



That's Hockey
David Bouchard
Dean Griffiths, illustrator

1-55143-348-6

\$9.95 CDN • \$7.95 US, PAPERBACK

8 X 10, 32 PAGES

AGES 4-8

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The Story

When Etienne takes his cousin out to play street hockey for the first time, he has a lot of explaining to do. Street hockey is nothing like ice hockey. Everyone has to wear a number nine Canadiens hockey sweater, but beyond that, the game has more to do with a fun day in the snow than with winning or losing. ET's cousin comes away with a talisman and a story worth passing on. The story and art together create a rambunctious, joyous mood and the surprise twist at the end invites the reader right back to the beginning again to read the story with an enlightened eye.

The Author

David Bouchard is the author of many best-selling and award-winning books for children. In addition to his picture books, he is author of *The Gift of Reading: A Guide for Educators and Parents* with Dr. Wendy Sutton (Orca, 2001), a book drawn from his years of experience working in schools. David grew up on the prairies, where he lived and breathed hockey. Every detail of *That's Hockey*, from Mop and Tooth to the hot chocolate, is drawn from his personal experience. He now makes his home in Victoria, BC, with his wife, Vicki, their daughter, Victoria, and their dogs, Lady Royale, a King Charles spaniel, and Hagrid, an Irish wolfhound.

The Illustrator

This is the second time that David Bouchard and Dean Griffiths have teamed up on a picture book. Dean brings the same lively playfulness to street hockey here that he brought to a Harley-riding tooth fairy in David Bouchard's *Fairy*. Other titles, Kathleen Waldron's *Rough Day at Loon Lake* and Ainslie Manson's *Ballerinas Don't Wear Glasses*, are just as much fun. Dean lives in Duncan, BC, with his wife, Sonja.

The Ideas

- Write a story about teaching your favourite sport or game to someone who has never played it before. What might seem strange or unusual about the game? Games without official rules may work best for this activity.
- Mop is the big guy who always gets picked first and Tooth is the one who keeps getting his teeth knocked out. Read the story carefully and look at each picture of Mop and Tooth. Then, see if you can make up a story on your own about something that happens to the two of them. Tell it in words or pictures or both.
- The main character, who comes from the city, learns a lot on this visit to Etienne's. What do you think this character might tell others back in the city after the weekend?
- You will find a list of picture books about hockey at the end of this guide. Read them all. Study the pictures. Then compare and contrast. Which one is most exciting? Why? How would you describe the different styles of art? Do you like one better than the others? Or are they all well suited to their own stories? Take the books to a class of younger children and do a presentation trying to get the kids excited about reading all of them.

A Few Words from the Author

Dear Reader,

In all the time that I played street hockey while growing up on the cold, bald prairie (and that was substantial) I cannot recall a single girl ever playing with us boys. Nor did I ever see a girl or a woman playing hockey on television. That was simply not done! Girls figure skated. Boys played hockey. Ringette, a game similar to hockey and played by girls, did not come about for another twenty years.

The Canadian Olympic Women's hockey team moved some to tears; it moved others to take up hockey, and it moved me to write *That's Hockey*. Like

so many, I wanted to participate in this phenomenon—women were being allowed to play this 'man's sport.' I wanted to be among those who stand waving the flag of equality.

I now have my own little girl. Like every other father before me, I've changed the way I look at the world. I am embarrassed by the fact that women had to take to the streets chanting slogans before they were given the right to vote. I would feel that much better about the renowned Group of Seven had at least one of their members been a woman. I am among those who resent tennis prize money being twice for men what it is for women. There was a time, and it wasn't that long ago, when some women in our country felt that they would not be taken seriously as authors if they were known to be women. Marshall Saunders, the author of the Canadian classic *Beautiful Joe*, dropped her first name, Margaret, in order to be published and accepted as a writer.

All of this tempts me to using a pseudonym of my own—a woman's name—as a statement of support! Instead, I am choosing to share a world that in my life experience was always for boys and men. I have made my hockey hero a girl.

That's it! The rest is easy.

That's Hockey was my attempt to record how more than one generation learned to play Canada's national sport (and, no, our national sport is NOT curling). Our children are at risk of coming to believe that the game is meant to be played in five million dollar arenas, on carefully manicured ice, on thousand dollar skates. It is not.

That's Hockey shows that hockey can be played by anyone, anywhere.

Yours truly,

David Bouchard

www.davidbouchard.com

Other Books about Hockey

Picturebooks

William Brownridge. *The Moccasin Goalie* (1995, Orca); *The Final Game* (1997, Orca); *Victory at Paradise Hill* (2002, Orca).

Roch Carriere. *The Hockey Sweater*. (1985, Tundra).

Jack Siemiatycki and Avi Slodovnick. *The Hockey Card*. Illustrated by Doris Barrette. (2002, Lobster).

Novels

Anne Laurel Carter. *In the Clear*. (2001, Orca).