

# Team Canada Alumni Association

NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2013



HHOF-IHF Images / Phillip MacCallum

National Women's Under-18 Team members (from L to R) Sarah Steele, Hannah Miller and Hanna Bunton celebrate after winning gold at the 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship

## Message from Gord Sherven

### CHAIR OF THE TEAM CANADA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Welcome to your Team Canada Alumni Association (TCAA) spring 2013 newsletter! With the NHL lockout carrying through the Christmas holidays, we all enjoyed our fill of hockey from all parts of the globe – from the IIHF World Junior Championship in Ufa, Russia, to the Spengler Cup in Davos, Switzerland, IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship in Vierumäki, Finland, Meco Cup in Füssen, Germany, World Under-17 Hockey Challenge in Victoriaville and Drummondville, Que., and World Sport School Challenge in Calgary, Alta., all of which are reviewed in this newsletter.

Also in this edition, Paul Romanuk, who has been broadcasting the Spengler Cup for a number of years, checks in with his thoughts on the 2012 tournament, which was one of the best in recent memory, and what makes the holiday tradition so special.

We also have a great story on former National Sledge Team captain Jean Labonté, a member of the national team from 1996 until his retirement following the 2010 Paralympics. He was a two-time world champion and 2006 Paralympic gold medallist and continues to help grow his sport as sledge hockey's representative for Hockey Canada.

Your spring newsletter also features all the latest updates from Hockey Canada and Hockey Canada Foundation events, a chat with Hockey Canada Foundation director and TCAA Advisory Committee member David Andrews on the effects of the NHL lockout on the American Hockey League and his history with Hockey Canada, as well as a "Where Are They Now" story featuring Team Canada and NHL great Scott Niedermayer.

We hope you enjoy this edition of your TCAA newsletter!

Thank you,  
Gord Sherven  
Chair, TCAA Advisory Committee ■

## 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 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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*Publisher:* Hockey Canada

*Contributors:* Debbie Elicksen, Gord Sherven, Chris Bright, Hockey Canada Communications

*Alumni Advisory Committee:* Gord Sherven, Ryan Walter, David Andrews, Terry O'Malley, Norm Dueck, Tom Renney, Mike Murray, Chris Bright

*Alumni Administration:* Norm Dueck ■



## A LIFE IN THE GAME

### DAVID ANDREWS ON HIS HOCKEY CANADA PAST, GROWING THE AHL AND THE TEAM CANADA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

by Debbie Elicksen

There isn't enough space to list all of David Andrews' accolades, but if there is anyone who bleeds hockey, it's this man.

Besides his 19-year role as president and CEO of the American Hockey League, Andrews is one of the lead individuals who brought the Team Canada Alumni Association into existence.

His initial involvement with the national team was as director of the first under-17 program, then as head coach of the first national under-18 team – a group that included future Hall of Famers Mario Lemieux and Steve Yzerman.

The merger of the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association and Hockey Canada, with one logo and one look, has given Canadians something to rally around. Andrews praises Murray Costello, Dennis McDonald and Bob Nicholson for having the vision to take the organization and the Program of Excellence to the next level.

"Dave King is highly regarded, but I don't think people really understand how important it was that his teams were successful. The success of his teams built the image of the World Juniors and support for the national team program. It helped bring everyone together. No one could foresee the success that Team Canada would have over the next 30 years, winning junior championships, an Olympic medal, and that women's and sledge hockey national teams would be where they are."

Enter 2012-13 and the NHL lockout, which impacted hockey from the grassroots level to the national team. This was the third one Andrews had been through during his time with the AHL. All of the lockouts have been an opportunity to grow his league.

In 1994-95, the presence of the AHL brand grew significantly with the exposure from television the league may not have received otherwise.

In 2004-05, it added great players like Jason Spezza, Ryan Miller and Mike Cammalleri.

"All those players went back to the NHL and became stars where they hadn't been stars before. That year in the AHL really helped them. A lot of AHL players who were not seen as top NHL prospects, became top NHL prospects because they played and were measured against those other players."

This year, the league experienced a 15% increase in ticket revenue, Oklahoma City filled a lot of buildings with the likes of Jordan Eberle and Taylor Hall in its star-studded line-up and the lockout provided a growth in media coverage and web traffic.

On the downside, the league lost 126 players when the NHL went back to work, which has changed the competitive balance. Oklahoma City has been faced with a new set of issues since Jan. 19, when its young stars went north to Edmonton. Like other teams that really benefitted from the lockout, since losing those players, the Barons won't be quite as strong as they were.

For its annual All-Star Game, the AHL was left with a completely different player pool than before the lockout, and with the back-and-forth player movement thanks to NHL training camps, the league was unable to cement a line-up until the last moment.

From a Hockey Canada perspective – on a bigger picture, it doesn't help the growth of hockey to have the NHL not playing.

When the Team Canada Alumni Association began, the original idea was to provide a way for former national team players and personnel to reconnect and stay in touch with each other and to continue to feel a part of Hockey Canada initiatives. The involvement of the championship teams and alumni in the gala and other events is critical to the Hockey Canada Foundation's success.

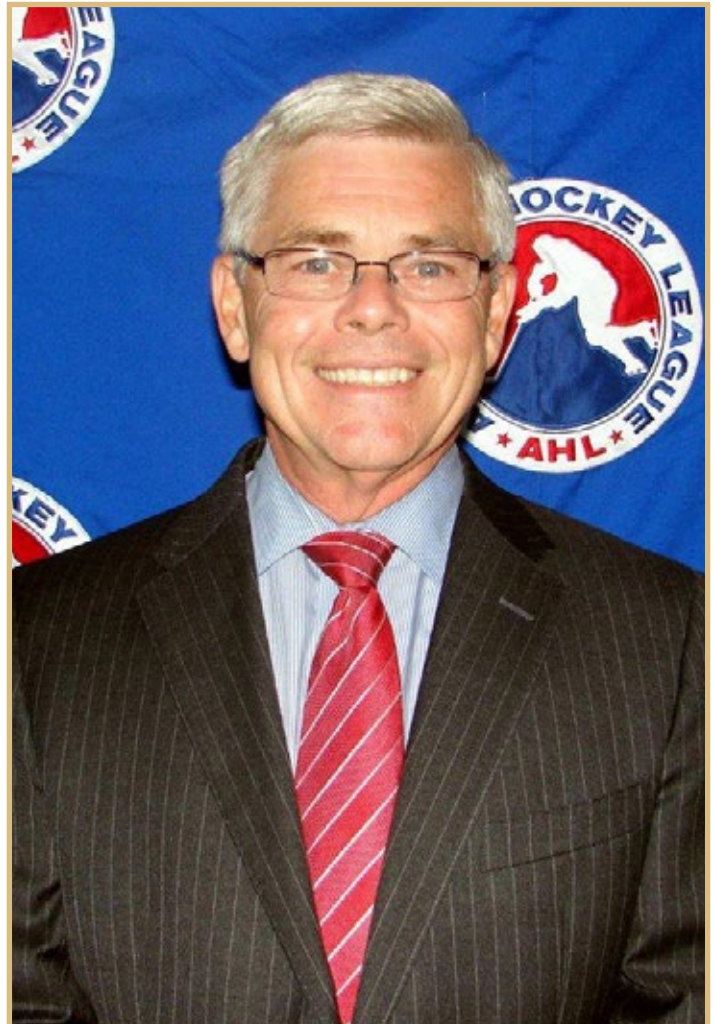
Andrews emphasizes that alumni has played a big role and the TCAA is blessed with being able to find thousands of alumni who are in a position to receive the newsletter and contact with Hockey Canada. Norm Dueck deserves credit for his silent work behind the scenes.

Andrews believes that for Team Canada alumni, there is a common bond of having the honour and pressure of representing one's country. The memories are so special because of the period of time everyone was together, for whatever

pressure-packed event they were in. When it was over, it was over, and then everyone was gone.

"There is an emotional tug for me to remain active with the Hockey Canada Foundation" Andrews says. "I don't think I've ever had a more rewarding experience than in my early years working for Hockey Canada. We took on some huge challenges in terms of changing attitudes about amateur hockey and minor hockey and what it should be about in terms of training coaches and officials. It was really a bit of a crusade back in those days. We built a whole network of volunteers and hoped to better the game and better the kids in the game. That was a really important time, also getting into some of the more high performance areas, like coaching in the Western Hockey League and national team programs. It was a really important time in my career."

The vision is that the TCAA database will eventually translate into more active participation of alumni with each other and with the organization. The association's role is to make itself stronger and meaningful for the alumni. With leaders such as Andrews, that's a future many can see. ■



David Andrews, president and CEO, American Hockey League



## GREAT MOMENTS FROM THE SPENGLER CUP



HHOF-IIHF Images / Andy Mettler

Ryan Smyth, back in his role as Captain Canada, lifts the Spengler Cup after the Canadians beat HC Davos 7-2 in the final for its 12th championship

For the first time since 2007, and the 12th time since it first took part in 1984, Canada claimed the Spengler Cup, beating host HC Davos 7-2 in the championship game on New Year's Eve to cap off an impressive run through the tournament. After a 2-1 overtime loss to Adler Mannheim in its opener, Canada went 3-0 the rest of the way, outscoring its opposition 17-3 over that span.

In no particular order, here are some final thoughts from Paul Romanuk, who broadcast the games for TSN, on the 2012 Spengler Cup.

**Emotion:** You see it sometimes from afar, but you really see it up close. The misty eyes of Canadian coach Doug Shedden when I interviewed him on the ice after the championship game reflected just how much this meant to him. Doug was a decent player, but he's become a very good coach and this was a big chance with Canada's national team. He coached Finland to a bronze medal at the IIHF World Championship in 2008 and is very proud of that – but, as he said to me during that interview on the ice: "This is my country and I'm coaching Canadians and that makes it really special."

**Davos vs. Mannheim Semifinal:** Patrick Kane put on a clinic that combined his remarkable skill set with an enthusiasm that no one in the building will ever forget. He scored two goals in the game, including the winner with 22 seconds remaining – and he celebrated as though he was in a Stanley Cup playoff game. I interviewed him on the ice afterwards, and his comment of (roughly): "It's hockey. I love playing and I'm happy when I'm playing," was a nice moment.

**Canada's Championship Celebration:** The players did something I'd never seen here before – they lifted the Spengler Cup over their heads and passed it around, Stanley Cup style, from one player to another on the ice. The fans loved it and, as one Swiss reporter said to me on the ice at the time: "They're having fun and making this ceremony something that it should be. This is great." I second that.

**Classy Veterans:** It truly warmed my heart to see old hockey warriors (and guys I've known since they were in their teens) Ryan Smyth and Joe Thornton. They remembered my name, they made a point of saying "hi" and they were absolute pros to deal with in terms of interview demands and anything else that was needed not from just TSN, but media from all over Europe. They both accorded the respect this tournament deserves and represented themselves, their teams and their country with pride. Old pros. They get it.

**Brad Pascall:** Canada's general manager was pulling the strings for his second Spengler Cup tournament. The 2011 version was a disaster. It was the poorest showing ever by a Canadian team at the Spengler Cup. Pascall was on a mission to get it right in 2012. He went off-script and didn't bring in a former NHL coach to

oversee things. Instead he went with two guys who both know the Canadian Swiss-based players and the teams. He also spent hours and hours consulting with players and their agents to work through whatever issues needed to be worked through to make sure that he could assemble the best possible team. Lastly, he respected the guys in the Swiss League who've answered the call before (and will again) like Travis Roche, Josh Holden and Micki Dupont (just to name three) by not bringing in too many locked out NHLers. It was a perfect mix.

**The Atmosphere:** It never gets tired for me. There is loads of singing, chanting, drum beating, beer drinking and sausage eating by the thousands of fans who descend on this small town every Christmas season, and the good-naturedness of it is always a pleasure to observe. What made it more fun this year was to observe the reactions of guys on the Canadian team (and their families) who had never experienced it before. A couple of the veteran NHL players, knowing that this was likely a once in a career experience, were sad to leave. So was I. ■



HHOF-IIHF Images / Andy Mettler

Ryan Smyth (left) and Patrice Bergeron celebrate a goal during the 2012 Spengler Cup championship game



# TEAM CANADA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION / HOCKEY CANADA FOUNDATION

## Recent Events Summary

### 2013 IIHF WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP DEC. 26, 2012 – JAN. 5, 2013 | UFA, RUSSIA

For the first time since 2008 Canada's National Junior Team headed across the Atlantic for the IIHF World Junior Championship, as Ufa, Russia – 11 hours ahead of the Eastern time zone – played host to the 2013 tournament.

Thanks to the NHL lockout, all of Canada's top junior talent was available for the tournament, which made for a competitive selection camp Dec. 10-14 at Hockey Canada's home rink at the Markin MacPhail Centre in Calgary.

After a week-long pre-competition camp in Finland that included a pair of exhibition games, the Canadian contingent arrived in Ufa on Dec. 23 and opened the World Juniors three days later with a 9-3 Boxing Day victory over Germany.

A come-from-behind 6-3 win over Slovakia was followed by a 2-1 victory over the United States, setting up a first-place showdown with the host country on New Year's Eve. Facing a pro-Russian crowd of close to 8,000, Canada outshot Russia 48-22 and made sure a pair of early power-play goals stood up in a 4-1 win, clinching a bye into the semifinals.

It was an all-North American match-up in the semis, as the Canadians faced the Americans – the 10th time in the last seven World Juniors the two teams would meet, and the fifth time in a semifinal or medal game over that stretch.

Unfortunately for Canada there would be no repeat of the preliminary round victory, as the U.S. opened up a 4-0 lead through two periods and a short-handed goal from Ty Rattie (Airdrie, Alta./Portland, WHL) was all the offence the Canadians could muster in a 5-1 loss, sending them to the bronze medal game for the second year in a row.

With Canada's 14-year medal streak on the line, the bronze medal game was yet another Canada-Russia classic, with the Canadians erasing deficits of 3-1, 4-3 and 5-4 to force overtime, only to see the Russians score 95 seconds into the extra period to leave Canada off the podium for the first time since 1998.

Canadian captain Ryan Nugent-Hopkins (Burnaby, B.C./Edmonton, NHL) finished as the tournament's leading scorer with 15 points (4G 11A) in six games, and was named Top Forward by the IIHF Directorate and to the media all-star team. ■



Canadian forward Mark Scheifele tries to pull away from a Russian defender during the 2013 IIHF World Junior Championship

### 2013 WORLD UNDER-17 HOCKEY CHALLENGE DEC. 29, 2012 – JAN. 4, 2013 | VICTORIAVILLE & DRUMMONDVILLE, QUE.

The future stars of the game gathered in Victoriaville and Drummondville, Que., for the 2013 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge as the tournament returned to the province it originated in for the first time since 1994.

For the second year in a row, and just the third time in the tournament's 28-year history, the gold medal game featured a pair of international teams, with Sweden claiming its first-ever U17 gold with a 7-5 win over defending champion Russia in a back-and-forth final at the Colisée in Victoriaville.

Quebec was the lone Canadian team to make the semifinals, surprising Ontario – which had won its previous two games by a combined 23-1 – in the preliminary round finale to sneak into the final four. But the French Canadians came up short against the Swedes in the semis and dropped a 4-3 decision to the United States in the bronze medal game.

Ontario and Pacific both had their semifinal hopes dashed on the final day of preliminary play, but the two Canadian entries put on a show in the fifth-place game, with Pacific earning a wild 7-6 win thanks to a goal from Conner Bleackley (High River, Alta./Red Deer, WHL) with 1:31 to go.

Fifteen-year-old Connor McDavid (Newmarket, Ont./Erie, OHL) lived up to the hype for Ontario, finishing as the top Canadian scorer with nine points (6G 3A) in five games and earning a spot on the tournament all-star team, along with Quebec goaltender Julio Billia (Montreal, Que./Chicoutimi, LHJMQ). ■



Quebec (in red) and Ontario battle on the final day of preliminary round action at the 2013 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge





## 2013 WORLD SPORT SCHOOL CHALLENGE

DEC. 28, 2012 – JAN. 2, 2013 | CALGARY, ALTA.

For the second consecutive year, Shattuck-St. Mary's School (Faribault, Minn.) earned the gold medal at the World Sport School Challenge, beating the Czech Republic's national under-17 team 3-0 in the Prep Division final at the Markin MacPhail Centre in Calgary.

In addition, the Okanagan Hockey Academy (Penticton, B.C.) claimed the first-ever Varsity Division gold medal thanks to a 5-2 victory over Rothesay Netherwood School (Rothesay, N.B.).

In the Prep Division gold medal game, Shattuck-St. Mary's got a 27-save shutout from Anthony Brodeur – son of Olympic gold medalist Martin Brodeur – and a goal and an assist from Ryan Norman to remain undefeated all time at the tournament and hand the Czechs their first loss.

In the Varsity Division gold medal game, Okanagan Hockey Academy avenged its lone loss of the tournament, getting two goals and an assist from Brett Young and three assists from Max Fritz to beat Rothesay Netherwood, scoring three times in the third period to break open a 2-2 game.

In its second year, The World Sport School Challenge was developed in line with a commitment made by Hockey Canada's officers and branches, "to service sport schools and create a positive and flexible infrastructure that meets the needs of this Hockey Canada customer," one of six priorities of focus the organization committed to in August 2011. ■



Shattuck-St. Mary's School celebrates its second consecutive World Sport School Challenge gold medal

## 2013 MECO CUP

JAN. 2-6, 2013 | FÜSSEN & MEMMINGEN, GERMANY

For the ninth time in 11 years, Canada's National Women's Under-22/Development Team won the gold medal at the Meco Cup, defeating Russia 8-3 on Jan. 6 at Füssen Arena.

Canada finished the tournament with a perfect 4-0 preliminary round record against senior women's teams, beating host Germany 8-1 on Jan. 2, shutting out Switzerland 4-0 on Jan. 3 and blanking Finland 2-0 on Jan. 5 to advance to the gold medal game.

In the final, Mélodie Daoust (Valleyfield, Que./McGill University, CIS) opened the scoring, Jamie Lee Rattray (Kanata, Ont./Clarkson University, ECAC) restored the Canadian lead at 2-1 and Laura Stacey (Kleinburg, Ont./Dartmouth University, ECAC) added another in the final minute to give Canada the 3-2 edge going into the first intermission. Brianne Jenner (Oakville, Ont./Cornell University, ECAC) gave Canada the game's first two-goal lead early in the middle frame and Daoust scored her second three minutes later to make it 5-2 for Canada after 40 minutes.

Brigitte Lacquette (Waterhen, Man./University of Minnesota Duluth, WCHA), Carolyne Prévost (Sarnia, Ont./Montreal, CWHL) and Sarah Edney (Mississauga, Ont./Harvard University, ECAC) scored in the third, the final two into an empty net. Christina Kessler (Mississauga, Ont./Toronto, CWHL) made 15 saves for the win, and earned a pair of assists.

Marie-Philip Poulin (Beauceville, Que./Boston University, HE) served as captain of Canada's National Women's Under-22/Development Team, while Laura Fortino (Hamilton, Ont./Cornell University, ECAC) and Jenner were alternate captains.

Canada is a nine-time gold medalist at the Meco Cup, formerly known as the MLP Cup and Air Canada Cup, winning gold in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2013. ■



Canada's National Women's Under-22/Development Team gathers for a team photo after beating Russia 8-3 to win the Meco Cup



## 2013 IIHF ICE HOCKEY U18 WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

DEC. 29, 2012 – JAN. 5, 2013 | HEINOLA & VIERUMÄKI, FINLAND

Talk about a storybook ending for Team Canada.

Catherine Dubois (Quebec City, Que./Limoilou, Collégial AA) scored in the dying seconds – 13 left, to be exact – to put the red and white on the scoreboard, tie up the gold medal game at 1-1 and send the Jan. 5 showdown against the United States into overtime at the 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship in Heinola, Finland.

And if that wasn't enough excitement at Arena Heinola, and dedicated fans who followed along online at [www.hockeycanada.ca](http://www.hockeycanada.ca) and [www.twitter.com/hc\\_women](http://www.twitter.com/hc_women), it took just under a minute into the extra fame for Karly Heffernan (St. Albert, Alta./Edge School, JWHL) to score the winner and give the Canadians a 2-1 win and their second straight U18 gold medal. Kimberly Newell (Burnaby, B.C./Princeton University, ECAC) made 39 saves for the win.

It was the bold exclamation point to an exciting hockey tale, which started with a 3-2 shootout win over the C2 Pojat boys Dec. 26 in Kirkkonummi, Finland, and continued to unfold with a perfect 3-0 preliminary round, including a 4-1 win over Hungary on Dec. 29, a 4-0 shutout over Finland on Dec. 30 and a 7-0 romp past Germany on Jan. 1. The impressive round robin earned Canada a bye into the semifinals, where it topped Sweden 7-3 to advance to the gold medal game against its long-time rivals from south of the border.

This year's edge-of-the-seat ending marks Canada's third gold medal at the U18 world championship. Canada won last year, shutting out the United States 3-0 in Zlin, Czech Republic, and in 2010, defeating the U.S. 5-4 in overtime in Chicago, Ill. Defencemen Halli Krzyzaniak (Neepawa, Man./Pursuit of Excellence, Midget AAA) was named Best Defenceman by the IIHF directorate, while she along with forwards Hanna Bunton (Belleville, Ont./Whitby, PWHL) and Dubois were named Canada's top three players of the tournament.

Captain Kristyn Capizzano (Oakville, Ont./Mississauga, PWHL), alternate captains Emily Clark (Saskatoon, Sask./Okanagan Hockey Academy, JWHL) and Krzyzaniak, along with Ashleigh Brykaliuk (Brandon, Man./Westman, MFMHL) and Dubois, were all returnees who won their second world championship gold medal this year. Jessica Dodds (London, Ont./London, PWHL), Kristin Gilmour (Millgrove, Ont./Oakville, PWHL) and Sarah Nurse (Hamilton, Ont./Stoney Creek, PWHL) made their Team Canada debuts at this world championship. ■



Catherine Daoust hoists the trophy after helping Canada win its second consecutive IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship gold medal



Team Canada defenceman Halli Krzyzaniak battles Finnish captain Suvi Ollikainen during Canada's 4-0 preliminary round win at the 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship





# TEAM CANADA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION / HOCKEY CANADA FOUNDATION UPCOMING AND PAST EVENTS

## DON'T MISS MOMENTS AT WOMEN'S WORLDS

**GERALDINE HEANEY CAN'T WAIT TO REUNITE WITH FORMER TEAMMATES – AND COACH HER DAUGHTER AT PROVINCIALS – WHEN THE PUCK DROPS IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL THIS SPRING**

by Kristen Lipscombe



National Women's Team members (from L to R) Cheryl Pounder, Andrea Hunter and Marianne Grnak show off their gold medals after Canada beat the U.S. 6-3 in the final of the 1994 IIHF World Women's Championship

When the puck drops in Ottawa this April for the 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship, not only will Olympic gold medallist and seven-time world champion Geraldine Heaney be reuniting with her former Canadian teammates – she'll also be coaching her eight-year-old daughter Shannon at the OWSA provincial championship.

Although there are still some games to be played in Shannon's regular season Novice B schedule, head coach Heaney is fairly confident the Ancaster Avalanche will be battling for a gold medal at the Ontario Women's Hockey Association provincials, which this year are taking place when the women's worlds takes over the nation's capital, so that minor female players have the chance to see their role models in action on the ice.

Shannon and her teammates, however, are fortunate to be inspired by a women's hockey legend each and every time they step on the ice. Heaney herself is excited to see the former teammates who inspired and motivated her day in and day out, when she gathers with fellow Team Canada alumnae from the 1992, 1994 and 1997 gold medal-winning National Women's Team contingents.

"Just seeing everybody, and what they're up to, is kind of fun," Heaney, originally from Belfast, Ireland, but raised in Weston, Ont., said of getting to touch base with the girls she used to spend countless hours with preparing and playing for gold, whether in the dressing room or on the ice.

"When they did it in Winnipeg, we thought it was great – and we got to bring our kids!" Heaney said with a chuckle, recalling the first such National Women's Team reunion hosted by the Team Canada Alumni Association (TCAA) at the 2007 IIHF World Women's Championship, to recognize the women who won gold for Canada at the inaugural 1990 women's worlds. "If it wasn't for them doing that, I probably wouldn't see too many from out west, or outside my province."

The TCAA is holding its next such reunion April 5-7 in Ottawa, to both honour the

incredible achievements of women's hockey pioneers such as Heaney, and keep the closely knit National Women's Team network connected, as Canada's women's program – and female game itself – both continue to grow and prosper.

"As an association, we are very excited to have 40 alumnae join us from the '92, '94 and '97 world championship teams," Hockey Canada Foundation executive director Chris Bright said. "The overwhelmingly positive response speaks volumes to the importance of the TCAA, and the connection between players and Hockey Canada. This gathering will be a terrific recognition of Canada's hockey heritage and a celebration of today's women's game."

It will also be exciting to "see the national team play again, too," Heaney said, adding it "will bring back a lot of memories" of that very first world championship in the nation's capital 23 years ago, when she and her teammates had to wear pink jerseys in order to attract publicity.

"It's kind of hard to believe that's what we did," she said with a laugh. "You just kind of sit back and look at how much it has changed ... people didn't even know women's hockey in '90."

Heaney said it simply "wasn't normal; girls didn't even play hockey," when she first laced up her skates. "Now, with my daughter, they're starting young."

Shannon is in her third year of hockey and like her head coach – slash mom – "loves it"

"Now our kids play – things have changed so much!" she said of the many hockey moms she once played with on Team Canada. "Being there in Ottawa, it's a great hockey city, and with provincials being at the same time, I would hope all the games would be packed.

"It just shows you girls' hockey is huge in Canada, and it just keeps on getting bigger and bigger." ■



## DO IT FOR DARON

### 2013 IIHF ICE HOCKEY WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CHOOSES A CHARITY THAT'S CLOSE TO THE HEART

by Kristen Lipscombe

It's a cause that continues to pull on the heart strings of the passionate female hockey community – and far beyond.

Hockey Canada announced in late December that D.I.F.D. (Do It For Daron) is the charity of choice for the 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship, taking place April 5-7 at SBP Arena in Ottawa and the Nepean Sportsplex. Do It For Daron is a youth-driven initiative at The Royal Ottawa Hospital focused on raising awareness and inspiring conversations about youth mental health.

It was named by family and friends of the late Daron Richardson, the daughter of National Junior Team and National Men's Team alumnus Luke Richardson, and sister of National Women's Under-18 Team alumna Morgan Richardson. Daron, who herself played the female game with the Ottawa Senators, lost her life to suicide at just 14 years old, sending shockwaves throughout the hockey community at all levels.

Recognized by everything purple from hearts on helmets and jerseys to bracelets and water bottles, Do It For Daron "is inspired by hope for a future where young people will reach out for help without fear or shame ... (and) supports programs and initiatives aimed at transforming youth mental health," according to [www.DIFD.com](http://www.DIFD.com). ■



Luke Richardson



Morgan Richardson





## CAPTAIN CANADA LOOKS BACK

### JEAN LABONTÉ REFLECTS ON A STORIED SLEDGE HOCKEY CAREER

by Debbie Elicksen



National Sledge Team captain Jean Labonté accepts the trophy after Canada beat the United States 2-1 in a shootout in the final of the 2009 Hockey Canada Cup

If you've ever watched the national team in action, you probably accept that sledge hockey is not an easy game.

The official criteria for playing the sport is that a player must be non-ambulant or can only walk short distances. This includes someone who has lost a leg from osteosarcoma in the left tibia at age 20.

Jean Labonté knew there were plenty of Paralympic sports to consider, but wasn't really aware he could play sledge hockey until he met someone who introduced him to the game. That someone was Hervé Lord, who would end up being his national teammate.

Since then, Labonté has led a storied career in hockey. Captain of Canada's National Sledge Team from 2007-08 to 2009-10, Labonté has three gold medals (2006 Paralympic Games, 2000 and 2008 IPC Sledge Hockey World Championships), one silver (1998 Paralympic Games), and two bronze (1996 and 2009 IPC Sledge Hockey World Championships).

"It took me one year to be comfortable at the beginning. You know what you want to do but you can't do it. It takes a lot of coordination to try and move, and then move the puck at the same time. Once you get balance, you just pick it up."

Labonté admits it helps if you have the aptitude and are a natural athlete, then it all comes into play, but you always try to improve.

When he got the phone call about making the national team, it was hard to believe, but obviously exciting. He jokes that he couldn't really jump for joy that high on his prosthetic leg.

"It was a big surprise, a shock. I didn't know what that meant (being selected for the team). I just wanted to play hockey. It happened so fast. It turned out to be a great experience after great experience."

Able-bodied people may be surprised with the sledge team's sense of humor and how they joke about their disabilities. They would do things to each other, like tape a teammate's legs to the ceiling of the dressing room before he came in off the ice, and then he would have to figure out how to get them down.

"We were in separate vans. One player was a double amputee. The sports psychologist who was traveling with us was new to the team. This player asked her to go to the back of the van and get his pair of shoes from the baggage area. He's laughing as she does it. He's a double amputee. He has no shoes."

When the players travel by plane, they usually take off their legs because it's more comfortable, and they will put them in the luggage compartment.

"You should see the faces of the people when they open the bins. One time, a stewardess was preparing the cabin for take-off and a foot kept sliding out of the overhead as she went to close it. My teammate kept yelling, 'Oww, that hurt.' She apologized."

After sledding up for his first international tournament at the 1996 world championship in Sweden, Labonté's career came to a close after achieving the colossal honor of being named the Canadian flag bearer in 2010 at the Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

A lot has evolved for the sport since those early days. The game has grown tremendously. Today there is better equipment overall. The sticks, picks, sleds and blades are better, and the players are faster.

Sledge hockey was introduced to Canada in 1982 and debuted at the Paralympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway in 1994. Then Hockey Canada brought it under its umbrella in 2004.

Labonté says Hockey Canada brought professionalism to the sport. It helped raise the level of preparation and improved the technical side of the game. Sledge hockey is now in more countries. The depth is greater than it was.

"It used to be Canada, Sweden, Norway; now Asian countries are catching up. There are a good group of countries that can aim for a medal."

The continued growth of the game will depend on those countries supporting it at the grassroots level as there are not a lot of players to pick from. Also programs like the Canadian Forces "Soldier On" are good for exposing disabled individuals to sledge hockey.

Labonté has taken a break from the game for the last couple of years, however, he still maintains a connection with the national team as the sledge rep on Hockey Canada's board. He feels that camaraderie at every event he goes to.

"You realize that once you're out of the game, you're still a part of the Hockey Canada family."

He plays a bit of recreational hockey, and he just registered for a university course to try something new and to see where it leads. In the meantime, there will always be the wealth of stories to look back on to keep that bond strong. ■



## STAFFORD GETS SPOT IN HOCKEY HALL OF FAME

### LONG-TIME EQUIPMENT MANAGER EARNS HIGHEST HONOUR



Equipment manager Barrie Stafford (far left) watches from the bench during the glory days of the Edmonton Oilers



Barrie Stafford

The Team Canada Alumni Association gained another Hockey Hall of Famer last fall when long-time Edmonton Oilers and Team Canada equipment manager Barrie Stafford was inducted into the Professional Hockey Athletic Trainers Society and Society of Professional Hockey Equipment Managers Wall of Honour, which is located in the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto.

In 30-odd years in hockey, Stafford, now the Oilers' director of special projects, has been on 15 winning squads: five Stanley Cups (1984, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1990), three Canada Cups (1984, 1987, 1991), the 2004 World Cup, 2002 Olympics and 1994 IIHF World Championship. As a player in the late 1970s, Stafford also won one minor pro championship with the Amarillo Wranglers and three Canadian university championships with the University of Alberta Golden Bears.

In the fall of 2011, David Staples of the Edmonton Journal sat down with Stafford for a seven-part series on his career, called *The Oilers Way*. One of those parts focused on Stafford's international experience, and some of his favourite Team Canada moments. Here's an excerpt:

Players, coaches and managers came and went from Team Canada between the 1984 Canada Cup and the 2004 World Cup, but one thing remained the same for Canada's biggest international hockey wins: trainer Barrie Stafford was

behind the scenes as the team's equipment manager.

"I was lucky enough to be behind the bench for some of the greatest games ever played in that era," Stafford says.

What stands out most for Stafford is the fierce determination that Canadian players had to win, exemplified by stars like Steve Yzerman and Mario Lemieux playing through serious injuries, and Mark Messier taking charge with dominating physical play.

Stafford has the utmost respect for the players able to come through for Canada under such crushing pressure. "Whether it's the Olympics or Canada Cups, you're going to let your country down if you lose," he says. "People don't realize how much pressure is on these guys."

The 1984 tournament was Stafford's first international match. Oilers coach Glen Sather was named Canada's coach, so he was allowed to bring in his own crew, including Stafford. For Sather, it was an easy call. "Barrie had a great relationship with the players," he says. "He ran a good ship. I thought he was terrific. If they had a Hall of Fame for trainers, Barrie should be in it." ■

To read the full story, [CLICK HERE](#).

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## NIEDERMAYER HONoured BY BLAZERS DECORATED D-MAN HAS NO. 28 RETIRED BY JUNIOR TEAM

by Mark Hunter – Kamloops Daily News



Team Canada alumnus and Kamloops Blazers co-owner Mark Recchi presents Scott Niedermayer with a painting during Niedermayer's jersey retirement ceremony in Kamloops on Jan. 25

Scott Niedermayer won't go down as the last person in Kamloops Blazers history to wear No. 28, but the number will henceforth always be his.

The Blazers retired Niedermayer's former number before a Jan. 25 WHL game against the Prince Albert Raiders. His No. 28 will hang alongside Greg Hawgood's No. 4, Mark Recchi's No. 8, Dean Evason's No. 20, Greg Evtushevski's No. 26 and Rob Brown's No. 44.

Since Niedermayer moved into the NHL in 1992, the No. 28 has been in consistent use by Blazers players, most recently by defenceman Brady Gaudet during the 2011-12 season.

Niedermayer even remembers the first player to wear No. 28 after him – it was his good friend Bob Maudie, a fellow Cranbrook product who went on to play four seasons with the Blazers, winning two Memorial Cups.

"It was in good hands," Niedermayer said. "We're great friends, still stay in contact – he's doing well. It's pretty cool that we have that connection."

Maudie, who is three years younger than Niedermayer, grew up on Brookview Crescent in Cranbrook, the same street where the Niedermayer family lived. Maudie's brother, Alan, shot the iconic photo of Niedermayer raising the Stanley Cup atop Fisher Peak – it's hardly a stretch to say that half the houses in Cranbrook have copies of that picture on their walls.

"There were the two Maudies, my brother (Rob) and myself and one other family (the Cains) – the families were very tight," Niedermayer said following a Friday news conference. "We grew up doing a lot together – road hockey, pond hockey."

Niedermayer only played three seasons with the Blazers (1989-92), picking up 190 points in 156 games. He also made the pass that set up Zac Boyer's last-minute game-winner in the 1992 Memorial Cup final.

When Niedermayer was introduced at a news conference, Recchi, representing the Blazers' ownership group, of which he is a part, said that Niedermayer's "accolades speak for themselves."

Those accolades – which were printed on the back of a shirt for sale during the game against Prince Albert – include the Conn Smythe Trophy as NHL playoff MVP in 2007, the Norris Trophy as the NHL's top defenceman in 2004 and four NHL all-star selections, along with a spot on the 1993 NHL all-rookie team.

Niedermayer won four Stanley Cups (three with the New Jersey Devils, one with the Anaheim Ducks), a world junior championship, a World Cup, a world men's championship and, of course, WHL and Memorial Cup championships with the

Blazers in 1992. (Niedermayer's name is also on the Memorial Cup with the 2002 Kootenay Ice, of which he is a co-owner).

Despite having a trophy room that's probably bursting at the walls, Niedermayer was excited to get the call about the number retirement.

"It's pretty special ... it doesn't happen every day," he said, while sitting about a foot away from the Memorial Cup itself. "It (means) a lot."

Niedermayer doesn't remember how he ended up wearing No. 28 with the Blazers. He spent his entire NHL career wearing No. 27.

"I think when I got to New Jersey, somebody had 28 there, otherwise I would have kept wearing it," he said. "It worked pretty well for me here (but) there was a player that had 28 (in New Jersey) so they gave me the next-closest thing."

"I was never too fussy about the number thing, but the numbers I ended up wearing worked well."

Niedermayer may have started his hockey career in Cranbrook and ended it in Anaheim after the 2009-10 season, but he made a major mark on Kamloops, and it affected him as well.

"This morning, I went and visited my billets' house where I stayed when I played here," he said. "They've spruced it up a bit here and there, but it's still the same house."

Niedermayer had a gaggle of friends and family come out Friday. He was joined by wife Lisa and their four sons – Logan, Jackson, Joshua and Luke – as well as mom Carol and brother Rob, also a former NHL player.

Former Blazers general manager Bob Brown also attended last night, as did Brian Burke, Niedermayer's GM in Anaheim. WHL commissioner Ron Robison made an appearance, as did Hawgood.

"With Mark (Recchi) here and other people coming in – it means a lot," Niedermayer said.

Niedermayer recently was named an assistant coach with the Ducks, and also has been serving as a coach for three of his sons' minor teams.

"I'm at the rink more than I've ever been, really," said Niedermayer, who lives in Anaheim. "I realize now what my parents did. Going to the rink and tying an eight-year-old's skates is not one of the easier things to do when they're squirming around."

"I'm enjoying it a lot – that's one thing that retiring has allowed me to do." ■

# YOU'VE WORN THE JERSEY



HHOF-IIIHF/Images on Ice/Andy Devlin

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