

LISA: OF COURSE I HAVE! THAT'S USUALLY YOUR LINE. ANYWAY, VISIBILITY EQUALS SURVIVAL FOR MOST CELEBRITIES IN THE ENTERTAINMENT BIZ. HOWEVER, SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT IS AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT ANIMAL. THE ENTIRE SPORT IS THE CELEBRITY FIRST, AND THE PLAYERS SECOND. POPULAR SPORT EQUALS BIG CELEBS. FEW HOCKEY PLAYERS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE THE CROSSOVER TO THE MAINSTREAM CELEBRITY WORLD. I MEAN, I GASPED WHEN I SAW WAYNE GRETZKY IN A SPORTS EDITION OF VANITY FAIR MAGAZINE!

STACEY: HOCKEY PLAYERS ARE DEFINITELY MAINSTREAM IN CANADA. HOCKEY PLAYERS ARE TREATED

LIKE ROYALTY HERE. HOCKEY IS OUR CULTURE. HOCKEY IS ALWAYS AROUND.

LISA: I FIRST HEARD HOCKEY IN MY MOM'S WOMB, HOW ABOUT YOU?

STACEY: ME TOO.

LISA: BUT, WE HAVE SOME HOCKEY FRIENDS SOUTH OF THE BORDER WHO DIDN'T HAVE THAT LUXURY.

INSIDE THE HOCKEY LOUNGE WITH LISA & STACEY

Hockey: The Boutique Sport for the Discerning American Sports Fan

One thing we accept, that all Canadians should accept, is Hockey will never be the way it is for the United States as it is for Canada. Hockey doesn't enjoy the same cultural entrenchment in the United States. But, Stacey and I won't fall into the trap other Hockey columnists spiral into where they get stuck on American Hockey's limited popularity, prompting them to drone on about TV ratings, and name every other sport or pastime ahead of Hockey.

Instead, we've opened a fine bottle of red wine and we say, "Cheers to American Hockey fans who love Hockey in spite of what the other columnists say." In the United States, Hockey really is harder to find. It's not everywhere, as

Walmart-like as football is, and as Gap-like as baseball and basketball are. Hockey, in the United States, is out of the ordinary and exotic, because not everyone is into it and because not everyone knows about it. We toast American Hockey fans who choose to seek out Hockey, despite the difficulties they face in finding it.

Hockey doesn't have much of a national US TV contract. It does, however, have regional TV contracts. Analysts love to call Hockey a Regional Sport in the United States. That's fine and dandy, but Stacey and I feel the word regional is too agricultural sounding. Hockey is not lettuce. Ask any American Hockey fan,

**INSIDE
THE HOCKEY LOUNGE
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they'll tell you Hockey is the greatest game on earth and it's the furthest thing from lettuce.

Inside our Hockey lounge, Stacey and I call Hockey the 'Boutique Sport.' Notice how attractive Hockey becomes when it's referred to as a Boutique Sport. Using the word 'boutique' did wonders for the hotel industry, and specialty or boutique stores have been enjoying success with exclusivity for years. Daring, free-thinking travelers and shoppers with a flare for something different choose boutique hotels and shops over the large faceless chains. So do American free-thinking Hockey fans when they choose Hockey over the other big sport chains, oops, we mean leagues.

American Hockey fans, we at Hockey & High Heels thank you for keeping Hockey alive in the United States despite the fact that some sports columnists have been intentionally or unintentionally trying to kill it down there. American Hockey fans, you've chosen to contribute to Hockey's pulse in the United States, and we salute you!

Look for more way underground. Inside The Hockey Lounge with Lisa and Stacey columns in the coming chapters.



Back to Scott Gomez...

LISA: SCOTT GOMEZ'S OFFICIAL NICKNAME IS GOMER. HEY, LET'S MAKE GOMER OUR EASTERN CONFERENCE WHIPPING BOY.

STACEY: OKAY! HE PLAYS THE FORWARD POSITION, CENTRE, SO WE'LL TRACK HIS GOALS.

LISA: ACCORDING TO THE HOCKEY WORLD, A MINIMUM 20 GOALS A SEASON SEEMS TO BE THE DESIRABLE NUMBER. MAYBE GOMER WILL HIT THE 20 MARK THIS YEAR.

STACEY: WHAT IF A PLAYER SCORES 19 GOALS? THAT'S CLOSE ENOUGH. MAYBE IN OUR BOOK, 19 SHOULD BE THE NUMBER TO SHOOT FOR.

LISA: HMMM. THE HOCKEY WORLD DOES SAY SCORING HAS BEEN ON THE DECLINE OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS. LET'S MAKE IT 18 GOALS SO WE REFLECT THE DECLINE.

STACEY: AGREED. EVERY SKATER, INCLUDING GOMEZ SHOULD SHOOT FOR AT LEAST 18 GOALS PER SEASON, UNTIL SCORING INCREASES AGAIN.

LISA: ALL RIGHT. WELL, WE'VE BEEN PRODUCTIVE TONIGHT: WE'VE TOUCHED ON THE STANLEY CUP, JUNIOR HOCKEY, ICE CREAM, CELEBRITY-ISM, TOASTED AMERICAN HOCKEY FANS EVERYWHERE, GENTLY DISSED HOCKEY COLUMNISTS, UNOFFICIALLY RENAMED HOCKEY AS A BOUTIQUE SPORT IN THE UNITED STATES, REDEFINED THE DESIRABLE NUMBER OF GOALS TO SHOOT FOR, AND ESTABLISHED THE BOOK'S EASTERN CONFERENCE WHIPPING BOY.

STACEY: AND WE'RE DRUNK!

LISA: NOT BAD FOR A COUPLE OF GOOFY BLONDES, EH?

