

EDMONTON *hockey*

FALL 2019

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THE ICE!

JAY BOUWMEESTER

INTEGRAL TO BLUES STANLEY CUP WIN

LOUIE & JAKE DEBRUSK

**A MUTUAL ADMIRATION FOR
EACH OTHER'S GAME**





fun

continues on
the 2nd shift!

The Edmonton Oilers 2nd Shift program
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Edmonton Oilers First Shift.

It provides kids and parents
with more exposure to the sport through
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and learning sessions to encourage
continued participation in the sport.

Edmonton Oilers Alumni, Fernando Pisani
and Jason Chimera will be leading
the program and teaching the
next generation of hockey players,
with the support of
Hockey Edmonton instructors.



FALL SESSION NOV. 10 - DEC. 15

Register Now At EdmontonOilers.com/youthhockey

2nd Shift is a Continue to Play program and requires participants to have completed a Learn to Play program prior to registering. To be eligible for Edmonton Oilers 2nd Shift participants cannot have been previously enrolled in minor hockey.

What's INSIDE

**5. MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
OF HOCKEY EDMONTON**

**7. MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER
OF THE HOCKEY MAGAZINE**

**8. MALE MIDGET AAA
EXCITING CHANGES OCCURING
IN EDMONTON**

**10. EDMONTON OILERS
2ND SHIFT PROGRAM**

**13. FEATURED ON THE COVER
NICOLAS GRMEK**

**14. LOUIE & JAKE DEBRUSK
FATHER & SON - A MUTUAL
ADMIRATION FOR EACH
OTHER'S GAME**

**18. EDMONTON ARENA
LOCATOR MAP**

**20. HOCKEY EDMONTON
SUBWAY PARTNERSHIP**

21. THE REF COST US THE GAME

**23. JAY BOUWMEESTER
INTEGRAL TO BLUE'S STANLEY
CUP VICTORY IN JUNE, 2019**

**26. BOSTON PIZZA RON BRODEUR
SCHOLARSHIP AWARD**

**30. HOCKEY NIGHT IN CANADA
IN CREE**

**32. SPOTLIGHT ON AN OFFICIAL
BRETT ROBBINS**

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

We believe every leader of the sport has the responsibility to inspire stakeholders in an effort to deliver a positive family hockey experience. Hockey participation offers families value beyond making an individual 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.

Today, guided by our common values, we jointly pledge to the following Principles.

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, color, 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 living by these Principles will provide a healthy, balanced and enjoyable experience for all and inspire impactful service beyond the rink.





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Message From Hockey Edmonton

Welcome back! I hope you had a chance to get away with your family and friends to enjoy summer somewhere that was hot and warm.

It's amazing how time speeds by. It feels like just yesterday we were dropping the puck at the ENMAX Hockey Edmonton Championships and going into our annual general meeting where I became president of Hockey Edmonton. Fast forward to now when player evaluations and team selections have ended and we are into our players' first practices, league games, tournaments and team building events.

Before I go forward, we need to give special thanks to some very dedicated volunteers who have stepped down from the Hockey Edmonton executive. A very special thank you goes to Mark Doram, Darcy Wiltse and Barry Bentz. These three gentlemen have given a lot of time and energy over many years in an effort to improve the hockey experience for our athletes and their families. It has been a pleasure working with them and they will be missed.

As we look forward to the upcoming season, we will see some new and exciting changes. Last season's novice program changes will expand to include all players in this category participating in the half-ice model. We will see some changes with the Alberta One Standardized Tiering Model which will allow for smaller sized groupings within the six major tiers. Our Midget AAA hockey program has seen the biggest changes over the last season. We will now have three teams playing instead of four and team formation has moved from club-centralized to a city-wide open tryout and draft system with all the clubs working together. Along with this there is a stronger player development model within the program.

Lastly, I would like to give a special thank you to all the volunteers involved with Hockey Edmonton. Thanks to: presidents of all the clubs, districts, operating areas, their executives and board members, the coaches and all the team staff, volunteers and families. Without the hard work and dedication from all these people we could not make hockey what it is today.

Please remember hockey should be fun for all involved, the players, coaches, referees and everyone in the arena. So, let's go out, play some hockey and have lots of fun!

Yours in Hockey.

Joe Spatafora

President Hockey Edmonton



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Message From The Publisher

This season marks our 18th year of publishing the Hockey Edmonton Magazine, a partnership we enjoy with Hockey Edmonton.

In this issue, we have a great feature on an exciting new program for families new to minor hockey. With support from Hockey Edmonton instructors, the Edmonton Oilers have launched "2nd Shift," which will help bridge the gap for new-to-hockey families.

We also have a great feature on "Hockey Night in Cree," which covers the first NHL game broadcast with Cree play-by-play. Through a partnership with the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) and Rogers Sportsnet, the idea came to fruition earlier this year, with a game between the Montreal Canadiens and the Carolina Hurricanes called in the Cree language.

We have an exclusive interview with a father-son combination: Louie and Jake DeBrusk. Edmonton Oiler fans know Louie from his six years playing with the Oilers, but hockey fans all over are now starting to see how good Louie is as a colour commentator and hockey analyst with Rogers Sportsnet.

Jake DeBrusk grew up playing minor hockey in Edmonton, playing for the Southside Athletic Club (bantam), then the SSAC Bulldogs in minor midget, and the SSAC Athletics in midget, before moving on to play with the Swift Current Broncos and Red Deer Rebels in the WHL. Jake was drafted in the first round (14th overall) by the Boston Bruins in the 2015 NHL entry draft. With two NHL seasons under his belt (including a run at the Cup with the Bruins), Jake is making a name for himself in the pro game.

Another local Edmonton product who has made a name for himself is Jay Bouwmeester. After 15 NHL seasons, Bouwmeester finally got to hoist the Stanley Cup. We met up with Jay this summer, and he shared what it was like to win the Cup. Bouwmeester played his minor hockey in Millwoods up until peewee before joining the Southside Athletic Club for bantam and midget.

Speaking of midget hockey, we have a feature on the Ron Brodeur Boston Pizza Scholarship Award winners: Madeline Elliott and Brett Robbins. (We are also featuring Brett in our "Spotlight on an Official," segment of the magazine.)

The Ron Brodeur Award is handed out annually to midget players who demonstrate outstanding achievement in athletics, academics and community involvement.

With the season now underway, we would like to wish all the participants, from the players to the coaches and managers in minor hockey, a great season!



Sincerely,
Rob Suggitt

Publisher of the
Hockey Edmonton Magazine



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MALE MIDGET AAA

EXCITING CHANGES OCCURRING IN EDMONTON



BY JOEL LENIUS

BACKGROUND:

Since the 2016-17 season the Hockey Alberta Male Alberta Development Model (ADM) Committee has been reviewing player registration statistics and team playing records in order to identify potential changes needed in order to maintain a competitive balance within each of the three categories of elite hockey under the Male Alberta Development Model. Initially the focus was on Southern Alberta, where the committee identified that some draw zones had access to significantly smaller numbers of registered players than others. As a way to improve the possibility of a competitive balance within this model, the Male ADM Committee made changes effective for the 2017-18 hockey season.

Through 2017-18, the Male ADM Committee directed its attention to the draw zones located in Central and Northern Alberta and committed to continue to review the entire model across the province believing that completing regular evaluations are a necessary feature.

During 2017-18 the committee analyzed the registration statistics of each elite draw zone area by the number of eligible players per team. For the Male ADM Committee to deliver on its mandate of providing opportunities for competitive balance within this model, the committee determined that there had to be changes made to the Edmonton draw zone.

As a result of their findings, considering the facts and statistics, the Male ADM Committee determined that the following changes would be made and implemented in the 2019-2020 season:

1. The Edmonton draw zone would be reduced from four (4) Male Midget AAA teams to three (3).
2. Hockey Edmonton must develop an appropriate feeder system to support the Male Midget AAA programs, in line with the other elite draw zones across Alberta. This may require adjustments to numbers of teams at other levels to fit the feeder system.

3. Hockey Edmonton must develop an improved internal boundary system such that the registered number of players are relatively balanced to help ensure that the organizations in Hockey Edmonton are created in a way to achieve competitive balance.

The ADM Committee believed that this change would align the Edmonton draw zone with the rest of the province and provide an opportunity for Hockey Edmonton to improve upon its AAA hockey program, developing players within the Edmonton draw zone.

IMPLEMENTATION:

A significant amount of work has been executed by Hockey Edmonton and the athletic clubs in order to implement the mandated changes by the Male ADM Committee. The Elite Hockey Management Committee (EHMC) was formed to support the following initiatives:

- The mandate of the Hockey Alberta Male ADM Committee will be met and a unique hockey delivery model, made in Edmonton for Edmonton athletes and coaches, will evolve. The Hockey Edmonton Male Midget AAA High-Performance Hockey Program model will be developed which all athletic clubs will implement, ensuring that elite Edmonton athletes, regardless of residential address or hockey club, will have access to the same basic program.
- Operational and cost efficiencies are expected in many areas.
- Competitive parity within Edmonton will increase as will our overall measure of competitiveness, measured over time, within the respective ADM and AA Model leagues.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE HOCKEY PROGRAM:

The Hockey Edmonton Male Midget AAA High-Performance Hockey Program has become the pinnacle of elite hockey in Edmonton. This hockey program is intended to provide male athletes with a revolutionary high-performance development opportunity within the city-wide drafted framework. All three Edmonton Male Midget AAA teams will operate within the same hockey program framework.

Hockey Edmonton will utilize the best coaching staffs in Alberta, the best off-ice instructors, the best skill development instructors, the best mentors, the best mental trainers, and the best medical practitioners, within one high-performance program. Some of the confirmed development personnel include:

- **Physical: Body by Bennett**
- **Medical: HealthPointe, Advantage Sport Medicine & Physiotherapy**
- **Mental: University of Alberta**
- **Technical (Player): Dan Kordic, Stephen Zipp, Scott Smith, Vanessa Hettinger, and Brian Shackel**
- **Technical (Goalie): Ian Gordon, Dave Rathjen, Kurtis Mucha**

In addition to the exceptional development personnel, players will be provided with revolutionary materials, equipment, opportunities, and seminars to further advance their development as a student-athlete. Events within the hockey program will be scheduled with consideration and consistency, permitting the athlete to better rest, prepare, nourish, succeed in academics, and strategize other life activities/commitments.

The Hockey Edmonton Male Midget AAA High-Performance Hockey Program is built around the Hockey Canada/Alberta four pillars of player development: physical, mental, technical and life skills. This hockey program will rival CHL, U Sports, and NCAA programming and, ultimately, will better prepare Edmonton's Midget AAA athletes for a successful lifestyle and career in hockey.



Male Midget AAA High-Performance Hockey Program

PHYSICAL

- Player Nutrition, Hydration, Sleep, Workout Information Sessions.
- (2) Fitness Testing Days.
- (20) Team Workout Sessions (1 per week) – at centralized selected gym.
- (20) Team Agility, Quickness, Plyometrics Sessions (1 per week) – before/after practice at arena.
- (6) Spin Sessions (1 per month) – at centralized selected studio/facility.
- (6) Yoga Sessions (1 per month) – at centralized selected studio/facility.
- Fitness Training App (6 months) – to be utilized to guide players' individual non-team workouts, sleep, rest, hydration, etc.
- Team Trainer (6 months) – full time.
- Hockey Edmonton Medical Process & Return to Play Guidelines.
- Designated Medical Staff, and Designated Physiotherapy/Rehab Staff.

MENTAL

- (4) Mental Development Sessions (September, November, January, February):
 1. Goal Setting & Preparation.
 2. Simulation/Imagery.
 3. Overcoming Adversity.
 4. Focus.

TECHNICAL

- 20 (1-hour) Technical Skill Development Sessions – Players (1 per week).
 - 20 (1-hour) Technical Skill Development Sessions – Goalies (centralized, 1 per week).
- 20 (1-hour) Individual Tactic/Team Tactic/Position Specific Sessions (1 per week).
- 20 (1-hour) Team Play System/Strategy Sessions (1 per week).
 - 10-20 Optional Supplementary Sessions (1 per week) – Maximum.
- 34 Game Regular Season, Playoffs: <http://amhl.ab.ca/index.php>
- (3) Tournaments – Maximum.
- 20 Team Video Review Sessions (1 per week) – Minimum.
- Contract with VidSwap (full player/staff access).
- Live Streamed Games.

LIFE SKILLS

- (1) Team Identity/Vision/Rules Session (September) – executed by Coaching Staff.
- (2) Parent Information Sessions (September and January) – executed by Coaching Staff.
- (3) Individual Player Development/Progress Sessions & Reports (September, December, March) – executed by Coaching Staff.
- (4) Team Building Events (Bowling, Escape Room, Soccer, Volleyball, etc.) (6 months).
 - Continuous on-site Team Building Activities (6 months).
- (2) Community Service events (Coaching, Food Bank, Shelter, etc.) (6 months).
- (1) How to Get Scouted (WHL/NCAA/AIHL) Information Session (October).
- Academic Advisor service available.
 - Team Mentorship Program (Coach & Player).

EXTRAS

- Designated Game Facilities & Practice Facilities (location rotation for City-wide athletes).
- Team Apparel & Team Equipment.
- Travel and bussing agreement in place.
- Team Snap accounts.

Hockey Program logistics / development personnel will continue to be developed and announced throughout the Spring & Summer.



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**GOOD LUCK TO ALL THE PLAYERS IN THE
2019 - 2020 HOCKEY SEASON!**



NEW EDMONTON OILERS 2ND SHIFT PROGRAM BRIDGING THE GAP FOR NEW-TO-HOCKEY FAMILIES

BY AMANDA KEMSLEY
PHOTOS BY ANDY DEVLIN / OEG

HOCKEY IS OUR COUNTRY'S NATIONAL HEARTBEAT. However, for some families, it's too expensive a sport to enroll their children in. As a hockey country, the Edmonton Oilers want everyone to have access to this great sport and stimulate the desire for participation for years to come.

With support from Hockey Edmonton instructors, the Edmonton Oilers have launched 2nd Shift, an introductory program for new-to-hockey families. This program is accessible, affordable and designed to help bridge the gap between learn-to-play programs, such as the successful Oilers First Shift.

2nd Shift provides parents and kids with additional exposure to the sport while ensuring a safe, fun and positive environment. It also aims to help families with equipment requirements and relieve safety concerns parents may have.

Participants in 2nd Shift will learn fundamental skating and hockey skills at their own pace from experienced instructors. Learning this way allows time to build confidence and allows participants to experience the sport at its best. It is also a great opportunity to join the hockey community and learn why hockey is so rewarding both on and off the ice.

“STARTING TO PIQUE KIDS’ INTEREST IN HOCKEY AT A YOUNG AGE HAS SO MANY BENEFITS BEYOND THE GAME, SUCH AS LEARNING TO BE A TEAM PLAYER, BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND INSTILLING A PASSION FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.”

In addition to Hockey Edmonton instructors, participants have the unique opportunity to be taught by Edmonton Oilers Alumni, Fernando Pisani and Jason Chimera. These influential alumni will be leading the program and empowering the next generation of hockey players through on-ice sessions.

“Starting to pique kids’ interest in hockey at a young age has so many benefits beyond the game, such as learning to be a team player, building confidence and instilling a passion for physical activity,” said Pisani.

2nd Shift is open to children between the ages of six and 10 years old, who have never been enrolled in minor hockey in Canada. This is a continue-to-play program and requires participants to have completed a learn-to-play program prior to registering. The registration fee is \$150 per participant and includes:

- SIX ONE-HOUR ON-ICE SESSIONS
- EDMONTON OILERS 2ND SHIFT JERSEY
- AUTOGRAPHED TRADING CARDS SIGNED BY OILERS ALUMNI FERNANDO PISANI AND JASON CHIMERA
- EDMONTON OILERS 2ND SHIFT BAG TAG
- OPPORTUNITY TO MEET EDMONTON OILERS MASCOT HUNTER
- GRADUATION PHOTOS
- A \$100 VOUCHER TOWARDS MINOR HOCKEY REGISTRATION FOR THE 2020 / 2021 SEASON

No equipment? No problem. Participants are welcome to purchase expertly fitted equipment and will receive important information on how to wear equipment properly, the maintenance of equipment and more.

“The Edmonton Oilers are committed to decreasing barriers to grassroots hockey, making the game accessible to everyone who wants to continue improving their skills in a safe and fun environment,” said Patrick Garland, Oilers Entertainment Group Director, Hockey Engagement & Alumni Relations.

2nd Shift also goes beyond the ice as it helps build important character traits such as responsibility, respect and teamwork that provide players with lifelong, transferable skills.

To register or to learn more about 2nd Shift or other programming offered by the Hockey Engagement Department at Oilers Entertainment Group, please visit:

<https://www.nhl.com/oilers/community/2nd-shift>



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Calling All GOLD MEDAL WINNERS

If your child wins or has won a gold medal at the 2019 Quikcard Edmonton Minor Hockey Week, we want to hear from you! Please complete the following questionnaire and send it in by Monday December 2, 2019, and your child could be featured in the next issue of the Official Hockey Edmonton Magazine! Send in completed entries, along with a photo (preferably in a hockey uniform) to: publisher@hockeymagazine.net

Or you can mail in submissions to:
Hockey Edmonton Magazine
10177 - 105 Street
Edmonton, Ab, T5J 1E2



Name: _____ Age: _____

Current Team: _____

Number of Years Played: _____ School Grade: _____

Usual Position: _____

Favourite Hockey Team: _____

Favourite Hockey Player: _____

Who is your Role Model: _____

Other Hobbies / Interests: _____

Favourite Hockey Memory: _____

FEATURED ON THE COVER NICOLAS GRMEK

PHOTOS BY SC PARKER PHOTOGRAPHY

HOW OLD ARE YOU, AND WHAT GRADE ARE YOU IN?

I am six and I am in grade one.

HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU PLAYED HOCKEY?

Three, this will be my third year.

WHAT TEAM DID YOU PLAY FOR LAST SEASON? AND ARE YOU PLAYING FOR THE SAME TEAM THIS SEASON?

For this season I will play for the Beaumont Braves, and for last season I played for them too.

WHAT IS YOUR USUAL PLAYING POSITION?

Mostly skating around to score goals and sometimes defense.

WHO IS YOUR ROLE MODEL?

My Daddy.

WHICH IS YOUR FAVOURITE NHL TEAM?

The Oilers.

WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE NHL PLAYER?

Connor McDavid.

OILERS HOCKEY CAMP

HOW DID YOU ENJOY YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE OILERS HOCKEY CAMP?

It was very, very fun!

WHAT DID YOU LEARN AT THE CAMP?

I learned how to skate faster, learned passing and how to score goals.

DID YOU MEET ANY EDMONTON OILERS PLAYERS AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS YOUR IMPRESSION?

I met Matt Benning and Mark Fistric. They were very cool. I got a picture with them, they signed my jersey and I got to play British Bulldog with them. I also got to meet Hunter the mascot.



FATHER AND SON

A MUTUAL ADMIRATION FOR EACH OTHER'S GAME

..... BY JEREMY FREEBORN

THROUGHOUT HOCKEY HISTORY there has been some fascinating father-son combinations who have gone on to play in the National Hockey League. They include Bobby and Brett Hull; Gordie, Marty and Mark Howe (Gordie actually played with his sons for the Hartford Whalers); Peter and Paul Stastny; Keith, Matthew and Brady Tkachuk; and Tie and Max Domi.

Over the last two seasons, hockey historians have been able to add another father-son duo to this list, and this familial link has an Edmonton connection. Louie DeBrusk played for the Oilers from 1991-97, and his son Jake, who is currently with the Boston Bruins, was born in Edmonton in 1996 while Louie played for the Oilers.

What makes this father-son combination unique, however, is that Louie does not have the opportunity to cheer for his son every night. Louie's current job is a television analyst for the Edmonton Oilers games on Rogers Sportsnet and on Hockey Night in Canada. Throughout the season, Louie is down at ice surface between the benches, and part of his job is to remain impartial. This can be extremely tough when the Bruins are involved.

The DeBrusk father-son duo could be compared the closest to the Domi father-son duo. Like Tie, Louie was known for his toughness. While Max Domi and Jake DeBrusk are known for their grit and determination, but have significantly more offensive skill than their fathers provided. Louie DeBrusk did not have much offensive flair and in 401 career regular season games, he only had 24 goals and 17 assists for 41 points.

However, it was the physical presence and toughness that Louie displayed on a nightly basis that made hockey fans adore him. In his 11 NHL seasons with the Oilers, Tampa Bay Lightning, Phoenix Coyotes and Chicago Blackhawks, Louie had 1,161 penalty minutes, including a career high 205 penalty minutes with the Oilers in 1992-93.



Louie had a great time with the Oilers over six NHL seasons. In his first NHL game with the Oilers in Los Angeles on Oct. 8, 1991, had a fight against Jim Thomson of the Kings.

"My first game was a big deal," recalled Louie, in an interview for Hockey Magazine Edmonton on Aug. 13. "(It was very special) playing against Wayne Gretzky at the old forum."

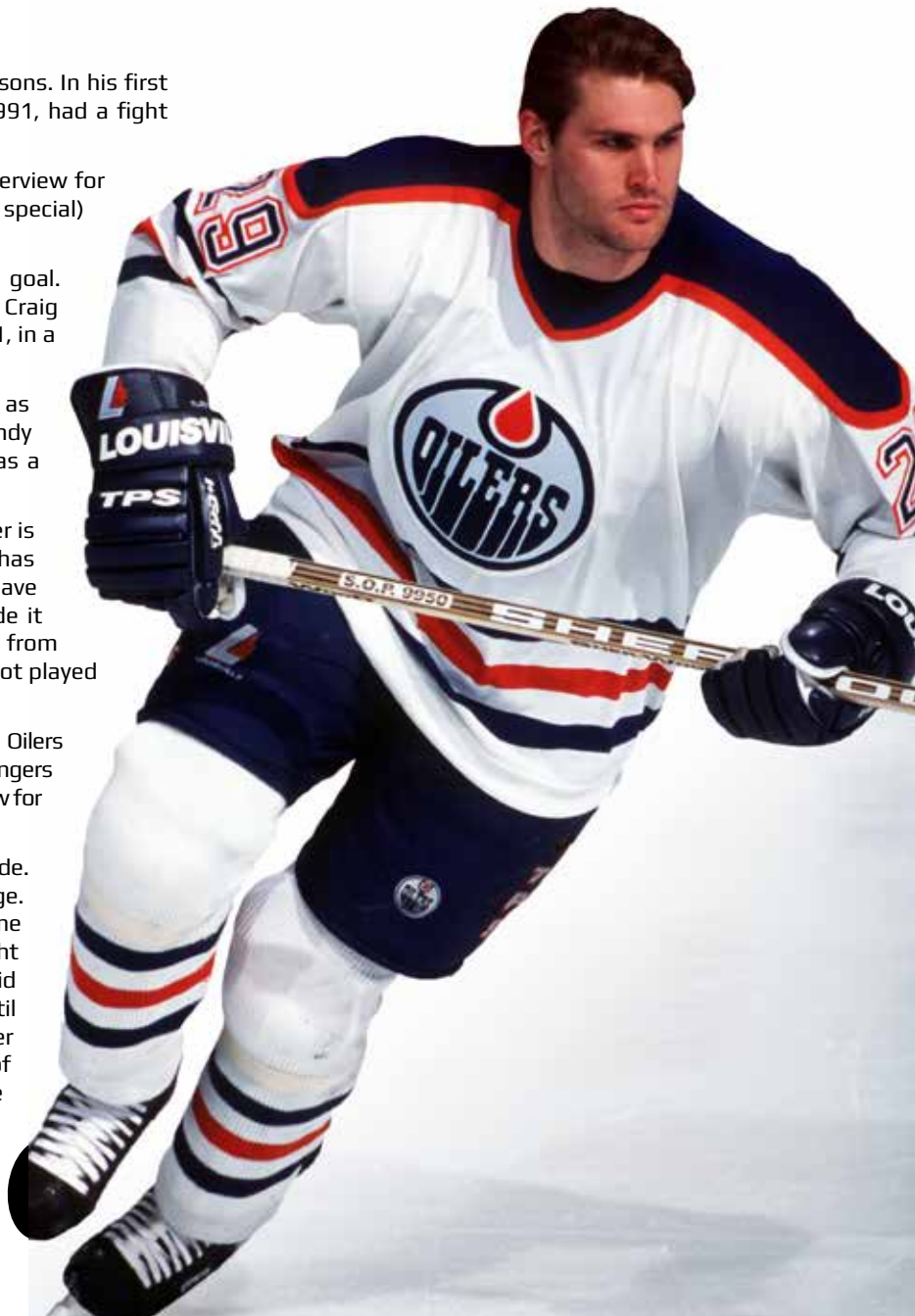
Louie also has great memories about scoring his first goal. It was a game winning goal from Kelly Buchberger and Craig MacTavish at 3:28 of the second period on Oct. 27, 1991, in a 6-3 Oilers win over the Vancouver Canucks.

Off the ice it was an extremely fond time for Louie as well. While with the Oilers, he met his future wife Cindy in Edmonton. The couple has two children, as Jake has a younger sister, Jordyn.

"We consider this home for us," said Louie. "My daughter is going to university in Edmonton. Playing in Edmonton has made me an Edmontonian. Ever since I played here, I have always considered this to be my home and I have made it my home. When people ask me where I am from, I am from Edmonton. I would never had experienced that if I had not played for the Oilers."

Louis was involved in the second most famous trade in Oilers franchise history when he was traded from the New York Rangers to the Oilers with Bernie Nicholls, Steven Rice and David Shaw for Mark Messier and Jeff Beukeboom on Nov. 12, 1991.

"I remember it being really cool," said Louie of the trade. "I look at it for being an opportunity when I was that age. I was coming from the Rangers and Glen Sather called me and told me I was going to have an opportunity to play right away. For me that was the most important thing. I truly did not put a whole lot of thought that it was for Messier until I got to Edmonton. Then I realized a Hall of Fame player was going the other way. I got bombarded with a lot of questions. I was honoured to even be mentioned in the same sentence as him. He was a tremendous player, and one of the best leaders in sports, not just hockey. I was just a young guy trying to play his first game in the NHL, and that is what I was focused on. It worked out pretty well. I was the longest surviving guy in the trade for Messier, as I lasted six years in Edmonton."

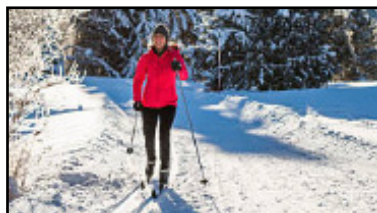


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Jake spent his minor hockey league time in Edmonton and Phoenix. While in Edmonton, he played with the Southside Athletic Club Lions for bantam, then the SSAC Bulldogs in minor midget and the SSAC Athletics in midget.

Jake's most memorable moment playing minor was easy. It came on March 7, 2013, when he scored the only goal in a 1-0 SSAC win over the Sherwood Park Midget AAA Kings in game four of the Dodge Division semifinals of the Alberta Midget Hockey League. The game went into quintuple overtime before being decided.

Jake was second in scoring in the AMHL that season. The leading scorer was Riley Simpson, son of former Edmonton Oilers legend Craig Simpson. Both Craig Simpson and Louie DeBrusk are current analysts on Rogers Sportsnet/Hockey Night in Canada. Riley Simpson, who also played for SSAC, had 55 points, while DeBrusk had 52 points.

Jake's two junior coaches in the Western Hockey League were former Edmonton Oilers centre Mark Lamb, who coached Jake in Swift Current, and Brent Sutter of Viking, AB, who coached Jake in Red Deer.

"Both coaches were awesome," said Jake. "They are big reasons why I am in the NHL today."

Honoured to be drafted by the Boston Bruins organization in the first round, 14th overall, in the 2015 NHL Entry Draft, Jake has felt comfortable being a Bruin since day one.

"I didn't really know what to expect," he said. "There are a lot of Bruins fans everywhere in the world, and it is really cool to be a part of that organization. Once I got to Boston for the first development camp (in 2015), I fell in love with it."

In his first two NHL seasons, Jake has been consistent. He recorded 43 points in his rookie season of 2017-18 and then had 27 goals and 42 points in 2018-19. Unlike his father, Jake stays out of the penalty box. He has only had 37 penalty minutes in 138 regular season games with Boston, and even got a fifth place vote for the Lady Byng Award (NHL's most gentlemanly player) this past season.

In 2018-19, Boston advanced to the Stanley Cup final with Jake and the Bruins battling the St. Louis Blues in a dramatic seven game series. Even though the Bruins lost four games to three, Jake was instrumental in the Bruins post-season run with four goals and seven assists for 11 points and was a +4 in 24 playoff games.

For Louie to have the chance to watch his son from the stands in the Stanley Cup finals as a father, was special.

"It was amazing," beamed Louie. "Getting to the final dance and having an opportunity to win it (the Stanley Cup), is what the game is all about. Every time the Bruins won and every time they advanced, it seemed like they were the perfect group to get there and they did their part. They gave themselves a chance to win it. It was stressful. It was enjoyable. It was awesome to watch. I was very proud of him."

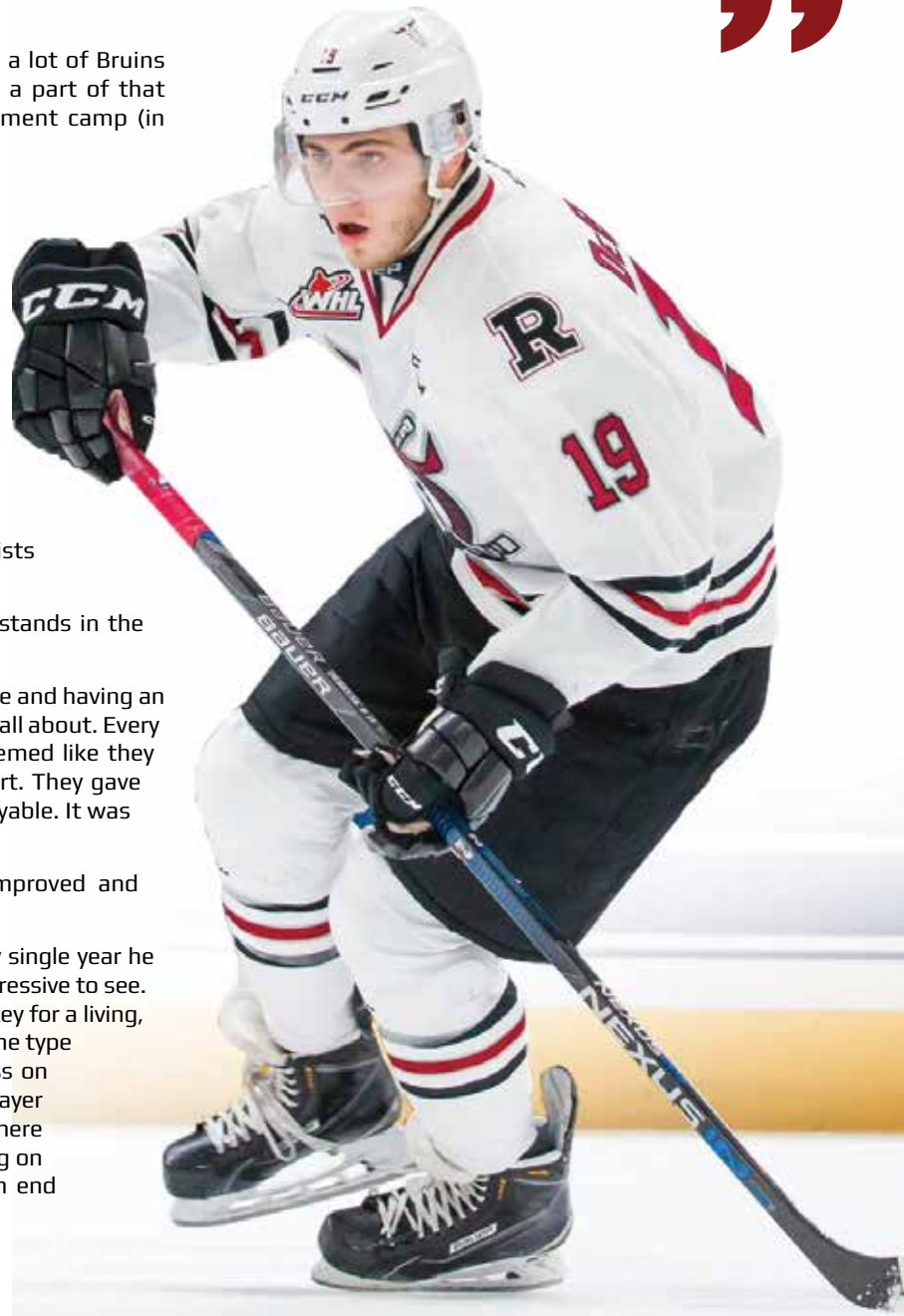
Louie has been impressed with how much Jake has improved and developed over the last three seasons.

"I think he has gotten better every year," said Louie. "Every single year he has taken an extra step. He seems to get faster. That is impressive to see. As a player, you try to improve yourself every year. I call hockey for a living, so I get to watch these games on a nightly basis, and he is the type of player I admire. He is fast, skilled, works hard, relentless on pucks, tough, and scores big time goals. He is the type of player I hoped he would become, which is amazing to see. I know there is more and there is not a ceiling for him yet. Jake is working on aspects of his game. He has played with very skilled, high end players, which is not always easy. He has been able to do it."

“

I THINK HE HAS GOTTEN BETTER EVERY YEAR. EVERY SINGLE YEAR HE HAS TAKEN AN EXTRA STEP. HE SEEMS TO GET FASTER. THAT IS IMPRESSIVE TO SEE. AS A PLAYER, YOU TRY TO IMPROVE YOURSELF EVERY YEAR. I CALL HOCKEY FOR A LIVING, SO I GET TO WATCH THESE GAMES ON A NIGHTLY BASIS, AND HE IS THE TYPE OF PLAYER I ADMIRE.

”



"I'm trying to get faster," said Jake. "That is pretty much the key nowadays, especially with the way the NHL seems to be going. Speed is the biggest tool of mine when I am skating. That is pretty much the biggest thing I am focusing on."

Even though Louie and Jake are two different types of players, Louie has seen some traits Jake has in his game that he tried to bring to the NHL.

"I think drive and tenacity. He plays with a certain edge. Mine was a little more on the physical side of it. Jake is relentless to score goals. He takes a punishment. He is never afraid (to go into the corners) and never shied away from physicality."

Jake is fully aware of the toughness that his father brought to the rink on a regular basis.

"He has hands that are triple the size of mine," said Jake. "Everywhere I go, I hear about my dad."

Being able to stay in the game as a broadcaster after his playing days were over, has significant meaning to Louie. He talks about how he became a colour-commentator.

"To be totally honest with you, it fell on my lap," he said. "I didn't think of it while I was playing or think that was an avenue I wanted to go down. I was contacted by the Phoenix Coyotes to do radio even though I had never done it before. I sat down and thought about it. I realized I always liked talking, loved hockey and thought I should give it a shot. Lo and behold, it worked out. It was awesome."

Since 2008, Louie has worked with Rogers Sportsnet, either as a colour-commentator or intermission analyst for the Edmonton Oilers broadcasts. He has also moved into the number two chair among colour commentators (behind Simpson) on Hockey Night in Canada.

"I do not have the pressures as a player," he said. "However, I do get to dive in and dissect what they are doing. I get to talk about a game that is evolving all the time. The game is getting better, which is exciting for the fans and people who watch the game. It has gotten so fast. It is a great job. I have the best seat in the house (in between the benches)."

As an analyst, Louie strives to be the person in your living room who is having a chat about the game with the fans. He is not afraid to show excitement and passion when something interesting happens on the ice.

Louie admits when he broadcasts Jake's games he has a mixture of emotions.

"I am not going to lie," he said. "It is a little bit awkward. I feel a mix of awkwardness and excitement. I have to walk the line of being a parent and an analyst."

"Surreal" is how Jake explains what it is like to play up close in front of his father.

"It is pretty surreal," he said. "The first game my dad called one of my games, he was in between the benches. I was trying to talk to him throughout the game and he was all business."

Hockey continues to be a major part of the DeBrusk family. As a proud Edmontonian, Louie has had a huge impact on the game as a parent, player and broadcaster. Now Louie is seeing his son Jake develop into a solid NHL player with a definite opportunity to get even better down the road.



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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
179 - 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
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Calgary Flames

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Whether you're watching NHL games or minor hockey games, you're going to run into fans who are convinced that an official's call (or non call) cost their team the game. Some fans may even be convinced that a referee has it in for their team.

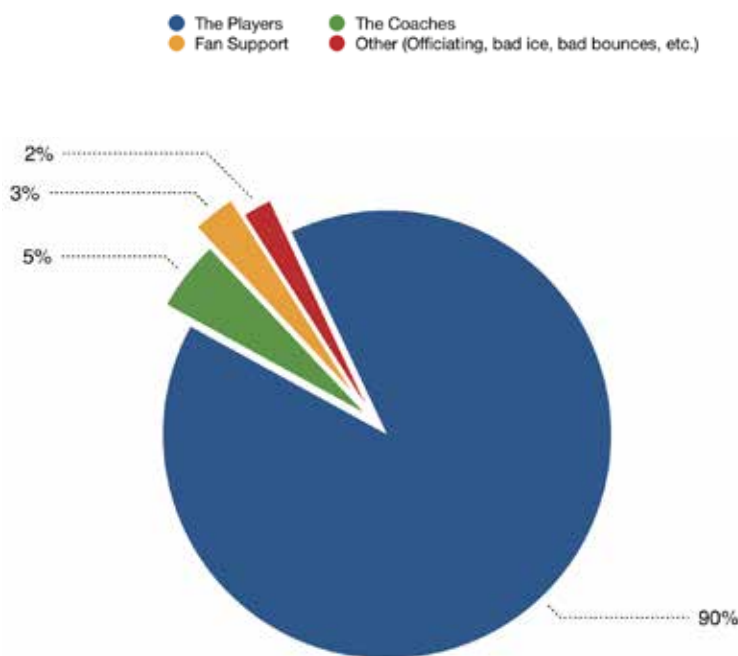
We're not suggesting that officials are inhuman, or that they don't make mistakes. They obviously do make mistakes, no different than the players on the ice. But it's very unlikely that any official (pro game or minor hockey game) has it in for any particular team.

The reality is that players decide the outcome of the game. Sure – a bad call (or missed call) can give one team a power play (or no power play on a "missed call"), but it's the players on the ice who either score on the power play, or kill the power play.

The players are the ones in control of the hockey game (with some assistance from coaches, and sometimes energized by positive energy from the crowd), and there are hundreds, if not thousands of plays (or missed plays), which take place in a single hockey game.

Players control 99% of what happens in a hockey game, and when they win a championship, they deserve the credit.

FACTORS WHICH DETERMINE THE OUTCOME OF A HOCKEY GAME



Goalposts probably "determine" the outcome of more hockey games than any official's call or non call. (Maybe that's why Patrick Roy talked to "his" goalposts?)

And what about "bad bounces," or "unlucky breaks," pucks that ricochet off the boards in an unpredictable fashion, equipment malfunctions, broken hockey sticks, etc.

There are a number of things out of a player's control on the ice, so there's no use dwelling on the things you can't control. When you really get down to it, championships are not won by lucky bounces. Division titles are not won by officiating.

Players control 99% of what happens in a hockey game, and when they win a championship, they deserve the credit. When's the last time you heard a winning team say that they won because of a lucky bounce or a call that went their way? So when you lose, why should it be any different?

RRD AD

BOUWMEESTER

INTEGRAL TO BLUES' STANLEY CUP VICTORY

BY JEREMY FREEBORN
PHOTOS BY SCOTT ROVAK



AT THE BEGINNING OF 2019, not many hockey fans might have believed the headline of this article. The St. Louis Blues were the worst team in the National Hockey League with a record of 15 wins, 18 regulation losses and four losses in extra time for 34 points overall.

What would happen over the next six months was magical. The Blues went from worst to first and captured their first Stanley Cup title in franchise history.

Veteran defenseman Jay Bouwmeester of Edmonton was on the Blues roster. One of two Alberta natives to win a Stanley Cup this year (the other was defenseman Colton Parayko of St. Albert), Bouwmeester had three goals and 14 assists for 17 points in the regular season with the Blues in 2018-19.

Known as a defensive-minded blueliner, Bouwmeester had 127 blocked shots, 61 hits and 25 takeaways in 78 games. Then in the 2019 Stanley Cup playoffs, Bouwmeester had seven assists in 26 games, was a +9, with 46 blocked shots, 32 hits and six takeaways. Bouwmeester's 46 blocked shots were third most in the 2019 Stanley Cup playoffs, behind Alex Pietrangelo of the Blues and Brent Burns of the San Jose Sharks, who each had 48 blocked shots.

This past summer, the Hockey Edmonton Magazine had an opportunity to speak to Bouwmeester, who reflected on his memorable spring.

"When you play professionally, it is something you always work towards," he said. "For me, it has taken a lot of years (35 years old and 16 seasons in the NHL). I was just really happy for my teammates and everyone you went that whole dream with. It makes you appreciative and think about all the people who have helped you along the way." Among those people Bouwmeester was referring to were his billets, junior hockey coaches, and family.

On the surface, two major reasons for the Blues unbelievable turn around can be directly related to two personnel changes by Blues general manager Doug Armstrong: a change in goaltending (Jordan Binnington replaced Jake Allen) and coaching (Craig Berube of Calahoo replaced Mike Yeo).

"It was a combination of a lot of things," said Bouwmeester about the team's drastic improvement. "We had some new players (including Conn Smythe trophy winner Ryan O'Reilly from the Buffalo Sabres, rookie Robert Thomas and former Oiler Patrick Maroon from the New Jersey Devils), and it took time for guys to figure out where to fit in the team dynamic. The coaching change (on Nov. 19) was a wake-up call for everybody. It was a little bit of what we needed. There was an attitude change. You can't go anywhere these days without good goaltending. Once we got rolling, we knew we were a good team. We were hot heading into the playoffs, and that is always a good thing."



I WAS JUST REALLY HAPPY FOR MY TEAMMATES AND EVERYONE YOU WENT THAT WHOLE DREAM WITH. IT MAKES YOU APPRECIATIVE AND THINK ABOUT ALL THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE HELPED YOU ALONG THE WAY.

- Jay Bouwmeester on winning the Stanley Cup in June, 2019



In the playoffs, the Blues beat the Winnipeg Jets in six games in round one, the Dallas Stars in seven games in round two, the San Jose Sharks in six games in the Western Conference final and then the Boston Bruins in seven games in the Stanley Cup final. Despite not having a playoff goal, Bouwmeester had more playoff points (seven) in 26 games with the Blues in the 2019 Stanley Cup playoffs, than he did in the 49 playoff games with the Blues (six) from 2013 to 2017.

In the 2019 Stanley Cup playoffs, Bouwmeester had two multi-point games. He had assists on goals by Oskar Sundqvist and O'Reilly (an overtime winner) in a 4-3 win over the Jets in game two of the first round series. Then Bouwmeester had assists on goals by Pietrangelo and Maroon in a 4-3 victory over the Stars in game three of the second round series.

Jay Bouwmeester got involved in hockey through his father Dan, who was a defenseman and later an assistant coach with the University of Alberta Golden Bears. As an alumni, Dan would take Jay regularly to Golden Bears hockey games.

"The Golden Bears were the main thing when I was a kid," said Bouwmeester. "I thought that was the highest level. I didn't really pay too much attention to the NHL when I was young."

Bouwmeester played his minor hockey in Millwoods up until peewee before joining the Southside Athletic Club for bantam and midget. He had 13 goals and 36 assists for 49 points in 35 games with the SSAC Lions Bantam AAA squad in 1997-98 and then 14 goals and 29 assists for 43 points with the SSAC Midget AAA in 1998-99. While with the Lions in 1997-98, he was named the Alberta Major Bantam Hockey League rookie of the year and the Alberta Major Bantam Hockey League top defenseman.

"We didn't do a lot of summer hockey, but in the winter it was something I enjoyed," he said.

While playing minor hockey in Edmonton, Bouwmeester remembers being one of the tallest players in respective leagues. He finished growing at 6'4".

In 1998, he was selected first overall in the Western Hockey League Bantam Draft by the Medicine Hat Tigers. He played four seasons with the Tigers and progressed offensively each year to eventually average a point a game in his final WHL season of 2001-02.

"It is an interesting time in a lot of players' lives. You leave home at about 15 years old," he said. "Moving away from home is a big transition not only for the kids, but the parents as well. At the time, you don't think too much about it. Medicine Hat is a great little junior hockey community. I feel pretty fortunate that I was a part of that organization."

In 2002, Bouwmeester was selected in the first round, third overall, by the Florida Panthers. He was only drafted behind Rick Nash of the Columbus Blue Jackets and Kari Lehtonen of the Atlanta Thrashers. Bouwmeester would play the next six seasons with the Panthers and four seasons with the Flames (where he was the assistant captain) before joining the St. Louis Blues in 2012-13. While with the Panthers, he played in the 2007 and 2009 NHL All-Star Games.

A Stanley Cup ring is the latest championship memorabilia that Bouwmeester will have in his possession. It will join the numerous medals he won while playing internationally with Team Canada: gold medals at the 2003 and 2004 World Hockey Championships, gold medals from the 2004 and 2016 World Cup and a gold medal from the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi.

"The whole Olympic experience and being part of Team Canada with a group of athletes that are participating in a whole bunch of different sports is just as cool as winning a gold medal," said Bouwmeester. "You see a lot of athletes and the gold medal is the pinnacle in their sport. For hockey players it is more the Stanley Cup, but for a lot of other athletes, the Olympic Games are the highest level. The whole Olympic experience was at another level."

Bouwmeester wants readers to know he is proud to be from Edmonton. He enjoyed growing up there and still has family in Edmonton.

For youth hockey players who want to be defensemen, Bouwmeester says the one area where players need to work on the most is skating backwards. He holds it is a skill that is extremely difficult to master, and one that forwards do not have to work on as much.

On July 4, Bouwmeester took the Stanley Cup to his summer home in Canmore, where he and his family have lived for the last seven years.

"It was a chance for everyone to check it out and take a picture," he said. "It is kind of neat to see everyone's reaction to it."

Heading into the 2019-2020 season, Bouwmeester is hungry to win the Stanley Cup again. He is at the stage in his NHL career where he wants two rings and to be a leader in the Blues organization, helping the younger players and share the knowledge that has come his way. The Blues will be fortunate to have Bouwmeester's leadership skills for another year to come.





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RON BRODEUR SCHOLARSHIP AWARD



THE RON BRODEUR SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS sponsored by Boston Pizza are awards for graduating Hockey Edmonton Midget-aged players who played in the Edmonton Federation Hockey League. The Ron Brodeur Scholarship Award was created 12 years ago by the Edmonton BP franchise group, who wanted to set something up in Ron's memory. As Ron's brother Roger put it, "The award is to recognize outstanding youth involved in minor hockey in Edmonton. It was an obvious fit for us to help give back to the local hockey community. We have rewarded \$27,500 in scholarships to date."

Ron Brodeur was a Boston Pizza franchisee who had restaurants in Edmonton and Denver Colorado. Ron was an exceptional hockey player and business man who grew up playing all his minor hockey in Edmonton. He played with the South Side Athletic Club, the St. Albert Saints (AJHL) while attending Louis St. Laurent high school and eventually went on to a successful hockey scholarship at Northern Michigan University (NCAA Div. 1) where he earned a degree in Business Administration.

Ron was passionate for the game because of the friendships, the fun, and the leadership lessons the game taught him. Ronny shared his passion by being a great coach and a wonderful mentor to many young kids. He loved being at the rink and spending time with his teams.

Ron passed away tragically on December 20 2006 at the young age of 43. He resided in Denver, Colorado where he coached minor hockey with the Littleton Hockey Association.



ROGER BRODEUR PRESENTING TO THE AWARD WINNERS:

- BRETT ROBBINS & MADELINE ELLIOTT -

ALONG WITH MARK DORAM (PREVIOUS HOCKEY EDMONTON PRESIDENT)

[PHOTO CREDIT: SC PARKER PHOTOGRAPHY]

MADELINE ELLIOTT

Madeline Elliott played three years of midget hockey (she was the only girl on the team), and was the assistant captain on her team for two seasons.

Madeline considers herself a physical player, and while she wasn't afraid to play an aggressive (but clean) style of game, she earned the Esso Medal of Achievement for Sportsmanship in 2017.

Outside of hockey, Madeline was involved in many team sports at her high school (Strathcona High School), including: curling, swimming, ultimate frisbee, rugby, and track and field.

Academically, Madeline earned honours with distinction, maintaining an average of over 90 per cent in all three years of high school. She was also on the Scona "Mathletics" team twice, and represented her school at the APEGA science olympics. Madeline wrote nine Advanced Placement (AP) exams, and earned AP Scholar with Distinction and AP National Scholar. She was awarded the University of Alberta Faculty of Engineering Iron Standard Entrance Scholarship based on entrance high school marks.

In terms of community involvement, Madeline was a volunteer timekeeper at the Stollery Family Day Classic Hockey tournament. She also played in this tournament as a young Atom player. She also served as a timekeeper and linesman for the Scona Classic volleyball tournament.

For the past three years, she participated in the Scona Bike-a-thon fundraiser as a rider, team captain, and event volunteer.

Madeline is currently enrolled in her first year of Engineering at the University of Alberta. She is keeping active in hockey, joining an intramural team at the U of A. Madeline will also be taking the Hockey Canada coaching certification, with hopes to get involved in the coaching side of the game.



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BRETT ROBBINS

Brett is an all-around athlete, excelling in a multiple of sports including: hockey, volleyball, soccer, track and field, and cross country running. He recently finished first in his age group at the Edmonton Marathon, with an impressive time of 3:14.

Academically, Brett earned honours with distinction at Lillian Osborne High School, maintaining an average over 90 per cent for all three years of high school. In grade 12, he won the "Math/Science/Technologies Award" which is an Edmonton Public Schools district award. Brett is a math and science wizard, finishing with grades between 97 - 99 per cent in grades 10, 11 and 12.

For community involvement, Brett participated in a high school charity bake sale for the Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation, and he has also served a Thanksgiving dinner to English language learner students. Brett participated in "Water for Life Walk" to raise awareness for safe and clean water throughout the world.

Brett has also volunteered his time as a hockey official for Edmonton Minor Hockey Week. (Brett appears in our "Spotlight on an Official" feature on page 32 of the magazine.)

"I have come to realize that minor sports can only survive with volunteers. It feels right to give back to the coaches, the team managers, the parents, and to the game itself - creating the dream I lived, for someone else," said Brett.

Brett is currently enrolled in the Neuroscience honours program at the University of Alberta. In his spare time, he volunteers at the Kaye Clinic in the Urology department, where he assists patients before they go in for testing. He also teaches at a private swim club and has enrolled as an assistant instructor for two SWZ camps for this hockey season. And Brett plans to keep on running, his next marathon will take place in Honolulu, Hawaii.



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SHARED PASSION FOR HOCKEY

RESULTS IN FIRST CREE PLAY-BY-PLAY NHL GAME



Clarence Iron: CFNK 89.9 FM radio station announcer turned NHL play-by-play announcer in Plains Cree.



The APTN Plains Cree broadcasting team: (from left) Earl Wood, Clarence Iron, Jason Chamakese and John Chabot.

By Shari Narine

With the seed planted during the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, nine years later the dream was realized when the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) and Rogers Sportsnet teamed up to deliver the first National Hockey League game called in Cree.

"A lot of these pieces happened in part in coincidence, but, part of me says it was meant to be that way, that's why it played out that way," said Jean La Rose, CEO and president of APTN.

On March 24, the APTN main studio in Winnipeg was the scene of history-in-the-making. Clarence Iron, of the Canoe Lake First Nation, Sask., was on one side of a curtain calling the action between the Montreal Canadiens and Carolina Hurricanes in Plains Cree, while on the other side of the curtain were former NHL player and assistant coach John Chabot and studio host Earl Wood (from Saddle Lake First Nation, AB) doing the intermission analysis in Cree. With Chabot hailing from the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation where Algonquin is spoken, Jason Chamakese interpreted for him.

The result was more than La Rose expected.

"In our entire history, this is the highest rated non-English or -French show that we've ever broadcast. We had half-a-million viewers, which was, for a language program, unheard of," he said.

APTN was launched in 1999 and has approximately 11 million Canadian subscribers.

But better than the numbers was the international coverage the Cree-called game received and the comments through social media, emails and phone calls from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous viewers.

"We were pleasantly surprised by the number of Canadians who don't speak the language, who wrote to us or called in to say, 'This was amazing. We really had no clue what he was saying, but we could follow the game by the names he was referring to... and he was so lively, he was exciting, he was so enthralling' They watched the whole game. They tuned it in because it was a curiosity, but ended up watching the entire game," said La Rose.

Iron was the man who made the game "lively...exciting...enthralling."

Cree announcer for the past four years at CFNK 89.9 FM radio station in Pinehouse Lake, Sask., Iron is no stranger to calling hockey games. For years, he was involved with Indigenous hockey tournaments doing play-by-play for radio broadcast.

"Everybody was kind of excited. Everybody wanted to hear an NHL game in Cree. Even myself," said Iron.

He admits that when APTN put out the call on Facebook for a Cree play-by-play announcer, he only fleetingly thought about it.

But then his friends started encouraging him and the final piece fell into place when APTN contacted him to apply.

Iron was known to APTN as he, and Chabot, were involved in voicing some of the sporting action during the Vancouver Winter Olympics. That broadcast made APTN the world's first Indigenous official broadcaster of any Olympic games.

When Iron got the nod, it became crunch time. He had followed NHL hockey in his younger days, but wasn't as familiar with today's players.

"I thought to myself, 'Oh my God, what did I get myself into?'" he admitted.

Then he shook off the nerves and each night he studied players' names and numbers. Much to his delight, he discovered that the teams' line combinations, powerplay units and statistics were all available on the Internet. He memorized everything he could and even practiced play-by-play to himself. He also found that APTN had a Cree dictionary for sports terms.

However, the broadcast wasn't without its challenges.

"The atmosphere was different. I was in a studio alone, not in the arena with fans to see live play-by-play," he said. But that didn't stop him from giving his all.

"Once you get in there, I could kind of make an entertainment out of it, too. I tried to keep it professional as much as possible, but there's sometimes you need to laugh," Iron said.

If he were to do it again, Iron says a colour commentator working alongside him would enhance the viewing experience for all.

Is another Cree-called NHL game in the works?

La Rose would love to see that – and more – happen, but it depends on sponsorship and funding, considering APTN's limited budget. He has big plans which start with a monthly NHL game which turns into a weekly NHL broadcast with the possibility of games being called in different Indigenous languages on APTN's four channels.

"These are all things that are being discussed, very generally right now, if we ever get the financial means to carry out such a plan," he said.

La Rose has nothing but good things to say about Rogers Sportsnet, which bought the rights to broadcast NHL games in 2012.

//

**EVERYBODY WAS KIND OF
EXCITED. EVERYBODY WANTED TO
HEAR AN NHL GAME IN CREE.
EVEN MYSELF.**

//

Initially, Rogers approached APTN with the possibility of two NHL games, but the timing was such, says La Rose, that APTN could only carry the March 24 game. But it was a perfect fit as it coincided with Rogers Hometown Hockey stop in the Enoch Cree Nation. The teams also had First Nations players with Canadiens' goalie Carey Price, who has Nuxalk and Southern Carrier First Nations heritage, and Hurricanes' Michael Ferland, who is Cree.

"I am a Montreal Canadiens fan, I have to admit, full disclosure. So obviously for me Carey Price was an extra bonus to be there for us to air that game in Cree," said LaRose.

After the positive feedback, La Rose was surprised to discover that many First Nations citizens were deeply loyal to either Montreal or Toronto, even in the west.

"We really appreciated Sportsnet and Rogers support in this. They were very, very helpful. They were very understanding of the challenges we have. They came (to the Winnipeg studio) checked up the set-up, loved what they saw, were impressed with the staff here and the possibilities we could bring to the game," said La Rose.

He also believes that the move by the communications giant was in keeping with initiatives that are happening Canada-wide to promote reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and the rest of the country. As well, the United Nations has declared 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages.

"Committed to uniting Canadians through the sports they love, we at Sportsnet know that there is no stronger common thread than the country's passion for hockey," said Rob Corte, vice president for Sportsnet and NHL Productions. "We are truly honoured to have the opportunity to work with APTN to celebrate Canada's Indigenous communities and the shared passion for hockey that unites us all."



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PHOTOS BY SC PARKER PHOTOGRAPHY

BRETT ROBBINS



For this edition of the magazine, we are featuring a Ron Brodeur Scholarship Award Winner for our Spotlight on an Official. (Check out the article on page 26.) We met up with Brett at the Hockey Edmonton Awards earlier this year, and learned that he was a minor hockey official. We thought he would be an excellent candidate for our "Spotlight on an Official" feature we do in each edition of the magazine.

We later caught up with Brett in the summer, and he took the time to answer some questions on being a minor hockey official.

When did you start officiating hockey?

I started officiating in the winter of 2014, and I have officiated every winter season since.

What made you want to become a hockey official?

I have always loved the game of hockey, and I was eager to become more involved with the sport itself by becoming a hockey official. When I decided to become a hockey official, I was a young child who was looking for a little extra money, which is another incentive that made me want to become a hockey official. Finally, my dad and two of my older brothers were also hockey officials, and I saw how much they enjoyed their job; this was the chief factor that made me want to become an official.

What level of hockey did you officiate last season?

I officiated bantam AA, midget, bantam, peewee, atom, and novice. However, I mostly officiated bantam AA, midget, and bantam. For the bantam and midget games, I head refed some games, and I was a linesman for other games. This past winter season, I received an opportunity to join the A program, which allowed me to be a linesman for bantam AA hockey games.

Did you officiate games this past Minor Hockey Week, and if so, what makes you volunteer your time?

Since I was in novice, Minor Hockey Week has been my favourite tournament to participate in. I love the fact that it is run time, as it brings the intensity of the game to an entire new level. I have been playing hockey for 13 years now, and I have come to realize that minor sports can only survive with volunteers. It feels right to give back to the coaches, the team managers, the parents, and to the game itself - creating the dream I lived, for someone else.

Any special memories from Minor Hockey Week?

In bantam, one of our games went all the way to one-on-one overtime, and I was put out on the ice. The other team pulled their goalie, so it was two on one. I ended up intercepting a pass, where I then shot the puck into the other team's empty net, winning the game for my team!

Do you have any highlights related to any other big games or tournaments you wish to pass along?

In my second year of midget, in the championship playoff game, I scored the game-winning goal in overtime! This victory felt so amazing because the team we beat in the final game was a team that we struggled to beat throughout the entire season.

What do you enjoy most about officiating hockey games?

I enjoy the fact that I can be so up close to the action! Also, I like how I always feel on my toes while I am officiating. Whether a coach is yelling at me from the bench, the crowd is yelling at me because they believe I should have called a penalty, or a team pulls their goalie in an attempt to tie the game, there is never a dull moment, and it ensures that I am hyper focused throughout the entirety of the game.

What kind of training were/are you provided?

Each year, I was required to attend a referee clinic prior to the commencement of the winter season.

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

After every game I officiated, I always had my dad to talk to. Sometimes I would eagerly tell him the highlights of the game, but then there were other times where he would be my confidant when I experienced adverse moments during the game. He would always be there to comfort me, and he would ensure that I was able to regain my confidence before my next officiating game.

What is the toughest part about being a referee?

The most challenging part about being a referee was when an infraction would occur out of my line of sight, such as a slash behind the play, and the fact that I was unable to call it, even though I was sure it has occurred, judging by the reactions of the fans and coaches.



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How do you handle criticism on the ice?

Whenever I was criticized on the ice, I would remain calm and maintain confidence in my original decision; for example, if a coach was questioning a penalty that I called, I would always defend my original call, even if I knew that my original call may not have been the best form of judgement.

Do you have comments you wish to share with parents, coaches or anyone involved with minor hockey?

I understand that it is easy to get caught up in the game. When there are seconds left on the clock, and one team is down by one goal, it is very easy for the parents, coaches, or even players to get carried away. I have witnessed kind-hearted coaches verbally criticize officials after a controversial call during a crucial moment in the game. I have witnessed some players verbally, and sometimes physically, abuse players on the other team. I have witnessed parents from different teams screaming at each other after a poor call was made by one of the officials. It is okay to be competitive. It is okay to be physical out on the ice. However, it is key to always refer back to the sole reason why us players step out onto the ice, and that is to have fun.

I would like to thank my parents, coaches, and anyone else involved in minor hockey for making my hockey experience one to remember. Without this collective of individuals, none of this would have been possible, so I am extremely grateful. I am grateful for my parents, as well as my coaches who woke up bright and early for the 6:30 a.m. practices way back in novice. I am grateful for my team managers who volunteered their time to organize our hockey tournaments. I am grateful for the Minor Hockey Week officials who volunteered their time, giving me the opportunity to participate in this exhilarating tournament. There is so much to be grateful for, including the game itself; for as long as I live, this will be a journey that I will never forget.



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