

Team Canada Alumni Association

NEWSLETTER – SUMMER 2011



Lanny McDonald in Afghanistan

The Team Canada Alumni Association

Where We Want To Be – Our Vision: Team Canada Alumni – Coming Together, Reaching Out

Why We Want To Go There – Our Mission: To engage, encourage, and enable Team Canada alumni to maintain a lifelong relationship with Hockey Canada and our game

Who We Will Be Along the Way – Our Values: We are committed to honouring Canada's international hockey heritage, assisting with the growth of Canadian hockey and the pursuit of international hockey excellence for Canada, while providing an opportunity for our alumni to reconnect and celebrate the game and their experiences. These objectives will be within a spirit of teamwork, inclusion, integrity, and service. ■

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Message from Gord Sherven

CHAIR OF THE TEAM CANADA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Welcome to your Team Canada Alumni Association (TCAA) summer newsletter. We have another great issue with updates on the Hockey Canada Foundation, Hockey Canada and stories of former players such as Jennifer Botterill, Rick Martin, Brian Propp, Scott Walker and Hall of Famers Ron Ellis and Lanny MacDonald.

Lanny's story is certainly interesting, as for the past three years he and many former Team Canada and NHL alumni went to Afghanistan to show their support for our troops and boost the morale of sol-

diers through the connection of the great game of hockey! Additionally, the players received firsthand knowledge of Canada's contribution to the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

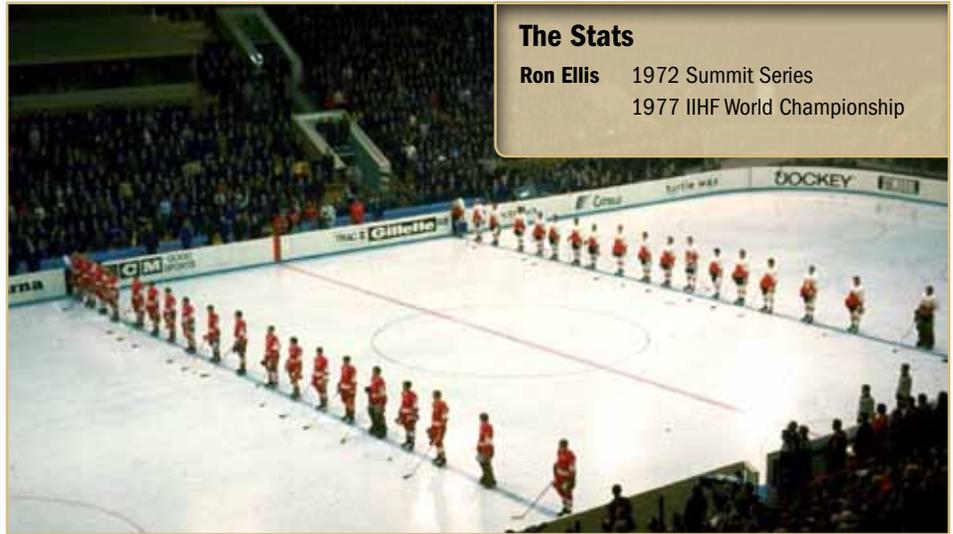
Finally, long time NHL player and coach Mark Lamb is a new member of the TCAA. Lamb was recently the assistant coach of Canada's entry in the 2011 IIHF World Under-18 Championship in Germany and was extremely impressed with the culture of Hockey Canada and everything it tries to accomplish. Enjoy his story and the rest of your Team Canada Alumni Association newsletter!

Gord Sherven
Chair, TCAA Advisory Committee



When Politics And Sports Collide: Ron Ellis Goes Behind The Iron Curtain And On The Ice At The 1972 Summit Series

by Debbie Elicksen



The Stats

Ron Ellis 1972 Summit Series
1977 IIHF World Championship

For those who weren't around during the 1972 Summit Series between Team Canada and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), it might be hard to fathom the raw emotion this hockey tournament elicited amongst Canadians.

Canada had obviously participated in international competition before this event. But this series would end up being sewn into the country's fabric. While it was first billed as a "friendly international tournament," after the first two minutes of Game One, it was clear that it would be anything but friendly.

This was more than just a hockey tournament. It was a challenge to our way of life. It was western democracy versus the Iron Curtain.

Ron Ellis and his former Toronto Maple Leafs teammate Paul Henderson flanked Bobby Clarke on what would become the team's most memorable line.

"Phil Esposito expressed it: 'This is war.' If they won, it would be beneficial to their propaganda efforts," Ellis recalls.

As it turned out, the Russians were still able to use it to their advantage because they took the Canadians to the last minute of the last game. But it was Canada that won the deciding game by one goal, going to the extreme in order to do it.

Thirty-five National Hockey League players received invitations to play and were promised that each would see ice time in at least one game. It ended up being a promise that couldn't be kept when the team got behind in the series. Canada couldn't afford even a tie in the last three games.

"I've got to be honest," Ellis admits. "You look around the room—I remember my teammate Bobby Clarke saying to me, 'Ron, look at who we're with here. Who could beat us?' We were pretty confident."

It was basically an all-star team thrown together at the last minute. Some of them didn't like each other. There was no team chemistry. Meanwhile, the Russians had trained as a team and all of their lines were together on their parent clubs.

"We had some tough times in Canada," he says. "We got booed off the ice in Vancouver. I just think it's a level of frustration because they were told we were going to win all games. Phil Esposito was our leader and that interview with Johnny Esaw was a turning point, not just for the team, but for the fans. We left Vancouver and we were a broken team."

The team was able to regroup in Sweden, however, with two games against the national team there before heading to Moscow for the final four contests. "If we went straight into Moscow from Vancouver, I hate to think what would have happened."

In Moscow, the players were not allowed to travel alone. The KGB was always in their presence. They even took their own food and beverage supply, but between the airport and the hotel, half of everything was "paid" as barter. That's the way it was; no questions asked. The team was also told by the RCMP that their rooms would have listening devices, and that if they had to talk about anything important, they should go out into the hallway.

1972 - TEAM CANADA - 1972



"At the time we thought (the Russians) were doing their best to try and upset us. Every time we went somewhere as a team, the buses were always an hour late. Now, I don't think it was done intentionally. That's just the way it was," Ellis says. "We were on the lookout for anything and everything."

It all came down to Game Eight. The Russians self-imposed a hand-picked official, who paraded the Canadians to the penalty box in droves. The tying goal didn't get the red light, but it ultimately counted — after a heated exchange that nearly had series promoter Alan Eagleson arrested.

With 34 seconds left in the game and the game tied, Henderson came out on the ice to replace Peter Mahovlich. He jumped on the rebound off Phil Esposito's shot, and The Goal of the Century was scored.

"We weren't all jumping up and down. Everybody was sitting in their stalls exhausted — mentally, emotionally and physically," Ellis recalls. "All the adversity we faced ... we didn't win those last three games in Canada; we won them in Moscow. We overcame a lot to accomplish that."

The Summit Series set the tone for future international competition, and years later, the NHL started welcoming defecting players from behind the Iron Curtain.

Henderson's sweater was bought at an auction for \$1,067,538 US, and is being toured around the country for viewing. School boards have included the series into their curriculums.

Much has changed overseas, but some things have not.

"I've had the opportunity to speak to some of our junior teams participating in the world championships," Ellis says.

"My message to them is: you're going to have to be prepared to face adversity from refereeing or whatever. They may be all-stars from their individual teams, but some of them are going to be asked to take roles they are not used to. If they do that and keep the team first, they'll be successful." ■





TEAM CANADA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION/ HOCKEY CANADA FOUNDATION

Recent Events



2011 IIHF WORLD WOMEN'S UNDER-18 CHAMPIONSHIP

January 1-8, 2011 – Stockholm, Sweden

Canada's National Women's Under-18 Team earned a silver medal at the 2011 IIHF World Women's Under-18 Championship in Stockholm, Sweden, falling 5-2 to the United States in the gold medal game at Stora Mossen arena.

Emily Fulton (Stratford, Ont.) opened the scoring for Canada late in the second, while Katy Josephs (Cochrane, Alta.) added Canada's only other goal of the final game before the end of the middle frame. The Canadians couldn't complete the comeback in the third, and the 2011 world championship title went to their American rivals.

In the preliminary round, Canada beat Switzerland 9-1, blanked Finland 6-0 and defeated Germany 8-1 to earn a bye to semifinals, where they topped Finland again, this time 6-1. Canada and the United States have met in all four gold medal games in the history of the IIHF World Women's Under-18 Championship. ■



2011 ESSO CUP

April 17-23, 2011 – St. Albert, Alta.

The Notre Dame Hounds (West) won the 2011 Esso Cup, Canada's National Female Midget Championship, defeating the Edmonton Thunder (Pacific) 5-2 in the gold medal game inside the Performance Arena at Servus Place.

It was a sweet victory for the Hounds, who took silver at the 2010 Esso Cup, and a bitter loss for the Thunder, who are the only team to have appeared at the national championship for three straight years, finishing fourth in 2009 and earning bronze in 2010, in addition to taking silver at this year's tournament.

The Toronto Aeros (Ontario) won the bronze, shutting out the Kodiaks du Lac St-Louis (Quebec) 4-0 to take home a medal from their first-ever appearance at the national championship, which first took place in Calgary, Alta., in 2009. Thunder goaltender Morgan Glover (Edmonton, Alta.) was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player. ■

2011 MLP CUP

January 5-8, 2011 – Kreuzlingen, Switzerland

For the eighth time in nine years, Canada's National Women's Under-22 Team won the MLP Cup, this year shutting out Sweden 6-0 in the gold medal game at the Bodensee Arena in Kreuzlingen, Switzerland.

Canada finished with a perfect 4-0 record at the international tournament, beating Switzerland 5-0 and Germany 9-0 in preliminary round play, then moving on to knock off Russia 9-0 in semifinal action.

Bailey Bram (St. Anne, Man.) and Vicki Bendus (Wasaga, Beach, Ont.) both had three goals and six assists, tying to lead tournament scoring with nine points total. Canadian netminders Roxanne Douville (Beloeil, Que.) and Geneviève Lacasse (Scarborough, Ont.) combined to stop all 83 shots they faced, for four shutouts over the course of the 2011 MLP Cup.

Eleven players on Canada's National Women's Under-22 Team won their second straight MLP Cup gold medal. ■





2011 IIHF WORLD UNDER-18 CHAMPIONSHIP April 14-24, 2011 – Crimmitschau and Dresden, Germany

Canada finished fourth at the 2011 IIHF World Under-18 Championship, starting the preliminary round with three straight wins over the Czech Republic, Finland and Norway before dropping its last game to Sweden. That forced the Canadians into the quarter-finals, where they came from behind to defeat a determined German home squad 4-3.

In the semifinals, Canada faced two-time defending champions from the United States, valiantly rallying back from a three-goal deficit to send the game into overtime; however, the Americans would score in extra time for the 5-4 win.

Canada took on Russia in the bronze medal game and once again ended up down three in the third. Canada fought back in the final frame to cut its deficit to one, but Russia added an empty net goal to secure the bronze with a 6-4 win.

Ryan Murphy (Aurora, Ont.) set a Canadian record for most points in a tournament with 13, surpassing a total of 12 set by Pierre-Marc Bouchard (Sherbrooke, Que.) in 2002 and equalled by Cody Hodgson (Markham, Ont.) in 2008. ■



2011 WORLD SLEDGE HOCKEY CHALLENGE April 18-23, 2011 – London, Ont.

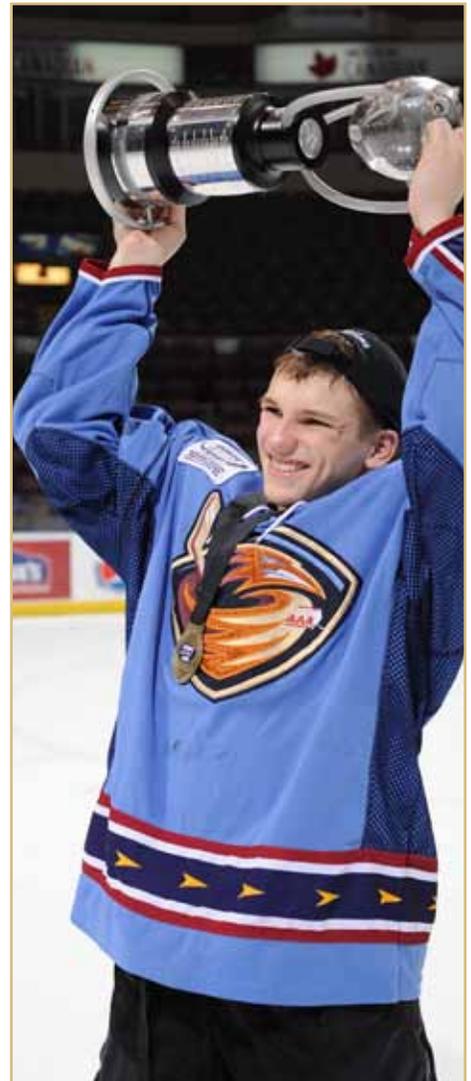
World Sledge Hockey Challenge gold belongs to Canada once again.

For the first time since 2008, the Canadians came out on top at the international tournament, blanking Norway 8-0 in front of a red and white crowd during the final game at the Western Fair Sports Centre in London, Ont.



Canadian forwards Bradley Bowden (Orton, Ont.) and Greg Westlake (Oakville, Ont.) tied for the tournament lead in scoring with 18 points each in five games, while netminder Corbin Watson (Kingsville, Ont.) contributed three shutouts to his team's success on the ice.

Canada came out of the 2011 World Sledge Hockey Challenge with a perfect 5-0 record en route to winning the gold medal on home ice. ■



2011 TELUS CUP April 18-24, 2011 – St. John's, N.L.

The Winnipeg Thrashers have won their first-ever National Midget Championship, taking home the 2011 TELUS Cup after a 3-1 win over the London Junior Knights at the Mile One Centre in beautiful, St. John's Newfoundland. The Thrashers and Knights had rather improbable routes to the final, after finishing third and fourth in the preliminary round, respectively.

This season marks the second-ever TELUS Cup gold medal for a Manitoba team, with the Brandon Wheat Kings winning the national championship in 2004. It's also the seventh gold medal in eight years for the West, with only the Thrashers failing to take home the TELUS Cup in 2008.

Alex Kerfoot (West Vancouver, B.C.) from the Vancouver NorthWest Giants received Most Valuable Player honours after an impressive 22 points in seven games. ■



2011 IIHF WORLD WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP April 16-25, 2011 - Winterthur and Zurich, Switzerland

Canada's National Women's Team suffered a heart-breaking 3-2 overtime loss to the United States in the gold medal game at the Hallenstadion in Zurich, losing the world championship title to their long-time rivals for a third straight time.

The Americans took an early lead in the first, but Gillian Apps (Unionville, Ont.) was able to tie it up in the last eight seconds of the opening frame. The United States kept up the offensive pressure and made it 2-1 midway through the second, with Canada again having to stage a comeback and Rebecca Johnston (Sudbury, Ont.) letting a quick shot go late in the third to send it into overtime. In the end, the Americans got the revenge

they were seeking after settling for 2010 Olympic Winter Games silver.

Canada went undefeated through the rest of the 2011 IIHF World Women's Championship, shutting out Switzerland 12-0, Kazakhstan 7-0 and Finland 2-0 in the preliminary round, then defeating Finland again 4-1 in semifinals.

Canadian defenceman Meaghan Mikkelson (St. Albert, Alta.) and forward Hayley Wickenheiser (Shaunavon, Sask.) were both named to the tournament's media all-star team. ■



2011 ALLAN CUP April 11-26, 2011 - Kenora, Ont.

The Clarenville Caribous took home Canada's oldest amateur hockey championship this season, winning the 2011 Allan Cup with a 5-3 victory over the Bentley Generals in Kenora, Ont.

Dale Sullivan, Travis Chapman and Brandon Roach scored in the game's opening nine minutes, giving the Caribous an early 3-0 lead. Brad Crann scored in the second to make it a 4-1 game and Dustin Russell put the finishing touches on the win with an empty net goal

in the final 10 seconds, as Clarenville became the first Newfoundland and Labrador team since the 1986 Corner Brook Royals to win the Allan Cup, Canada's National Senior Championship.

The Allan Cup is one of the oldest club-team hockey competitions in North America, having been first competed for in 1908. Only once in the past 103 years, in 1945, has an Allan Cup champion not been crowned. ■



2011 RBC CUP April 30-May 8, 2011 - Camrose, Alta.

The Pembroke Lumber Kings won their first RBC Cup, and their victory on the ice in Camrose, Alta., came at the expense of one of the tournament's most successful teams.

Francis Dupuis (Orleans, Ont.) made 40 saves and Jonathan Milley (Ottawa, Ont.) scored twice to help the Lumber Kings beat two-time defending champions the Vernon Vipers 2-0 in the championship game and claim Canada's National Junior A Championship.

The Lumber Kings are the first team from Ontario since the Aurora Tigers in 2007 to win the national championship. The Vipers, who have won a record six national titles, were looking to become the first team in history to win three straight championships.

The Lumber Kings finished the preliminary round with a 1-3 record before defeating the host Camrose Kodiaks in semifinal action, en route to the national title. ■

2011 IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP April 29-May 15, 2011 - Bratislava and Kosice, Slovakia

Canada finished fifth at the 2011 IIHF World Championship in Bratislava and Kosice, Slovakia, after falling 2-1 in quarter-final action to Russia.

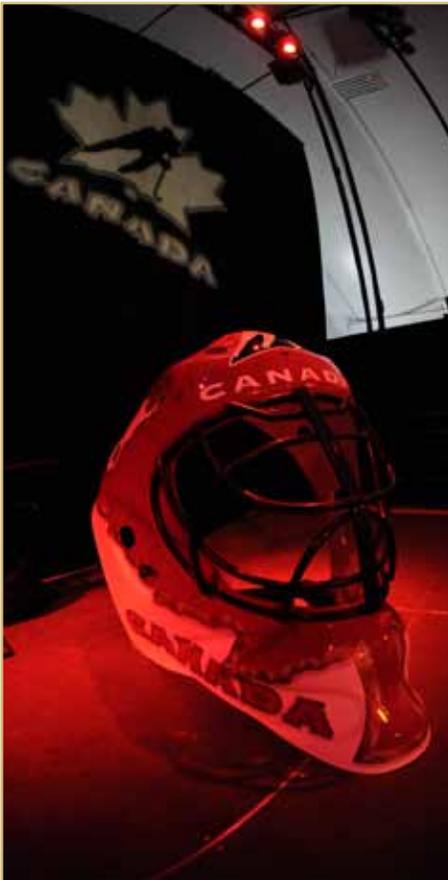
Despite the loss, Canada finished the tournament with a 6-1 record, led offensively by John Tavares (Oakville, Ont.), who tallied nine points (five goals and four assists) in seven games. In the preliminary and qualification rounds, Canada defeated Belarus 4-1, France 9-1, Switzerland 4-3 in overtime, the United States 4-3 in a shootout, Norway 3-2 and Sweden 3-2.

Canada National Men's Team last won a gold medal at the IIHF World Championship in 2007 in Moscow, Russia. In total, the Canadians have captured 25 world championship gold medals, tied with Russia and the Soviet Union for most all-time medals (Russia has three gold, while the Soviet Union had 22 gold). ■



TEAM CANADA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION/ HOCKEY CANADA FOUNDATION

Upcoming Events



HOCKEY CANADA FOUNDATION GALA AND CELEBRITY CLASSIC

**June 27-28, 2011
Ottawa, Ont.**

After a highly successful event last year in Edmonton, Alta., this year's gala is moving east again. The City of Ottawa will be the literal backdrop for our gala, as the dinner will be hosted in the beautifully renovated Ottawa Convention Centre, overlooking the Rideau Canal and Parliament Hill. The two-day event will be attended by a number of alumni in the area, including members of the National Women's Program, past National Sledge Team players, '72 Summit Series participants and the captains and head coaches of the past 30 National Junior Teams. This event will serve as the kick-off to celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Program of Excellence. ■



2ND ANNUAL TEAM CANADA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION GOLF TOURNAMENT

**September 13, 2011
Calgary, Alta.**

The second annual TCAA Golf Tournament will be held September 13, 2011, at Lakeside Greens Golf Course and Country Club in Chestermere, Alta. Proceeds from the event will go to support the Hockey Canada Foundation, in addition to everything from grassroots development to our Olympic hockey teams to various alumni initiatives. This year's tournament looks to build upon last year's success by having Team Canada alumni lead teams of three at the tournament. For more information, please contact Gord Sherven at gsherven@wellwest.ca, Wayne McBean at wayne.mcbean@lakesidegreens.com or Chris Bright at cbright@hockeycanada.ca. ■



TEAM CANADA ALUMNI FANTASY GAME WITH KPMG

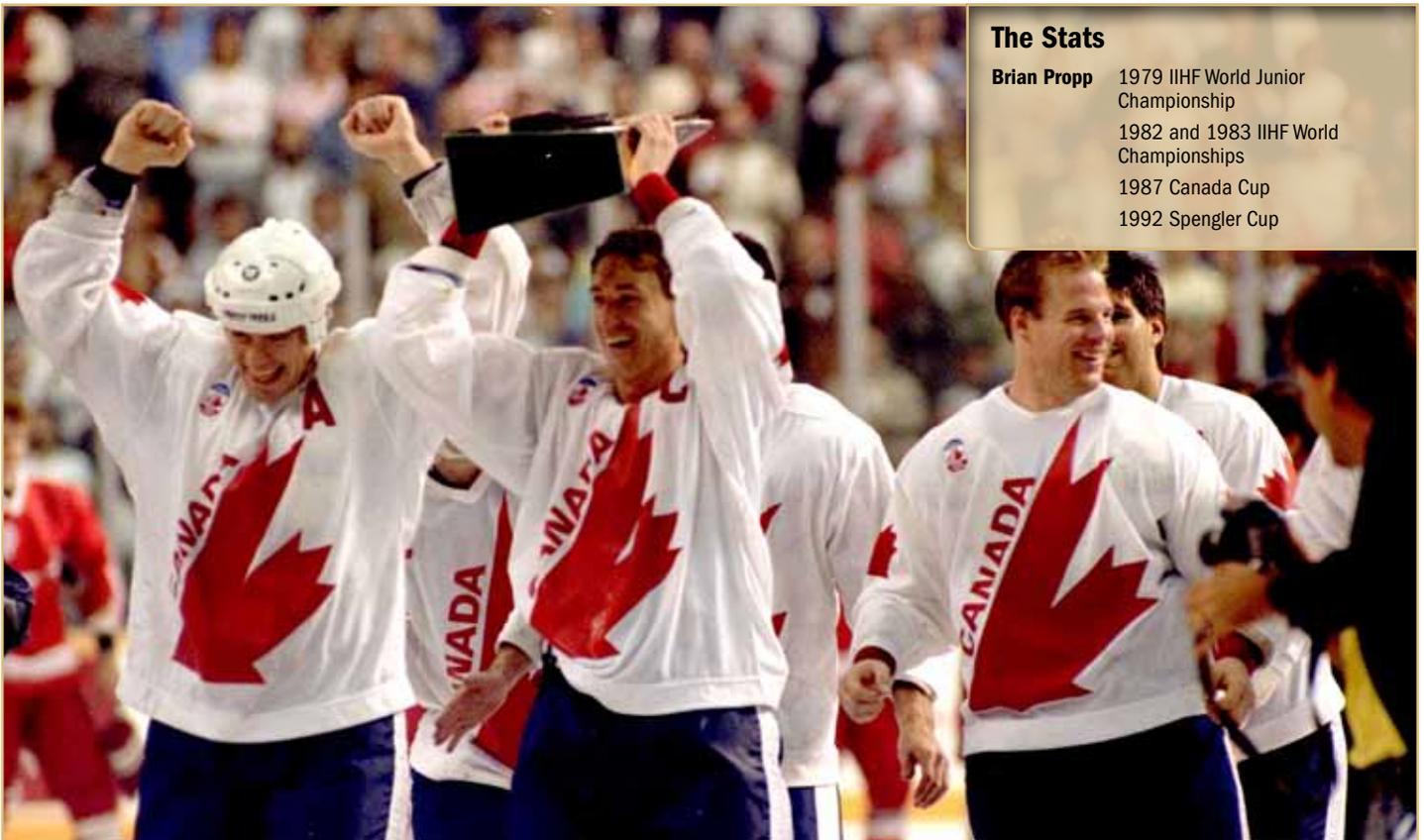
**January 20, 2011
Calgary, Alta.**

Team Canada alumni, including Martin Gelin, Charlie Simmer and three-time Olympic gold medalist Colleen Sostorics, hosted a group from audit, tax and advisory services firm KPMG in a Hockey Canada Experience game. The KPMG players lived the ultimate hockey dream by dressing in the Team Canada room, watching a recent Team Canada pump-up video and receiving expert coaching from Al Coates, Wally Kozak and Lanny McDonald. The fundraising event was purchased by KPMG as a part of the 2010 TCAA Golf Tournament auction held in Chestermere, Alta., in September 2010. ■

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Former Flyer Brian Propp Looks Back On Everything From Playing With Gretzky to Giving “The Guffaw”

by Debbie Elicksen



The Stats

Brian Propp 1979 IIHF World Junior
Championship
1982 and 1983 IIHF World
Championships
1987 Canada Cup
1992 Spengler Cup

Not many National Hockey League players can say they've been to the Stanley Cup Final five times.

But while Brian Propp's storied career may not include Lord Stanley's prize, he has enjoyed more success than most. He is No. 41 on the NHL's all-time scoring list. For playoff stats, he is one of the top 30 in all categories in the history of the game.

Propp enjoyed 15 years in the NHL, but he has also had a strong presence on Team Canada.

“When you play for a team like the Philadelphia Flyers for 11 years, you are very loyal to them, but when you play for your country, that pride just goes to a completely other level,” he said. “You know you have your whole country behind you. What you're playing for means a lot.”

His first call to duty was at the IIHF World Junior Championship. But as a pro, he played in the 1982 and 1983 IIHF World Championships, with Canada taking bronze in both years.

“When you don't win the tournament, especially the world championships, you come away with a sour taste,” Propp said.

The tournament that stands out to him the most, however, is the 1987 Canada Cup, where Propp's linemates were Wayne Gretzky and Mario Lemieux.

He may have been the oldest player on the roster. His role was to play well defensively and still create offensive chances. His experience in the 1982 and 1983 IIHF World Championships meant he understood how the Russian and European teams broke out of their zone to attack.



"Mike Keenan was the coach. Of course, I had been with Mike since 1985. I knew exactly what he was like. It's the morning skate, it's pre-season, and we're getting ready for one of the games. Everyone came in full equipment and Mike starts to run through all these drills. Gretzky and Lemieux go, what is this? They were a little more used to having a relaxed morning skate and an optional. They were surprised it was more like a practice than just a loosening up session. But I think Mike adjusted."

In the three-game final against the Soviets, Canada lost the first game and came back to win the next two.

"It's always nice to be in the room where the champagne is being popped," Propp said. "Up to that point, I had lost three Stanley Cup Finals already"

The transition to retirement was difficult, but Propp said it helped that he had tried a lot of different things outside of hockey and was involved in a lot of businesses.

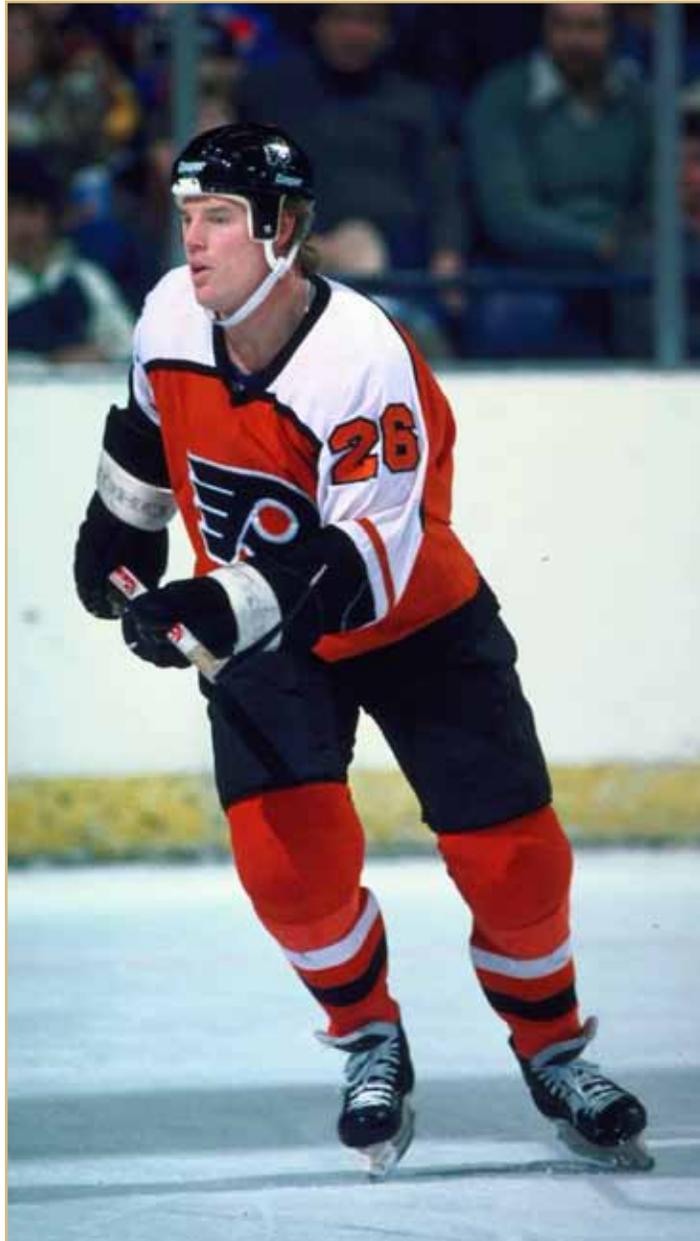
"Hockey develops a person, if they utilize it right, to become a successful business person. You develop great habits, teamwork, breakout and a whole plan of attack, goals that you set for yourself. It's all concentrating. It all fits very well in the business world. It's a lot of hard work and also having a game plan. Practising until you get good at something. Always wanting to get better. The elite players are always looking for something to improve their game, whether it's using a sports psychologist, visualization, relaxation. You're very young when you retire with a lot of life ahead. Every athlete struggles with it."

Propp finished his NHL career in 1994 and signed a deal in France as player/coach. Then, with a group in Philadelphia, he built an ice rink in Medford, New Jersey, ran the rink operation and taught hockey for three years. In 1999, the Flyers asked him to broadcast radio. With a three-day window and no training, he did that for nine years but had to supplement his income. He got his financial licence, registered as a representative for a brokerage firm, and then a couple years ago, joined The Judge Group as a strategic accounts manager.

"This is the best job I've ever had since hockey," he said.

What many may not know about Propp is that he also ran as a Republican for state assembly in New Jersey in District 7. He didn't win, but said it was a great experience.

However, there is one distinctive thing Brian Propp is most known for: the guffaw.



"After I scored a goal, I would go back to centre ice and do a hand movement that went up in a guffaw motion. But I actually got the guffaw from Howie Mandel. At one of his shows in Atlantic City, I was there with one of my friends and he did the guffaw, which means a hearty laughter. He said to the audience, 'Does everyone want to mess up the next comedian coming to town? The next time, instead of a whistle or laugh, go guffaw,'" he recalled.

"I started using it with friends. I needed a little more personality (when I scored), so the next season I did the guffaw. Coach said, 'What was that? Don't ever do it again.' I scored again and did the guffaw again. My wife says, 'For all the things you did in hockey, they just remember the guffaw.'"

For more information on Brian Propp, please visit www.brianpropp.com and www.judge.com. ■



A Golden Foundation: Celebrating 30 Years Of Hockey Canada's Program Of Excellence And Taking The Next Steps On The Road To Success

by **Kristen Lipscombe**

The first colours that pop out on the Hockey Canada logo pin are, of course, red and black, representing pride in our country. But it's the third colour that catches the light, shimmers and shines, and serves as a reminder of what our organization's Program of Excellence is all about.

Gold.

"Every time we put a team together, it's our goal to have 22 players standing on the blue line, receiving gold medals," Shawn Bullock, manager of hockey operations/national teams, said of the vision behind Hockey Canada's Program of Excellence, which celebrates three decades of success on the ice this year.

"We don't settle for anything less than that, we don't cut corners and we make sure that we have the best players available to us, we have the best staff available to us and we're the most prepared going into (competition)," he said. "Our guys are held to the highest standard."

The Program of Excellence's 30th anniversary comes just as Canada readies itself to host the IIHF World Junior Championship, in Calgary and Edmonton, Alta., next December.

"We have a huge opportunity to embrace our 30 years of success, and hopefully carry that through and help the players and staff that are going to be involved with the 2012 World Juniors win the championship," Bullock said. "We are the top nation ... We need to embrace that and be proud of it."

Proud, indeed.

Canada has won gold at five of the last seven IIHF World Junior Championships, and has collected 15 gold medals total, including during the Program of Excellence's inaugural 1981-82 season, when head coach Dave King and team captain Troy Murray led the red and white to its first of many World Junior titles. In addition to winning gold more times than any other country, Canada has also won 10 silver and five bronze, for 30 medals overall, since the under-20 tournament's 1974 inception.

"There's a culture involved," Bullock said of Hockey Canada's POE, which has been carefully crafted and refined since its inception in 1981 to ensure Canada is always at the top of its game. "The majority of our players, when they get to the World Juniors, most of them have had multiple experiences and understand what the culture is, and what the expectations are for them."

"They understand how important it is, right from how you act in the hotel and the meal hall to the rink ... (to be) part of a team," he said, adding by the time play-



ers reach that "pinnacle" of wearing the maple leaf on their jerseys at the World Juniors, "they have an understanding of what Canadian hockey looks like."

"It's played hard, it's played tenaciously," Bullock said. "We're unforgiving and relentless in every game we play."

From under-16 programs run through Hockey Canada's branches and events such as the World Under-17 Hockey Challenge to participation on Canada's National Men's Under-18 Team to representing Canada at the IIHF World Junior Championship, both the players and the program itself continue to improve and evolve.

"Over the past 30 years, Hockey Canada's Program of Excellence has created a gold standard for high performance athlete development across the country and around the world," Hockey Canada president and CEO Bob Nicholson said. "We should be extremely proud of our past accomplishments, as well as excited and eager to raise the bar by building an even stronger foundation on the road to international hockey success."

To recognize the Program of Excellence's 30th anniversary, Hockey Canada and Penguin Canada are partnering to publish a book chronicling the golden moments of Canadian junior hockey over the past three decades. *Thirty Years of The Game at its Best: A Hockey Canada Retrospective* will be released this October, in advance of the 2012 IIHF World Junior Championship.

Hockey Canada and the Canadian Hockey League are also teaming up for a special POE 30th anniversary celebration that will recognize contributors to the program's success and take place in conjunction with the 2012 IIHF World Junior Championship in Calgary and Edmonton. Plans are also shaping up for POE 30th anniversary festivities at this month's Hockey Canada Foundation Gala in Ottawa, Ont. ■



Canada's True Heroes: Hockey Legend Lanny McDonald Reflects On Lessons Learned While Visiting Our Country's Finest In Afghanistan

by Kristen Lipscombe



These hockey fans may have been in awe when Hall of Fame legend Lanny McDonald strolled onto Kandahar Airfield ready to hit the rink, but to the Team Canada alumnus with the unmistakable moustache, they're the ones who are the real heroes.

"They're over there protecting the men and women, and especially the children, in Afghanistan, while also trying to keep us safe here at home," he said of the Canadian Armed Forces, who he has paid his respects to – and played ball hockey against – on a trio of trips to the war-torn country. "It's a very easy decision to go back."

It may be a thrill for soldiers far from home soil to rub shoulders on the base with, or perhaps elbow on the rink, the likes of McDonald and fellow Calgary Flames alumni Perry Berezan and Jamie Macoun, but for the Canadian hockey stars themselves, stepping onto the arid Afghani tundra and seeing our country's finest at work is an educational experience unlike any other.

"When Canada first went there in 2002, there were 600,000 kids in school, and none of them were little girls," McDonald said of lessons learned on these journeys. "If the teacher was caught teaching little girls they were executed on the spot. Now, in 2011, there are six million kids in school, and 35 percent, or 2.2 million of those, are little girls."

Stats like that have stuck with McDonald, while seeing progress firsthand, from empty, unused fields during his first trip in March 2009 to farmers tending crops, thanks to a Canadian constructed and protected dam, on his most recent trip in March 2011, have shown him exactly how a devastated nation is being rebuilt. "The Canadian men and women do a phenomenal job in building those relationships with the Afghan people."

McDonald also believes Canada "really laid the groundwork" for coalition forces in Afghanistan, allowing the United States to focus in on tracking down, and eventually taking out, Osama bin Laden in neighbouring Pakistan. "Now that he is out of the picture ... we need to get to a point where we can hand the power back to the Afghan army and the Afghan police."

As for releasing photographic evidence of the al-Qaeda leader's death to the public, McDonald thinks that would just "stir up more possible hatred around the world." Canadians, after all, have always been more about uniting people, whether that's through reaching out to other countries or coming together for a game of hockey.

"It's that camaraderie you share with each other," he said of taking time out of shaking hands and signing autographs to pick up a stick and take on members of the Canadian Armed Forces on their makeshift outdoor arena in Kandahar. "It takes some of that pressure off what they're going through each and every day."

While McDonald and his fellow former NHLers who have accompanied him on his travels are "more than happy" to bring a piece of Canada back to those serving in Afghanistan, their trips abroad aren't just about giving back.

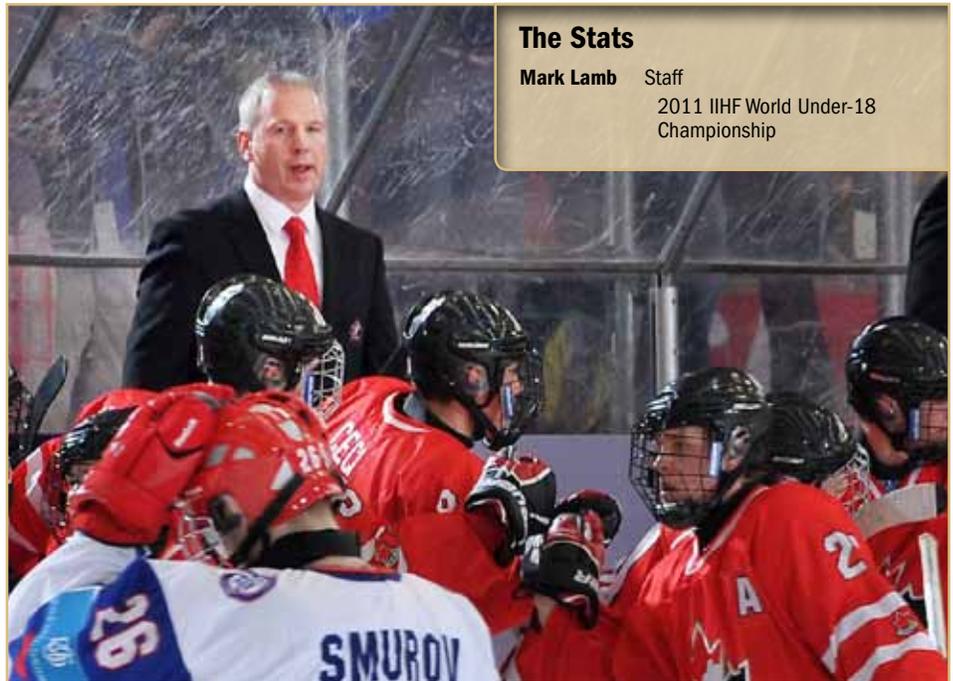
McDonald gets choked up as he recalls watching Canadian and American soldiers embrace each other, after a Chinook helicopter landed on the flight centre tarmac and a shared mission came to a close. "That kinds of tells it all - it's about working together as other countries and protecting each other."

"For the soldiers over there ... the fact that we would ... come out and hang out with them, they just think is absolutely awesome," he said. "But we can't believe how good they are at what they do and how (well) they represent Canada." ■



Mark Lamb Takes Experience With Hockey Canada Back To Club Team

by Chris Jaster - Prairie Post



The Stats

Mark Lamb Staff
2011 IIHF World Under-18
Championship

Spending a few months working with Hockey Canada really opened up Mark Lamb's eyes.

Lamb became the assistant coach of Canada's entry in the 2011 IIHF World Under-18 Championship in Germany. He enjoyed the culture of Hockey Canada and what it tries to accomplish.

The goal Hockey Canada sets for each of its members is to bring back a gold medal from every hockey event in which it enters a team. It tries to motivate each person who is a part of a team with videos on what it has accomplished, including when Canada won gold medals at the Olympics.

"It didn't take long for you to buy into that you're part of the Canadian heritage and you want to put your own stamp on the heritage of what has gone by," Lamb said.

"Dale Hawerchuk, who was Canada's other assistant coach, was one of those players on the big Canada Cup teams with (Wayne) Gretzky and (Mario) Lemieux when they played the Russians. He knew what it was like, but for the rest of us it was a new experience. For us, it didn't take long for us to buy in."

Despite getting the players to come together fairly quickly and reaching the semi-finals, Lamb doesn't believe he left a mark or stamp behind. He feels a team must win a medal to do that and Canada fell short, finishing fourth. Canada lost its semifinal to the United States 5-4 in overtime and lost to the Russians 6-4 less than 18 hours later in the bronze-medal game.

Nevertheless, Lamb said the experience in Germany did leave a definite mark with him.

He enjoyed the challenge of trying to scout teams and prepare for them on such short notice and admitted Hockey Canada was so organized it made the coaches' preparations a lot easier.

"Coming back, there are a lot of things at Hockey Canada that I learned, with preparation and how to run a hockey team. That's more what I learned," said Lamb, general manager and head coach of the Swift Current Broncos.

"Coaching is coaching. The coaching part isn't anything different. You're just coaching better players, but you're coaching in the same way. How they run their organization is impressive. I'll bring some of that back to the Broncos."

With the chance to coach a Canadian team at an international competition and almost come away with a medal, the U18s proved to be an experience Lamb will never forget.

"It was good," he said. "I played a year in Germany so I know what it's all about, but the whole process was very exciting. It was great." ■

Scott Walker Taking Head Coach Role in Guelph By Storm

by Tony Saxon, The Guelph Mercury



The Stats

Scott Walker 1999, 2001 & 2005 IIHF World Championships
1992-93 Canada's National Men's Team

There will be plenty of new faces on the Guelph Storm next season, but it will be a familiar one behind the bench. Storm general manager Mike Kelly confirmed in early April that Scott Walker will return as head coach of the team for the 2011-2012 season.

"That's always been the plan and I was thrilled to death with the job he and the other coaches did," Kelly said.

The Storm GM had a long list of what he liked about Walker.

"He could get through the fluff and get down to what is important in regards to winning and losing hockey games. He had the instincts to know what players had to do to win and to be successful," Kelly said.

Walker said he is looking forward to returning and working with what should be a very young team.

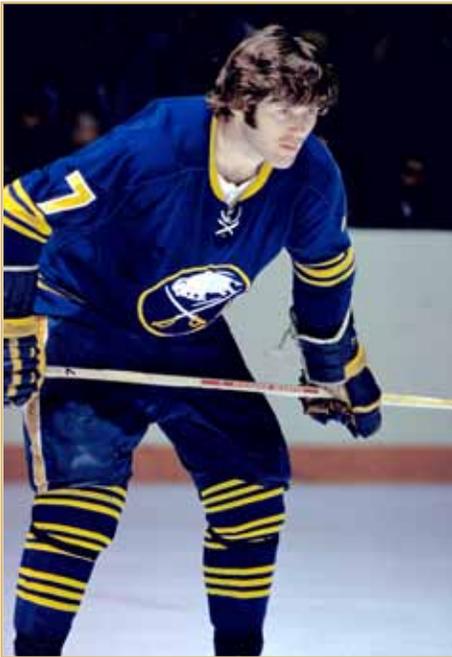
"I had a blast this year, I really did," Walker said. "I'm already looking forward to next season. I'd never coached before and I think I really caught the bug."

Kelly said he thinks Walker's "black and white" communication skills work well with today's young players and he thinks Walker will be fine working with a rebuilding team in 2011-12. When Walker replaced Jason Brooks as head coach, he signed a contract for the remainder of this season and an option for 2011-12. ■



French Connection Linemates Remember Former Buffalo Sabres Forward Rick Martin

The Canadian Press



The Stats

Rick Martin 1972 Summit Series
1976 Canada Cup

Pulling out a cigar from one breast pocket and a can of beer from the other, Rene Robert looked up to the arena ceiling to deliver his French Connection linemate, Rick Martin, one last message.

"This is for you my friend," Robert said, paying tribute to the former Buffalo Sabres star forward. "Rico used to say all the time, that if you can't have a laugh, this life ain't worth living."

"So, he lived it to the fullest."

Martin's life was celebrated during an hour-long memorial service March 24, held at the Sabres' home, HSBC Arena. Martin, 59, died of complications due to heart disease while driving his car in suburban Buffalo on March 13.

"As long as there (are) memories," Robert said, "no one ever dies."

Martin's passing summoned plenty of colourful recollections. He was remembered by former teammates, friends and family members as much for the 384

career NHL goals he scored, as for the 5,000 jokes he told and countless pranks he pulled.

"If we ever make a movie about him, the name of the movie should be, 'Rico The Great Entertainer,'" said Gilbert Perreault, who centred the famed French Connection line alongside Martin and Robert. "Rico was a flamboyant hockey player. He was a great entertainer on the ice, in the dressing room, on the golf course and in life in general. I'm going to remember all the great times I had with him. And who knows, maybe in the next life we just might be reconnected again."

The trio had just been reunited in Buffalo in April, when they took to the ice to welcome the Sabres' new owner, Pennsylvania billionaire Terry Pegula, prior to a game against Atlanta.

An estimated crowd of 3,000, with many wearing No. 7 Martin jerseys, packed six sections of the arena's lower bowl to attend the service. It was held on a black-carpeted area at centre ice, below the video scoreboard which showed pictures of the player,

many of which featured him with both a cigar and beer in hand. Current members of the Sabres team sat on the visitor's bench, while the home bench was left empty and draped in black.

A two-time 50-goal-scorer, the Verdun, Que., native was remembered for his hard shot and goal-scoring drive. Martin was selected fifth overall by the Sabres in the 1971 draft, and immediately made an impact on the team the following season when he scored what was then an NHL rookie record 44 goals. He played 10-plus seasons in Buffalo before his career was cut short by a severe knee injury. He was traded to Los Angeles during the 1980-81 season, and only played four games for the Kings through the following season. A five-time 40-goal-scorer, Martin finished with 701 points in 685 career NHL games.

"I became aware when I was younger that I shared my father with everybody," Corey Martin said of his dad. "This is just not my loss or my family's loss. It's a loss for everybody. And it's very apparent how many people he's touched." ■



Good Luck, Botts: From The Locker Room To The Ice, Recently Retired NWT Alumna Jennifer Botterill Helps Others Reach Their Dreams, Score Their Goals

by Kristen Lipscombe

Whether she's assisting the game-winning goal of the gold medal game at the Olympic Winter Games on home ice, or encouraging little girls to dream big, Canada's National Women's Team alumna Jennifer Botterill has always been determined to make her dreams come true, and help others do exactly the same.

"If you see people that are successful, they seem to have a great outlook," Botterill says of the key messages she emphasizes when speaking at everything from corporate to charity events, which have kept her plenty busy since announcing her retirement from hockey in mid-March. "They are passionate about (what they do), so I think it's important for people to remember that, and to enjoy every day."

With three sparkling Olympic gold medals, five IIHF World Women's Championship titles, seven wins at the 4 Nations Cup and a solid reputation both on and off the ice, it's hard to ignore Botterill's heartfelt words of wisdom. And her former teammates confirm that "Botts" has always followed her own advice of "pursuing excellence in everything that you do."

"Botts was always Mrs. Positive," recalls former Team Canada captain Cassie Campbell-Pascall. "She was just a sweetheart and also a Steady Eddy on the ice."

Veteran forward Hayley Wickenheiser also points to Botterill's "positive enthusiasm" as being an important part of the team dynamic, adding her dependability extended from the dressing room to the ice.

"On the ice, when it mattered, we knew you would be there with your best game," Wickenheiser says. "Enjoy your retirement. Just think - no more logs or boot camps!"

"Jen was a well-rounded player that had the ability to control the play and change a game," adds long-time teammate and linemate Jayna Hefford. "She will continue to inspire people in so many ways. I'm very proud to call her a friend."

For Botterill, who was a smiling staple on Canada's National Women's Team from 1997 through the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, the decision to retire was difficult, but definitive.

"It was time for me to reflect, and what I thought was, 'I'm so thankful for all of my experiences,'" she said. "I got to a point where I feel great on the ice (and) I feel like the game's been so good to me."

From big moments such as winning world championship gold on home ice three times, including in her hometown of Winnipeg, Man., to smaller moments such as the Easter egg hunt and dinner her family hosted for the entire team home during that 2007 tournament, Botterill feels blessed to have shared these memories with "so many great people" during her Team Canada career.



Of course, what better way to cap off 13 years of international on-ice success than with winning Olympic gold on home ice?

In her 184th, and last, game wearing red and white, Botterill set up linemate Marie-Philip Poulin to help put the first of two goals on the scoreboard en route to that history-making 2-0 win over the United States inside a roaring Canada Hockey Place.

Before stepping onto the ice for that Feb. 25 game in Vancouver, B.C., Botterill distinctly remembers I Gotta Feeling by the Black Eyed Peas playing over the arena's loud speakers, and her own gut instinct telling her, "that we were going to be successful."

"I just feel like every person was in the right spot that day ... we had so much fun," she said. "Despite all the pressure, and the fact that it was a big deal, for us, that day, it was about enjoying it."

It's that very attitude that inspires all those she encounters, whether teammates or fans, and seems to bring success to whatever new challenges she takes on. Most recently, Botterill provided an insider's analysis from TSN's desk in Toronto, Ont., during the 2011 IIHF World Women's Women's Championship in Switzerland, "a fun new project" she'd like to further pursue.

From teaching girls how to play the game, to sharing her story with a room full of accomplished businesswomen, for Botterill, "it's always been about being a great teammate and a good person, and trying to help the people around you."

"I'm a big believer in a positive attitude, and I guess for me, it's finding the way that I can continue to learn about that, and hopefully help other people with it as well." ■

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