

# What is it with three-day beards?

In spite of the fact I'm a full-blooded, dyed-in-the-wool Canadian, I have a confession.

I'm not an avid hockey fan.

My daughters are genuine hockey fans, and since the Leafs-Islanders series, I've temporarily elevated myself to a hockey 'watcher'— at least for a few weeks.

But with every game I watch, one recurring question seems to niggle at me as the television cameras zoom in for tight shots on Tie Domi, Gary Roberts or Bryan McCabe.

What is it about shaving and hockey players? They all have three-day beards.

Now some even have what could be construed as an 'almost beard' but it's a mess, untrimmed and downright sleazy.

Please don't try to say it's cuz they're too busy to shave, or have so much on their minds with the upcoming game— that one won't wash. I might be convinced it's cuz they're superstitious about shaving and winning, but it's still a stretch.

And with their salaries, it's not cuz they can't afford blades. It's simply an image, and an annoying one at that.

It's not limited to the NHL.

During the local hockey season, I find myself at a few Raider games, (okay, and Capitals for my Brampton readers... oh, and the Blues, just to keep the east end of Brampton happy too.)

Same thing with their players.

Few hockey players take pride in any personal grooming. It's like they revel in being scruffy.

Now, before the entire readership out there says 'wait a minute,' and wags an accusing finger at my head shot in the upper right corner, saying "but he wears a beard."

I admit, yes I do have a beard— have had for years. But I'm also quick to add I shave above and below that beard, each and every morning— Saturdays and Sundays included.

It takes mere minutes.

So, what's the problem with hockey players?

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Ted Brown

When I was a true-blue, obnoxious hockey fan, (back in the days when the NHL had six teams,) every hockey player was clean-shaven.

You never saw Dave Keon or Frank Mahovlich with a three-day growth.

Gordie Howe was always respectable (except for his elbows), and Johnny Bower, in spite of his battered face, always had a fresh haircut.

Back then, hockey legends were featured on Wheaties cereal boxes. They had to look good.

So what is it with these younger players?

I'm not suggesting members of the Toronto Maple Leafs need to book waxing appointments before each game, or anything so bizarre.

But they could look a tad more presentable, instead of looking like some lost soul who stumbled in from an episode of *Survivor*.

If only for the sake of national pride.

Call me old-fashioned, but it bugs me.

If I were appearing on national TV, I'd shave. I'd even get a fresh haircut, like Ron MacLean.

We have scruffy players on the bench yet the coaches behind them don sports jackets and ties, with a perfectly groomed haircut and shave.

Perhaps it's a class distinction, or even a rite of passage. When players finally realize they can shave, they grow up to become coaches.

I can't deny today's hockey players have lots of talent, and get paid big bucks for it.

But unfortunately, they have no class.

Not like Keon, Howe or Mahovlich.

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