

Book Review

Hockey anthology is a must for fanatics

David Gowdey's hockey anthology, *Riding on the Roar of the Crowd*, is a must for the hockey fanatic.

From Hugh MacLennan's *Fury on Ice* to Studs Turkel's *Hockey Player*: Eric Nesterenko, I was not only entertained but also extensively informed about a game that I love, played and now have made a living for almost 20 years.

In *Fury on Ice*, the "razzle dazle of elliptical curves" probably describes Frank Boucher's hockey style better than anyone has or will. It is this style of beautiful prose that predominates throughout the anthology. (Gage Educational Publishing, 328 pages, \$16.95.)

Doug Beardsley's *Sheer Joy of Shiny* brings back the fond memories of playing shinny as a boy.

Building the Gardens was especially fascinating for me since it is now my part-time place of work, as a color commentator for Maple Leaf games on radio.

There are many stories that bring back memories—and challenge us to make comparisons. Foster Hewitt calling the game from the Old Olympia reminds me of my association with today's Foster Hewitt, "The Voice of the Maple Leafs"—Joe Bowen. Don't get me wrong, he's no Foster yet, but he's the best there is now.

WINTER BALLETT

Morley Callaghan puts it best when he says: "Hockey is our winter ballet and in many ways our only national drama." It really shows what hockey meant to Canadians of Morley's vintage.

The *Siberia of Hockey*, by Don Cherry, talks primarily about one of the great characters of his time, Eddie Shore and his Springfield Indians.

David Gowdy, in his *Make Believe Gardens* piece, tells about learning to skate by "pushing a kitchen chair around in front of him." Didn't we all learn that way?

Once Section 1, *The Origin*, has been completed, you do have a feel for this great game and what it means to Canadians. Section 2, *In the Arena*, deals with some of the great players of the game and their thoughts.

Hugh Hood's story on Jean Beliveau is superb. In describing Beliveau's style as "completely natural" and apparently un-

conscious," he conveys his admiration of Le Gros Bil.

Ken Dryden's piece, *Saturday*, tells what it's really like in the Canadiens' dressing room on game day. The accuracy and detail is especially attractive to me. If you want to know about the Ken Dryden Canadiens, then read this. I can remember, as business manager of Team Canada '76, the pranks of Savard and Lapointe, the complexity of Bowman and the aloofness of Dryden. It's all there and done masterfully.

Fred Shero has always been an enigma to me. I couldn't believe how he did so much with so little. After reading *The Flyers' Bible*, I understand. It's a must for aspiring coaches and for those who want success and are willing to work for it.

The *Sad Tale of the New York Rangers* (and of their wild fans) is chronicled masterfully by Jeff Greenfield. That Madison Square Garden mob is a unique group and Jeff does a great job of illustrating this.

The *Enforcer* tells us about Brian Spinner Spencer and his trials and tribulations. This guy, who died of gunshot wounds a year ago after an acquittal on a murder charge, was doomed. You get that feeling after completing Martin O'Malley's piece.

David Gowdey's suggestions for changing the game was apparently a "filler" and shouldn't have been included.

Other tales enrich the collection, including one by Roy MacGregor. In *Playing Against Orr*, MacGregor has really captured the essence of one of the game's greats: "Orr seemed to be sitting at a table as he played, eyes as alert as a poker player." MacGregor plays the role of Batteredinski, the Sudbury goon whose job it is to get Orr. He tried but didn't quite make it. "I dug in, but he was gone, a silent blond brushcut in an empty arena."

MASTERFUL

Scott Young, as usual, does a

masterful job on his chronicle of Team Canada '74, *Hanging Together, Falling Apart*. Even Young's description of the weather in Vancouver that beautiful September week strikes home. It was the first time I had been to Vancouver in four years when the sun shined.

Tretiak, the great Soviet goaltender, tells us about his great coach Tarasov. Before you really know Tarasov, you must eat fat, sprinkled with hame and washed down with vodka. I spent one full afternoon in Montreal '77 doing the same thing, with Aggie Kukulowicz doing the interpreting. I saw him some 12 years and two plastic hips later in Duncan, B.C. The only constant was the diet. Tretiak captures the essence of this great Soviet coach.

David Levine tells us about Wayne Gretzky and it's a must read for today's fans.

Jack Batten really tells it all about Max Bentley. If you don't know Max after you've read Batten's piece, then it's your own fault.

Peter Gzowski, hockey fan and part-time *Morningside* host, does an interesting piece on the return of the Rocket, Maurice Richard, on enigma at the best of times, spent a week in Jamaica with Bobby Orr and I and the presence is still there. You're never quite sure what the Rocket will do and Gzowski captures that feeling.

Old-timer hockey is the central theme of Hugh Hood's *The Sportive Centre of Saint Vincent de Paul*. There are some literary gems as well in this one:

"The name PIE IX makes me think of the First Vatican Council of 1870-71, and the promulgation of the dogma of papal infallibility."

As I said, it's a little more than just a hockey book.

TWO GREAT ONES

Then there's this line: "Gordie Howe was the champion of the middle-aged Canadian." Mordecai Richler compares Howe with Richard and suggests building two rinks beside one another. Put Gordie in one and Richard in another. He has Henri, Maurice's brother, rhetorically ask, "which one would be filled?" There are some very descriptive yarns in Richler's piece as well.

King Clancy has the penultimate comment on ol' elbows. "They ought to bottle Gordie Howe's sweat."

A touch of sadness closes out Richler's contribution when Gordie tells him that he is hustling Amway. "Say it ain't so, Gordie."

For all you Leaf fans, Brian Fawcett does a nice spoof on his imaginary tenure with the Leafs. Ric Salutin tells us quite nicely what the Canadiens meant to the French people. Tim Burke tells us how the "Quiet Revolution began" the night of the Richard riots. Salutin also theorizes that the night of the PQ victory in Quebec was the night that "the people of Quebec transferred their need of victory from the shoulders of the hockey team onto their own backs." Somewhat preposterous and yet somewhat true.

Alma's Night Out has a familiar ring. Any of us who have quarreled with our spouse about how much hockey we watch on TV can really get into this one. Nicely done, with some humor to top off a great book on my favorite game.

—Bill Watters, a color commentator for National Hockey League and international hockey games, served as general manager for Team Canada at three world championships. Among his various activities in the sports world, he is a regular panelist on *Sportspage*, a weekly program on TSN.



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