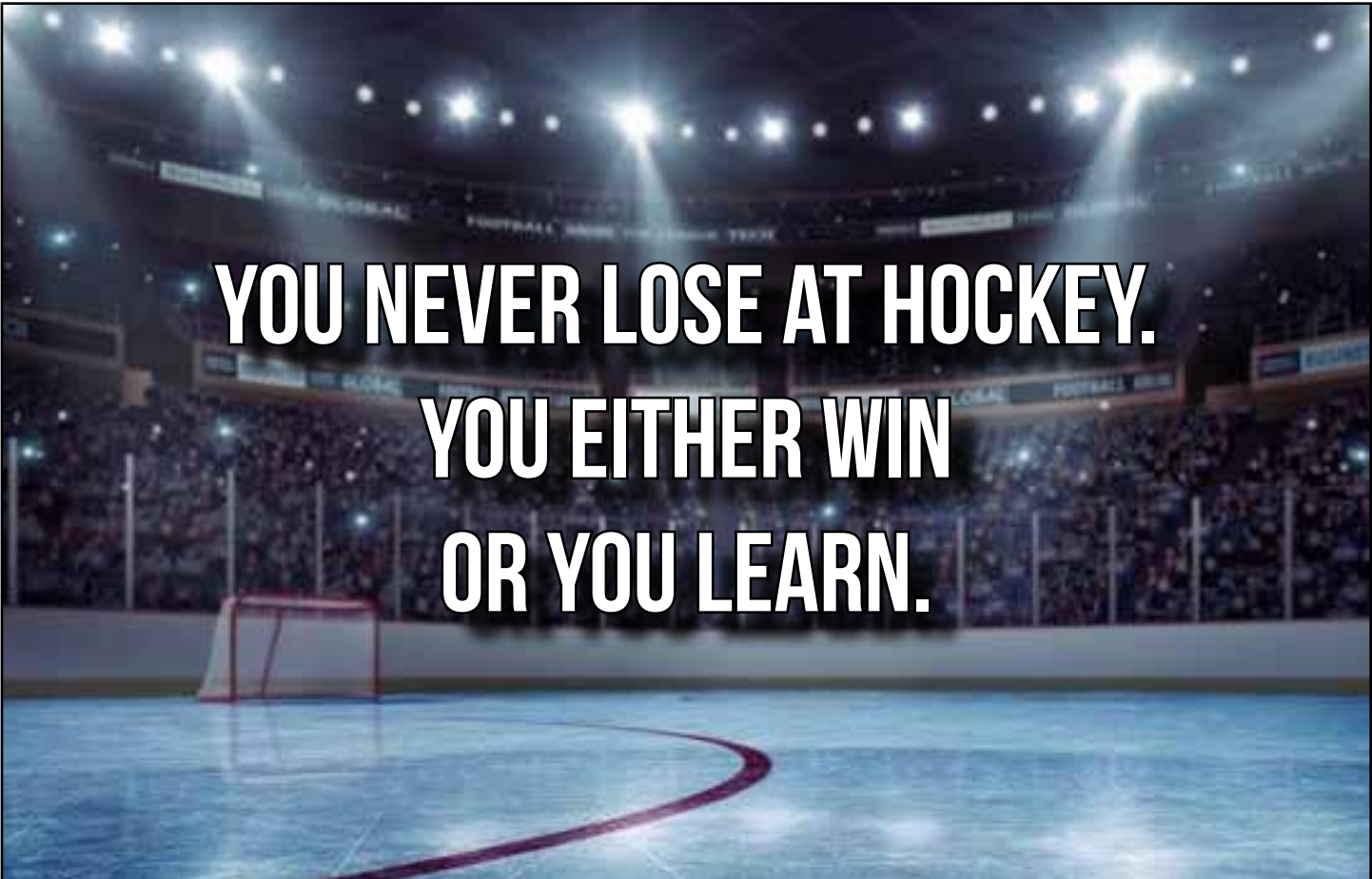
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A wide-angle photograph of a hockey rink at night. The ice is blue, and the red goal is visible on the left. The arena is filled with spectators, and bright lights illuminate the scene from above.

**YOU NEVER LOSE AT HOCKEY.
YOU EITHER WIN
OR YOU LEARN.**

A portrait of a man with glasses, wearing an orange and blue Edmonton Oilers jersey. He is looking slightly to the left. A diagonal orange and blue graphic element is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Rest in Peace
JOEY MOSS
1963 - 2020

Message From The Publisher

Welcome to our Winter Edition of the Hockey Edmonton Magazine!

This is our 20th year publishing the magazine in partnership with Hockey Edmonton, a partnership which began in 2001. This is the first time we are publishing the magazine in a digital-only format. (We've published the magazine digitally before, but we've always had physical copies in stands in all Edmonton and area arenas.)

With COVID, we made the decision to hold off on publishing hard copies of the magazine, recognizing potential concerns on how people may handle the magazine in the rinks. (And that arenas are closed for two weeks.) We hope to return to a printed copy format in 2021, when things get back to "normal."

There's nothing like a kid seeing themselves featured in a magazine, from all the Quikcard Minor Hockey Week winners we feature every year, to a brother/sister combo like Nash and Kennedy Weyland, who we selected for our cover this issue.

We also have a great feature on 15-year-old Cole Miller, who was the Lethbridge Hurricanes first round pick at the WHL draft earlier this year. Cole played with the KC Squires the past few seasons, and with the WHL season delayed, Cole will suit up with the Maple Leaf Beverly Optimists in the Alberta Elite Hockey League.

One of the mainstays in our magazine is our "Spotlight on an Official" feature we do each edition. This issue, we are re-features Kasi Jain, who we profiled last season. It's great to take the helmets of our young officials, to remind everyone they are also participants in the game, and deserve our respect and appreciation.

As a special bonus this edition, we have a feature interview with the NHL's top rated referee – Wes McCauley. We first met up with McCauley for an in-person interview in 2017, and he was kind enough to reconnect after he finished working the Stanley Cup finals. (His seventh final series in eight seasons.) McCauley shares what it's like to be an NHL official, and what it was like to work in the two NHL "bubbles."

In wrapping up this issue, we have included an exclusive interview with Willie O'Ree, the first black man to play in the NHL. O'Ree talks about his decades experience in hockey, and his role (since 1998) as the National Hockey League's Diversity Ambassador.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Hockey Edmonton Magazine, and if you have any suggestions for a future edition, please pass them along. In the meantime, best wishes to everyone this hockey season. Stay safe, stay active, and stay positive!



Sincerely,
Rob Suggitt

Publisher of the
Hockey Edmonton Magazine



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Message From Hockey Edmonton

The arenas are quiet, the hockey bags are tucked away and the kids may soon start to go stir crazy. We are in a two-week shutdown as we write this message and life without hockey is not easy for any of us. This has been a season like no other; the challenges brought on by the pandemic seem to only intensify. It's been a tough grind but once again our sport is offering us lessons in life.

We thank players, families, coaches and volunteers for all they've done this season. "Cohort hockey" placed additional demands on everyone as we learned to follow the guidelines required in order to get kids into games while putting everyone's health first. We learned to be more responsible leaders and teammates and to put the interest of others first.

We were doing well in the battle against Covid-19 so we were surprised to see minor hockey as one of the few groups hit hard by the shutdown. We have no problem doing our part in the fight against the pandemic; we just thought there would be broader measures put into effect.

The work at hand has our ice schedulers once again juggling teams, times and rinks so we can quickly resume play when we get the green light. They're working long hours and teams may get short notice as to when they're back on the ice. We are also looking ahead to Christmas and planning more games over the holidays. In addition, we're exploring extending the season longer than usual into the spring to make up for lost games.

The pandemic has also delayed the start of QuikCard Edmonton Minor Hockey Week, a piece of history in our hockey season that dates back more than half a century. We hold out hope we can stage it later in the year. We're grateful our long-time partner, Lyle Best at QuikCard, vows support no matter what is around the corner.

Despite all the challenges, there are still a lot of great things happening in Hockey Edmonton. We were thrilled to see Cole Miller of KC Hockey and now MLAC selected in the first round of the Western Hockey League, a reflection of our improved player and coach development programs (more in a separate story in this issue). We were also excited when Chloe Goofers became the first female player approved for acceleration by Hockey Alberta. Kasi Jain and Ryan Shelast also brought smiles to our faces when they won Ron Brodeur Boston Pizza scholarships to subsidize their first-year tuition at the University of Alberta, recognition for all the great things they've achieved on and off the ice. All these players are symbolic of the quality of the kids in our program.

In the meantime, we urge everyone to remember to put our health first - respect the virus and do everything within our power to abide by the guidelines set down by the people at Alberta Health and Hockey Alberta. The last thing we want to see is the numbers climb further and the lockdown extended.

The pandemic has obviously prompted us to go with an online only edition of the Hockey Edmonton magazine this season. Everybody is getting used to things being virtual so why not one more thing!

Be strong, be safe and be smart – hockey will be back!



Joe Spatafora

President | Hockey Edmonton



Steve Hogle

GM | Hockey Edmonton



PHOTO PROVIDED BY
DWAIN TOMKOW

FROM THE CLUB TO THE DUB!

COLE MILLER SHOWS WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN

In any other year, Cole Miller would have spent part of the fall at the training camp of the Lethbridge Hurricanes in the Western Hockey League, commonly referred to as the Dub. But this season is unlike any other year. With the start of the WHL season delayed because of the pandemic until at least January, the 'Canes' first round pick from this year's WHL Draft headed off to suit up with the Maple Leaf Beverly Optimists in the Alberta Elite Hockey League.

It's the first time Miller has pulled on the blue and white colours of MLAC, having been drafted out of the KC Club Hockey program (KC players headed to MLAC as part of the consolidation at U18AAA to make for stronger clubs in Edmonton). Miller says considering the circumstances surrounding Covid-19, he's just grateful to be playing. "I know my parents love to watch me play but if it gets to the point where there are no fans in the stands but we could still play, I'd take it. At least we'd be on the ice!"

Miller's love of the game, his skill set plus his large frame saw him climb up draft lists this past season. He ended up going in the first round, 16th overall, to Lethbridge. "We knew we would not have got him if we waited until the second round," said the man who drafted him, Hurricanes General Manager Peter Anholt. The reigning WHL Executive of the Year added, "We saw him at the John Reid tournament and we really liked the look of him. He has size, can skate and thinks the game well."

"I know they like my size – I'm 6' 4" now. But I can also move my feet like I'm 5' 8". And I feel I have a good hockey IQ, read the game and be patient to make the right play. But it was just super cool to watch the process play out at the draft. It was like a dream come true," adds Miller.

Cole grew up playing in Hockey Edmonton where he joined the KC Squires and coach Adam Sergerie. Miller says Adam has had a big impact on his development. "It's what he does on a daily basis, both on and off the ice. One of the reasons I think he's one of the greatest is he helps you become an amazing human being off the ice, something as simple as you're not going to get anywhere in life being rude!"

"On the ice, it's the diversity. Some days you're focusing on using your edges effectively, other days you might be learning how to use your body to create space while yet another time you might experiment with different angles on shots. And if you want to address something different specifically, he can create high quality drills on the spot."

Coach Sergerie sees great character in the Miller. "He was our captain and a high-profile player. We were at the all-star game and skills competition and Cole could have gone in any one of those competitions and done well. But we asked what he thought if some of his teammates took part. He loved the idea. He told us, "Whether I'm in or out doesn't matter - I'll cheer just as loud whoever is out there." What a mature response. He is everything you want from your captain.

"And I love the fact he will give you the same effort no matter what the score. If it was 10-0 or 1-0, you knew what you would get out of him every time: total buy-in to the game plan. As the year went on, he really understood the importance of leadership. He gets it. He will hold guys accountable, but he will also be the first to embrace those opportunities to celebrate his teammates. He's the ultimate team first guy."

Miller's initial development as a player and a person began back in Timbits hockey and his time in the Northeast Zone. His growth is a reflection of a few things that are being overhauled in Hockey Edmonton, including club hockey's enhanced programming for player and coach development. For example, Sergerie is now overseeing the entire KC Hockey development program for players and coaches.

"We've been amping up our development program for a number of years now," explained the president of KC Elite Hockey, Bruce Fitzpatrick. "Sergerie is overseeing development, the CK (Connaughton Kohn) skills instructors and other leaders are offering more development on and off the ice. It's giving us – and the other clubs – great traction with players and coaches."

Miller's mother, Heather, added, "There can be a misperception of club hockey, that it can be disorganized or bureaucratic. You can get that in any other organization. The coaches Cole has had and the coaches I've seen on opposing teams are really working hard and getting great people on the bench."

"Hockey Edmonton athletic clubs have recognized the need to improve development practices for their membership," according to Hockey Edmonton's head of development, Joel Lenius. "These practices are within the physical, mental, life-skills, and technical areas. The clubs have also attempted to schedule earlier practices at more consistent game and practice facility locations.

Additionally, more rigorous coach selection and coach education and mentorship practices have been adopted to ensure the athletes are being best supported by their coaching staffs. With lower fees, better development programs, more rigorous coaching recruitment and more coaching support, the athletic clubs are proving to be a strong option for players."

Lenius is also involved in what is proving to be another valuable piece in this model: the relationship a growing number of players and their club teams are building with academies in schools. For example, Cole played in the St. Edmund Hockey Academy and is now in the St. Francis Xavier High Performance Hockey Academy.



COLE MILLER AT AGE 6 PLAYING WITH TIMBITS HOCKEY, AND AT AGE 16, PLAYING WITH THE MAPLE LEAFS ATHLETIC CLUB.

"This is a great, new complementary piece to support players who remain in or return to club hockey," explained Lenius. "Players can develop their on-ice and off-ice skills in a high-performance environment during the day before attending their club team events in the evening. The instructors are available to club coaches for collaborative player feedback, program design, scheduling, curriculum and more. This ensures the athlete is using the supplementary time outside of the club team to productively and purposefully develop specific areas of their game. That, in turn, ultimately assists in improving performance during team events. Our skaters are finding this a great balance between developing as a player and making the most out of their academic abilities."

So, when Miller isn't busy at FXHP and school, he's getting in as many games as possible with MLAC in the AEHL.

"We were thrilled he's playing U18AAA in the Alberta Elite Hockey League," said Peter Anholt. "We really wanted him to go there, challenge himself and learn to play against some really good older players."

The league also happens to be making it easier for organizations to watch and measure players' progress with the introduction of both HockeyTV, a live streaming service, and its companion service, InStat Sport, the industry leader in sports analytics.

"We want Cole to play at the highest level he could," added Anholt. "We believe he can compete there and he will see his development pushed forward in that league."

While Cole is excited about getting drafted, he's the first to acknowledge there's a lot more work to do to be able to make an impact in the WHL. He's taken a well-worn path to the Dub, one that used to be the preferred route. While some players have recently chosen to play at sport schools, there seems to be a lot of interest from a growing number of players in following Miller's lead; that might not be too much of a surprise considering Cole Miller's reputation as a leader.

"WE WERE THRILLED HE'S PLAYING U18AAA IN THE ALBERTA ELITE HOCKEY LEAGUE. WE REALLY WANTED HIM TO GO THERE, CHALLENGE HIMSELF AND LEARN TO PLAY AGAINST SOME REALLY GOOD OLDER PLAYERS."



PETER ANHOLT

GENERAL MANAGER | LETHBRIDGE HURRICANES

WEYLAND

SIBLINGS



KENNEDY WEYLAND

Kennedy is eight years old and in Grade four at EPK School in Sherwood Park. This is her fifth season of playing hockey, and she currently plays for the Fuzion Ice Devils, which is an all-girls team.

HEM: What is your usual playing position?

KW: I play every position - including goalie.

HEM: What goals have you set for yourself this season?

KW: Because I played half-ice hockey last year, I am looking forward to learning all the positions. I also want to make new friends and have fun.

HEM: Who is your role model?

KW: My role model is Natalie Spooner - I got to meet her at Girls Hockey Fest a couple years ago.

HEM: Which is your favourite NHL team?

KW: The Edmonton Oilers, the Boston Bruins (like my Grandma) and the Toronto Maple Leafs (like my Papa and Grandpa).

HEM: Who is your favourite NHL player?

KW: Connor McDavid.

HEM: Aside from hockey, what are your other interests?

KW: I'm interested in gymnastics and I play soccer in the summertime.

HEM: What is your favourite hockey memory?

KW: My favourite hockey memory is our tournament in Calgary last year. My team stayed at a hotel with a pool and had a lot of fun on the ice too.

HEM: What's it like having an older brother playing hockey? Do you learn anything from him? Does he give you any tips, etc.?

KW: I like watching Nash play hockey and playing with all my friends at the rink. My brother and dad both give me lots of tips about hockey and sometimes we play on our driveway.

HEM: You wear jersey #5. Any significance to your jersey number?

KW: I chose the number last year and now I really like it.

NASH WEYLAND

Nash is ten years old and in Grade five at OLPH School in Sherwood Park. This is his seventh season of playing hockey, and he currently plays for the Strathcona Warriors Atom Tier 1 team.

HEM: What is your usual playing position?

NW: I play defense, but I also like to rush the puck.

HEM: What goals have you set for yourself this season?

NW: Keeping my head up and knowing where to put the puck when I have it.

HEM: Who is your role model?

NW: Oscar Klefbom - he's a good defenseman and I like watching him play.

HEM: Which is your favourite NHL team?

NW: Edmonton Oilers

HEM: Who is your favourite NHL player?

NW: Connor McDavid

HEM: Aside from hockey, what are your other interests?

NW: I like to play baseball, golf and football.

HEM: What is your favourite hockey memory?

NW: My favourite memory is when I scored my first goal last season. We were in a tournament at West Edmonton Mall and in one game I scored my first and second goal!

HEM: What's it like having a younger sister playing hockey? Do you give her any tips? Is there anything YOU can learn from watching your sister play?

NW: It's fun to watch her play and to cheer her on like she does for me. I try to give her tips about shooting and positioning. The one thing I can learn from my sister is to always have fun - she is always smiling and having fun with her teammates.

HEM: You wear jersey #11. Any significance to your jersey number?

NW: I had it last year and I thought it was a good number, so I picked it again this year.



By Shari Narine

A CREATIVE WRITING CLASS, the love of minor hockey, and determination have all come together to create Jennifer Jeffrey's first juvenile fiction novel.

"I felt I had a story and I wouldn't give up on it. I felt I wanted to capture this hockey world and I was just simply going to do it," said Jeffrey, who lives in Calgary.

Mattie and the Wolverines is the account of second year peewee (now referred to as Under-13 or U13) player Mattie Keller, who wants desperately to make the elite Wolverine team while struggling against the unwanted attentions of Kevin, an older boy who dislikes Mattie. Surrounding Mattie is his best friend Garrett, who geeks out for music as much as hockey, and Mattie's older sister Hallie, who is tired of hockey, but appreciates her brother's love for the game. And when it looks as if the Wolverines hockey program will only survive if the club joins with archrivals the Bashers, Hallie springs into action with an extraordinary plan.

Jeffrey is no stranger to writing having earned first honourable mention (Kay Parley Prize) in Canadian Stories' creative non-fiction category in 2016. In fact, Jeffrey's writing has appeared in two issues of Calgary Hockey Magazine. One of her articles, "Farewell to Hockey for Now," was a reflection on how she had enjoyed being a "hockey mom" and how "gut-wrenching" it was when her son Alastair stopped playing.

It was this love of hockey culture that spurred Jeffrey on.

Mattie's adventures first found voice around 2014 as a comic strip, with Jeffrey drawing "stick figures." Then it came to life as a graphic novel, once more with stick figures. These configurations

A COMING OF AGE TALE SET IN THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES

were presented more as funny vignettes. Then on the advice of her daughter Imogen that every book needed a plot, Jeffrey started writing a novel. At about that time, she had enrolled in a creative writing class at Mount Royal University.

Jeffrey admits writing a novel was "super challenging" compared to creating the graphic novel. "Someone has likened (writing novels) to digging ditches. To me, I use the analogy (that) you're doing a huge big puzzle, but you're also making a puzzle. It's very hard work, very," she said.

Mattie and the Wolverines is geared toward readers ages nine to 13 years old. Jeffrey said she found few hockey stories aimed at this age group.

But more than that, it's an age group that Jeffrey, who has a degree in child studies (as well as art history) finds is a "delightful, delightful" time of growing up.

"I think that's the age when kids' personalities are starting to come through and it's a fun age. It's a challenging age. I think there's a lot of challenges coming up for young adolescents. The hockey crowd is, of course, a very lively bunch. I guess I thought it would be fun to write a story for kids around that age," she said.

With that in mind, Jeffrey is careful to create characters who break stereotypes that are still too common in today's society. Hallie's friend Megan is a hockey player, who after playing in the boys' league up to the second year of U13 has now joined the girls' league and Hallie's babysitting "gang" has a boy interested in joining. Mattie's best friend Garrett is First Nations and Mattie's tormentor Kevin plays hockey, but his passion lies in cooking.

"Why I wrote this age (is that) I think that kids are really finding themselves, their self-expression, how to bolster their self-esteem. They're starting to think of goals and things," said Jeffrey. "I tried to break those stereotypes a little bit and just allow for the fact that, come on, we all have interests and whatever they are that's fine."

Perhaps the most delightful aspect of Mattie and the Wolverines is the easy way in which Jeffrey weaves hockey slang into the everyday conversations of Mattie and his friends. In fact, the novel includes a glossary for hockey terms. Jeffrey got help with that from her son and his friend, who also served as her technical advisor.

"If anybody had ever told me I would have written a hockey book years ago, I would have thought it not likely," said Jeffrey but admits that she plans to write a sequel. That will be, no doubt, welcome news to those who read the novel as it ends on two cliffhangers: how do the Wolverines do over the course of the season and does the club manage to succeed without having to join the Bashers?

Jeffrey may self-publish the sequel, too. She approached a handful of traditional publishers for Mattie and the Wolverines and had been hopeful that talks with Coteau Publishers would have been successful. However, shortly after those talks began, Coteau stopped publishing.

Mattie and the Wolverines is available through the online Friesen bookstore and also for online order (and perhaps in select stores) through Chapters/Indigo, Amazon, and Barnes & Noble.



Interested readers can also check out Jeffrey at jjeffreywriter.com and on Instagram at [_jennifer_robin](https://www.instagram.com/_jennifer_robin).

ARENA LOCATOR MAP



ADDRESSES

1. Akinsdale & Kinex Arenas
(St. Albert)
66 Hebert Road, St Albert

2. Bill Hunter Arena
9200 - 163rd Street

3. Broadmoor Arena
(Sherwood Park)
2100 Oak Street, Sherwood Park

4. Callingwood Arena
17650 - 69th Avenue

5. Canadian Athletic Club Arena
14645 - 142nd Street

6. Castle Downs Arena
6A3, 11520 - 153 Avenue

7. Clare Drake Arena
87th Avenue & 115th Street

8. Clareview Arena
3804 - 139th Avenue

9. Confederation Arena
11204 - 43rd Avenue

10. Coronation Arena
13500 - 112th Avenue

11. Crestwood Arena
9940 - 147th Street

12. Donnan Arena
9105 - 80th Avenue

13. George S. Hughes Arena
10525 - 72nd Avenue

14. Glengarry Arena
13340 - 85th Street

15. Grand Trunk Arena
13025 - 112th Street

16. Kenilworth Arena
8313 - 68A Street

17. Kinsmen Twin Arena
1979 - 111th Street

18. Knights of Columbus
Sport Complex
13160 - 137th Avenue

19. Londonderry Arena
14520 - 66th Street

20. Michael Cameron Arena
10404 - 56th Street

21. Millennium Place
(Sherwood Park)
2000 Premier Way, Sherwood Park

22. Mill Woods Rec. Centre
7207 - 28th Avenue

23. NAIT Arena
11762 - 106th Street

24. Oliver Arena
10335 - 119th Street

25. Russ Barnes Arena
6725 - 121st Avenue

26. Servus Credit Union Place
400 Campbell Road, St Albert

27. Terwillegar Rec. Centre
Subway Arena
2051 Leger Road

28. The Meadows Community
Rec. Centre
2704 - 17th Street

29. Tipton Arena
10828 - 80th Avenue

30. Westwood Arena
12040 - 97 Street

31. Downtown Community
Arena
(Rogers Place)
10330 - 105th Avenue

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A full-page photograph of NHL referee Wes McCauley. He is wearing a black and white striped NHL referee jersey with orange accents on the sleeves, a black NHL helmet with a clear face shield, and black pants. He is looking off to the side with a focused expression. The background is a blurred hockey rink with spectators.

WES MCCAULEY

NHL'S TOP-RATED REFEREE

By Rob Suggitt

Photos courtesy of Andy Devlin
Edmonton Oilers Hockey Club

BEING A HOCKEY OFFICIAL IS
THE ONLY JOB IN THE WORLD
WHERE YOU'RE EXPECTED TO BE
PERFECT YOUR FIRST DAY ON THE
JOB, AND IMPROVE FROM THERE

When you're an NHL player, you want to keep playing past the regular season, and it's no different for NHL officials. The ultimate goal is to reach the Stanley Cup Finals, and only the two best teams make it every year, and only the four highest rated referees are assigned games in the Cup finals.

Wes McCauley has proven himself to be one of the top officials in the NHL, making it to the Stanley Cup Finals seven of the last eight seasons. (He was ready to do the finals in 2019, but a hamstring injury kept him out.)

McCauley's dream growing up was to make it to the NHL as a player. Drafted by the Detroit Red Wings in 1990 (6 positions ahead of Peter Bondra), McCauley played a lot of hockey in the minor leagues (Las Vegas, Knoxville, Muskegon, Fort Wayne), but never got the call up to the NHL.

"Coming up, I always thought I was going to be a player. I played college hockey for Michigan State, and played 3 or 4 seasons in the minors. I was playing in Fort Wayne late in my pro career, and the coach there, Dave Farrish (former NHL player) wanted to chat with me after a pair of weekend games. I was feeling pretty good, because I thought I played well, so I'm meeting with Dave, and he says 'there were a lot of scouts in the stands, and your name got brought up.' So I'm feeling really good (thinking maybe this is my call-up to play in the NHL.) Dave continued 'yeah - we were thinking with the NHL going with two referees, we're looking at certain ex-players, and with your bloodlines, we think you'd make a real good referee.' So here I was thinking that the scouts were talking about me going up, and as it turned out, I was going to be sent down to the United League."

As for "bloodlines," McCauley's dad John McCauley was an NHL referee from 1966 - 1981, a career which was stopped short due to an eye injury he sustained from an assault by a crazed hockey fan after a game between the NHL All-Stars and the Soviet Union in 1979. He tried working for a few years afterwards, but due to blurred vision, he had to give it up. Thereafter, the elder McCauley went on to become the Director of Officiating for the NHL, until his untimely death in 1989. He was only 44 years of age, and Wes was just 17 years old.

Did you ever get to see your dad (John McCauley) work?

"Oh yeah - we used to go to all the games he worked. I probably saw him work up until I was around 7 years old. I remember a game in Buffalo when they were playing the Leafs - these teams had a pretty good rivalry. I remember a very angry Tiger Williams knocking on the door, and asking why John threw him out of the game. John responded 'I got the kid here,' and looking over to where I was sitting, Tiger calmly responded 'sorry John,' letting the issue go, then proceeded to take me over to the Leafs dressing room to meet the Leaf players."

A lot of people remember my dad, and have very nice things to say about him. For a man who's been gone over 30 years, it's pretty amazing to hear his name being brought up still. The biggest thing I learned from my dad was that he was happy for other people's success. That's a trait that I try to follow, and emulate. If you're not jealous of other people, you're probably a very content and happy person."

Do you remember your first game?

McCauley states without hesitation "Chicago at Columbus," and recites a number of NHL stars playing in that game: (Brent Seabrook, Duncan Keith, Martin Havlat, Patrick Sharp and Theo Fleury for the Blackhawks, and Rick Nash and Sergei Fedorov for the Blue Jackets.) McCauley adds that "Doug MacLean was coaching Columbus, and Brian Sutter was coaching Chicago."

That was January 20, 2003. Since then, McCauley has gone on to officiate nearly 1,100 regular season games. He reached the 1000 game milestone on December 23, 2018. When you hit this mark, the NHL allows you to pick (with some limitations) the game or city where you officiate this game. McCauley picked Vegas, and a game just before the Christmas break. McCauley ranks it up there as his best experience. "It was unbelievable. I've been fortunate to do some big games, some Stanley Cups, and a few outdoor games. I would put game 1000 as 1A, and my brother (Blaine's) first professional game as 1B as my most memorable games. Both Las Vegas and LA were tremendous to me and my family. It was kinda neat - they did a video presentation before the game, and brought my family onto the ice. It's easy to forget the sacrifices our family makes for us to do what we do. To be recognized out on the ice (for something like this.) (My family) walked through the bench, walking past all these famous players, and to be up close near the players was pretty cool. My kids are all hockey players, and to see their faces when Kopitar and Engelland are coming over (to congratulate me.) To see the smiles on their faces, and the look of awe, it gave them a glimpse of what I do a little bit."



Wes McCauley and Family Celebrating Wes' 1000th game
Photo Provided by the Las Vegas Golden Knights Hockey Club

"Another thing is you get to pick the crew, so over the course of your career, you come up with guys you've worked with a lot, and are good friends. I picked Kevin Pollack, who I worked with in the East Coast League.

He was kinda the senior guy when I was starting out. And Steve Barton and I were (also) in the East Coast League together, so we're pretty good friends. The other linesman was Brian Murphy, who ironically was the last guy on staff who my dad (the late John McCauley) hired."

What's the best part of being an NHL referee?

"On the ice" he answered without hesitation, and with asserted glee. "I know I'm biased, but you're on the ice with the best athletes in the world. It's the next best thing to playing. You're basically playing the game, you gotta kinda play the game a bit but without the stick. You gotta anticipate, you gotta think where they're gonna go, what they're going to do with the puck. You gotta stay out of the way. You have to think the game, almost like a player."

How important is training and fitness?

"I think it's everything: health, diet, fitness. Just like the players, you know if you keep yourself in shape, you're going to be out there, and it's a great living. It really doesn't feel like a job. I get paid to skate around with the best players in the world, travel to these great cities all over North America."

What's your game day routine?

"Most of the guys will meet for breakfast, have a bit of a workout. Fitness is so important, and that's for the better. It's better for the league. If you compare us to other officials in other sports – let's say the optimal level of experience is 15 years or 16 years, because of the physical demands of our sport, we may not keep them as long. But the better we can stay in shape, you're going to keep that experienced official for longer."

How important is communication?

"We have to (be good at communicating) with the players and coaches. I think it's very important. A big part of our job is to keep the game fair and safe. They want to win, and they will do whatever it takes. But they look at us (partly) as the four guys who are in their way of winning. You have to manage this part carefully, and I think communication is a big part of it. I'm a believer that we have to work together, and get through the game together. We're all going to make mistakes, but the key is that when you make a mistake, you don't let it blow up on you."



“ WE HAVE TO (BE GOOD AT COMMUNICATING) WITH THE PLAYERS AND COACHES. I THINK IT'S VERY IMPORTANT. A BIG PART OF OUR JOB IS TO KEEP THE GAME FAIR AND SAFE. THEY WANT TO WIN, AND THEY WILL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES. ”

Refs do 73 games a season, and usually see all 31 teams every season, and all 31 rinks. It's rare for an NHL referee to do back to back games with the same team in the regular season, just so there's not too much familiarity between teams and officials. Playoff assignments are based on merit, and only 20 out of the 33 full-time NHL referees get assignments for the playoffs. (And the top 20 out of 33 full time linesmen.) And from there, the number of referee assignments diminished by round. (12 and 12 in the second round, then 8 and 8, then four and four.)



Only the top four highest rated NHL referees get to officiate the Stanley Cup Finals, something all NHL referees aspire to. There are bonus dollars for every round worked, but it's mostly pride and the thrill of working the most important games of the season that motivates officials to make these cuts.

When asked how it feels to have been selected as one of the final four NHL referees seven of the past 8 seasons, Wes doesn't gloat. "It's pretty humbling, and overwhelming, it's always a goal. There were a lot of years when I just got in the business when it was just the first round for a number of years, and then one year I got to go to the conference finals, then the next year, I got chosen to do the finals. That was the Boston - Chicago final in 2013, and it was a really good series. McCauley went on to do the 6 out of the next 7 Stanley Cup Finals. Asked how many Cup winning games he's reffed, McCauley thinks it was four – "it's always great to see the Cup awarded. I did the one this year – we always stay around for the handshakes and Cup presentation. We're back in the far corner," he says with a laugh. "Some of the guys acknowledge you, skating over to say a few words or to give you a stick tap, which is a nice sign of respect."

What advice would you give to aspiring young hockey officials?

"Obviously you have to know the rules, how to skate, positioning, your mannerisms. The biggest thing is take care of the things you can control. Officiating sometimes requires a bit of a split personality – sometimes you need to be tough, and sometimes you need to be a bit of a hugger."

At the youth level, the hardest thing is the parents. The youth hockey player has a coach and gets to practice, but there's really no practice for being an official – it's just game experience. It's hard, but they have to have a lot of self-evaluation. You have to ask your peers how they would you handle or certain situation. Part of it is that you might not know you made a mistake – you may not have a mentor or supervisor at every one of your games."

The best advice I got early on, and because there was no video replay, was to get the goals (or non-goals) called right. Everyone wants to see goals. Get yourself in position behind the goal line to make the right call. If I'm waiving it off at the top of the circle, I'm probably catching the wrath of the players or coaches. I was always told early in my career "get to the line, get to the net."

How many more years will you be doing this?

"How about until they cut the skates off me. (Laughs.) It's going to be awhile. Maybe the goal should be 60? We've never had an official get into his 60's."

WES MCCAULEY

ON BEING IN THE “BUBBLE”

The NHL announced the suspension of the NHL regular season on March 12th. McCauley was in Toronto, getting ready for the Leafs-Predators game the next day when he heard the news. “We received all the media reports that the season was going on pause. If you’re on the road, go home. If you were at home, stay home.” Weeks passed and the Coronavirus cases (and deaths) grew, and eventually the regular season was cancelled. McCauley (and other officials) stayed prepared.

“In the back of my head, I always thought there was going to be playoffs. As officials, we never stopped. We would have virtual meetings, do game analysis, and do zoom workouts. As an officiating crew, we kinda kept rolling, ready to go anytime. ”

Did it matter what bubble cities were chosen?

“Nope. (Quick answer.) I just couldn’t wait to go back. There’s no real bad city in the NHL. You’re playing in the NHL.”

Did you have cabin fever? How did you keep yourself busy?

When we first got there we had to quarantine for two weeks. We were doing zoom workouts in our rooms, and we would have our sessions with the league, like we would do during the regular season. There was a lot of hockey. I’m a bit of a hockey junkie, so games I didn’t work, I would go watch these games. There were games at noon, 4 or 8 o’clock in the early rounds, so I could catch games I wasn’t working every day for the first 2-3 weeks. There was a suite provided for us (the officials), so we could go watch the games from there, and watch the games as fans. We don’t usually get to do that during the season. For me personally, I could see other guys work, what your peers do, what you can learn. See how teams play, giving you a little more game intelligence. How teams break out, what they do on the power play, watching how the officials stay out of the way, your position on the ice.” (Which is way easier when you observe the game from above.)

“We would play hockey in the morning together. We hung out a lot, and did a lot together as a group (of officials). I know both groups did – Toronto and Edmonton. We had access to the rinks which normally we wouldn’t, due to our travels. It was good for everyone, because we were able to support each other.”



What was it like with no fans in the building?

“No different for me. And you know, we really didn’t think there was going to be.

With the music blaring – I gotta tell when that puck dropped, it was “let’s go” – it was the same intensity as always. You have to give the guys credit – they were completely focussed. Obviously we’re biased, but they are the best athletes in the world for a reason. They wanted to win the Stanley Cup. And all 24 teams had the opportunity to win the Stanley Cup.”

So fans or no fans – no different?

“Someone once said you basically worry about what’s inside the glass. So I didn’t really feel, at ice level, that it was any different. And throughout the playoffs, from the very start, all the way until the end.”

Without the fan noise, did you hear more chirping from the bench?

“Me personally, no. But I did hear more communication from the players on the ice, ‘here, open, look out,’ etc. Without the ambient fan noise, you really noticed, wow – these guys talk to each other a lot on the ice.”

You were in the Toronto “bubble” for the first three rounds (including the play-in round), then moved to Edmonton for the Conference and Stanley Cup finals. Any difference between the two “bubbles”?

“Well, with the Community Arena in Edmonton it was more convenient for the many times we practiced, or our shinny games. In Toronto, we would get on a bus and head over to the practice facility that the teams used. In Edmonton, we could just walk to the arena. We could leave our equipment at the arena, which was pretty convenient. Obviously, when we were at Hotel “X” in Toronto, we would take a bus to the Scotiabank Arena, but in Edmonton, everything was right there. We could just walk.”

Did you run into players and team personnel?

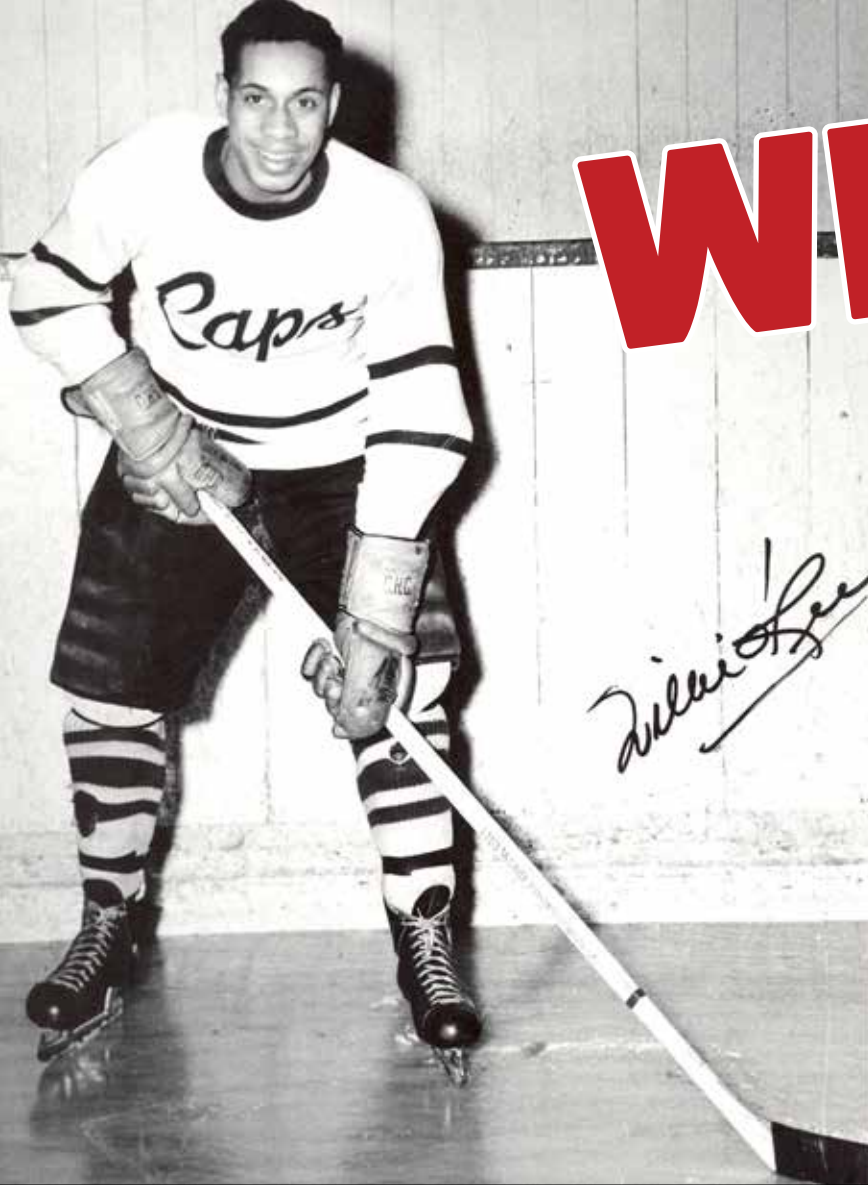
“Oh yeah – all the time. Everyone who was associated with (the playoffs) was there, whether it was broadcasters, events and production, health and safety, officials, off-ice officials, we were all under the same bubble.”

Are you optimistic there will be hockey early in 2021?

“I hope so. I think so. The league, everyone involved, we all served the game to make the playoffs happen. And because of that, we were able to stay safe, present a great event, and we got to see some phenomenal hockey, and see the Stanley Cup presented. I think we can do it again.”

PERSONAL BIO

Wes McCauley (48 years old) lives in South Portland, Maine, with his wife Bethany, and three children, Riley (19), Emma (17), and Maggie (12). Riley is a Freshman at the University of Arizona, and Emma is in Grade 11, attending a prep school, with hopes of attaining a hockey scholarship. His youngest, Maggie (12) is in grade 7. Wes McCauley recently completed his Masters at the end of 2019, from Michigan State, sports coaching and leadership.



WILLIE O'REE

Sports Hall of Famer Continues to Break Racial Barriers

By Jeremy Freeborn

Willie O'Ree may not have been a household hockey name when he played in the National Hockey League with the Boston Bruins in 1958, and again from 1960-61, but his impact has still been great. When he became the first black player to play in the NHL on Jan. 18, 1958, at the Montreal Forum in a 3-0 Bruins win over the Canadiens, the story got zero media attention from the Boston Globe. Little did he or anybody else know that O'Ree would eventually become the NHL's diversity ambassador.

In May 2020, O'Ree was inducted into Canada's Sports Hall of Fame in Calgary for his remarkable achievements off the ice. This induction is just one more way his incredible reach has been recognized. O'Ree was inducted into the New Brunswick Sports Hall of Fame in his birthplace of Fredericton in 1984 and the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto in 2018. He also received the Lester Patrick Trophy in 2003 (outstanding contribution to hockey in the United States), Order of New Brunswick in 2005, and the Order of Canada in 2008. Willie O'Ree Place can also be found in O'Ree's hometown of Fredericton.

In 2018, the Willie O'Ree Community Hero Award was created by the NHL. The award is presented annually to the person "who has worked to make a positive impact on his or her community, culture or society to make people better through hockey." The first recipient of the award was Humboldt Broncos' coach Darcy Haugan of Peace River, Alberta, who died on April 6, 2018, in the Broncos' bus crash near Armley, Saskatchewan. That crash claimed 16 lives.

O'Ree's time in the NHL lasted only 45 games, where he scored four goals and 10 assists for 14 points. He also had one multi-point game (Dec. 22, 1960, with two assists in a 4-2 Bruins win over the Chicago Black Hawks) and two career game winning goals for the Bruins (Jan. 1, 1961, in a 3-2 win over the Canadiens and Jan. 19, 1961, in a 4-2 win over the Detroit Red Wings).

Also as a player, he spent three seasons in the Quebec Hockey League (Quebec Aces from 1956-59), two seasons in the American Hockey League (Springfield Indians in 1957-58 and the New Haven Nighthawks in 1972-73), three seasons in the Eastern Professional Hockey League (Kingston Frontenacs in 1959-60, and Hull-Ottawa Canadiens from 1960-1962), 13 seasons in the Western Hockey League (Los Angeles Blades from 1961-67 and San Diego Gulls from 1967-74), and one season in the Pacific Hockey League (San Diego Sharks from 1978-79). He also played one season with the independent team, the San Diego Sharks in 1977-78.

Since he began serving as the NHL's diversity ambassador in 1998, O'Ree has traveled throughout North America to run hockey programs for minority youth who may not have the opportunity to otherwise play hockey, and to encourage the qualities of inclusion, dedication and confidence.

After receiving the induction into Canada's Sports Hall of Fame, O'Ree graciously spoke to Hockey Calgary Magazine. At 84 years old, he says he is honoured to be inducted and to represent hockey in Canada's premier museum for all sports.

"I was overwhelmed," said O'Ree, in an exclusive interview from his home in southern California. "It is so much appreciated. Everything that has been going on in the last couple of years has just been awesome for me. I've had so many great things happen and I feel very blessed at this time."

O'Ree is pleased with how the 'Hockey is for Everyone' program has been going. In 1998, the program was initially known as the NHL Diversity Program. It was rebranded in 2017. Over the last 22 years, the programs have taught 120,000 children how to play hockey.

"My job was to travel around to these different programs and do on-ice and off-ice clinics," said O'Ree. "I tried to introduce more boys and girls to the game. It's been keeping me quite busy over the years."

He spoke at elementary, junior and senior high schools, visited boys and girls clubs, along with YMCAs and juvenile detention facilities. Today, he says, there are not only more hockey players playing than ever before and more access to televised professional hockey, but more interest in the sport from boys and girls which has all combined to lead to more rinks being built.

O'Ree discusses why the program was initially put in place.

"I think it was important because Commissioner (Gary) Bettman knew that there were kids who wanted to get involved with hockey, and there were not that many programs. When I started, there were five programs, and there are now 36. I am very happy to reach out and touch numerous boys and girls while working for the NHL."

O'Ree not only broke the colour barrier when it came to hockey, but the disabled barrier as well. While playing for the Kitchener Canucks of the Ontario Hockey Association, he lost 95 per cent of the vision in his right eye after being hit by the puck. In addition to an eye injury, he broke his nose and cheekbone. The only person he told about his eye injury at the time was his sister.

O'Ree could not tell anyone in the NHL about his vision problems because at the time, the NHL forbid players who were blind from playing. As a left winger, O'Ree found the position challenging because he had to turn his head over his right shoulder to see the puck. While with the Los Angeles Blades in 1964-65, O'Ree moved from left wing to right wing even though he had a left-handed shot. The change was made because the Blades had a lot of players who played left wing, and not a lot who played right wing. The change helped O'Ree prolong his hockey career for 13 more years with instant offensive results as he had three consecutive seasons of 30+ goals.

When asked if he thinks if he could have played longer in the NHL if he moved over to right wing earlier, O'Ree is just grateful for the chance to play professional hockey for 21 years.

While playing the game, O'Ree experienced "racism, prejudice, bigotry and ignorance." They still exist today, he says. In his role, he not only helps players, but parents of players deal with the discrimination that occurs in all levels of minor hockey.

O'Ree is pleased that the NHL has no tolerance for racism in arenas. Even fans who deliver a racial slur today are immediately ejected.

While playing professional hockey, O'Ree learned about civil rights from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He quotes King from his famous speech in 1963, and states that it is important that all people "will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character."

O'Ree always knew to play professional hockey he had to be better than the "white players." He put emphasis on his work ethic throughout his career.

Prior to playing in the NHL, he remembers a fantastic experience with the Quebec Aces during the 1956-57 season. That year he won the Edinburgh trophy, which was presented at the time to the winner from a best-of-nine series between the Quebec Hockey League champion and the Western Hockey League champion. The Aces defeated the Brandon Regals five games to one.

With the Aces, O'Ree was thrilled to be coached by Punch Imlach, but never told the future Toronto Maple Leafs' Hall of Fame coach and general manager that he was blind in one eye. He was thrilled that Imlach treated him fairly and gave him an opportunity. That season he had 22 goals and 12 assists for 34 points in 68 games.

Imlach believed that O'Ree could play in the NHL and break the colour-barrier for hockey. "He was a great human being," recalled O'Ree.

O'Ree noticed a huge discrepancy playing professional hockey in Canada versus the United States. "There was very little racism in Canada. When I went to the United States, I was exposed to it quite a bit," he said.

Throughout his life, O'Ree was also blessed to meet the great baseball player Jackie Robinson on two separate occasions. When he was 14, he played baseball in his hometown of Fredericton. By winning the championship, O'Ree's team won a trip to New York. There, he and his teammates got to see the Empire State building and a Brooklyn Dodgers game at Ebbets Field.

After the game, O'Ree shook Robinson's hand down in the dugout. He told Robinson he not only played baseball, but hockey, too. Robinson was surprised that black people played hockey. In closing their conversation, Robinson told O'Ree "work hard. There is no substitute for hard work."

Then in 1962 (13 years later), while O'Ree was playing for the LA Blades, the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People had a luncheon for Robinson at a hotel in Beverly Hills. O'Ree attended the event with his teammates. After the luncheon, O'Ree spoke again with Robinson, and was amazed to find out that the first ballot baseball Hall of Famer remembered their conversation in Brooklyn.

In analyzing the game today, O'Ree would like to see more severe suspensions to players who commit high sticking and butt-ending infractions. He knows fighting is part of the game, but would like to see those who commit cheap shots get penalized more severely.

In looking back at all of the awards of recognition he has received in recent years, he said, "There are so many wonderful things that have happened to me over the years. I never thought that some of the awards I received were possible. All I wanted to do was to play hockey and have the opportunity to play. I was obsessed with playing the sport."

O'Ree said he hopes to make hockey better "by educating people. Racism is a big part of hockey. It is never going to stop overnight. We were put on this earth to live, raise families and work hard. There are some people who have this thing in their mind that black people are a second part. We are all equal in God's way. When we cut ourselves, we all bleed red. I say to people to keep working hard and life is good. Believe in yourself, and everything else has a way of working out."

The messages that O'Ree continues to give are extremely valuable and priceless. There is no doubt that the world and the hockey community are better places with O'Ree leading the way.

SPOTLIGHT

ON AN OFFICIAL

KASI JAIN

We met up with 17-year-old Kasi Jain as he was getting ready to officiate a game in early December. Kasi began officiating minor hockey when he was 13-years-old and is in his fifth season as a minor hockey official. Kasi is in grade 12 and attends Strathcona High School. He plans to get his Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology and has already been accepted in the program at the University of Alberta for next year.

Kasi is also a top level baseball player, who plays Midget AAA for the Edmonton Trappers. Most recently he represented Canada at the Senior League Baseball World Series. Our first question to Kasi was to tell us about his experience at this event.

What special memories do you have from competing at the 2018 Senior League Baseball World Series?

My team got the fantastic opportunity to host nationals that year, which we ended up winning. This qualified us for the SLBWS in Easley, South Carolina. The whole experience was surreal and something that I will never forget. Just being able to represent Canada at such a big tournament like that was so amazing and probably the best part about it all. The games were also really close and intense. One of the games went 11 innings, and even though we ended up losing 2-1, it was definitely one of the most fun games I've ever played in.

What position do you play in baseball?

During the World Series I played centre field for the whole tournament. However, I also catch and pitch a little bit too. (I throw right and hit left.)

Have you ever umped?

I spent one summer as an ump, but I much prefer reffing hockey. One of the things I enjoy most about reffing hockey is that I am able to skate around and be active during the games, which is not really an aspect of umping baseball. Additionally, it was very difficult for me to find time to ump, especially when my team was practicing or playing every day of the week.

Switching over to hockey, I understand you still play hockey. What team do you play for and what position?

I play for Southwest Zone Oil Kings, and I am a centre.

Did you ever play in Edmonton Minor Hockey Week, and if so, any special memories?

I played in Minor Hockey Week every year until the end of my second year of peewee. I really like the overtime in Minor Hockey Week, because after each period that passes, it gets a little bit more intense. I loved it as a player, but even as an official, being on the ice for those high pressure situations, is a blast.



What made you want to become a hockey official?

Well for one, I knew reffing would be a fantastic part-time job with super flexible hours, so it was nice to earn a little bit of money. I also stopped playing hockey for a few years, but I still wanted to be on the ice and involved in the game and reffing provided a great opportunity to do both.

What level of hockey did you officiate last season?

Last year I reffed high tiers of peewee and some low tiers of bantam, as well as a few atom and novice games. I also worked as a linesman for some peewee and bantam games.

Did you officiate games this past Minor Hockey Week? If so, what makes you volunteer your time as an official for Minor Hockey Week?

Yes, I ref Minor Hockey Week games every year. The games just have a different atmosphere than regular games and you can tell as soon as you step on the ice. This makes it really enjoyable to officiate, as almost every game is an elimination game, so teams are leaving it all out there every game. I was able to ref a final last year, which was a really cool experience, and something I hope to do this year as well.

Any special memories from Minor Hockey Week?

My big highlights were definitely winning Minor Hockey Week. In my second year of novice and my second year of atom my team won, which was really cool. I just remember the whole tournament as being a lot of fun.

What do you enjoy most about officiating hockey games?

I really like being on the ice and just being able to skate around. The high pressure games are definitely the most fun to do and I really enjoy reffing tough hockey games. They put me a little bit outside of my comfort zone and I have to stay focused the entire game. As much as officiating is a job for me it doesn't really feel like one. I just try to have fun on the ice and that makes the games a lot more enjoyable.

Do you have a role model or mentor who has helped you along the way?

Duncan MacDougall has been a big mentor for me both with reffing and baseball. I met him first at a ref clinic, but I got to know him a little better when he was umpiring baseball games of mine. He umpired most of our games at nationals in 2018. He's always ready to answer questions and, especially at the ref clinics, he is a huge help in passing on knowledge.

What is the toughest part about being a referee?

Handling criticism is definitely one of the tougher aspects of being a referee, but there is also a lot of judgement calls that can be tough to make. Just knowing the rules well helps with that a lot though.

How do you handle criticism on the ice?

When I first started this was probably the most difficult part of being an official, but as I become more experienced as a ref, it has become much easier for me to handle criticism. Obviously the biggest thing is having thick skin, because you are going to get criticized a lot, regardless of if your calls are correct or not, and that's just the nature of the game. The other big thing for me is understanding that I am going to make a lot of mistakes. Treating games as a learning experience has really helped, because there is no way to get better without making mistakes. I am out there to make the game safe and fair, as well as have a little bit of fun, and if I am doing that then I am doing my job.

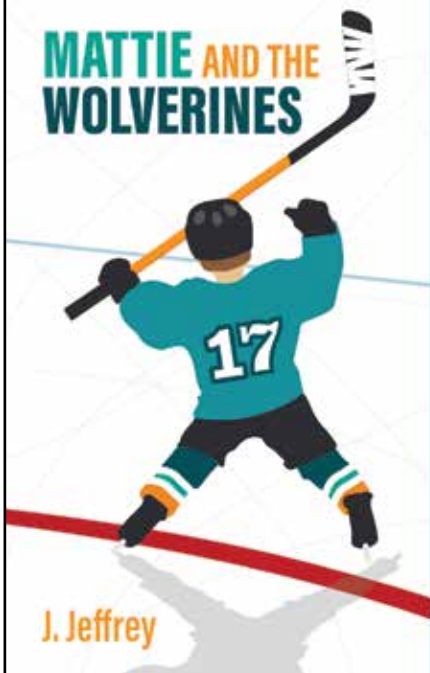
What kind of training were/are you provided?

I have attended the ref clinic in each of the past five years that I have been a referee. Also, just playing hockey when I was younger helped me see how to do things on the ice. The biggest way I learn and get better, though, is on the ice by making mistakes, as well as getting help and constructive criticism from other refs. Whenever I am reffing with a high level official, I try to ask a lot of questions so I can better myself as an official.

What are your plans for the upcoming hockey season?

I am definitely planning on continuing to be an official in the coming seasons and I hope to continue reffing higher and higher levels of hockey. I'd also like to get in the A program at some point.





Mattie wants that new hockey stick, but it turns out having the latest and greatest stick is the least of his problems...

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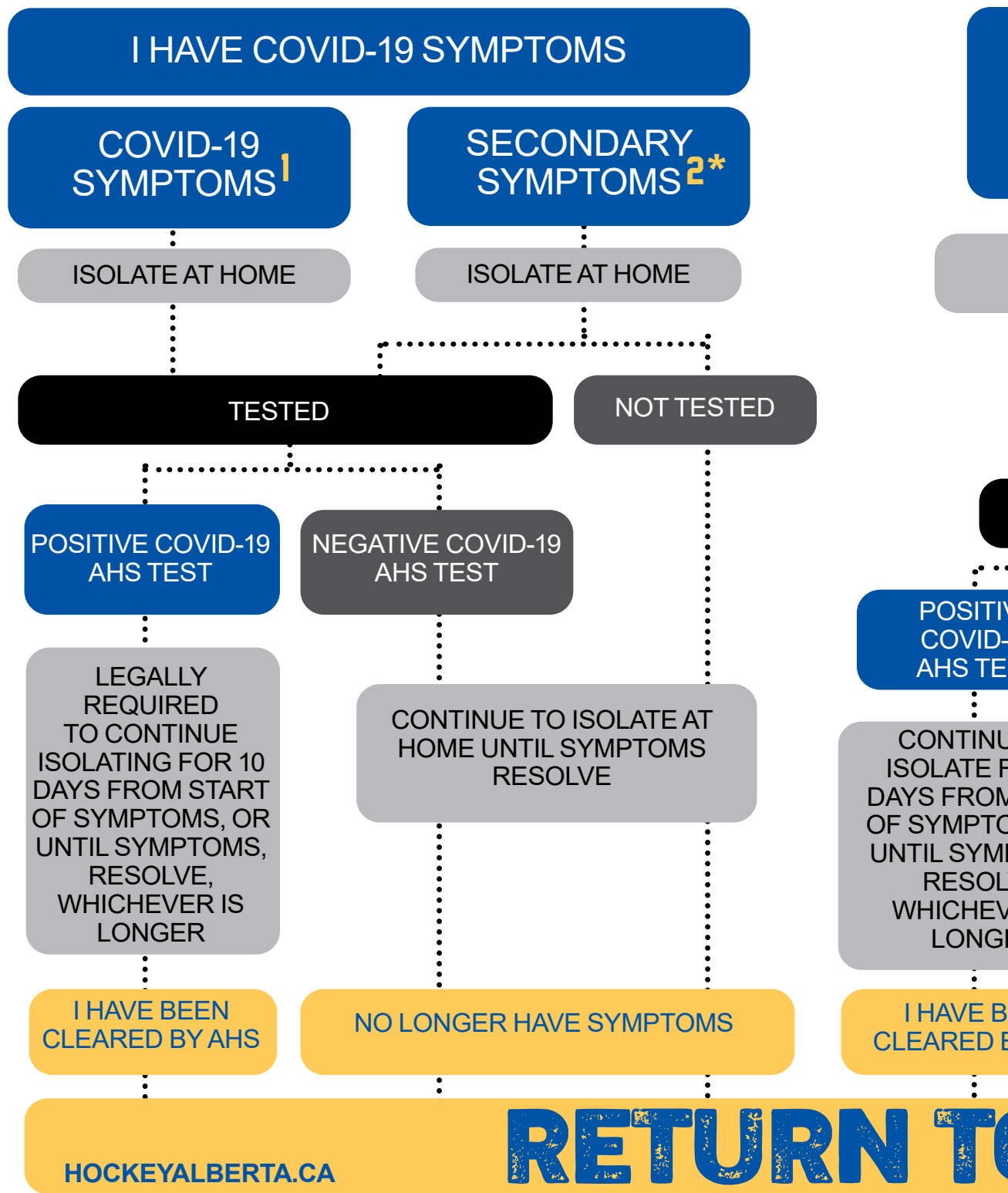
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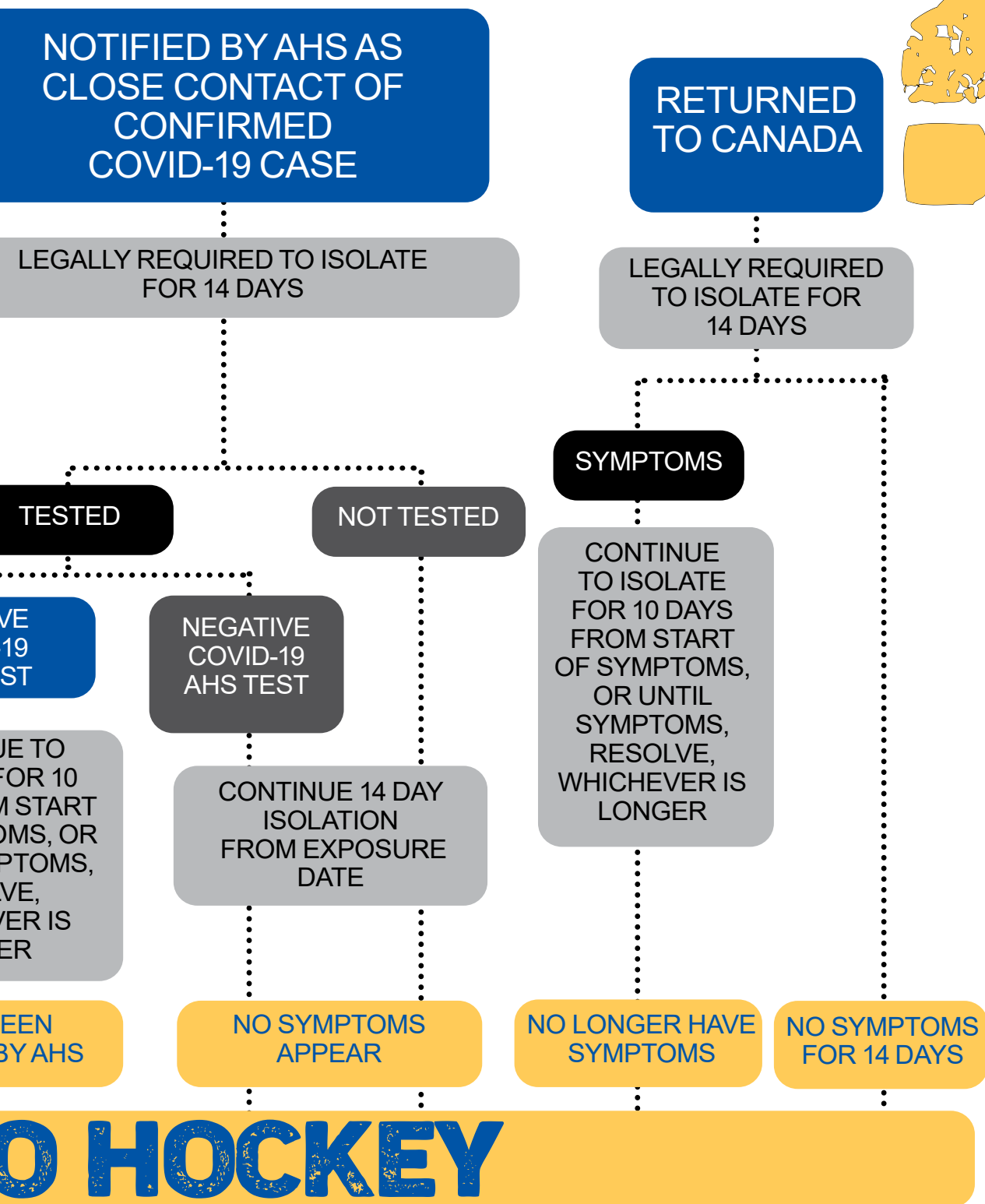




¹ COVID-19 SYMPTOMS
COUGH (NEW OR WORSENING) , FEVER, SHORTNESS OF BREATH, LOSS OF SMELL OR TASTE

² SECONDARY SYMPTOMS
CHILLS, PAINFUL SWALLOWING, SEVERE EXHAUSTION,

PARTICIPATE IN HOCKEY



Symptoms: Coughing, Stuffy Nose, Headaches, Muscle or Joint Aches, Fatigue or Tiredness, Pink Eye, Gastrointestinal Issues, Runny Nose, Sore Throat

Protocol: If you have a COVID-19 symptom, stay home & monitor for 24 hours. If improved and feel well, you may return to hockey. If symptoms worsen or more secondary symptoms follow, follow the flow chart.

MORE THAN A GAME

Candian Artist, Mike Plume, Uses Own Song Lyrics to Create Children's Book About Canada's Favourite Game

By Charley Meadows

Mike Plume has a habit of not planning anything.

Strangely, though, this seems to work in the singer-songwriter's favour. Whether deciding to book a recording session for a new album or penning a kid's book about hockey, Plume somehow makes it work.

"This whole project was 11 years in the making, but when it came together it happened quickly," Plume admits about his first effort as a children's author, *More Than a Game*, which is based on a set of lyrics for the song of the same name he wrote back in 2009. "It was something that happened to be rolling around in my head for a long time and it was time to get it done, whether I had an actual plan or not."

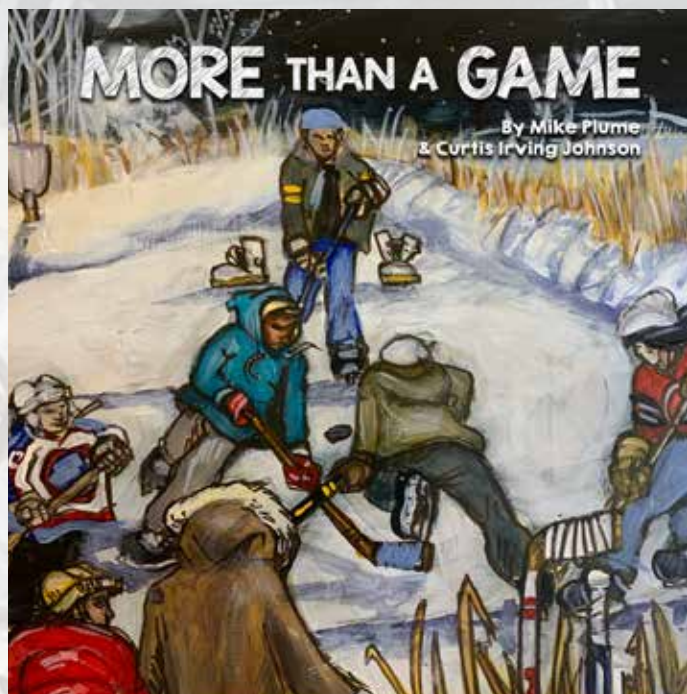
More Than a Game started out as a roots-rock song on his album *8:30 Newfoundland*. More specifically, it was written as an entry for Hockey Night in Canada's 2009 contest for a new theme. A huge fan of the sport, Plume went deep into nostalgia and reverie with his lyrics before discovering that the program was actually looking for an instrumental. Undeterred, he put it on his album; the tune has made its way into almost every Plume concert since.

"It probably didn't even crack the top 1000 in the competition but I don't care," Plume states. "I've never been prouder of a song or a set of lyrics."

He should be. A fond glance back at our shared obsession with the national sport, *More Than a Game's* luminous words (in both song and book) paint a picture of how "the backyard is flooded and lit/So we all throw our sticks in the middle so we can pick teams." Gretzky is referenced, as is Bobby Clark. The outdoor apparel you're wearing against the cold? "That ain't a jersey, it's a sweater/Man, there's nothing better, throw one on and start reliving all your dreams/Someone was always Bobby Orr/Someone always said "He shoots He scores."

As Plume is quick to point out, it's something that any Canadian boy or girl can relate to, as well as a large portion of parents. Speaking of painting a picture, Plume enlisted the help of friend and fellow hockey enthusiast Curtis Irving Johnson to provide the actual images for the book. They agreed to do this in a very appropriate venue for a couple of grown up rink rats.

"It was at a Canadian Tire," Plume laughs. "I'd known Curtis for a long time but hadn't seen him for quite awhile. He was there with his kids and we swapped phone numbers. Then we met up at the pub and I told him about my idea. He immediately said that he was in and it went from there."



Known for his series of hockey paintings Johnson was a natural fit for the project, and in the spring of 2019 he got to work. Plume sent along the lyrics and the artist immediately began turning out images to match them every month. Johnson wrapped up his part of the deal in August of this year, and Plume began to consider the next stage, layout. Enter Rob Suggitt.

"Rob's another old friend of mine. I went over to meet him and he offered his publishing services; he helped assemble the book for printing."

The final result is a slim, gorgeous hardcover, Plume's ice rink reminiscences framed beautifully by Johnson's paintings.

Available on Dec. 1 from Plume's Bandcamp, *More Than a Game*, goes for \$30, a steal for anyone wanting to introduce their kids to the beautiful game, or even sink in those evocations of toe frozen nights on the rink themselves.

"It gives me chills every time I sing those lines," Plume admits. "It takes me back every time. The cold skidoo boots, the sticks that we heated on the stove and then curved under the door. Those really were the best of times, weren't they?"

If you are interested in picking up a copy of this book, visit:

mikeplume.bandcamp.com/merch/more-than-a-game-childrens-book-about-hockey



Photo provided by Michael Anderson



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