

CALGARY *hockey*

MAGAZINE

FALL 2011



**NEW RULES
EXPLAINED**

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FOR THE**

**2011 - 2012
Season**



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Early morning assist.



PUBLISHER'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the Fall Edition of the Hockey Magazine!

Established three seasons ago, we are excited to be back for another season, with news and stories about what's going on in the hockey world.

There has been a lot of news coverage regarding concussions in hockey, and while most of it relates to the pros, it's essential that minor hockey sets the standard for players who aspire to play at the highest level, but most importantly, for the vast majority of players who play the game for fun. (And who hope to play the game for years to come.)

It's imperative that players, coaches and officials work together to eliminate hits to the head, and all hockey organizations are encouraging respect on the ice (play safe, play smart) to significantly reduce the incidences of concussions. It's important also to understand and recognize what a concussion is – what are the symptoms, and what you should do when you suspect you've been concussed, or if your son or daughter has appeared to suffer a concussion. There was a time when players kept quiet when they had "their bell rung," but those times are over, and you can see the difference all the way to the pro level.

On the pro side of things, Jon Hagan has contributed a great article about the "Culture of Hockey," with opinions shared by some of the toughest guys who ever played in the NHL. It's a very interesting article, one which will inspire thoughts and debate about the role of enforcers in the game, and for the most part, at the pro level.

On the minor hockey side of things, we have two great articles about some interesting programs which combine scholastics and hockey. First off, there is a great partnership between the École Highwood High School and the Foothills Midget AA Bisons. This partnership helps address the lack of sufficient ice time, while providing opportunities for kids to stay focused on their education.

The small town of Warner is another success story, one where the spirit of a small community helped save a town, and in doing so, carved out one of the nation's finest training grounds for female hockey players.

That's it for this issue, with more to come in our next edition, which publishes during Esso Minor Hockey Week in January. In the meantime, we wish all participants in minor hockey a safe and enjoyable 2011-2012 season! Hockey is a great sport, and a wonderful experience, with memories and achievements which build fitness, character and friendships.

Best wishes to all!



Sincerely,

Rob Suggitt
Publisher,
HOCKEY MAGAZINE



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DO YOU HAVE A MINOR HOCKEY STORY TO TELL?

We are always open to suggestions for articles and stories, and in particular, at the minor hockey level. If you have a suggestion for a story, please pass it along to publisher@hockeymagazine.net.



VICTORY MOUTHGUARDS



By Dr. David Cichon DDS

Victory Mouthguards specializes in the custom fabrication and fitting of high performance EVA laminated mouthguards to protect athletes of all ages against sports injuries and dental trauma and to raise their performance to previously unachieved levels.

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Calling All Gold Medal Winners!

If your child won a gold medal at the 2011 ESSO Minor Hockey Week, we want to hear from you! Please complete the following questionnaire and send it in by November 30 th, 2011. Your child could be featured in our 2011 - 2012 Yearbook edition of the Hockey Magazine. Send completed entries along with a photograph (preferably in a hockey uniform) to Hockey Magazine #950, Bell Tower, 10104 - 103 Ave., Edmonton, AB T5J 0H8 (If you enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope, we will gladly return your photo.) or E-Mail to publisher@hockeymagazine.net

Name: _____
 Current Team: _____
 Age: _____ School Grade: _____
 Number of Years You've Played Hockey: _____
 Usual Position: _____
 Favourite Hockey Team: _____
 Favourite Hockey Player: _____
 Who is Your Role Model?: _____
 Other Sports/Interests: _____
 Favourite Hockey Memory: _____

ANNOUNCEMENT

We are pleased to welcome Vicki Davis as our new Account Manager with the Hockey Calgary Magazine.

Vicki has an extensive background in business, advertising, sales and marketing. In addition to her professional experience, she is an accomplished elite hockey player.

Vicki first laced up the skates at seven years old, and for most of her minor hockey experience, she played on "boys teams".

She was recruited to Shattuck St. Mary's in Minnesota, spending grades 11 and 12 with the Girls Prep Team, winning a state championship in 2002, only to lose by one game in the 2002 USA Nationals. Although Sidney Crosby arrived the year after Vicki graduated, she trained and studied along side with notable future NHLer's including Zach Parise, Drew Stafford, Patrick Eaves, Brady Murray, and Casey Borer.

Vicki earned a full scholarship to the University of New Hampshire, and as a freshman, was named to the All Rookie Team for Hockey East. Vicki had chronic injury setbacks in her second year of college hockey and returned home for rehabilitation.

She then joined the University of Wisconsin-Madison and remained part of the 2006 squad which won the NCAA National Championship that year.

Vicki completed her education at the London School of International Students in London UK, graduating with a BA in Sociology in 2007. She helped run a family-owned small business – "Gourmet Granola" which she later sold to a third party. Most recently, Vicki worked with a radio conglomerate (in sales and advertising), and her interest in hockey has continued. She plays part time for several men's league teams, and she is the assistant coach for a midget AA hockey team.

We are very excited to have Vicki as a major part of the Hockey Magazine. Vicki brings passion to our team: from the magazine to the rink!!



Look no further than the Hockey Magazine

- distributed in all Calgary arenas
- 10,000 copies printed per issue
- targeted to hockey parents, fans, coaches, etc. (an ideal target market)

Our next issue comes out in January (Esso Minor Hockey Week). Booking deadline is December 16th, 2011
Please contact us at vicki@hockeymagazine.net or (780) 782-8070 for further details.

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miss out!**



AFTERNOON PRACTICES FOR THE FOOTHILLS MIDGET AA BISONS



By **Jeremy Freeborn**

Photos provided by Deborah Spence
Communications/Events Manager
Foothills School Division

A major issue for minor hockey teams throughout the entire country today is the constant battle for ice time. There are only 24 hours in a day, and it is common for teams to have limited practices because of the abundance of minor hockey clubs at all age levels that need ice time too. In High River, Alberta, a unique and revolutionary relationship has started between two unlikely parties-- the École Highwood High School and the Midget AA team of the Foothills Bisons Hockey Association.

A relationship like this cannot exist without the remarkable co-operation from everyone involved. École Highwood High School principal Leah Kingston is a hockey mom and Bisons' Head Coach Dan MacDonald is a certified teacher.

Changes needed to be made in High River because players were traveling late at night for practices and home games, many times to either Vulcan or even Claresholm. The arenas in High River and Nanton were not available due to their constant use.

“The team will now have guaranteed ice time Monday through Thursday in the mid-afternoon.”

According to the Foothills School Division in an Aug. 31 news release, “The team will now have guaranteed ice time Monday through Thursday in the mid-afternoon. Players will forego the last block of classes to practice and then return to school after hours to study specialized credit courses designed to aid their development as athletes and foster practical life skills.”

MacDonald will be responsible for teaching the specialized credit courses once the practices are complete. At this time students will study five modules linked to fitness, sports psychology, nutrition, leadership, and Career and Life Management. Each module is worth one high school credit.

The École Highwood High School is also opening its doors to students who are home schooled for the proper instruction of the after-practice modules.

Kingston has high praise for MacDonald's teaching ability. “Dan is a well-renowned coach who has been well-respected for many years and has a great gift in building relationships



(L-R): Kaleb Burnett, Cole Miller, Blayne Gillanders, Bisons' Midget AA Head Coach Dan MacDonald, Ecole Secondaire Highwood High School principal Leah Kingston, Levi Wilson, Mike Schaefer and Austin Beauchamp.

with the students. And I think because of the fact he is going to be in our school as a teacher can only benefit us. So if the student is experiencing trouble in school, he is going to be on them, and encourage them to get done what they need to get done in the classroom, and he can also carry forward that relationship on the ice, so I think the kids will gain a special experience."

MacDonald believes the Bisons will be able to gel significantly. "The relationship between the school programming and hockey we feel is another chance for us to grow as a hockey team. One of the issues we had was that all of our players were going to different schools. Some guys went to Claresholm, others to Nanton, and some to High River. At least one class of their day now is in High River. We meet as a group, are together as a team, and we have to hang around each other more. The essence of a team is affiliation, and it's hard when players are scattered and going in different directions."

Improving the skills of the athletes on the ice is another major intent of the program. "Students who may not be ready for midget AAA or junior A, etc., can still get top quality coaching and help with their development," Kingston stated. "We certainly want to promote our students and our athletes to continue to work on their skills and become the best hockey players they can, and do that while still being able to compete at the school level."

MacDonald also credits Deputy Superintendent Del Litke and Assistant Superintendent Stacey Meyer of the Foothills School Division, and Rick Valette, the Director of Hockey Development for the Foothills Bisons Hockey Association, for helping make this partnership a reality. "We just kept finding ways we could make it work," said MacDonald. "It took about five years in the making before the whole thing came to pass. The late night practices were simply not conducive to a good education."

Kingston also realizes the importance of hockey in High River as a whole. "Well I think hockey is Canada's sport, of course. Kids benefit from being part of a team. I think Highwood High School students benefit from having that relationship here in town. We have a very supportive community that I am very proud of. I think whatever we

"The relationship between the school programming and hockey we feel is another chance for us to grow as a hockey team."

can do to keep our kids in town and to keep our kids developing in both sport and school, then we are doing our job as educators."

Kingston's son, Rhett, is attending the Athol Murray College of Notre Dame in Wilcox, Saskatchewan, a school known for its strong connection with the Notre Dame Hounds of the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League. The Hounds' alumni include Curtis Joseph, Brad Richards, Wendel Clark and Rod Brind'Amour.

Kingston understands the challenges that students face in not only combining academics and athletics, but an after school job as well. "A lot of students need to work, and so by us being flexible in their daily schedule in school, and working with the Bisons, this gives a lot of our students the ability to still hold down a job, and not be up in the middle of the night, trying to accomplish all three things."

The advances of educational technology has also made things easier for the players. "We have a program here at Highwood called the Hub," Kingston explained. "It is online learning through our module program. Students are able to sign up for a course, literally complete it on their own time, with a teacher tracking their progress. So they don't have to sit in front of a teacher, as it is traditionally done."

It will be interesting to see how much the Foothills Midget AA Bisons improve as a team in the South Central Alberta Hockey League this season. In 2010-11, the Bisons were the South Division champions and earned the right to represent the southern zone with wins over Okotoks and Taber. The team finished fourth in their pool at the provincial play-offs before losing three-games-to-one to the Wheatland Chiefs in the league championships. Will the afternoon hockey practices lead to a 2012 championship title and better grades in the classroom? Time will tell.



Bisons' Midget AA Head Coach Dan MacDonald (left) demonstrates training techniques to some of the players during CTS instruction.



THE NEW HEAD CONTACT RULE

PLAY SAFE, PLAY SMART

By Maurice Tougas

No one personifies the debate over head contact in hockey like Sidney Crosby.

The Pittsburgh Penguins superstar, the NHL's preeminent player, was on track to a record-setting season last year when back-to-back shots to the head in January put Crosby on the shelf for the season. Only now, months after sustaining the concussions, is Crosby slowly returning to the ice.

Worse yet is the sad fate of Boston Bruin star Marc Savard, who was leveled by a blind hit by Matt Cooke in March 2010. Savard hasn't played since, won't play this year, and may never play again.

As minor hockey parents know, concussions are not restricted to muscled professional hockey players skating at full speed. A study by University of Alberta assistant professor Martin Mrazik, conducted during the 2009-10 season in two Edmonton-area minor hockey associations, found that about one in 10 players suffered a concussion that required missing game or practice time. In the U.S., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that among young people aged 15 to 24, sports-related injuries are now second only to car accidents as a cause of traumatic brain injury.

In response to the widespread concern — and perhaps tired of the glacial pace of NHL thinkers — Hockey Canada has instituted strict, no tolerance rules regarding head contact in minor hockey, effective this season. According to one longtime referee, the rule change is one of the most significant in years.

It's called Rule 6.5 - Head Contact, and it's sure to take some getting used to for parents and players. Under the new rules, even accidental contact to the head will now be penalized. Even the age-old sign of disrespect — the so-called face wash — will be considered head contact and liable for a penalty.

Rule 6.5 states that in minor and female hockey, "a minor penalty shall be assessed to any player who accidentally contacts an opponent in the head, face or neck with his stick or any part of the player's body or equipment." All contact above the shoulders is to be called Head Contact.

Hockey Canada has upped the ante for deliberate contact to the head as well.

"A double minor penalty or a major and a game misconduct penalty, at the discretion of the referee and based on the degree of violence of

impact, shall be assessed to any player who intentionally contacts an opponent in the head, face or neck with her stick or any part of the player's body or equipment," the rule states. A match penalty will be given when a player deliberately attempts to injure or deliberately injures an opponent.

That's a lot of new information to absorb, and nobody knows that better than long-time official Kumail Moledina.

The head contact rule is "a significant rule change," said Moledina, certainly one of the most significant in his 19 years of officiating. "We will be calling all accidental and intentional contact to the head."

The impetus for the change came from all levels of hockey, and gained momentum with the high-profile injuries to stars like Crosby, Moledina said.

Training all of the referees is no small chore. All referees must attend referee clinics every year, and the head contact rule is the no. 1 topic.

"All officials will be trained, and there will be a transition period for them to get used to this," said Moledina. "The one thing we will have to have is patience from coaches and players to help us through this transitional period. "There will be some road bumps along the way, but we're hoping with the support of local hockey boards, the transition will be smooth." Moledina asks parents for patience as well.

He expects parents and fans will be accepting, but "this is a drastic change to the rules. We hope the parents, players, coaches and minor hockey boards will embrace this. It will be a learning curve for everyone."

Early on, said Moledina, referees were calling plenty of head contact penalties, sometimes around a dozen a game. But in more recent games, that number has fallen to a couple a game.

"Players are starting to adapt, coaches are starting to adapt," he said.

For the full wording of the new rule, and to see videos that explain what is, and what isn't, head contact, go to www.hockeycanada.ca.

CONCUSSIONS

HOW TO SPOT ONE AND WHAT TO DO



In the macho world of hockey, being knocked silly used to be called 'having your bell rung,' and was considered a part of the game. Players were expected to shake-off the cobwebs, and get back on the ice on the next shift.

While that attitude still has some followers — perhaps mostly among the players, who don't want to miss any ice time — the days of treating concussions as a minor injury are over.

There may still be some confusion among players and parents about what constitutes a concussion. After all, it is an invisible injury that doesn't show up on x-rays or MRIs. Here is an FAQ about concussions, with information coming from the ThinkFirst Foundation, a national non-profit organization dedicated to preventing head and spinal cord injuries.

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury, most often caused by a direct or indirect hit to the head or body. This causes a change in brain function, which results in a variety of symptoms.

WHAT HAPPENS IN A CONCUSSION?

Simply put, the brain gets rattled. It might move inside the skull, and bump up against the bony surface of the skull. Brains weren't made to be moved.

IS SOMEONE WHO HAS HAD A CONCUSSION MORE VULNERABLE TO HAVING ANOTHER?

Yes, at least in the minutes or days after a concussion, when brain cells are vulnerable. This is why it is so important not to return to normal activity until your concussion has healed.

IF I SUSPECT MY SON OR DAUGHTER MAY HAVE SUFFERED A CONCUSSION, SHOULD I JUST LET THEM REST?

This is no time to play doctor. Seek medical advice immediately upon receiving a blow to the head or body that results in signs or symptoms of a concussion. Concussion symptoms may worsen during the day, so it's vital to seek medical attention.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I'VE HAD A CONCUSSION?

Tell someone — coaches, parents, friends, fellow players — if you think you might have been concussed. Do not return to the ice until you get medical attention.

ALL RIGHT, HERE'S THE TOUGH ONE: HOW CAN YOU TELL IF YOU'VE HAD A CONCUSSION?

There are multiple symptoms of concussions. First, it's important to know that you don't have to experience a loss of consciousness to have suffered a concussion. Second, symptoms may appear right away, or they may appear later. Not every concussion has the same symptoms, but certain combinations of symptoms typically occur.

HERE ARE TYPICAL SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION:

- Nausea, vomiting
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Fatigue
- Light-headedness
- Headaches
- Irritability
- Seeing bright lights or stars
- Feeling of being stunned
- Depression

Signs of a concussion include inappropriate behaviour, decrease work/play ability, inability to perform daily activities, memory dysfunction, sleep disturbance, vacant stare and poor balance.

Proper diagnosis of a concussion is the job of a medical professional, which is why if you suspect a concussion, see a doctor.

WHEN CAN I GET BACK TO PLAYING?

A concussed person should be removed from activity immediately and should be assessed by a medical doctor. Given that symptoms may worsen later that night and the next day, you should not return to play or practice until you have seen a doctor. Once the concussion has been diagnosed, it is important to let the injury heal. Don't rush your return to the ice. Most concussions heal uneventfully, but if you get back to the game before you are fully healed, it could set back your recovery (just ask Sidney Crosby). Concussions can result in permanent damage and seriously affect your quality of life. Brains, just like tendons and muscles, take time to heal. Let it do its job.

Sport Nutrition



“Graduate from athlete to *elite athlete* through nutrition”

By Crystal Phillips

Hockey is an exceptionally competitive sport and a thin line can be drawn between what is a good hockey player and a great hockey player. So what is it that makes your teammate, who plays just as many games as you and follows the same on-ice and dryland programs as you, better? And what can make it within your power to cross that line? A sudden twist upsetting my career as an elite athlete has taught me the answer to that question. My personal gains as well as the progression I've seen in the many Olympians and pro-athletes that I have had the opportunity to work with are a testament to my belief that proper nutrition (and don't forget that positive attitude) is never to be underestimated as a factor in making the leap from good to great!

The Twist...

In the spring of 2005, at 19, I plunged from being one of the top speed skaters in Canada to needing, but stubbornly resisting, the aid of a cane to walk. I lost feeling from my chest to my toes and vision in my left eye and was exhausted every waking minute. I received the devastating diagnosis of relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis. This is an auto-immune condition that, at any given moment, can affect nerve transactions, making for a long list of potential symptoms like muscle weakness and spasticity, fatigue, numbness and visual problems to name only a few.

This sudden interruption of my life and athletic career established a turning point. I realized how much I took for granted and that this was a wake-up call to change that. Consequently it is because of the adversity I've had to face that my life has been transformed and enriched. Given some time eventually my question of “why me?” became “why not me, and what am I going to do about it?”

Whether or not I wanted to continue skating was a no-brainer and there was no way MS would be the winner in my fight to get back on the ice. But to actually stay competitive

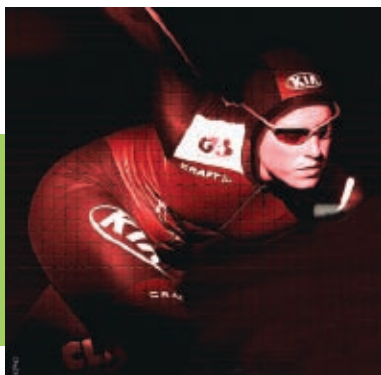
in skating with a neuro-muscular disease would be the challenge that ultimately set me on a path that has been lined with optimism and fulfillment. This challenge required that I reach outside of regular training to seek ways of achieving optimal health and, in turn, I was led to a career in natural nutrition.



I am now 24, still battling MS, yet training at an elite level, advancing on making the National Long Track Team and chasing my dream of qualifying for the 2014 Winter Olympic Games. I work as the sport nutritionist and do my summer training at Athletes Nation in St. Albert and train at the Olympic Oval in Calgary throughout the winter season.

When I am eating well (and thinking positively) I have high, consistent energy, feel stronger, and find it easier to stay focused. As a result, my MS symptoms have become much more manageable.

Yes, following a healthy diet can be difficult at first. We are constantly surrounded by temptations of the "quick fix" foods, making it easy to fall back into a poor dietary routine. (Preparing a healthy meal or snack doesn't mean it takes any more time.) I like to look at the challenges of overcoming the temptation and following a healthy and balanced diet as an opportunity for athletes. If it was easy, wouldn't everyone do it?



Follow Crystal's blog and learn more about her story at www.crystalpatches.com or contact Crystal to book an individual nutritional consultation, motivational speech or nutrition presentation.

And those that do will have the edge and have a better chance of being on the "great" side of the line.

Take this opportunity and be patient with it. When you commit to and learn how to make healthy food choices your body will start to crave more health promoting foods. Eating healthy will become a new habit rather than a chore or sacrifice. Have fun with it, try new foods, learn new recipes and introduce a colourful diet full of variety, nutrients and flavour.

I would not be competing at an elite level if optimal nutrition was not a part of my program. Remember as you start eating more vegetables and less sugary, processed food that in the end your results will make all your hard work worthwhile.

Cheers to a healthy future!

Crystal Phillips
RHN, Natural Nutritionist
www.athletesnation.ca

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A Recipe to Try....

Bison Taco's

*Why Bison? Bison has less than half the fat and almost double the iron than regular beef.

Ingredients:

- 6 Whole Grain Soft Tortilla's
- 1lb Ground Bison
- 1 Organic Yellow Onion
- ¼ Cup Hummus
- 2 Cups Organic Spinach
- ½ Cup Salsa
- 1 Sliced Ripe Organic Avocado
- 1 Taco Seasoning (*see recipe below)

Directions:

- 1) Brown bison in a saucepan with sliced onion.
- 2) Add seasoning and ¾ cup water and bring to a boil. Simmer for 5-8 min.
- 3) Spread hummus and add salsa, spinach and avocado on the tortilla.
- 4) Add meat to the tortilla, wrap it up and enjoy!

Taco Seasoning

Ingredients:

- 1 Tbsp chilli powder
- ¼ Tsp garlic powder
- ¼ Tsp onion powder
- ¼ Tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- ¼ Tsp dried oregano
- ½ Tsp paprika
- 1 ½ Tsp ground cumin
- 1 Tsp sea salt
- 1 Tsp black pepper

Directions:

Mix all ingredients and store in an airtight container.

*If you would prefer to buy a taco seasoning package, look for one that does not contain any MSG (Monosodium Glutamate) for your nervous system's sake.





Warner, Alberta

A TOWN THAT BUILT A TEAM

By Jon Hagan

Drive for an hour or so southeast on Highway four out of Lethbridge and you'll come across the farming community of Warner, Alberta. Not unlike other communities that dot the prairie landscape, Warner is small: blink and you might just miss it.

What's not small, however, is the town's spirit and growing reputation as home to one of the hockey world's premiere training grounds for female players: the Warner Hockey School.

But this almost wasn't the case. Prior to incorporating hockey into their mandate, declining enrollment numbers at the local high school suggested that Warner was dangerously close to slipping into obscurity.

"We wanted to save our school because that meant saving our community," said Sandra Nelson, current ambassador for the Warner Hockey School and former resident of Warner. At the time, Nelson was also employed by the Horizon School Division. Keenly aware of what the numbers meant, she knew exactly what was coming down the pipe. "I was very familiar with some of the things that were happening. I'm the one that did the five-year enrollment projection and that was a pretty bleak picture. I was aware that Alberta Infrastructure was doing a survey of schools at that time and I was privy to information that the recommendation was that Warner become a K-to-eight school."

Nobody wanted to find how that would play out, and thanks to a group of motivated quick thinkers, and later on, some incredible luck, some very generous individuals, and a horde of dependable volunteers, they wouldn't have to.

Earlier in 2001, prior to any discussion of a hockey school, Todd Coverdale, a farmer who

lives a mile west of Warner, decided that the arena originally built as a grain storage facility in 1956 was in desperate need of a complete overhaul. "The place was falling apart," he said. "I thought to myself, if we want to keep this thing going someone's going to need to step up."

And step up he did. Coverdale was able to spearhead the renovation project and raise the half million dollars needed to replace the rink's old dirt floor with concrete, as well as replace the boards and the glass.

He even managed to access funds from the NHLPA's Goals and Dreams Fund to buy a new Zamboni. "Rich Sutter came down and presented us with a cheque," Cloverdale added with a chuckle.

The way he describes it, a few people were watching as workers were putting the finishing touches on the arena renovations. "I noticed a few people outside," he said. "Apparently, they were talking about starting a hockey school."

Nelson was one of them. "We were watching some work being done thinking 'wow, you know, look at what we have! How can we capitalize on this?'"

Once the newly-renovated arena was identified as the ace up Warner's sleeve, the wheels were immediately set into motion. "The next morning I went to work and straight into the superintendent's office," said Nelson. "I told him that I have this idea." You can almost see her tapping the side of her head with her index finger as she described the idea to him. "He said you call a meeting and I'll be there."

All of the interested community members were invited to participate and be a part of the whole process.

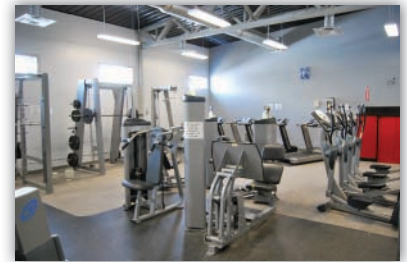
"They approached the school, but the principal at the time was a little bit busy, so he asked me to take part in that meeting," said Mark Lowe, current principal of Warner School and current chairman of the hockey program. "I immediately wanted to latch onto this as it was something in my area of expertise [high performance sports]. We had our first meeting in October 2001 where we came up with a list of things we needed to think about."

At first, it wasn't immediately clear whether the school would be for boys or girls, but Canada's involvement in an event in 2002 helped to solve that minor detail.

"At one of our next meetings shortly after the women won gold at the Salt Lake City Olympics we all agreed around the table that going the female route was going to be nothing but positive for the future success of this program," said Lowe.

"That was like winning the treasure chest," added Nelson. "After the women won gold, we absolutely knew that we were on the right track."





With a decision made regarding who the school would be catering to, the committee needed to find a reasonable model for success that could be emulated. Enter Notre Dame College in Saskatchewan. Lowe was sent out to do some research. "I came out pretty quickly with what we needed to do to become successful," he said.

The next step was to find a coach who knows how to run things. Jamie Wood, currently associate head coach and recruiting coordinator for the University of New Hampshire women's hockey program, was just that person.

"The biggest thing about starting Warner Hockey School was the incredible community spirit that surrounded the entire project," said Wood. "It really was inspiring to see this group of people in small town Alberta come together to try and fight for their community school. It was something real and important, and I knew I could help and wanted to be a part of it."

"The community of Warner consists of about 435 people and there's about 435 people in the arena every time the girls play at home."

Wood arrived at the end of June 2003. As the story goes, the intent was to have him recruit and fundraise for a year before officially opening the hockey school, but that's not quite how things worked out.

"It was kind of start with a bang," Shelly Thomas, the school's administrative assistant, said with a laugh. "We thought we're going to start up this hockey school, so we'll hold a little showcase camp in July (2003). We had about 10 girls show up, but ended up with over 20 that were very interested. The school opened the following month. Things happened very quickly."

Wood stayed on as Warner's Director of Operations until 2007 after which former NHLer Mikko Makela took over the reins and is currently guiding the school's hockey program.

For the first few years of the school's operation, the girls had to be billeted by people in the community. This was fine as an intermediate

step, but school officials needed to find a different way to accommodate the girls. The thinking turned towards finding a dedicated residence. As good fortune would have it, there was a building that, after a few modifications, would be perfectly suited for their purposes. But it wasn't free.

"When we were just playing with this idea of a hockey school, wondering if we could even make it work, within two or three months the community had donated \$30,000," said Nelson. "Now that may not sound like very much money, but when you think they donated their money based on just an idea." Well, you get the picture.

It was that idea that resonated with 98-year-old Rome Meisser. On the first meeting night way back when, Meisser donated \$10,000 to the project. He followed that up with a cheque for \$1,000 at the June homecoming. The whopper, however, came when Nelson got a call asking her to come over to his house.

"He pulled out his cheque book," she said with a hint of emotion in her voice, "and he wrote a cheque to us for \$200,000. Then he held up both of his hands and said, 'I can't help you with my hands anymore, but I thought I could help you this way.' Then he took his elbow and nudged mine—you know how people do—and said, 'I just thought you needed a little boost!'"

He wanted his contribution to be used to help fund the purchase and subsequent refurbishing of what was to become the players' residence, and it certainly went a long way in doing so. As an act of honouring their benefactor, school officials named the facility the Rome Meisser Residence.

It could be argued that hockey saved the village, but that puts the sweat, toil, and generosity to make things happen in the back seat. It would be more accurate to say that a group of people with great imaginations and a shared vision came together and seized an opportunity to take an otherwise bleak situation and turn it inside out.

"The community needs the hockey school and the hockey school needs the community," said Lowe. "There's opportunity for both sides, but it really is a testament to what the community is like. It had the foresight to envision the need for a hockey school. It's got the temperament to keep a hockey school alive and functioning in a very small community."

"The community of Warner consists of about 435 people and there's about 435 people in the arena every time the girls play at home," said Warner Mayor Jon Hood with a laugh. "It brought life back to the school and life back to the community, they mean a lot to us. I can tell you that the community supports them, council supports them, and we're happy to have them."

"I don't know if a lot of other communities could have done that," said Nelson. "To be able to work together as a group with a common vision and purpose. It was a pretty special moment to be a part of, for sure."

It was a group that would not let Warner be denied.



Jamie Wood on Warner Hockey School

It is something that I am proud of and proud to have my name associated with Warner. Two of my children were born there and it was a really fun and special time that I will never forget. To see the program continue to evolve, and see things done the right way, is a credit the community and the leadership of the Warner Hockey School.

There were so many people who contributed to the project that I don't want to single anyone out because it was never about just one person. Early on before the residence, the billet families really did an amazing job, as did the leadership at Horizon School Division, and our principal, Mark Lowe. Sandra Nelson was a big, big reason the school gained as much momentum as it did, and having her as president early on, was a blessing. Larry Norris was my right-hand man on the hockey side, and really was a rock for the girls, who used to call him Mr. Mom. Chad Jensen came in and made a big contribution right away. He brought a lot to the program. All the teachers and support staff at the school were understanding, committed and helpful. Being able to get Mikko Makela to carry on the pride and tradition of Warner has helped the school continue to thrive.

As far as the girls who came to Warner, I think a big part of it was that parents felt the environment was excellent for their daughters, and that they would be well taken care of, and that the girls were following their dreams. In most cases the girls were able to achieve their dreams and go to university and play hockey. They also learned a lot about life and what it takes to be successful. Mostly they learned that if you want something for yourself you have to pick yourself up and keep going and working hard. That is really what the whole idea of the Warner Hockey School was about. The students learned about teamwork, community, pride and effort.

As a university coach now, I think you know that when you are getting a Warner girl, you are getting a Warrior in the truest sense of the word. You are getting a good player, a person who knows about team work, and who rises to the occasion when the going gets tough. They are leaders, they have great skills, but most of all they have lived in a special place and absorbed the values that the Warner Hockey School stands for.

Sam Sutherland on Warner Hockey School

Being that you're from Cochrane, why did you choose Warner and not a school in Calgary, Edge, for example?

The way that Warner runs its program really changed my decision. You get to live with the team so you obtain a different relationship than you would with a non-boarding school and you learn the life skills needed when we go to University someday. I also love the community, they are amazing. The population of Warner is extremely low and we still get an amazing turnout at our home games. Even when we play at Edge, which is a little over three hours away, locals from Warner will drive up to watch us play. Also with a school like the Edge, there are many different competitive teams going to school there; in Warner there is only the girls hockey team so you are known by your name and not just a number. This allows us to have our own dressing room and training facility to use whenever. Without the hockey school, the town wouldn't have survived at this point simply because the high school did not have enough teens attending. With the hockey girls coming to school everyday, the high school can continue to have classes. Sure, it's great to come to Warner and to have a great program and staff to make you a better hockey player

"The biggest thing about starting Warner Hockey School was the incredible community spirit that surrounded the entire project. It really was inspiring to see this group of people in small town Alberta come together to try and fight for their community school. It was something real and important and I knew I could help and wanted to be a part of it,"



and person, but when you know that you are doing something to give back really makes me feel like I am a part of something bigger.

Can you tell me about balancing academics with sport? How do you cope with stress if it crops up in that regard?

It is not that hard as long as you get a good schedule in. If you know when your tests and assignments are due, you can make a study schedule to help you not get off track and get your assignments in on time. Sure, sometimes hockey gets pretty crazy one week and you can get a little behind but I stick to my schedule and the head scheduler himself, my dad. He helps me if I get too far off track and even though I don't always like it, he helps me a ton! I also have 19 other girls here that will help me if I don't understand something and have my back!

When I really get over my head I like to go in at lunch and ask the teachers for help which seems to lower the stress level and if that doesn't work I like to go for bike rides around town to calm me down so that I can get back to work.

Where did you play minor hockey, and what teams did you play for?

I played minor hockey in Cochrane mostly. I started when I was four years old, so Cochrane minor hockey wouldn't take me so I had to play in Cremona my first year but other than that I played in Cochrane. I played boys tier 1 hockey from Tyke (or initiation) for the Rockies to second year peewee when I switched to girls. I played girls Cochrane hockey until second year bantam which was when I moved to Warner.



Have you had any encounters with university scouts yet?

Yes I have. We go touring universities at the beginning of the year and since we are on their campus, the coaches can talk to us and I have talked to a few. It's a cool feeling because you get a feeling



about what university is about and you can get an idea of the kind of university that you would like to attend. Also since we attend tournaments in places like Washington, Minnesota, and Boston we usually get a very high turnout of coaches coming to watch you play. So I have talked to some off and on their campus.

What's the best part of Warner?

The best part about Warner is the pride that you have for going there. Sure, it's great that we have a great team and it is really fun to have the experience but I think that pride is something that I have a lot of belief in. If you have pride about something or someone it is a special type of relationship and gives you an opinion about what you believe in. I think that Warner gives me pride about my hockey and who I play for. Even when I go home for a weekend or a holiday I will wear Warner clothing to show the pride that I have for my team's program."





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Do you take your helmet out to dry after use?

Your answer should be yes. One of the things that accelerates the deterioration of the padding material in a helmet is moisture. If you'd like to extend the life of your helmet, we'd recommend that you hang all of your equipment at room temperature, including your helmet after each use.

Is the foam inside your helmet soft and absorbent with no cracks in it?

If your padding is getting too hard or dry it may not be able to absorb shock as well and increase the risk and severity of any injury. Remember, that thin layer of foam is all there to absorb and cushion any impact. Therefore, you want great foam!

Are there any cracks in the outer shell of your helmet?

The hard plastic material that makes up your helmet shell is designed to distribute any impact force over a wide area. If the plastic is old and/or damaged in any way, it may not offer you the force distribution and shock absorption you're after and need. The severity of any impact to your head could be greater with a damaged helmet.

With your helmet on and chin strap done up, can you fit more than two fingers between your jaw and chin strap?

Your chin strap is critical in maintaining the position of your helmet on your head. Your helmet may shift or fall off during a collision and offer your head no protection whatsoever. Reduce the risk of your helmet shifting too much or falling off by tightening your chin strap to allow only two fingers beneath your chin.

Do you feel confident that your helmet will protect you in the event of collision or blow to the head?

In order to play well and enjoy the game of hockey, you need to have confidence that your equipment will offer you enough protection in the event of a collision, fall or bodycheck. If you have some doubt in the quality and protection your current helmet offers, we'd advise you to purchase a new helmet and increase your confidence in your equipment.

Photo provided by Stephen Kathnelson

How old are you?

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That's a big no-no. Your helmet was designed to help reduce the severity of any impact you may sustain to your head. Tamper with the helmet and you may be gambling with your life. If your helmet doesn't fit well enough, visit a local retailer and select a better fitting helmet. If you've tampered with your current helmet, visit a local retailer and purchase a new one before returning to play.

How long have you used your current helmet?

Helmet design has improved in the past five years to offer you better foam protection, fitting options and overall protection against injury. Based on your response to this question, we'd recommend that you visit a local retailer and consider purchasing a new helmet.

Have you ever sustained a head or facial injury wearing your current helmet?

If you answered yes, your helmet may or may not have contributed to your previous injury. Under these circumstances, we'd recommend that you visit a local retailer to confirm that you don't need to replace your helmet with a new one.

EX-OILER ASSISTING THE Dinos UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

By Jeremy Freeborn

Five years ago you would have found Cory Cross suiting up for the Edmonton Oilers. He was your typical stay at home defenceman whose number one job was to minimize opposition scoring opportunities. Cross had 11 goals and 20 assists for the Oilers over three seasons from 2002-2006. Today, you will find him as assistant coach for the University of Calgary Dinos Men's Hockey Team in Canadian Interuniversity Sport.

It takes time for many professional sports athletes to find their niche in society once their playing days are over. But fortunately for Cross, he was able to continue to be active in the game of hockey after his decision to retire. Cross was named assistant coach for the Dinos on Sept. 27, 2009, by Head Coach Mark Howell. When the puck drops to begin the CIS hockey season, September 30 when the Dinos hosted the University of Manitoba Bisons at Father David Bauer Arena, Cross was behind the bench for his third season.

Never giving up on your dream is another important message that Cross wants to get across.

For Cross, it is an opportunity to continue his strong leadership, something he was known for during his 13-year playing career on the blueline with the Oilers, Tampa Bay Lightning, Toronto Maple Leafs, New York Rangers, Detroit Red Wings and Pittsburgh Penguins, from 1993-2006.

"I really enjoyed myself the first year," said Cross. "I learned a lot and am working on my life skills as a coach. I enjoyed getting back on the bench and teaching our young defencemen things I learned during my career."

As with any new position, there are challenges. "The difficult part of being on the bench is analyzing the other team and matching lines, and trying not to get caught up in watching the game," Cross explained.

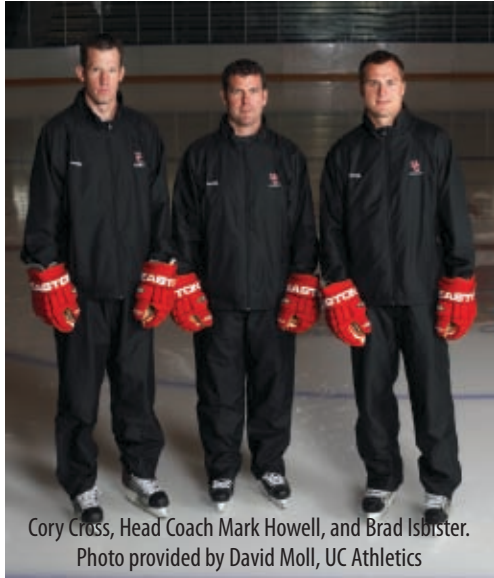
Unlike most who make it to the National Hockey League by going through the Canadian major junior hockey system, Cross spent three years with the University of Alberta Golden Bears from 1990-1993, where he scored 17 goals and 44 assists in 105 games. In 1992, he was on the Golden Bears' blueline that won the University Cup (CIS Men's Hockey Championship), as the University of Alberta defeated the University of Acadia Axemen 5-2 in the final game in Toronto. Cross understands first-hand the importance of combining academics and athletics.



"It's so important," said Cross. "You see kids who think they're going to the NHL and don't need their schooling. You're just cutting off your options. I tell kids to keep all your options open, and that includes going to school and getting good marks. If things don't work out and you don't get a professional contract, you have something to fall back on. There is a small percentage of players who make it to pro hockey, and there is even a smaller percentage of players that can retire after pro hockey, so education is very important."

Never giving up on your dream is another important message that Cross wants to get across. The Lloydminster native was selected first overall by the Tampa Bay Lightning in the 1992 NHL Supplemental Draft. "I was such a late bloomer," recalled Cross. "I grew a lot in high school. It took me until I was 22 for me to grow out my body. The Golden Bears worked with me, I learned how to play defence, and things fell into place."

Cross would like to see greater support for the university hockey program within Calgary. "University hockey is right up there with



Cory Cross, Head Coach Mark Howell, and Brad Isbister.
Photo provided by David Moll, UC Athletics

the Western Hockey League, maybe even better than the Western Hockey League entertainment-wise. Every game is so important, is so high intense and quick, because there aren't as many games. Guys practice all week and when they play the game, they play them at 100 percent. Just from that aspect alone, the competition level and the game level is so high. People in Calgary are missing great entertainment of hockey at the university level."

Cross would also like to see professional scouts take university hockey a little more seriously. "I think there is a stigma for guys who have gone through the Junior 'A' level. (Some) scouts think they don't have a chance of getting better. I think it's almost ridiculous to think that because I know there are kids for a fact that haven't got the coaching until they are in the university level. Kids are still growing by the time they're 20 years old. To give up on them is not right. There is definitely some talent in the Canada West that can definitely move on to professional careers."

Last season the Dinos finished second in the Canada West standings with a record of 17-8-3 and advanced to the CIS National Championship for the first time since 2000. In Fredericton, New Brunswick, the Dinos lost two close games, a 2-1 decision to the University of New Brunswick, and then a 3-2 loss to the University of Western.

This season the expectations are higher with Howell and Cross having two years of experience under their belt. "The goal is to win a National Championship," Cross said. "I think we have laid a good foundation. It took a while for the guys on our team to realize they could be winners. If we continue to get good play from our forwards, we'll be right in the hunt."

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Canadian Tire Hockey School Presents: 2012 NHL JUNIOR SKILLS

Photos and Article By Vicki Davis

On a beautiful October day here in Calgary, hockey players aged 7-12 "play hooky to play hockey."

Don Hartman Sportsplex was buzzing with excitement on Sunday Oct. 16, where local players participated in one of 15 qualifiers for the Canadian Tire NHL Junior Skills competition. Over 7,000 participants in 15 communities across Canada are competing to earn a spot in the Canadian Tire NHL Junior Skills National Championship in Ottawa, during the 2012 NHL All-Star Weekend. Kevin Klootra, the Sponsorship & Events advisor, said, "The idea is to give the kids a chance to participate in a skills competition just like the pro's do." They also get to meet and receive instruction from some big-time NHL Alumni.



Todd Simpson, Charlie Simmer, Peter Ing & Jason Wiemer

I think most hockey parents would allow their kid to take a day off studying for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. The parents of defenceman Evan Bourassa were potentially even more excited than Evan was when they got the phone call confirming Evan's name had been chosen from the lottery. "Evan was...modestly excited, kinda

like his dad [sitting next to me]," said Evan's Mom. We agreed the parents were perhaps more star-struck by the attending alumni than the kids, due to generation. However, Evan may have had a humble reaction at home, but I saw a very excited little boy on the ice on Sunday. What a fantastic experience for these kids!

To enter the contest, you must be a Canadian Tire Hockey School member and contestants must be between 7-12 years of age. Goalies are not eligible. As registration closes for each qualifying event (roughly a week prior to the event), winners are chosen at random and are contacted via phone. After all 15 qualifier events are complete, the top five boys and top five girls are selected for the championship. Additionally, 10 random players from the qualifiers are also awarded a spot at the Championship in Ottawa.

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And if you don't get a chance to enter this year, you can stay tuned for the 2013 NHL Junior Skills!



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THE CULTURE OF HOCKEY

By Jon Hagan

On December 12, 2008, Whitby Dunlop defenceman Don Sanderson got into a fight with Brantford Blast forward Corey Fulton. The fight lasted a moment before Sanderson's helmet came off and he fell. His unprotected head bore the brunt of the impact when he hit the ice. The 21-year-old lay comatose for close to three weeks before finally succumbing to his injury. Sanderson's father and the young man's girlfriend were quoted as saying Don never liked fighting, he only did it occasionally to defend his teammates.

Over a century before, in 1907, Owen "Bud" McCourt lost his life after an on-ice altercation resulted in severe head trauma. A quote from the newspaper at the time said, "nearly all the local players express(ed) the opinion that if the referee had been more strict regarding the rough play, the trouble would have been averted."

Considering each of the following players also suffered head injuries at the hands of opposing players that were overcome with something akin to madness, it's only dumb luck that Ace Bailey (1933), Ted Green (1969), Donald Brashear (2000), and Steve Moore (2004) didn't suffer a similar fate as McCourt.

Tragedy struck yet again in 1968 when Bill Masterton hit his head on the ice in a game between the Minnesota North Stars and the Oakland Seals. A recent article suggests that Masterton may have been playing with a pre-existing head injury.

Each of these deaths and the circumstances surrounding them, in one way or another, underscores four things about hockey: there's a code; there's passion; there's a culture; and there's controversy.

This past summer will long be remembered as one of the most tragic in hockey. In addition to the plane crash carrying the KHL club Lokomotiv Yaroslavl, we saw the passing of Derek Boogaard, Rick Rypien, and Wade Belak. The former struggled with addiction issues; the latter two, depression. Unlike the first three men, it's obvious these three died of something other than head trauma, right?

Perhaps not.

Recent research coming out of a collaborative effort between the Boston University Medical School and the Sports Legacy Institute is suggesting that the effects of head trauma no longer have to be as obvious as in the cases of Sanderson, Masterton and McCourt.

The hypothesis, set forth by neurosurgeon Robert Cantu and his team, is that addictions, anxiety and depression might be caused in part by something called chronic traumatic encephalopathy. The Institute's website describes CTE as "a progressive degenerative disease of the brain found in athletes (and others) with a history of repetitive brain trauma ... (and) is associated with memory loss, confusion, impaired judgement, paranoia, impulse control problems, aggression, depression, and, eventually, progressive dementia."

The mere possibility of secondary effects to head trauma like this adds a new dimension to the discussion and raises the question of whether or not these men experienced the effects of repetitive brain trauma that Cantu's research suggests.

Even 2 grizzled NHL enforcers like Georges Laraque and Brantt Myhres have not been unaffected by anxiety on the ice.



"I just hoped that he'd (Dave Brown would) have a good game, so he wouldn't be mad."

"All I could think about was that Stu Grimson was in the lineup."



By piping up regarding their roles and the effects that fighting has had on them, some retired heavyweight enforcers seem to be suggesting that there might be a correlation. Both Brantt Myhres and Georges Laraque were recently interviewed on a radio show discussing the negative psychological effects that the role foists upon enforcers. Laraque understands the pressure that some feel; and Myhres, having struggled for years with addiction, has lived through it. Each man touched on his anxieties with the prospects of an upcoming fight.

"All I could think about was that Stu Grimson was in the lineup," said Myhres as he recounts one of the first NHL games he played in. For Laraque, it was having to face the prospects of Dave Brown. "I just hoped that he'd have a good game, so he wouldn't be mad."

Todd Fedoruk summarized it concisely in the USA Today: "Could the pressure of fighting make you want to pick up? Yeah, I think that can be a trigger," he said. "For me, it was. You just want to forget about having to fight the guy. You line up against a guy like Boogey, God rest his soul, but he's 267. He's a big man. You think about that a week before you fight him."

Not everyone, however, feels this way. On CBC's *Fifth Estate*, Marty McSorley said the prospects of fighting didn't bother him at all, and he's not alone.

"I don't understand where it comes from" said Grimson. "No matter what profession you're involved in, we all experience anxiety. I experience those same things that Georges Laraque and Brantt Myhres are talking about, but it's not necessarily a daily experience. Anxiety is something a professional has to learn to manage if they're going to work in a certain profession for any length of time."

The Grim Reaper, as Grimson was called in his playing days, is now a trial lawyer working out of Nashville. Although his career trajectory doesn't fit the stereotype of an NHL enforcer, fighting was his stock and trade for over 700 NHL games. In fact, Grimson was so tough, he could literally do it in his sleep.

"I was in a fight in junior hockey once where I blacked out, and it felt like I was gone for a long time," he said. "I recovered consciousness, and I was still on my feet. In fact my right arm was cocked somewhere up behind my shoulder and I realized, 'Wow, I'm still in this one.' It was bizarre."

According to HockeyFights.com, Grimson fought a total of 217 times prior to retiring. That's almost a fight every fourth game. Ironically, fighting and the lingering effects of post-concussion syndrome are what forced him to retire. Despite that, he fully supports the role fighting plays in hockey, and he doesn't agree that it should be vilified whenever talk of reckless head shots comes up.

Todd Fedoruk weighs in.



"You just want to forget about having to fight the guy. You line up against a guy like Boogey; You think about that a week before you fight him."

"I'm not so sure that fighting should be drawn in because here it's a different story: you've got two guys who both understand the risk associated with what they're about to do. They understand it very well, but they're prepared to accept those risks. It's a job that they readily step into knowing full well there may be a cut lip; there may be a broken nose; there may even be a concussion in any particular fight, but that's very different from somebody that's not expecting someone else targeting their head. I think the point you really want to make is that we need to do whatever is reasonable to eliminate deliberate or even reckless head blows to players that are vulnerable. Those are the areas that we've really got to crack down on."

Whatever the cause, and whether or not what Dr. Cantu's research suggests is accurate, issues of depression and addiction have long reared their head in any number of sports and are certainly not the unique province of repeated head trauma. What, however, should come from this revelation is the continued need for dialogue and support for those players that might be suffering from any one of these psychologically debilitating diseases.

"There are a number of great programs in place right for any athlete that is current or retired from the game of hockey," Grimson said. "Specifically, the collaboration between the NHL and the NHLPA called the Substance Abuse and Behavioural Health (SABH) program. This is a program that's designed to support anybody that's dealing with a behavioural issue like depression or a physical addiction like drugs and alcohol."

While it's impossible to identify any one particular solution to address issues of head trauma in hockey, whether they result from deliberate shots to the head or the effects of two willing combatants clubbing one another in the cranium, Grimson offers some food for thought on where it needs to start.

"Knowing what I know about the effects of head trauma back when I first started, I probably would have been quicker to disclose to the medical professionals that supported me what I was experiencing when I was experiencing it. I would have been quicker to seek treatment," he said. "Now, I say that as someone that understands the culture of the game, that sounds a bit ideal. Here's one of the problems; one of the difficulties that we face in this area. We haven't talked about this much yet. The culture of sport, specifically of hockey, is problematic in this area. The athlete doesn't want to disclose anything for fear of losing his spot on the roster. It's akin to exposing a weakness to teammates. You never want to let on that you've been hurt."

Bill Masterton immediately comes to mind. After a brief pause, Grimson added, "The culture may have prevented me from doing the right thing. As we talk about the issues that are part of this debate, for me that's one that really needs to be identified as we analyze the problem."

Speaking in terms of the culture, for a program like SABH to work, a player needs to come forward on his own. "It's not always easy to detect and diagnose that there is a problem," said Grimson. "Even if a guy did come forward and he said, 'You know what? I'm really struggling with this particular area of my life,' if he decides to take his life for whatever reason there is no program in the world short of keeping him inside in an institution and under 24-hour watch to prevent that."

It's not a stretch to think that if coaches and athletes took a different tack and began to change the culture so it was easier for an athlete to come forward, things might be easier to rectify. "The responsibility lies with everybody. The players, first and foremost, the trainers, coaches, teammates—everybody involved," said Grimson. "I know the powers that be in our sport are making every reasonable effort to do that."

This can, and should, also be extended into the realm of fans and spectators. You only need to read the comment section for almost any article on Sidney Crosby's concussion or turn to Coach's Corner on *Hockey Night in Canada* to see just how entrenched the culture of hockey is in the public consciousness. An example can be seen in part of a response to a CBS Pittsburgh article on Crosby where a reader takes issue with Crosby for speaking out on head shots and writes, "Whining and crying are not the finer qualities of a professional hockey player." A more recent example is Don Cherry calling three former NHL fighters "pukes" for allegedly saying, "The reason they're [Boogaard et al] taking drugs and alcohol is because they fight. You turncoats, you hypocrites," said Cherry. "You were fighters and now you don't want guys to make the same living you did." Cherry claimed Grimson was one of the three that said it.

Despite allegations, criticisms and condemnations, discussion regarding blows to the head and fighting has been front and centre for over a century and they should continue to be. Not that anyone wants to stifle the passion of hockey, but when talk of the code and the culture are used to explain why certain things happen maybe it's time to really look at our game, and what it is we're teaching kids and expecting of the athletes who play it. Perhaps only then will we be able to move forward and leave seriously debilitating and sometimes deadly injuries behind us.

Finally, and not to make light of the discussion, There had to have been someone that caused the Grim Reaper sleepless nights . . .

"Dave Brown for sure," he says. "Brown was the baddest man on the planet. You knew you were going to have your hands full if you were going to lock horns with big Dave. He was somebody I was well aware of before going into the game."



Bill McCreary

25 Years as an NHL Referee

By Rob Suggitt

Interview Photos provided by Stephen Kathnelson

All others provided by Andy Devlin, EOHC



We met up with Bill McCreary last season as he was winding down his career as one of the most prolific (and recognizable) officials in NHL history.

McCreary worked his final NHL game on April 2, 2011, between the Buffalo Sabres and Washington Capitals.

At 55 years of age, McCreary joined only two other NHL officials (Kerry Fraser and Don Koharski) to have officiated 1,700 NHL games.

McCreary is considered one of the top NHL referees in the game, and for many years, with a reputation as one who calls the game with consistency and fairness. Even without a name bar on his jersey, he is recognized by most hockey fans, especially with his signature dark moustache, one he has worn for most of his NHL career.

McCreary is a reluctant interviewee, not because he is uncooperative or aloof – he just prefers to not be in the spotlight. He grants this interview nevertheless, because he understands and appreciates the role and profile he (and other officials) carry in the NHL. “I don’t seek it out (the publicity), but I think it’s good for our sport – to get our side out a bit once in a while.”

It’s understandable (and not unusual) that hockey officials want to be in the background, but McCreary’s career deserves some attention, especially when you look at his achievements and accomplishments.

McCreary has officiated over 1,700 NHL games, and most notably, the most Stanley Cup final games by an NHL referee. He officiated the 1991 and 1994 Canada Cups, and the gold medal games in four consecutive Olympics: 1998, 2002, 2006 and 2010. He also worked Wayne Gretzky’s last game as a player, and the last game played in Maple Leaf Gardens.

Where did it all start for McCreary? Not unlike most NHL officials,

McCreary played hockey at a high level, before deciding to become a hockey official. McCreary downplays his playing career, but he played Junior A hockey in St. Catharines and Windsor, and it was in his hometown of Guelph, Ontario where he was approached by Terry Findley of the Guelph Referees Association to consider officiating as a career.

McCreary remembers how it took place. “I played hockey right up to junior, but I wasn’t very good. Living in Guelph, we had a really good representation of hockey officials, and they encouraged me to get involved with our local minor hockey association and I did. I started working with the little kids early on – enjoyed it – and got a break to go to a major junior game when they needed an official, and went from there.”

The Guelph Hockey Referees Association has developed and delivered numerous officials to the NHL, including Bill McCreary, Ray Scapinello, Paul Devorski, Ron Asselstine, Will Norris, George Ashley and Andy Van Hellemond.

After a few seasons working in the OHA, McCreary was contacted by John McCauley, who was the supervisor of officials for the NHL, and he was assigned to do games in the Central and American Hockey Leagues, on a part-time basis. McCreary remembers what took place next. “Former NHL Referee-in-Chief Scotty Morrison hired me and Dan Maourelli to an NHL contract in 1982.” A few years later, McCreary worked his first NHL game, which was played between Pittsburgh and Washington near the beginning of the 1984-1985 season.

“I remember it very, very well. I worked with two senior linesmen – Gord Rosicker and Ray Scapinello, and they helped me out a lot – it was a great experience. People tell you it won’t be long until you’ve done a hundred (games), and now I’m coming up on 1,700 games. It goes by quick.”

Aside from the speed of the game, one of the biggest changes in his NHL career was the introduction of the two-referee system in the 1999-2000 hockey season. "It had a large impact on me, and other senior officials at the time. When you're refereeing in the traditional three-man system, you (the referee) have ownership of the game, along with your two partners. You're calling the game the same at both ends of the ice – consistent – to be fair and safe to the players. When you add another official, you're adding another judgment, and you're adding another set of eyes to that judgment, and that's where the tricky part comes along – to mesh those judgments. It took me time as a senior official to accept it. I'm certainly not naïve enough to think that if we didn't have it, that I would be on the ice today. The game's very quick, much quicker than it ever was – because of the rule changes, there's a change in the players from one decade to another."

Even without a name bar on his jersey, he is recognized by most hockey fans, especially with his signature dark moustache, one he has worn for most of his NHL career.

"I was saying to a coach the other day, 'Can you imagine if Marcel Dionne and Guy Lafleur could have played the game without being hooked or held in their era?' I was fortunate enough to be on the ice with skilled athletes at that time, and I'm still fortunate today," said McCreary.

"When the red line was in play, anything past was offside, but now, you can pass the puck all the way up to the opposite blue-line. This has changed the game a lot, allowing more speed to take place. (As an official), you have to work hard to get in position, to create the best sight line to watch the play (and without getting in the way)."

When asked what he likes about being an NHL official, McCreary remarked that "job satisfaction for me is when I walk off the ice, and I don't have anything left in the gas tank. Where I've left an environment for the players – keeping the game fair and safe. I don't have a long checklist that way. It's all about the entertainment package – keeping it fair and safe enhances the entertainment package."

One of McCreary's biggest highlights was the 2002 Olympic Games in Salt Lake City. "It was an emotional time, because I was the first Canadian to officiate a Canadian-American gold medal game. That being said, to me, it's two teams playing a game – the white team against the blue team, or whatever coloured sweaters are involved."







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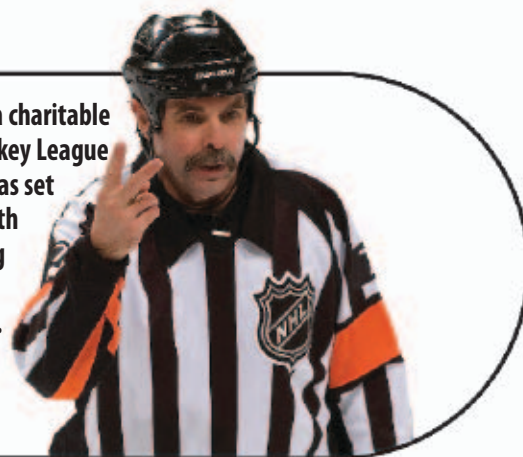


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When meeting with Bill McCreary, he wanted to promote a charitable organization which was established by the National Hockey League Officials Association (NHLOA), called "Zebra's Care." It was set up with their desire to bring joy to children across North America and grow the great game of hockey, by giving underprivileged and sick children the opportunity to meet with NHLOA members, and attend an NHL game. It's a great example of giving back to the community. For more on this very worthwhile cause, please check out the NHL Officials Website: www.nhlofficials.com



I don't look at it as country – I work with each and every one of those players to make my living, so it's about working hard, and once again, keeping it fair and safe."

"Following the game, 11 of the American players, unsolicited, came over and shook my hand, which was a big shock to me. They understood the position I was in, and they respected that more than anything. The game was called fair. Both teams had an equal opportunity to win that game, and the outcome that particular night was that Canada won, and I'm sure it could have gone the other way as well."

Being selected to work in the NHL playoffs is a big deal for the officials, from the standpoint of pride, and also, the additional earnings which can be made, and for each round worked. Getting there is not easy though. Officials are rated all the time, and the highest rated officials are selected to officiate during the playoffs, and the best are chosen to work the Stanley Cup Finals. Here's where McCreary really shines as an official, having worked 15 Stanley Cup Finals in the last 16 seasons. Last year, he reached an even more special milestone. "I think, the highlight for me was to break Bill Chadwick's record for most games worked in the Stanley Cup Finals, which was 42. I surpassed that by two games, so that's quite an honour for me. Mr. Chadwick was a well respected official in his time, back when it was a six-team league."

One of his favourite memories is a game which took place just prior to the Stanley Cup Finals – a game seven between the Rangers and Devils in 1994, which went to double overtime. "That was my first year going to the Stanley Cup Final. I don't know if you remember, but in Game 6, Mark Messier made a promise there would be a game seven," and McCreary was chosen as the referee for this game. "There was great leadership on both teams. I called one penalty on each team, and we played almost five periods (of hockey). They played like men. I treated them like men. It was a tough, old-fashioned hockey game – it was a great game to be involved in. I think that's what vaulted me into my first Stanley Cup Final."

As things wound down in his last NHL season (a career that has spanned 25 seasons in the NHL), we asked him about his retirement.

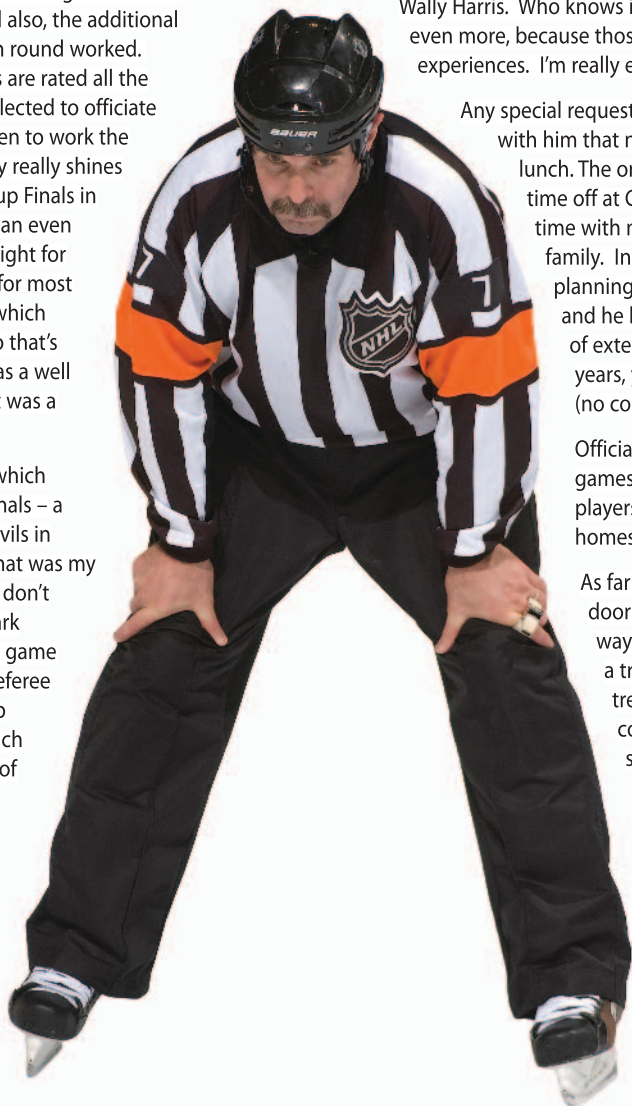
"I was supposed to retire last year. My wife and I were both ready for retirement. However, I was approached by our director of officiating (Terry Gregson) to stay on for another season. He wanted me to work with some of the younger or less experienced officials, to pass along some of the things I've learned in my career. Sort of mentor them and coach them a little bit. I'm really enjoying it. It's been a fascinating time. They (the younger officials) want to learn, and if I look back to my start, I would have (relished) the opportunity to work with a Bob Myers or Wally Harris. Who knows if my career would have been advanced even more, because those gentlemen could have passed along their experiences. I'm really enjoying what I'm doing (this season)."

Any special requests? "It's funny. We (the officials working with him that night) – the fellas just talked about that at lunch. The only request I had was to have a little bit of time off at Christmas and New Year's – to spend more time with my family. You lose a lot of time spent with family. In the NHL, we have what we call succession planning, and I spoke to Terry (Gregson) about that, and he had no problem with me requesting a bit of extended time off around Christmas. Over the years, you work a lot of Christmas holidays, and (no complaints), that's part of our business."

Officials work 73 games a season, almost as many games as the players. They travel more than the players though, because for them, there are no homes games.

As far as future plans, McCreary is leaving the door open to contribute to the game in other ways. "I'd love to stay with the NHL – it's been a tremendous company to work for. They've treated me very fairly over the years. Maybe coaching or mentoring or helping out somehow in the game. That being said, there isn't always room for everyone to be in that role, so if that's not available, I'll seek something else out."

McCreary has advice for young officials who want to progress as a hockey official. "First of all, you have to be able to skate. But if you've played the game as a hockey player to a fairly high level, I really believe



that helps you a lot in making the transition to refereeing. It gives you an understanding of the game which possibly other people don't have. How players react. How coaches react. Tough situations where things have happened in a hockey game. Playing the game is quite an asset to have in your toolbox. You also have to be able to communicate, to admit to any mistakes made on the ice. Being honest at all times is the number

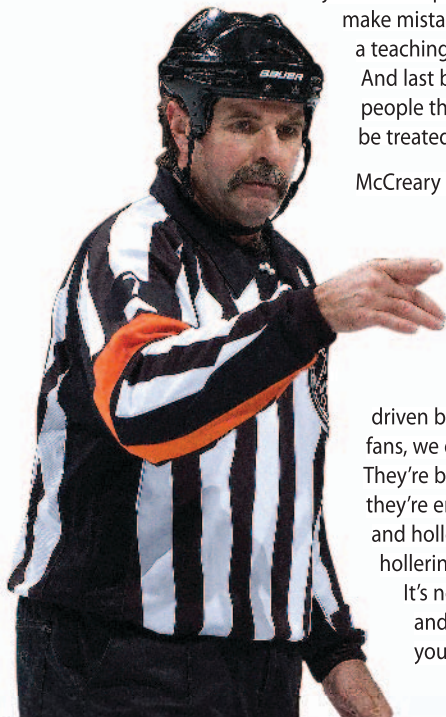
one priority. You're a human being, just like the players, so you will make mistakes, and let them be a teaching tool to you as well. And last but not least, treat people the way you like to be treated."

McCreary also believes you need to have thick skin to be a hockey official. "You have to have it. I love fans. Our business is driven by fans – without the fans, we don't have our sport. They're buying a ticket, and they're entitled to come out and holler, and if they're hollering at me, that's fine. It's never bothered me, and for the most part, you don't even hear it.

Like I said, without the fans, we wouldn't have the great sport that we do."

Minor hockey is different though, and McCreary is quick to draw the distinction, and point out what should be permissible. "I think they should be very restrictive on how they (fans) express themselves in arenas. I've been to many minor hockey games, and moms and dads, and even myself, have let their emotions get the best of them. I think it's imperative today to keep your emotions in check, go to support your son or daughter first, their team second, and the game of hockey third of all. I think it's vital as a parent to do that, and show nothing but positive encouragement, because there are too many variables kids have to deal with today. They don't need extra pressure from mom or dad hollering how they're playing. Just give them positive encouragement and stay in the background."

And that's just the way McCreary likes to operate – in the background – and for someone who has made his living in this manner, he quietly but effectively has left a positive impact on the game of hockey, and at its highest level.



7 Questions with Number 7

We asked Bill McCreary to give us quick answers to seven questions about players and coaches he's worked with over the past 25 years.

Most skilled player:

Wayne Gretzky

Classiest player:

Larry Robinson

Classiest coach:

Al Arbour

Most prolific hockey enforcer:

Oh boy, there's been many. I would say Clark Gillies.

Toughest guy in hockey:

I'd probably still say Clark Gillies, but Bob Probert too.

Greatest leader:

Mark Messier (no hesitation)

Greatest hockey team:

Pretty close to a draw, but I would have to say the '80s Islanders or the '80s Oilers.



SPOTLIGHT

On An Official

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SPOTLIGHT

On An Official

SIGNALS



CHECKING FROM BEHIND

If a player pushes, body-checks or cross-checks an opponent from behind, a checking from behind penalty may be called. It's a game misconduct (ejection), coupled with a two-minute or five-minute penalty, depending on the severity of the offense. The referee's signal is a forward motion of both arms, with the palms of the hands opened and facing away from the body, fully extending from the chest at shoulder level.



BOARDING

If a player is checked into the boards in a violent manner, then the ref may call a boarding penalty. A two-minute penalty will be assessed for boarding, and in situations where the offense is more serious (when a player is vulnerable, etc.), a 5-minute major penalty and game ejection may be called.



CHECKING TO THE HEAD

A minor and misconduct penalty, or a major and game misconduct penalty, at the discretion of the referee, based on the degree of violence of impact, shall be assessed to any player who checks an opponent to the head area in any manner. A match penalty could also be assessed under this rule. If a player is injured, a major and game misconduct penalty, or a match penalty must be assessed.



BODY-CHECKING

Body-checking is not allowed until the peewee level in the Calgary Minor Hockey Association. Delivering a body-check in the lower divisions will result in a two-minute penalty being assessed.



CROSS-CHECKING

When a player uses the shaft of his stick, held between the hands, to check an opponent at any height. The referee signals with a forward and backward motion of the arms with both fists clenched and about a foot apart. (This signal imitates the action of a cross-check.)



BUTT-ENDING

If a player jabs (or attempts to jab) another player with the shaft of the stick above the upper hand, a butt-ending penalty may be called. The referee holds one forearm over the other; the lower is moved back and forth, across the body.



ELBOWING

This is when a player is checking an opponent with his elbow. The referee signals by tapping either elbow with the opposite hand.



CHARGING

If a player takes more than two steps or strides, or jumps into an opponent when body-checking, a charging infraction may be called. The referee signals by rotating clenched fists around each other in front of the chest. Since body-checking isn't allowed until the peewee level, you will rarely see this called in the first few years.



HIGH-STICKING

This occurs when checking an opponent with the stick above the normal height of the shoulders, either purposely or accidentally. A more severe penalty may be called for flagrant high-sticking fouls, including ejection from the game. The referee signals this call by clenching both fists and mimicking a player holding a stick above their shoulders.



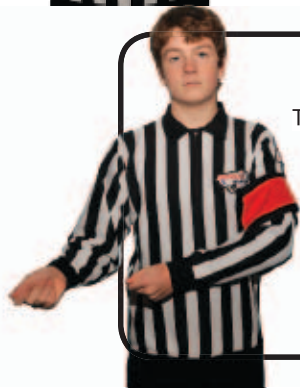
HOLDING

This is called when a player grabs an opponent's body or stick with the hands. The referee motions this call by grabbing either wrist with the opposite hand in front of his body.



ROUGHING

This penalty may be called when a player uses his arms or fists to hit or punch another player. The signal for this call is a clenched fist and arm extended out to the front or side of the body.



HOOKING

This is called when a player slows down an opponent by hooking his stick on any part of the opponent's body or stick. The referee signals this call with a tugging motion with both arms.



SLASHING

This penalty is called when a player deliberately hits an opponent with his stick. The signal for this call is a chopping motion with the edge of one hand across the opposite forearm.



INTERFERENCE

This penalty is called when a player impedes the progress of an opponent who doesn't have the puck. The referee signals this call by crossing his arms in front of his chest.



SPEARING

Spearing occurs when a player thrusts or jabs the blade of his stick at an opponent. Players are usually ejected from the game for spearing. The signal for this call is a jabbing motion with both hands thrusting out in front of the body.



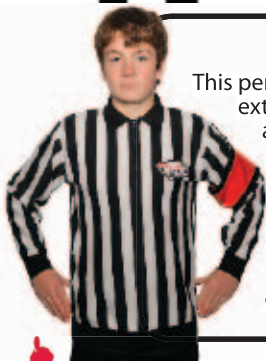
KNEEING

If a player uses his knee (or sticks his knee out) to take down or check an opponent, the referee may call a kneeing penalty. If the infraction is of a more serious nature, the referee may consider this a major penalty (and a game misconduct) instead of a minor penalty (2 minutes).



TRIPPING

This penalty may be called when a player uses his stick or any body part to trip the puck carrier. If the player touches the puck prior to contact with the player, there is usually no penalty called. The referee signals this call by striking his leg with either hand below the knee (usually bending down to do so), keeping both skates on the ice.



MISCONDUCT

This penalty may be called when a player exhibits extreme and inappropriate behaviour toward another player or a game official. Depending on the severity of the offense, the player may be given a 10-minute misconduct or game misconduct penalty. It is also a game misconduct when a player checks another player from behind. With the exception of checking from behind, the penalized team does not play shorthanded.



UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

This penalty may be called when a player exhibits poor sportsmanship or inappropriate behaviour on the ice.



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WINNERS: LaSalle Sabres 98's
HOSTED BY: Windsor Spitfires



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- Concussion resources including responsible “return to play guidelines”

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