

University of Alberta

**Manhood, Rivalry, and the Creation of a Canadian “Hockey World”:
Media Coverage of Early Stanley Cup Hockey Challenges, 1894-1907**

by

Stacy Lyle Lorenz

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For my friend

Rod Murray

1972 - 2010

Abstract

This study examines media narratives of high-level amateur and professional hockey in Canada during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In particular, this project analyzes English Canadian newspaper coverage of Stanley Cup “challenge” games and championship series between 1894 and 1907. It assesses local and national newspaper reporting on hockey, as well as the telegraph reconstructions that enabled fans to share a simultaneous experience of distant games. Early Stanley Cup matches are valuable case studies for examining the cultural meanings of hockey in Canada. Media reports and experiences of hockey brought Canadians into local and national communities of interest, while constructing narratives of regional identity, civic boosterism, and community rivalry. Press coverage and telegraph re-enactments of Stanley Cup challenges contributed significantly to the growth of a mediated Canadian

“hockey world” – and a broader “world of sport” – during this time period. By 1903, Stanley Cup hockey games had become “national” Canadian events, followed by audiences across the country.

Hockey also played an important role in the construction of gender and class identities, and in debates about amateurism, professionalism, and community representation in sport. By examining media descriptions of “brutal” and “strenuous” play, this study explores the connections between violence and manhood in Canadian hockey. Narratives of robust and hard-hitting hockey expressed both ideals of respectable, middle-class masculinity and characteristics of rough, working-class masculinity. In addition, this project analyzes how notions of civic identity changed as hockey clubs evolved from amateur teams represented by players who were “members” of their home community to professional aggregations that included paid imports from outside the town. A growing emphasis on securing the professional athletes that could ensure victory led to praise for a team’s efforts to please its supporters, or “customers.” By investigating key issues related to media, gender, and community identities in early hockey, this research addresses important gaps in the study of sport history and the analysis of sport and Canadian popular culture. More specifically, this thesis answers the need for careful, scholarly examinations of the cultural narratives attached to Canadian hockey – and the development of the Canadian sports media – in a historical context.

Acknowledgements

Writing a thesis in the field of sport history probably starts with the sports books and magazines I read as a kid; the organized – and unorganized – sports I played while growing up; the newspaper sports sections, radio play-by-play and sports talk, and televised games I read, listened to, and watched; following the Toronto Maple Leafs of the late 1970s and the (much more successful) Edmonton Oilers of the 1980s; and, in particular, the “world of baseball” I was a part of, despite living nowhere near any major league teams – from *Baseball Digest* and Bill James, to Expos games on TV, biographies of Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb, and summer days spent playing Strat-O-Matic. Mix an interest in history with a realization that sport history was becoming a legitimate academic field (and a fortuitous conversation with Bob Barney at The University of Western Ontario),

and I found myself applying to a PhD program where this kind of work was actually encouraged....

More formally, the work for this dissertation began in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at the University of Alberta, under the guidance of Gerald Redmond and Peter Lindsay. It then moved into the Department of History and Classics at the University of Alberta, where I was pleasantly surprised to find this kind of research welcomed by my initial supervisor, Doug Owram; my later supervisor, David Mills; and other professors teaching graduate courses, including Burton Smith and John-Paul Himka. I was also fortunate to sit in on a sport and Canadian popular culture course taught by Dave Whitson, who pointed me in a number of different directions that significantly influenced this project.

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Through the efforts of Yvonne Becker, David Dahle, Jeremy Mouat, and Roger Epp, I received support from Augustana University College and the Augustana Campus of the University of Alberta in a number of important ways. My coaching and teaching colleagues in Physical Education and Athletics at Augustana offered needed encouragement and diversion over the years, especially Morten Asfeldt, Gary Snyder, Yvonne Becker, and Dave Drabiuk. Geraint Osborne collaborated on the first stages of the research that shaped the way I think about hockey violence. And co-teaching courses on hockey, culture, media,

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Chapter One

Introduction:

Media, Culture, and the Meanings of Early Hockey

Newspaper readers were exposed to a number of different perspectives on the cultural meanings of hockey during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Media coverage of Canadian hockey offered fans and spectators a variety of interpretive possibilities and identities. For instance, when the Kenora Thistles travelled east in January 1907 to play the Montreal Wanderers for the Stanley Cup – the trophy that symbolized the national championship of Canada – the *Montreal Gazette* praised the western champions’ manly character and style of play. “They are in Montreal representing a fine type of manhood; what is more, the finest type of hockey, fast and clean, looking for the puck, not the man; aiming at the goal, and not with vicious intent to hurt or maim,” commented the

Gazette.¹ The two Kenora-Wanderer Stanley Cup games were described in Montreal newspapers with such phrases as “speedy and clean”; “a ripping fast match”; “brilliant, not at all rough”; and “exceptionally clean,” with “plenty of smart, snappy hockey.” Nevertheless, while there appeared to be “no foul play of a serious nature,” press reports acknowledged that the contests included hard collisions, some “rough work,” and a great deal of “stiff” checking.²

Similarly, when the Wanderers journeyed to Winnipeg in March 1907 to try to reclaim the Stanley Cup from Kenora, the *Montreal Star* noted the tension between “clean” and “rough” hockey. According to the *Star*’s analysis of the opening match of the series,

It was a clean game....There was some close checking, but in most instances it was strictly within rules. Early in the game [Hod] Stuart had his splints knocked off and injured his finger, but he played throughout [the] game without wincing. Once he collided with the fence and was dazed for a moment, but he came back gamely and continued play. Not a man was seriously injured in the

¹ *Montreal Gazette*, 18 January 1907, 4.

² *Montreal Gazette*, 18 January 1907, 4; 22 January 1907, 4; *Montreal Star*, 18 January 1907, 10; 22 January 1907, 10.

game....[T]here was no wanton roughness and altogether it was creditable hockey.³

The *Star*'s summary of the second game stated, "As an exhibition of lightning, fast, scientific hockey the game was without doubt the finest ever seen on local ice. The players of both teams were about the finest ever seen on local ice. They were in the pink of condition. The pace, which was terrific at the start, was held to the very end. Each and every man showed himself a marvel of strength and endurance." However, this impressively played match – "the greatest game of hockey Winnipeg people have ever witnessed" - also ended with the following incident:

Johnston was hit by Whitecroft. The bell had rung for full time, and the players were starting for their dressing room when Whitecroft started towards Johnston and deliberately struck him over the head.

Johnston fell to the ice in a heap, and was carried in the dressing rooms, where a doctor dressed his wound. The totally uncalled for attack of Whitecroft, was the most cowardly thing ever seen on the Winnipeg ice, and if anything has ever happened to take any of the sympathy

³ *Montreal Star*, 25 March 1907, 12.

away from the Kenora team which Winnipegers have almost looked upon as their own, it was that.⁴

Manly and cowardly. Clean play and rough work. Scientific strategies and vicious attacks. Such contradictory narratives of “credible hockey” characterized much of the newspaper reporting on the game in this era.

This brief look at some of the press coverage of Stanley Cup hockey matches in 1907 illustrates the kind of research that is undertaken in this doctoral thesis. “Manhood, Rivalry, and the Creation of a Canadian ‘Hockey World’: Media Coverage of Early Stanley Cup Hockey Challenges, 1894-1907,” explores the relationship between sport, the mass media, and popular culture by examining media narratives of high-level amateur and professional hockey in Canada during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵ In particular, this project analyzes Canadian newspaper coverage of Stanley Cup “challenge” games and championship series between 1894 and 1907. Stanley Cup matches are valuable case studies for examining the cultural meanings of hockey in Canada during this time period. These championship games involved Canada’s leading hockey

⁴ *Montreal Star*, 26 March 1907, 12.

⁵ One of the limitations of this study is that it is based on English Canadian newspapers only. Because this research does not examine French Canadian newspapers, we must be cautious about applying its conclusions to French Canada or to French Canadian media experiences of hockey.

teams, and they attracted a great deal of public attention.⁶ Through coverage of Stanley Cup matches, newspapers constructed a number of important narratives of hockey, manhood, civic identity, and regional rivalry. Hockey matches spurred public discussion of such issues as the place of violent and “strenuous” play in sport, and the role of hockey and other “manly” games in the building of a vigorous Canadian nation. In addition, because hockey teams were widely viewed as symbols of civic pride and community spirit, Stanley Cup series served as focal points for expressions of local and regional identity. As a result, the thesis also examines the discourses of boosterism and community surrounding championship hockey games in this period.

Another goal of this study is to examine newspaper coverage of hockey between 1894 and 1907 in the context of both an emerging mediated “world of sport” and an emerging Canadian “national” popular culture. Jeffrey Hill writes, “In Britain until the 1960s, when television began to take over its function, the newspaper was the principal means by which people ‘knew’ sport: how to understand, interpret, make sense of it. Far more people read about sport than

⁶ For summaries and overviews of Stanley Cup competition, see Henry Roxborough, *The Stanley Cup Story* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1964); Brian McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever* (Toronto: Pagurian Press, 1978); Dan Diamond, ed., *The Official National Hockey League Stanley Cup Centennial Book* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992); D’Arcy Jenish, *The Stanley Cup: A Hundred Years of Hockey at Its Best* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992); Michael McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter: Hockey’s Rise from Sport to Spectacle* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2000); Andrew Podnieks, *Lord Stanley’s Cup* (Bolton, Ont.: Fenn, 2004).

ever watched a sporting spectacle.”⁷ Mass circulation newspapers were established in Canada during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Because the daily press devoted increasing attention to sport, newspapers were crucial in developing local and national audiences for sport in Canada.⁸ Since much of this coverage focused on local happenings, the media helped to instill a sense of civic pride around a city’s sports teams. At the same time, newspaper coverage of major sporting events occurring outside the city, in other parts of Canada and the world, connected readers to a much wider community of fans and followers of sport. Along with the telegraph and wire services, mass circulation newspapers constructed a community of interest around sport in North America. This community of interest was composed of people who discussed, cared about, and paid attention to the same athletes, teams, leagues, and events, no matter where they lived. A unified “world of sport” was created by the mass media – one that embraced both amateur and professional sports, and included leagues, games, teams, athletes, events, stories, statistics, myths, and heroes. This “world

⁷ Jeffrey Hill, “Anecdotal Evidence: Sport, the Newspaper Press, and History,” in *Deconstructing Sport History: A Postmodern Analysis*, ed. Murray G. Phillips (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 121.

⁸ Stacy L. Lorenz, “‘A Lively Interest on the Prairies’: Western Canada, the Mass Media, and a ‘World of Sport,’ 1870-1939,” *Journal of Sport History* 27, no. 2 (2000): 195-227; Stacy L. Lorenz, “‘In the Field of Sport at Home and Abroad’: Sports Coverage in Canadian Daily Newspapers, 1850-1914,” *Sport History Review* 34, no. 2 (2003): 133-167.

of sport” also occupied a prominent position in the developing national popular cultures of both Canada and the United States in the early twentieth century.⁹

This study explores how people in Canada experienced this expanding “world of sport” by assessing press coverage of early Stanley Cup games. English Canadian newspaper reports on these matches form the primary research base for this project. First, the thesis examines media coverage of Stanley Cup contests within the communities where competing teams were based. In addition, the study assesses how these games were reported in a selection of newspapers published in other cities across the country. Daily newspapers consulted as part of this investigation include the *Halifax Herald*, *Fredericton Gleaner*, *Montreal Star*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Ottawa Evening Journal*, *Toronto Globe*, *Toronto Star*, *Kenora Miner and News*, *Manitoba Free Press*, *Winnipeg Tribune*, *Regina Leader*, *Vancouver World*, *Vancouver Province*, and *Victoria Colonist*. How were Stanley Cup challenge matches covered by newspapers in the “home”

⁹ My usage of the term “world of sport” is very similar to that of David Whitson and Donald Macintosh, who explore briefly the “world of sport” which developed out of continental media coverage of “big league” professional sport in North America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See David Whitson and Donald Macintosh, “Becoming a World-Class City: Hallmark Events and Sport Franchises in the Growth Strategies of Western Canadian Cities,” *Sociology of Sport Journal* 10, no. 3 (1993): 224-225. See also David Whitson, “Sport and Civic Identity in the Modern Canadian City,” *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 22, no. 1 (1995): 130; Dave Whitson, “Hockey and Canadian Popular Culture: The Making and Remaking of Identities,” in *Method and Methodology in Sport and Cultural History*, ed. K.B. Wamsley (Dubuque: A Times Mirror Higher Education Group, 1995), 193-196; Lorenz, “A Lively Interest on the Prairies.”

cities of participating teams in this period? To what extent did other Canadian newspapers in cities that were not directly involved in Stanley Cup competition report on such games? What role did the daily newspaper play in the construction of hockey as a popular spectacle? When did major hockey championships become “national” Canadian events, followed by newspaper readers across the country? How did media experiences of professional hockey draw Canadians into a continent-wide community of interest? These are the kinds of questions that are addressed in this thesis.

This project examines newspaper coverage of Stanley Cup challenge games and championship series between 1894 and 1907 – the time between the first Stanley Cup contests and the first few years of openly professional hockey in North America. Modern hockey’s organizational roots, early written rules, and first clubs and teams developed in Montreal during the 1870s.¹⁰ The first recorded indoor game of ice hockey in Canada occurred at Montreal’s Victoria Skating Rink in March 1875, and the *Montreal Gazette* published a set of rules for hockey in February 1877. Early organizers drew upon a combination of rules and equipment from rugby, lacrosse, field hockey, and Halifax-area shinny. Most

¹⁰ This overview of the early development of modern hockey is based mainly on Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport, Identities, and Cultural Politics* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1993), 37-53. See also Alan Metcalfe, *Canada Learns To Play: The Emergence of Organized Sport, 1807-1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), 61-73; McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter*, 1-19; John Chi-Kit Wong, *Lords of the Rinks: The Emergence of the National Hockey League, 1875-1936* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 12-27.

notably, physical contact was permitted within the sport, and hockey was established as an “on-side” game with no forward passing. A tournament at the first Montreal Winter Carnival in 1883 gave the Montreal version of hockey considerable publicity, and, as a result, teams were formed in other centres in Quebec and Ontario. In 1886, representatives from clubs in Montreal, Ottawa, and Quebec City formed the Amateur Hockey Association of Canada (A.H.A.C.), which “largely adopted the newly established rules on team size, equipment, and modes of play used by Montreal’s leading hockey clubs in the mid-1880s,” including “seven-man teams, bully-style face-offs (as in lacrosse and rugby), the on-side rule,” and the use of a standardized puck.¹¹ By the early 1890s, hockey teams were being established in cities and towns across Canada, and despite initial variations in play, these clubs gradually adopted the “Montreal rules,” as promoted by the A.H.A.C. In the words of Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, “a particular way of playing hockey” became “*the* way of playing” hockey.¹²

The Stanley Cup was first awarded in 1893 to the Montreal Amateur Athletic Association (M.A.A.A.) club after it compiled the best record in the A.H.A.C. The first Stanley Cup game actually took place in the spring of 1894 as part of the A.H.A.C. playoff.¹³ At this time, Stanley Cup champions maintained

¹¹ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 39.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 12-15; McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever*, 21-24; McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter*, 26-27.

possession of the trophy until they either lost a league title to another club, or lost a special challenge game or series to a team from outside their league. The play-off format for each challenge was dependent on specific agreements reached between competing teams and the Cup trustees. Prior to 1912, Stanley Cup challenges could be accepted at any time during the hockey season, and teams may have defended their claim to the Cup several times over the course of the year. For example, the Ottawa Hockey Club defeated nine consecutive challengers between March 1903 and March 1906, and played 23 Stanley Cup matches during this period.¹⁴ Challenges could be single-elimination games, best-of-three series, or two-game total goal series. Initially, Cup challenges were contested between amateur clubs, but, in the early 1900s, this emphasis on amateur play gradually gave way to open professionalism at the highest levels of hockey. In 1906-07, for instance, several of Canada's leading hockey leagues permitted recognized professional players to participate alongside amateurs. By 1909, amateur teams no longer competed for the Stanley Cup, and, beginning in 1915, the Cup winner was decided on the basis of a series between the champions of the leading eastern and western professional leagues, the National Hockey Association (N.H.A.) and the Pacific Coast Hockey Association (P.C.H.A.).¹⁵ As

¹⁴ Paul Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle: The Inside Story of the Old Ottawa Senators 1883-1935* (Manotick, ON: Penumbra Press, 2008), 117-120; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 35-38.

¹⁵ See Metcalfe, *Canada Learns To Play*, 168-172; Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 72-77; Daniel Mason and Barbara Schrod, "Hockey's

a result, this study considers a number of key issues and developments in hockey during a crucial period of transition within the sport.

This thesis is written according to the paper format for a doctoral dissertation, rather than the traditional format. This means that the following four chapters are designed as distinct papers. They are intended to be read as individual – though related – academic articles, rather than the more tightly connected chapters of a traditional, book-like thesis. Each chapter has a particular research focus that probes a specific topic in considerable detail. These topics are linked to broader themes related to the media experiences and cultural identities associated with early Canadian hockey. In addition, the paper format adopted for this thesis means that there is some repetition between chapters, as the common threads running through each paper are described briefly in more than one

First Professional Team: The Portage Lakes Hockey Club of Houghton, Michigan,” *Sport History Review* 27, no. 1 (1996): 49-71; Daniel S. Mason, “The International Hockey League and the Professionalization of Ice Hockey, 1904-1907,” *Journal of Sport History* 25, no. 1 (1998): 1-17; McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter*, 54-88; Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*, 28-57. Following the dissolution of the N.H.A. in 1917, the champion of the National Hockey League (N.H.L.) faced the P.C.H.A. winner in a Stanley Cup series. The N.H.L.-P.C.H.A. showdown lasted from 1918 to 1921. From 1922 to 1924, the Stanley Cup champion emerged out of several different combinations of games involving first-place finishers in the N.H.L., the P.C.H.A., and the new Western Canada Hockey League (W.C.H.L.). Finally, after the merger of the P.C.H.A. and the W.C.H.L. (in 1924-25 as an expanded W.C.H.L. and in 1925-26 as the Western Hockey League [W.H.L.]), the 1925 and 1926 Stanley Cup titles were contested between the N.H.L. and the W.C.H.L./W.H.L. champions. Beginning with the 1926-27 season, the Stanley Cup became the exclusive possession of the N.H.L., and was simply awarded to the N.H.L. champion. See Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 73-117; Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*, 46-120.

chapter. While an effort has been made to minimize this overlap, similar background information, explanations, and references were sometimes required to provide the necessary context for individual papers. The main body of the thesis consists of four case studies that explore the mediated “world of hockey” in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Case studies are noted for their ability to initiate the process of discovery, and they are especially useful for intensively examining a particular issue or event, engaging in theoretical analysis, and generating insights and hypotheses that may be explored in subsequent investigations.¹⁶ Early Stanley Cup challenges serve as useful case studies for assessing the cultural significance of hockey in the 1890s and early 1900s.

Chapter Two, “‘Our Victorias Victorious’: Media, Rivalry, and the 1896 Winnipeg-Montreal Stanley Cup Hockey Challenges,” scrutinizes media coverage of the first few Stanley Cup matches, particularly two key games between the Winnipeg Victorias and the Montreal Victorias. The chapter assesses local and national newspaper reporting on the 1896 Winnipeg-Montreal challenges, as well as the telegraph reconstructions that enabled fans to share a simultaneous

¹⁶ J.C. Mitchell, “Case and Situational Analysis,” *Sociological Review* 31 (1983): 187-211; Diane Vaughn, “Theory Elaboration: The Heuristics of Case Analysis,” in *What Is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*, ed. C. Ragin and H. Becker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 173-202; R. Gomm, M. Hammersley, and P. Foster, “Case Study and Generalization,” in *Case Study and Method: Key Issues, Key Texts*, ed. R. Gomm, M. Hammersley, and P. Foster (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000), 98-115; R.K. Yin, *Applications of Case Study Research*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003); R.K. Yin, *Case Study Design and Research*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003).

experience of distant games. Early Stanley Cup hockey matches brought Canadians into both local and national communities of interest centred on sport. In addition, this case study investigates the regional and interurban rivalries that were expressed through east-west hockey competition. Narratives of regional identity and civic boosterism were constructed through media reports on the 1896 challenges, as coverage of the rival Victoria clubs became part of an emerging “hockey world” that was beginning to expand across the country.

Chapter Three, “National Media Coverage and the Creation of a Canadian ‘Hockey World’: The Winnipeg-Montreal Stanley Cup Hockey Challenges, 1899-1903,” extends the analysis offered in Chapter Two by examining how Canadians experienced the next five championship series between hockey clubs based in Winnipeg and Montreal. The chapter argues that media coverage of the Winnipeg-Montreal challenges contributed significantly to the growth of a Canadian “hockey world” – and a broader “world of sport” – during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. First, press reports and telegraph re-enactments linked fans in Winnipeg and Montreal together. At the same time, newspapers in other Canadian centres provided coverage of Stanley Cup matches. As the media constructed a shared sports information-system throughout Canada, people were drawn into a wide-ranging community of interest centred on sport. Telegraph bulletins, in particular, gave fans a strong sense of participation in games that were being played in other places. By 1903, Stanley Cup hockey

challenges had become “national” Canadian events, followed by audiences across the country through news stories and “live” telegraph reconstructions.

Chapter Four, “Hockey, Violence, and Masculinity: Newspaper Coverage of the Ottawa ‘Butchers,’ 1903-1906,” shifts attention back to the dominant cultural narratives carried by the sports media in this period, especially those related to manliness, brutality, and physical play. This case study of violence and masculinity in Canadian hockey examines newspaper reports of Stanley Cup matches involving the Ottawa Silver Seven between 1903 and 1906. It assesses media narratives of rough and aggressive hockey in relation to gender and class identities in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Canada. The Ottawa team was widely known for its violent tactics. This chapter argues that media coverage of the Silver Seven constructed hockey narratives that combined elements of “brutal butchery” and “strenuous spectacle.” These narratives spoke to different ways of experiencing and enjoying hockey, and to various tensions within public perceptions of the sport. Depictions of “brutal butchery” combined outrage and fascination; accounts of “strenuous spectacle” portrayed violence as part of an absorbing, masculine display. Thus, descriptions of robust and hard-hitting hockey expressed both ideals of respectable, middle-class masculinity and characteristics of rough, working-class masculinity.

Chapter Five, “‘The Product of the Town Itself’: Community Representation and the Stanley Cup Hockey Challenges of the Kenora Thistles, 1903-1907,” analyzes media accounts of four series involving the only team from

outside Montreal, Winnipeg, and Ottawa to win hockey's championship trophy before 1912.¹⁷ This chapter examines newspaper coverage of the Kenora Thistles hockey club as it moved from an amateur team represented by players with roots in their home community to a professional aggregation that included paid imports from outside the town. The study is mainly concerned with exploring the relationship between sport and civic identity during a key time of change in top-level hockey. The dominant narrative surrounding the Thistles portrayed players as true "members" of the town of Kenora. Even after the turn to professionalism, narratives of small-town, amateur purity and close connections to the community characterized coverage of the Thistles as they pursued the Stanley Cup. At the same time, however, a growing emphasis on securing the personnel that could ensure victory led to praise for the club's efforts to please its supporters, or "customers." As a result, this study of notions of civic representation in early hockey provides insight into the process by which sports teams came to be viewed as symbolic representatives of their communities.

By examining media coverage of hockey in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this study aims to shed new light on the cultural history of sport in Canada. As the hierarchical distinctions that earlier cultural critics made between high culture and popular culture have broken down over the past few decades, more scholars have recognized the social significance of mass culture,

¹⁷ Prior to May 1905, the town of Kenora was known as Rat Portage.

commercialized leisure, and sport.¹⁸ At the same time, increasing interest in social and cultural history has caused sport to figure more prominently in the work of historians. In addition, the field of Canadian sport history has been reshaped since the initial academic studies of the 1960s and 1970s as growing numbers of historians successfully connect the history of Canadian sport with wider changes in society and social relations.¹⁹ However, despite the prominence

¹⁸ For useful introductions to various approaches to the study of culture, see Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 1-30; J.M. Bumsted, "Toward an Understanding of Popular Culture," *Alberta* 2, no. 1 (1989): 1-15; John Clarke, "Pessimism Versus Populism: The Problematic Politics of Popular Culture," in *For Fun and Profit: The Transformation of Leisure into Consumption*, ed. Richard Butsch (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 28-44; John Storey, *An Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, 2nd ed. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1998); Ann Hall, Trevor Slack, Garry Smith, and David Whitson, *Sport in Canadian Society* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991).

¹⁹ Important monographs that examine the history of sport in Canada include Gerald Redmond, *The Sporting Scots of Nineteenth-Century Canada* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1982); Helen Lenskyj, *Out of Bounds: Women, Sport and Sexuality* (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1986); Metcalfe, *Canada Learns to Play*; Colin D. Howell, *Northern Sandlots: A Social History of Maritime Baseball* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); William Humber, *Diamonds of the North: A Concise History of Baseball in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1995); Bruce Kidd, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Nancy B. Bouchier, *For the Love of the Game: Amateur Sport in Small-Town Ontario, 1838-1895* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003); Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*; Greg Gillespie, *Hunting for Empire: Narratives of Sport in Rupert's Land, 1840-1870* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007). See also Don Morrow, "Canadian Sport History: A Critical Essay," *Journal of Sport History* 10, no. 1 (1983): 67-79; Morris Mott, ed., *Sports in Canada: Historical Readings* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1989); Don Morrow et al., *A Concise History of Sport in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989); Wamsley, ed., *Method and Methodology in Sport and Cultural History*; Catriona M. Parratt, "About Turns: Reflecting on Sport History in the 1990s,"

of sport in Canadian life, Canadian academics have been reluctant to study sport and its role in Canadian culture.²⁰ Historians, in particular, have taken only the first steps toward putting together a thorough analysis of sport in Canadian popular culture.²¹ Similarly, there have been few attempts at examining either the

Sport History Review 29, no. 1 (1998): 4-17; Colin D. Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers: Sport and the Making of Modern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); M. Ann Hall, *The Girl and the Game: A History of Women's Sport in Canada* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2002); Amanda N. Schweinbenz, "Canada," in *Routledge Companion to Sports History*, ed. S.W. Pope and John Nauright (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), 360-374; Don Morrow and Kevin B. Wamsley, *Sport in Canada: A History*, 2nd ed. (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²⁰ See Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 3-7, 11-14, 23-27. Gruneau and Whitson's outstanding studies of hockey and Canadian culture are notable exceptions that seem to have inspired considerable new work in this area. See also David Whitson and Richard Gruneau, eds., *Artificial Ice: Hockey, Culture, and Commerce* (Peterborough: Broadview Press and Garamond Press, 2006).

²¹ For examples of historical work on sport and Canadian popular culture, see Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, especially 31-106; Howell, *Northern Sandlots*, especially 146-170, 196-231; Kidd, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport*, especially 184-231, 254-61; Gerald Friesen, "Hockey and Prairie Cultural History," in *River Road: Essays on Manitoba and Prairie History* (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1996), 215-229; John J. MacAloon, "Popular Cultures of Olympic Sport in Canada and the United States," in *The Beaver Bites Back? American Popular Culture in Canada*, ed. David H. Flaherty and Frank E. Manning (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 126-151; Robert Knight Barney, "Whose National Pastime? Baseball in Canadian Popular Culture," in *The Beaver Bites Back?*, ed. Flaherty and Manning, 152-162; Robert Stebbins, "Ambivalence at the Fifty-five-Yard Line: Transformation and Resistance in Canadian Football," in *The Beaver Bites Back?*, ed. Flaherty and Manning, 163-174; David L. Bernard, "The Guelph Maple Leafs: A Cultural Indicator of Southern Ontario," *Ontario History* 84, no. 3 (1992): 211-223; Stacy L. Lorenz, "'Bowling Down to Babe Ruth': Major League Baseball and Canadian Popular Culture, 1920-1929," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 23, no. 1 (1995): 22-39; Sean Hayes, "America's National

role of the media in Canadian sport, or the place of sports coverage and sports programming within the Canadian media, especially from a historical perspective.²²

Pastime and Canadian Nationalism,” *Culture, Sport, Society* 4, no. 2 (2001): 157-184; Lorenz, “A Lively Interest on the Prairies”; Douglas A. Brown, “‘Aggressive, Progressive and Up-to-Date’: The Sport Program at Toronto’s Industrial Exhibition, 1879-1910,” *Sport History Review* 32, no. 2 (2001): 79-109; Steven J. Jackson and Pam Ponc, “Pride and Prejudice: Reflecting on Sport Heroes, National Identity, and Crisis in Canada,” *Culture, Sport, Society* 4, no. 2 (2001): 43-62; John Nauright and Phil White, “Mediated Nostalgia, Community and Nation: The Canadian Football League in Crisis and the Demise of the Ottawa Rough Riders, 1986-1996,” *Sport History Review* 33, no. 2 (2002): 121-137; Steven J. Jackson, “Exorcizing the Ghost: Donovan Bailey, Ben Johnson and the Politics of Canadian Identity,” *Media, Culture & Society* 26, no. 1 (2004): 121-141; Bryan D. Palmer, Ch. 4, “Canada’s Great White Hope: George Chuvalo vs. Muhammad Ali,” in *Canada’s 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 111-137, 473-478.

²² The most helpful discussions of the connections between media, sport, and culture in Canada can be found in Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, especially Chapter 4, “Media, Audiences, and the NHL Monopoly,” 79-106. See also David Whitson, “Circuits of Promotion: Media, Marketing and the Globalization of Sport,” in *MediaSport*, ed. Lawrence A. Wenner (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 57-72. On sports journalism from the 1920s to the 1940s, see Don Morrow, “Lou Marsh: The Pick and Shovel of Canadian Sporting Journalism,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 14, no. 1 (1983): 21-33; M. Ann Hall, “Alexandrine Gibb: In ‘No Man’s Land of Sport,’” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 18, no. 1 (2001): 149-172; Duncan Koerber, “Constructing the Sports Community: Canadian Sports Columnists, Identity, and the Business of Sports in the 1940s,” *Sport History Review* 40, no. 2 (2009): 126-142; Morrow and Wamsley, Ch. 7, “Sports Journalism and the Media,” in *Sport in Canada: A History*, 143-164. For a useful ethnographic study of sportswriters and the production of sports news, see Mark Douglas Lowes, *Inside the Sports Pages: Work Routines, Professional Ideologies, and the Manufacture of Sports News* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999). A number of studies of the Canadian sports media have focused on television, rather than newspapers or radio. See, for example, Garry J. Smith and Cynthia Blackburn, *Sport in the Mass Media* (Ottawa: Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 1978); Susan Marie Nattrass, “Sport and Television in Canada: 1952

A significant number of valuable studies of hockey and various dimensions of popular culture have appeared since the publication of Richard Gruneau and David Whitson's *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport, Identities, and Cultural Politics* in 1993, as well as their follow-up edited collection, *Artificial Ice: Hockey, Culture, and Commerce*, in 2006.²³ As Andrew C. Holman notes,

to 1982" (Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 1988); Richard Gruneau, David Whitson, and Hart Cantelon, "Methods and Media: Studying the Sports/Television Discourse," *Society and Leisure* 11, no. 2 (1988): 265-281; Hart Cantelon and Richard Gruneau, "The Production of Sport for Television," in *Not Just A Game*, ed. Jean Harvey and Hart Cantelon (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988), 177-192; Richard Gruneau, "Making Spectacle: A Case Study in Television Sports Production," in *Media, Sports, and Society*, ed. Lawrence A. Wenner (Newbury Park: Sage, 1989), 134-154; Paul Rutherford, *When Television Was Young: Primetime Canada 1952-1967* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), especially "Hockey and the Male Ethos," 241-255; Robert Sparks, "'Delivering the Male': Sports, Canadian Television, and the Making of TSN," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 17, no. 3 (1992): 319-342; Neil Earle, "Hockey as Canadian Popular Culture: Team Canada 1972, Television and the Canadian Identity," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 30, no. 2 (1995): 107-123; Margaret MacNeill, "Networks: Producing Olympic Ice Hockey for a National Television Audience," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 13, no. 2 (1996): 103-124; James Gillet, Philip White, and Kevin Young, "The Prime Minister of Saturday Night: Don Cherry, the CBC, and the Cultural Production of Intolerance," in *Seeing Ourselves: Media Power and Policy in Canada*, ed. Helen Holmes and David Taras, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1996), 59-72; Steve Jackson, Jay Scherer, and Scott G. Martyn, Ch. 10, "Sport and the Media," in *Canadian Sport Sociology*, ed. Jane Crossman, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Thomson Nelson, 2008), 177-195; Jay Scherer and David Whitson, "Public Broadcasting, Sport, and Cultural Citizenship: The Future of Sport on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation?," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 44, no. 2-3 (2009): 213-229.

²³ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*; Whitson and Gruneau, eds., *Artificial Ice: Hockey, Culture, and Commerce*. Important recent studies of hockey and Canadian popular culture written or assembled by these two influential scholars include David Whitson, "Hockey and Canadian Identities: From Frozen Rivers to Revenue Streams," in *A Passion for Identity: Canadian Studies for the 21st Century*, ed. David Taras and Beverly Rasporich, 4th ed.

during the past decade, “scholarly disinclination towards reading hockey seriously as an emblem of Canadian culture has waned significantly.”²⁴ The resulting series of wide-ranging examinations of the contested identities associated with hockey’s place in Canadian society and culture has added considerably to our

(Scarborough: Nelson Thomson Learning, 2001), 217-236; Jean Harvey, “Whose Sweater Is This? The Changing Meanings of Hockey in Quebec,” in *Artificial Ice*, ed. Whitson and Gruneau, 29-52; Brian Wilson, “Selective Memory in a Global Culture: Reconsidering Links between Youth, Hockey, and Canadian Identity,” in *Artificial Ice*, ed. Whitson and Gruneau, 53-70; Mary Louise Adams, “The Game of Whose Lives? Gender, Race, and Entitlement in Canada’s ‘National’ Game,” in *Artificial Ice*, ed. Whitson and Gruneau, 71-84; Julie Stevens, “Women’s Hockey in Canada: After the ‘Gold Rush,’” in *Artificial Ice*, ed. Whitson and Gruneau, 85-99; Michael Robidoux and Pierre Trudel, “Hockey Canada and the Bodychecking Debate in Minor Hockey,” in *Artificial Ice*, ed. Whitson and Gruneau, 101-122; Robert Pitter, “Racialization and Hockey in Canada: From Personal Troubles to a Canadian Challenge,” in *Artificial Ice*, ed. Whitson and Gruneau, 123-139; Dan Mason, “Expanding the Footprint? Questioning the NHL’s Expansion and Relocation Strategy,” in *Artificial Ice*, ed. Whitson and Gruneau, 181-199.

²⁴ Andrew C. Holman, ed., *Canada’s Game: Hockey and Identity* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009), 5. See also Jamie Dopp and Richard Harrison, eds., *Now Is the Winter: Thinking About Hockey* (Hamilton: Wolsak and Wynn, 2009), 9-13. Notable recent non-academic works include Dave Bidini, *Tropic of Hockey: My Search for the Game in Unlikely Places* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2000); Andrew Podnieks, *A Canadian Saturday Night: Hockey and the Culture of a Country* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2006); Bill Gaston, *Midnight Hockey: All About Beer, the Boys, and the Real Canadian Game* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2006); Stephen Brunt, *Searching for Bobby Orr* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006); Brian Kennedy, *Growing Up Hockey: The Life and Times of Everyone Who Ever Loved the Game* (Edmonton: Folklore Publishing, 2007); Lorna Jackson, *Cold-Cocked: On Hockey* (Emeryville, ON: Biblioasis, 2007); Stephen Brunt, *Gretzky’s Tears: Hockey, Canada, and the Day Everything Changed* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009).

understanding of the sport's meanings and significance.²⁵ However, the bulk of this research has been undertaken in the fields of sport sociology and

²⁵ See, for example, Anouk Bélanger, "The Last Game? Hockey and the Experience of Masculinity in Québec," in *Sport and Gender in Canada*, ed. Philip White and Kevin Young (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1999), 293-309; Nancy Theberge, *Higher Goals: Women's Ice Hockey and the Politics of Gender* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000); Dan MacKinnon, "Myth, Memory, and the Kitchener-Waterloo Dutchmen in Canadian International Hockey," *Sport History Review* 31, no. 1 (2000): 1-27; Marc Savoie, "Broken Time and Broken Hearts: The Maritimes and the Selection of Canada's 1936 Olympic Hockey Team," *Sport History Review* 31, no. 2 (2000): 120-138; Gamal Abdel Shehid, "Writing Hockey Thru Race: Rethinking Black Hockey in Canada," in *Rude: Contemporary Black Canadian Cultural Criticism*, ed. Rinaldo Walcott (Toronto: Insomniac Press, 2000), 69-86; Jay Scherer, "Globalization and the Construction of Local Particularities: A Case Study of the Winnipeg Jets," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 18, no. 2 (2001): 205-230; Howard Ramos and Kevin Gosine, "'The Rocket': Newspaper Coverage of the Death of a Quebec Cultural Icon, A Canadian Hockey Player," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 36, no. 4 (2001): 9-31; Steven J. Jackson, "Gretzky Nation: Canada, Crisis and Americanization," in *Sport Stars: The Cultural Politics of Sporting Celebrity*, ed. David L. Andrews and Steven J. Jackson (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 164-186; Colin D. Howell, ed., *Putting It On Ice: Volume I: Hockey and Cultural Identities* (Halifax: Gorsebrook Research Institute, 2002); Daniel S. Mason, "'Get the Puck Outta Here!': Media Transnationalism and Canadian Identity," *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 26, no. 2 (2002): 140-167; Russell Field, "Passive Participation: The Selling of Spectacle and the Construction of Maple Leaf Gardens, 1931," *Sport History Review* 33, no. 1 (2002): 35-50; Philip Moore, "Practical Nostalgia and the Critique of Commodification: On the 'Death of Hockey' and the National Hockey League," *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 13, no. 3 (2002): 309-322; Cecil Harris, *Breaking the Ice: The Black Experience in Canadian Hockey* (Toronto: Insomniac Press, 2003); John Wong, "Sport Networks on Ice: The Canadian Experience at the 1936 Olympic Hockey Tournament," *Sport History Review* 34 (2003): 190-212; Jay Scherer and Steven J. Jackson, "From Corporate Welfare to National Interest: Newspaper Analysis of the Public Subsidization of NHL Hockey Debate in Canada," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 21, no. 1 (2004): 36-60; J. Andrew Ross, "The Paradox of Conn Smythe: Hockey, Memory, and the Second World War," *Sport History Review* 37, no. 1 (2006): 19-35; Markku Jokisipilä, "Maple Leaf, Hammer, and Sickle: International Ice Hockey During the Cold War," *Sport History Review* 37, no. 1 (2006): 36-53; Don Morrow, "Timelessness and Historicity of the Game in Ken Dryden's Book *The Game*,"

contemporary cultural studies, rather than sport history. In addition, while there are numerous popular histories of professional hockey in North America, the scholarly literature on the early history of Canadian hockey is not extensive.

Sport History Review 37, no. 1 (2006): 54-68; Greg Ramshaw and Tom Hinch, "Place Identity and Sport Tourism: The Case of the Heritage Classic Ice Hockey Event," *Current Issues in Tourism* 9, no. 4&5 (2006): 399-418; Jay Scherer, Gregory H. Duquette, and Daniel S. Mason, "The Cold War and the (Re)articulation of Canadian National Identity: The 1972 Canada-USSR Summit Series," in *East Plays West: Sport and the Cold War*, ed. Stephen Wagg and David L. Andrews (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 163-186; Russell Field, "Manufacturing Memories and Directing Dreams: Commemoration, Community, and the Closing of Maple Leaf Gardens," *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 35 (2007): 61-93; Russell Field, "Constructing the Preferred Spectator: Arena Design and Operation and the Consumption of Hockey in 1930s Toronto," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 25, no. 6 (2008): 649-677; Stephen Swain, "I Stole This From a Tragically Hip Song: Stories of Bill Barilko," *Sport History Review* 39, no. 2 (2008): 152-169; Scherer and Whitson, "Public Broadcasting, Sport, and Cultural Citizenship"; Terry Vaio Gittersos, "'Les 'frogs' sont menacés': Media Representations of the Nordiques and Canadiens, 1979-1981," *Sport History Review* 40, no. 1 (2009): 69-81; Sarah Gee, "Mediating Sport, Myth, and Masculinity: The National Hockey League's 'Inside the Warrior' Advertising Campaign," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 26, no. 4 (2009): 578-598; Holman, ed., *Canada's Game*; Dopp and Harrison, eds., *Now Is the Winter*; Tim Elcombe, "The Moral Equivalent of 'Don Cherry'," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 44, no. 2 (2010): 194-218; Tim Elcombe, "Hockey New Year's Eve in Canada: Nation-Making at the Montreal Forum," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 27, no. 8 (2010): 1287-1312; Jay Scherer and Jordan Koch, "Living With War: Sport, Citizenship, and the Cultural Politics of Post-9/11 Canadian Identity," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 27, no. 1 (2010): 1-29; Jason Blake, *Canadian Hockey Literature: A Thematic Study* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010); Stacy L. Lorenz and Rod Murray, "The Dennis Rodman of Hockey: Ray Emery and the Policing of Blackness in the Great White North," in *Commodified and Criminalized: New Racism and African Americans in Contemporary Sports*, ed. David J. Leonard and C. Richard King (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 183-202; Jay Scherer and Judy Davidson, "Promoting the 'Arriviste' City: Producing Neoliberal Urban Identity and Communities of Consumption During the Edmonton Oilers' 2006 Playoff Campaign," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 46, no. 2 (2011): 157-180.

Moreover, most of these works either deal with individual teams or the rise of professional hockey in this period.²⁶ “Given hockey’s trumpeted historical and

²⁶ Academic studies of hockey in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries include Don Morrow, “The Little Men of Iron: The 1902 Montreal Hockey Club,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 12, no. 1 (1981): 51-65; Morris Mott, “Flawed Games, Splendid Ceremonies: The Hockey Matches of the Winnipeg Vics, 1890-1903,” *Prairie Forum* 10, no. 1 (1985): 169-187; Michel Vigneault, “La diffusion du Hockey à Montreal, 1895-1910,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 17, no. 1 (1986): 60-74; Metcalfe, *Canada Learns To Play*, 61-73, 168-172; R.S. Lappage, “The Kenora Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 19, no. 2 (1988): 79-100; David Mills, “The Blue Line and the Bottom Line: Entrepreneurs and the Business of Hockey in Canada, 1927-1990,” in *The Business of Professional Sports*, ed. Paul Staudohar and James A. Mangan (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 175-201; Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 31-92; Daniel Scott Mason, “The Origins and Development of the International Hockey League and Its Effects on the Sport of Professional Ice Hockey in North America” (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1994); David Seglins, “‘Just Part Of The Game:’ Violence, Hockey and Masculinity in Central Canada, 1890-1910” (M.A. thesis, Queen’s University, 1995); Mason and Schrodt, “Hockey’s First Professional Team”; Stephen Hardy, “Memory, Performance, and History: The Making of American Ice Hockey at St. Paul’s School, 1860-1915,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 14, no. 1 (1997): 97-115; Mason, “The International Hockey League”; Michael A. Robidoux, “Imagining a Canadian Identity through Sport: A Historical Interpretation of Lacrosse and Hockey,” *Journal of American Folklore* 115, no. 456 (2002): 209-225; Daniel S. Mason and Gregory H. Duquette, “Newspaper Coverage of Early Professional Ice Hockey: The Discourses of Class and Control,” *Media History* 10, no. 3 (2004): 157-173; Andrew C. Holman, “Playing in the Neutral Zone: Meanings and Uses of Ice Hockey in the Canada-U.S. Borderlands, 1895-1915,” *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 34, no. 1 (2004): 33-57; J.J. Wilson, “Skating to Armageddon: Canada, Hockey and the First World War,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 22, no. 3 (2005): 315-343; Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*; Stacy L. Lorenz and Geraint B. Osborne, “‘Talk About Strenuous Hockey’: Violence, Manhood, and the 1907 Ottawa Silver Seven-Montreal Wanderer Rivalry,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 1 (2006): 125-156; Stacy L. Lorenz and Geraint B. Osborne, “Brutal Butchery, Strenuous Spectacle: Hockey Violence, Manhood, and the 1907 Season,” in *Coast to Coast: Hockey in Canada to the Second World War*, ed. John Chi-Kit Wong (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 160-202; Ryan Eyford, “From Prairie Goolies to Canadian Cyclones: The Transformation of the

cultural importance (some might say persistence) in Canada, surprisingly little Canadian scholarship focuses on the game,” writes Russell Field.²⁷ The social and cultural history of hockey is particularly underdeveloped in comparison to other sports.²⁸ For instance, there is no comprehensive historical study of the cultural meanings of hockey during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thus, by investigating key issues related to media, gender, and community identities in early hockey, this research addresses important gaps in the study of sport history and the analysis of sport and Canadian popular culture. More specifically, this thesis helps to answer the need for additional careful,

1920 Winnipeg Falcons,” *Sport History Review* 37, no. 1 (2006): 5-18; John Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora: The Death of a (Big-Time) Hockey Dream,” *Journal of Sport History* 33, no. 2 (2006): 175-191; John Chi-Kit Wong, ed., *Coast to Coast: Hockey in Canada to the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Andrew Holman, “Frank Merriwell on Skates: Heroes, Villains, Canadians and Other *Others* in American Juvenile Sporting Fiction, 1890-1940,” in *Now Is the Winter*, ed. Dopp and Harrison, 53-67.

²⁷ Russell Field, “‘There’s more people here tonight than at a first night of the Metropolitan’: Professional Hockey Spectatorship in the 1920s and 1930s in New York and Toronto,” in *Canada’s Game*, ed. Holman, 128.

²⁸ See, for example, Elliott J. Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986); Warren Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps: A History of Early Baseball* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989); Michael Oriard, *Reading Football: How the Popular Press Created an American Spectacle* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Howell, *Northern Sandlots*; Mark Dyreson, *Making the American Team: Sport, Culture, and the Olympic Experience* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998); Steven A. Riess, *Touching Base: Professional Baseball and American Culture in the Progressive Era*, rev. ed. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

scholarly examinations of the cultural narratives attached to Canadian hockey – and the development of the Canadian sports media – in a historical context.

This study draws upon ideas and methods utilized in other historical and sociological studies of sports media narratives. Holman suggests that Gruneau and Whitson's *Hockey Night in Canada* “urged scholars to look more critically at Canadian commonplace, to do more than just watch the game or play it; it urged them, in fact, to *read* it. And to read it, scholars need to understand the sport as a text that contains many narrative possibilities.”²⁹ In recent years, a number of sport historians have used textual analysis of sports coverage to “read” sport, and to shed light on its cultural meanings. These historians consider newspaper reports not simply as *sources*, but as *texts*.³⁰ In particular, this thesis applies to Canadian hockey some of the insights and methodologies developed by Michael Oriard in his studies of American football since the late nineteenth century.³¹ For

²⁹ Holman, ed., *Canada's Game*, 6. See also Susan Birrell and Mary G. McDonald, eds., *Reading Sport: Critical Essays on Power and Representation* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000).

³⁰ See Hill, “Anecdotal Evidence,” 122-127.

³¹ Oriard, *Reading Football*; Michael Oriard, *King Football: Sport and Spectacle in the Golden Age of Radio and Newsreels, Movies and Magazines, the Weekly and the Daily Press* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Michael Oriard, “A Linguistic Turn into Sport History,” in *Deconstructing Sport History*, ed. Phillips, 75-91; Michael Oriard, *Brand NFL: Making and Selling America's Favorite Sport* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Michael Oriard, *Bowled Over: Big-Time College Football from the Sixties to the BCS Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009). See also David B. Welky, “Viking Girls, Mermaids, and Little Brown Men: U.S. Journalism and the 1932 Olympics,” *Journal of Sport*

example, in *Reading Football: How the Popular Press Created an American Spectacle* (1993) and *King Football: Sport and Spectacle in the Golden Age of Radio and Newsreels, Movies and Magazines, the Weekly and the Daily Press* (2001), Oriard explores the multiplicity of cultural narratives created by football reporting, commentary, stories, illustrations, photographs, films, and other media representations of the game prior to 1960. His study of the media texts surrounding American football reveals that there was no “single monolithic interpretation of the game but multiple narratives to which readers could respond.”³² Football coverage was characterized by a variety of competing and conflicting media discourses related to gender, race, class, ethnicity, and community. Oriard is especially attentive to the narratives about masculinity which accompanied the promotion of football as a “manly” sport, and he identifies a number of different “versions of manliness” articulated by the game’s defenders and critics from the 1880s to the 1950s.³³ In addition, he examines “how interest in football became diffused and came to be read in similar ways

History 24, no. 1 (1997): 24-49; David B. Welky, “Culture, Media and Sport: The *National Police Gazette* and the Creation of an American Working-Class World,” *Culture, Sport, Society* 1, no. 1 (1998): 78-100; Dyreson, *Making the American Team*; Pamela Grundy, *Learning to Win: Sports, Education, and Social Change in Twentieth-Century North Carolina* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Daniel A. Nathan, *Saying It’s So: A Cultural History of the Black Sox Scandal* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

³² Oriard, *Reading Football*, 115.

³³ See *Ibid.*, 189-276; Oriard, *King Football*, 208-222, 328-363.

throughout the country.” According to Oriard, “the influence of the great metropolitan papers made them models for provincial publishers and editors, while syndicates and wire services provided a common source of information.”³⁴

This thesis aspires to cover some of the same ground for hockey that Oriard maps out for football, although its scope is much more modest than Oriard’s ambitious analysis of football’s cultural meanings. In comparison to Oriard’s work on football, this study of Canadian hockey focuses on a narrower range of sources, issues, and media narratives. As a result, this project aims to accomplish only a part of what Oriard achieves in his meticulous reconstruction of the mediated world of football. Nevertheless, this thesis shares with Oriard’s research the goal of reading the cultural narratives contained within sports coverage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Like Oriard’s studies, this dissertation is also an examination of the growth and impact of the sports media, particularly the daily press at the turn of the century. As Oriard states in *Reading Football*, “The newspapers and magazines seemed increasingly important in themselves, not merely as my access to the football games they reported.”³⁵ Following Oriard, then, the upcoming chapters of this dissertation assess hockey “as a cultural text, explain how it came to function in this way, and reconstruct several of the specific narratives through which the game was read

³⁴ Oriard, *Reading Football*, 120.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, xviii.

during its formative period.”³⁶ Hockey played a key role in the construction of gender and class identities; in the shaping of local and regional community allegiances; and in debates about amateurism and professionalism. The media narratives examined in this study illuminate the place of hockey in these issues, and demonstrate some of the tensions surrounding the cultural experience of hockey in the 1890s and early 1900s. As Oriard writes,

Sports journalism presents us not only with a running commentary on football but also with a series of historically grounded interpretations of the game’s meaning....The daily newspaper in particular tells us what the great majority read about football at the turn of the century. Together with a range of popular periodicals, the newspaper can help us reconstruct the cultural conversation about football in which readers took part.³⁷

Similarly, this thesis draws upon newspaper coverage of Stanley Cup matches to reveal important “cultural conversations” about hockey in Canada during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It analyzes the “hockey world” that developed across the country between 1894 and 1907 as teams clashed for the Stanley Cup, and fans followed these contests through the media.

³⁶ Ibid., xix.

³⁷ Ibid., xx.

Chapter Two

“Our Victorias Victorious”: Media, Rivalry, and the 1896 Winnipeg-Montreal Stanley Cup Hockey Challenges

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, mass circulation newspapers emerged in Canada. At the same time, this developing daily press devoted more and more attention to sport. As a result, daily newspapers were instrumental in creating local and national audiences for sport in Canada.¹

Because much of this increased sports coverage focused on local happenings, the media helped to generate public interest in a city's teams and athletes. Reports on local clubs and events encouraged spectatorship and helped to create a sense of

¹ These ideas are explored more thoroughly in Stacy L. Lorenz, “‘A Lively Interest on the Prairies’: Western Canada, the Mass Media, and a ‘World of Sport,’ 1870-1939,” *Journal of Sport History* 27, no. 2 (2000): 195-227; Stacy L. Lorenz, “‘In the Field of Sport at Home and Abroad’: Sports Coverage in Canadian Daily Newspapers, 1850-1914,” *Sport History Review* 34, no. 2 (2003): 133-167.

community spirit and civic pride around a city's sports teams. Meanwhile, media coverage of major sporting events occurring outside a newspaper's "home" city, in other parts of Canada and the world, began to connect readers to a much wider community of fans and followers of sport. This community of interest was composed of people who discussed, cared about, and paid attention to the same athletes, teams, leagues, and events, no matter where they lived. A unified "world of sport" was created by the mass media – one that embraced both amateur and professional sports, and included leagues, games, teams, athletes, events, stories, statistics, myths, and heroes.² With the spread of the daily press throughout Canada, people across the country gained access to a common body of information about sport.³ Thus, media experiences of major sporting events

² My usage of the term "world of sport" is very similar to that of David Whitson and Donald Macintosh, who explore briefly the "world of sport" which developed out of continental media coverage of "big league" professional sport in North America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See David Whitson and Donald Macintosh, "Becoming a World-Class City: Hallmark Events and Sport Franchises in the Growth Strategies of Western Canadian Cities," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 10, no. 3 (1993): 224-225. See also David Whitson, "Sport and Civic Identity in the Modern Canadian City," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 22, no. 1 (1995): 130; Dave Whitson, "Hockey and Canadian Popular Culture: The Making and Remaking of Identities," in *Method and Methodology in Sport and Cultural History*, ed. K.B. Wamsley (Dubuque: A Times Mirror Higher Education Group, 1995), 193-196; Lorenz, "A Lively Interest on the Prairies."

³ Another way of looking at this "world of sport" is as a shared pool of "information" about sport. In other words, to draw upon some of the ideas of Joshua Meyrowitz, the "world of sport" is an "information-system" that links people together in a transnational community of interest. See Joshua Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior* (New

involved Canadians in a “world of sport” that extended across provincial and national boundaries.

This chapter examines local and national media coverage of sport in Canada through the lens of late-nineteenth-century hockey. In particular, this study analyzes Canadian newspaper coverage of the two Stanley Cup hockey challenges played by the Winnipeg Victorias and the Montreal Victorias in February and December 1896.⁴ First presented in 1893, the Stanley Cup symbolized the national hockey championship of Canada.⁵ Newspaper reporting on the 1896 Winnipeg-Montreal Stanley Cup hockey challenges serves as a useful case study for investigating how sport was experienced through the media during this period. Historians have made few attempts at considering either the role of the media in Canadian sport, or the place of sports coverage and sports

York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Whitson and Macintosh, “Becoming a World-Class City,” 225-226; Whitson, “Sport and Civic Identity,” 133-134.

⁴ One of the limitations of this study is that it is based on English Canadian newspapers only. Because this research does not examine French Canadian newspapers, we must be cautious about applying its conclusions to French Canada or to French Canadian media experiences of hockey.

⁵ For summaries and overviews of early Stanley Cup competition, see Henry Roxborough, *The Stanley Cup Story* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1964); Brian McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever* (Toronto: Pagurian Press, 1978); Dan Diamond, ed., *The Official National Hockey League Stanley Cup Centennial Book* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992); D’Arcy Jenish, *The Stanley Cup: A Hundred Years of Hockey at Its Best* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992); Michael McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter: Hockey’s Rise from Sport to Spectacle* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2000); Andrew Podnieks, *Lord Stanley’s Cup* (Bolton, Ont.: Fenn, 2004).

programming within the Canadian media. By assessing media coverage of early hockey, this research addresses important gaps in the study of Canadian sport history and the analysis of hockey and Canadian popular culture.⁶ More specifically, it begins to answer the need for careful, focused case studies that examine the Canadian sports media, as well as North American hockey, in a historical context.⁷

⁶ The most helpful discussions of the connections between hockey, media, and culture in Canada can be found in Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport, Identities, and Cultural Politics* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1993), especially Chapter 4, “Media, Audiences, and the NHL Monopoly,” 79-106. See also David Whitson, “Circuits of Promotion: Media, Marketing and the Globalization of Sport,” in *MediaSport*, ed. Lawrence A. Wenner (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 57-72. On sports journalism from the 1920s to the 1940s, see Don Morrow, “Lou Marsh: The Pick and Shovel of Canadian Sporting Journalism,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 14, no. 1 (1983): 21-33; M. Ann Hall, “Alexandrine Gibb: In ‘No Man’s Land of Sport,’” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 18, no. 1 (2001): 149-172; Duncan Koerber, “Constructing the Sports Community: Canadian Sports Columnists, Identity, and the Business of Sports in the 1940s,” *Sport History Review* 40, no. 2 (2009): 126-142; Don Morrow and Kevin B. Wamsley, Ch. 7, “Sports Journalism and the Media,” in *Sport in Canada: A History*, 2nd ed. (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2010), 143-164. For a useful ethnographic study of sportswriters and the production of sports news, see Mark Douglas Lowes, *Inside the Sports Pages: Work Routines, Professional Ideologies, and the Manufacture of Sports News* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999). A number of studies of the Canadian sports media have focused on television, rather than newspapers or radio.

⁷ On media coverage of violence in hockey during this time frame, see Daniel S. Mason and Gregory H. Duquette, “Newspaper Coverage of Early Professional Ice Hockey: The Discourses of Class and Control,” *Media History* 10, no. 3 (2004): 157-173; Stacy L. Lorenz and Geraint B. Osborne, “‘Talk About Strenuous Hockey’: Violence, Manhood, and the 1907 Ottawa Silver Seven-Montreal Wanderer Rivalry,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 1 (2006): 125-156; Stacy L. Lorenz and Geraint B. Osborne, “Brutal Butchery, Strenuous Spectacle: Hockey Violence, Manhood, and the 1907 Season,” in *Coast to Coast:*

Through heightened coverage of local sports happenings, urban dailies in the late nineteenth century contributed to the creation of local audiences for sport

Hockey in Canada to the Second World War, ed. John Chi-Kit Wong (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 160-202. Other academic studies of hockey in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries include Don Morrow, "The Little Men of Iron: The 1902 Montreal Hockey Club," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 12, no. 1 (1981): 51-65; Morris Mott, "Flawed Games, Splendid Ceremonies: The Hockey Matches of the Winnipeg Vics, 1890-1903," *Prairie Forum* 10, no. 1 (1985): 169-187; Michel Vigneault, "La diffusion du Hockey à Montreal, 1895-1910," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 17, no. 1 (1986): 60-74; Alan Metcalfe, *Canada Learns To Play: The Emergence of Organized Sport, 1807-1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), 61-73, 168-172; R.S. Lappage, "The Kenora Thistles' Stanley Cup Trail," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 19, no. 2 (1988): 79-100; Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 31-92; Daniel Scott Mason, "The Origins and Development of the International Hockey League and Its Effects on the Sport of Professional Ice Hockey in North America" (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1994); David Seglins, "'Just Part Of The Game:' Violence, Hockey and Masculinity in Central Canada, 1890-1910" (M.A. thesis, Queen's University, 1995); Daniel Mason and Barbara Schrod, "Hockey's First Professional Team: The Portage Lakes Hockey Club of Houghton, Michigan," *Sport History Review* 27, no. 1 (1996): 49-71; Stephen Hardy, "Memory, Performance, and History: The Making of American Ice Hockey at St. Paul's School, 1860-1915," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 14, no. 1 (1997): 97-115; Daniel S. Mason, "The International Hockey League and the Professionalization of Ice Hockey, 1904-1907," *Journal of Sport History* 25, no. 1 (1998): 1-17; Michael A. Robidoux, "Imagining a Canadian Identity through Sport: A Historical Interpretation of Lacrosse and Hockey," *Journal of American Folklore* 115, no. 456 (2002): 209-225; Andrew C. Holman, "Playing in the Neutral Zone: Meanings and Uses of Ice Hockey in the Canada-U.S. Borderlands, 1895-1915," *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 34, no. 1 (2004): 33-57; John Chi-Kit Wong, *Lords of the Rinks: The Emergence of the National Hockey League, 1875-1936* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); John Wong, "From Rat Portage to Kenora: The Death of a (Big-Time) Hockey Dream," *Journal of Sport History* 33, no. 2 (2006): 175-191; John Chi-Kit Wong, ed., *Coast to Coast: Hockey in Canada to the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Andrew Holman, "Frank Merriwell on Skates: Heroes, Villains, Canadians and Other Others in American Juvenile Sporting Fiction, 1890-1940," in *Now Is the Winter: Thinking About Hockey*, ed. Jamie Dopp and Richard Harrison (Hamilton: Wolsak and Wynn, 2009), 53-67.

in Canada. At the same time, the mass media – especially with the development of the telegraph – played an important role in building a shared sports information-system throughout the country.⁸ In the words of Peter Putnis, the media “enabled communities to imaginatively participate, on a recurring regular basis, in a ‘larger world.’”⁹ This chapter assesses how media coverage of early Stanley Cup hockey games helped to draw Canadians into these local and national communities of interest centred on sport. D’Arcy Jenish suggests that “[t]here were frequent conflicts and there was occasional confusion” during the early years of Stanley Cup competition. “Yet the pursuit of the Cup quickly took hold of the country and became a national passion,” he writes.¹⁰ One of the goals of this study is to evaluate the degree to which Stanley Cup hockey challenges had

⁸ See Lorenz, “In the Field of Sport,” 148-155; Lorenz, “A Lively Interest on the Prairies,” 195-203.

⁹ Peter Putnis, “News, Time and Imagined Community in Colonial Australia,” *Media History* 16, no. 2 (2010): 154. See also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1983); Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); John B. Thompson, *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 31-37; Simon J. Potter, *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System, 1876-1922* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Simon J. Potter, “Communication and Integration: The British and Dominions Press and the British World, c. 1876-1914,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 31, no. 2 (2003): 190-206; Simon J. Potter, “Webs, Networks, and Systems: Globalization and the Mass Media in the Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century British Empire,” *Journal of British Studies* 46 (2007): 621-646.

¹⁰ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 15.

become “national” events in Canada by 1896. In addition, when teams from Winnipeg and Montreal met to decide the hockey championship of the country, the clubs became symbols of regional differences and focal points of civic pride. Therefore, as part of this investigation of the connections between media and sport, this chapter analyzes the narratives of regional and local identity that accompanied hockey reporting in this period. How did newspapers in Winnipeg and Montreal cover the 1896 Stanley Cup challenges? What role did the telegraph play in enabling fans to follow games taking place in other cities? To what extent did other Canadian newspapers in places that were not directly involved in Stanley Cup competition report on these contests? How did hockey coverage contribute to understandings of regional rivalry and local loyalty? These are some of the questions addressed in this study.

Competition for the Stanley Cup took several forms in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Known formally as the Dominion Hockey Challenge Cup, the trophy was donated by Sir Frederick Arthur Stanley, a British aristocrat who became Governor General of Canada in 1888. Over the next few years, Lord Stanley developed a keen interest in the winter sport of hockey, first sponsoring a local Ottawa team and then purchasing a silver cup that was intended to “be held from year to year by the leading hockey club in Canada.”¹¹ The

¹¹ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 12. See also McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever*, 16-19; McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter*, 20-25; Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*, 16-

Stanley Cup was first awarded in the fall of 1893 to the Montreal Amateur Athletic Association (M.A.A.A.), since the club “had finished first the previous winter in the Amateur Hockey Association of Canada [A.H.A.C.], which was regarded as the country’s premier league at the time.”¹² The Stanley Cup then became a “challenge” trophy, and the play-off format for each challenge was dependent on specific agreements reached between competing teams, as well as the two Stanley Cup trustees. In general, Stanley Cup champions maintained possession of the trophy until they either lost a league title to another club, or lost a special challenge game or series to a team from outside their league.¹³

The first Stanley Cup game was played on 22 March 1894, as part of the A.H.A.C. playoff. After the M.A.A.A. defeated the Montreal Victorias in the league semi-final, the defending champions beat the Ottawa Hockey Club in the

17; Paul Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle: The Inside Story of the Old Ottawa Senators 1883-1935* (Manotick, ON: Penumbra Press, 2008), 90-91; Kevin Shea and John Jason Wilson, *Lord Stanley: The Man Behind the Cup* (Bolton, ON: Fenn, 2006).

¹² Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 12. See also McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever*, 21-23; McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter*, 26; Podnieks, *Lord Stanley’s Cup*, 4. The deciding game for the A.H.A.C. championship had been played between the M.A.A.A. and the Ottawa Hockey Club at the Victoria Skating Rink in Montreal. See *Montreal Star*, 17 February 1893, 2; 18 February 1893, 6; 20 February 1893, 3.

¹³ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 14-15; Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 91-92. Prior to 1912, challenges could be accepted at any time during the hockey season, and teams may have defended their claim to the Cup several times over the course of the year.

final game.¹⁴ Five thousand fans were reported to be in attendance at Montreal's Victoria Rink, and the *Montreal Gazette* claimed, "Never before in the history of the game was such a crowd present or such enthusiasm evident....Tin horns, strong lungs and a general rabble predominated."¹⁵ The *Ottawa Evening Journal* followed an informative preview of the match with a thorough game story on its front page, titled, "THE HOCKEY CUP GOES TO MONTREAL."¹⁶ Although the contest attracted significant local interest, it does not seem to have drawn very much attention in other Canadian centres. For example, while Montreal newspapers printed advertisements for the final game, a brief game preview, and a short game story, there were no announcements or previews in the main Toronto dailies.¹⁷ In fact, the *Toronto Star* does not appear to have covered the

¹⁴ *Montreal Star*, 17 March 1894, 4, 8; 19 March 1894, 3.

¹⁵ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 13. See also Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*, 3; McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever*, 23-24; McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter*, 26-27.

¹⁶ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 22 March 1894, 5; 24 March 1894, 1. According to Paul Kitchen, "both the Ottawa and MAAA players were more conscious of the AHAC title being at stake than they were of the prospects of winning the new trophy. The Stanley Cup was a side benefit that merited little attention, and its being up for grabs was not even mentioned in the Ottawa Hockey Club's annual report for the season. But it would not be long before the trophy came to symbolize hockey supremacy." See Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 92. The *Ottawa Evening Journal*'s reports do not fully support Kitchen's analysis. For an opposing view which suggests that the Ottawas were eager to claim the Stanley Cup, see McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever*, 23.

¹⁷ *Montreal Star*, 22 March 1894, 2, 3; 24 March 1894, 7; *Toronto Star*, 22 March 1894, 1-4; *Toronto Globe*, 22 March 1894, 1-8.

championship game at all. Likewise, there seems to have been no press coverage of the game in Halifax, Fredericton, or Victoria.¹⁸ However, the *Toronto Globe* treated the match as one of the most significant sporting events of the previous day, publishing on its sports page a fairly comprehensive analysis of the key features of the game and the contributions of various players. “The building was packed with enthusiastic and fashionable spectators,” noted the *Globe*.¹⁹

The Montreal Victorias earned the Stanley Cup in March 1895 by winning the A.H.A.C. league title.²⁰ Established in 1882, the Victoria Hockey Club of Montreal was “the first relatively permanent club” in Canada.²¹ The day after the Victorias clinched the league championship, the M.A.A.A. played a previously scheduled challenge with Queen’s University. When Queen’s failed to defeat the previous Cup holders, the Montreal Victorias were recognized as Stanley Cup champions, because they had finished ahead of the M.A.A.A. in the A.H.A.C. standings.²² Like the March 1894 A.H.A.C. title game, the March 1895 Stanley

¹⁸ *Toronto Star*, 24 March 1894, 1-8; *Halifax Herald*, 22 March 1894, 1-8; 23 March 1894, 1-8; *Fredericton Gleaner*, 22 March 1894, 1-4; 24 March 1894, 1-4; *Victoria Colonist*, 22 March 1894, 1-8; 23 March 1894, 1-8.

¹⁹ *Toronto Globe*, 23 March 1894, 6. The *Globe*’s account was actually more informative than the *Montreal Star*’s article.

²⁰ McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever*, 24-25. See also *Montreal Star*, 8 March 1895, 4, 5; 9 March 1895, 9.

²¹ Metcalfe, *Canada Learns to Play*, 63.

²² McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever*, 24-25. The Queen’s-M.A.A.A. challenge received less media attention than the Victorias’ final league game,

Cup challenge was ignored by newspapers in other parts of the country.²³ Since the Victorias held the Cup at the conclusion of the 1895 season, they were open to challenges from other leagues during the winter of 1896. When a team from Winnipeg decided to make a bid for the national championship trophy, one of the most important rivalries in the history of Canadian hockey began.

The Victoria Hockey Club of Winnipeg was the first hockey club in Western Canada. A group of businessmen and grain merchants put the squad together in 1890, and over the next few years the Winnipeg Vics established themselves as the strongest team outside the dominant Ottawa-Montreal centre of Canadian hockey. Competing in the Manitoba and Northwestern Association against other teams from Winnipeg, as well as Brandon, Portage La Prairie, and Rat Portage, the Vics finished in first place – or tied for first – every season from 1892-93 to 1901-02. During the winter of 1895, the Vics completed a triumphant exhibition tour in central Canada, outscoring teams from Toronto, Ottawa,

except in the *Toronto Globe*. However, the *Globe* devoted much of its coverage to questioning the purpose of the match and criticizing the quality of play. See *Montreal Star*, 8 March 1895, 4; 9 March 1895, 9; 11 March 1895, 2; *Toronto Star*, 9 March 1895, 2; 11 March 1895, 1-4; *Toronto Globe*, 9 March 1895, 19; 11 March 1895, 6.

²³ See, for example, *Halifax Herald*, 8 March 1895, 1-8; 9 March 1895, 1-8; 11 March 1895, 1-8; *Fredericton Gleaner*, 8 March 1895, 1-4; 9 March 1895, 1-6; 11 March 1895, 1-4; *Regina Leader*, 7 March 1895, 1-8; 14 March 1895, 1-8; *Victoria Colonist*, 9 March 1895, 1-8; 10 March 1895, 1-8; 12 March 1895, 1-8.

Montreal, and Quebec by a combined margin of 33-12.²⁴ Buoyed by their success in these games, the westerners submitted a challenge for the Stanley Cup in early 1896. As a result, Cup trustees John Sweetland and P.D. Ross scheduled a match in Montreal on 14 February between the Winnipeg Victorias and the defending champion Montreal Victorias.

“Every seat in Montreal’s Victoria Rink was occupied and the standing-room sections were jammed when the local Victorias skated on to the ice,” writes Jenish.²⁵ However, the home crowd watched the visiting Vics build a two-goal advantage in the first half of play, and then withstand a furious Montreal attack in the final thirty minutes to maintain their narrow 2-0 lead. The shutout victory meant that the Winnipeg Vics became the first team from outside Montreal to claim the Stanley Cup. Keen to recapture the trophy, the Montreal Victorias requested a rematch with their Winnipeg counterparts. The game was scheduled for the beginning of the following season, and Montreal left for Winnipeg on Christmas Day 1896 in order to arrive in time for the renewal of the rivalry on 30 December. This time Winnipeg’s McIntyre Rink was filled to capacity, and the home fans were again disappointed as Montreal regained the Stanley Cup with a

²⁴ Mott, “Flawed Games, Splendid Ceremonies,” 169; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 15-16.

²⁵ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 17. See also Podnieks, *Lord Stanley’s Cup*, 22.

hard-fought 6-5 victory.²⁶ The remainder of this chapter examines the ways in which the 1896 Stanley Cup challenges were experienced through the media.

One of the key features of press coverage of these Stanley Cup matches was the manner in which newspapers facilitated the creation of audiences for hockey. In conjunction with the telegraph and wire services, mass circulation newspapers built local, national, and international communities of interest around sport in North America.²⁷ Prior to the First World War, most press coverage of sport focused on local teams and athletes.²⁸ Whitson notes that through regular, daily sports coverage, “metropolitan papers developed serial-type narratives around the fortunes of their home teams, beginning with pre-season signings and prognostications, and continuing through the successes and disappointments of a

²⁶ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 18-20; McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever*, 26-27; Podnieks, *Lord Stanley's Cup*, 23.

²⁷ On the development of the modern mass press in Canada, see P.F.W. Rutherford, “The People's Press: The Emergence of the New Journalism in Canada, 1869-99,” *Canadian Historical Review* 56, no. 2 (1975): 169-91; Paul Rutherford, *The Making of the Canadian Media* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978); Paul Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority: The Daily Press in Late Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982); Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1989); Minko Sotiron, *From Politics to Profit: The Commercialization of Canadian Daily Newspapers, 1890-1920* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997). For an alternative perspective that examines the rural weekly press, see Paul Voisey, *High River and the Times: An Alberta Community and Its Weekly Newspaper, 1905-1966* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2004).

²⁸ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 95; Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority*, 54, 135, 195; Lorenz, “In the Field of Sport,” 148-152.

sporting season.”²⁹ Because of its “serialized” nature, this continuous, local sports coverage was extremely useful in mobilizing civic identifications around a city’s sports teams. “The popular newspaper...was far and away the most effective agent of a sense of community, a civic consciousness in the big city,” explains Paul Rutherford.³⁰ As promoters of their city, newspapers were important instruments of civic boosterism – the effort on the part of local politicians and business leaders to encourage economic and population growth by developing a dynamic image for their town or city in comparison with its competitors. “Most publishers used their newspapers unashamedly to ‘boom’ their communities,” states Minko Sotiron. “Not illogically, they reasoned that growth of their community would result in increased prosperity and growth for their newspaper.”³¹

When newspapers started paying more attention to sport, they became valuable publicity agents for local clubs and athletes. Media coverage sparked interest in local teams, and helped to bring members of the community out to watch games. In addition, because sports teams were seen as expressions of community competence, fan support was viewed as an important measure of civic

²⁹ Whitson, “Hockey and Canadian Popular Culture,” 194. See also Whitson, “Circuits of Promotion,” 61-62.

³⁰ Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority*, 136.

³¹ Sotiron, *From Politics to Profit*, 65. See also Ibid., 66-68, 150-151; Rutherford, “The People’s Press,” 182; Rutherford, *The Making of the Canadian Media*, 68; Lorenz, “In the Field of Sport,” 148-149.

spirit. For example, in a report from Montreal prior to the first Winnipeg-Montreal challenge in February 1896, the *Manitoba Free Press* stated, “Very great interest is manifested here in the match which takes place on Friday. Special arrangements for a large crowd have been made at the rink, but so great is the enthusiasm that every available seat and inch of standing room has already been taken.”³² In a more subdued tone, the *Montreal Gazette* noted, “The match is looked forward to with interest, and will, undoubtedly, draw a big crowd.” Similarly, the *Montreal Star* reported, “This evening’s game for the Stanley Cup between the Victorias of Winnipeg, and the local Victorias is creating great interest.”³³

The emphasis on spectators and local engagement was especially evident in coverage of the December 1896 rematch in Winnipeg. In fact, based on newspaper reports related to the contest, the fans in the arena sometimes seemed as important as the sporting event itself.³⁴ This type of coverage began with

³² *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 February 1896, 5.

³³ *Montreal Gazette*, 13 February 1896, 8; *Montreal Star*, 14 February 1896, 3. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 14 February 1896, 8.

³⁴ On the other hand, Montreal media accounts of the February 1896 challenge gave little consideration to the crowd that gathered at the Victoria Rink. See, for example, *Montreal Star*, 15 February 1896, 12; *Montreal Gazette*, 15 February 1896, 2. Perhaps this lack of specific attention to spectators was because, in Montreal, the audience for high-level hockey was already well-developed by 1896, so interest in a championship match was unremarkable. Teams had been playing “modern,” indoor games of hockey in Montreal since 1875. With the formation of the A.H.A.C. in 1886, consistent rules, regular schedules, and paying fans also became standard components of Montreal hockey.

notification of tickets available for sale in Winnipeg, including assurances that “[f]rom any of the gallery seats a splendid view of the game can be had.”³⁵ Interest in the game in Winnipeg was high, as these tickets were sold very quickly: “There was a rush Thursday for the reserved seats for the championship hockey match. The plan was opened at 11.30 and in exactly forty minutes every one of the 500 seats had been taken. They were sold in blocks from five to fifteen, parties having pooled their money in order to save time.”³⁶ The general admission price was \$1 and reserve seats cost \$2. However, newspapers speculated that reserve seats were selling for between \$5 and \$12 in the days leading up to the game.³⁷ A desperate fan from Calgary allegedly paid \$25 for a seat.³⁸ Even practice sessions attracted tremendous attention, as 700 people

In addition, Montreal clubs had competed for numerous league, “national,” and Stanley Cup championships prior to 1896. See Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 37-39; Podnieks, *Lord Stanley’s Cup*, 3; Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*, 12-27; Metcalfe, *Canada Learns To Play*, 61-64.

³⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 24 December 1896, 5. See also 30 December 1896, 5.

³⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, 25 December 1896, 6. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 28 December 1896, 6; *Montreal Star*, 28 December 1896, 4.

³⁷ *Montreal Star*, 28 December 1896, 4; 29 December 1896, 8; *Montreal Gazette*, 28 December 1896, 6; 29 December 1896, 5; 31 December 1896, 8; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 28 December 1896, 4; 30 December 1896, 4.

³⁸ *Montreal Star*, 6 January 1897, 7.

reportedly watched one of the Montreal Victorias' workouts the day after the team's arrival in Winnipeg.³⁹

In the days leading up to the match, newspaper reports also expressed considerable concern for spectators at Winnipeg's McIntyre Rink. According to the *Manitoba Free Press*, a number of changes were made to the arena in order to enhance the experience of fans:

The management of the rink will see that there will be no trouble from the mist that interfered with a view of the game on Tuesday night. The large ventilators in the roof of the building will be opened and all the mist will be carried off. The gas lights will be done away with, and four additional arc lights will be put in which should successfully light up the building. The gas pipes which not infrequently stop some of the lifts will be taken out so there will be no future trouble on that score.⁴⁰

Similarly, the *Montreal Star* wrote,

The management of the McIntyre Rink have put as much accommodation as possible in the building, and it is now expected that an opportunity will be given to about two

³⁹ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 28 December 1896, 4.

⁴⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, 24 December 1896, 5. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 24 December 1896, 2; *Manitoba Free Press*, 30 December 1896, 5.

thousand to watch the match. There will be some great improvement made in the lighting of the rink and also in the ventilation, as the steam which arises from the ice at present often obscures the view of both spectators and players.⁴¹

Local interest was expected to be so high that at least one telegraph update featuring “live” bulletins was scheduled to take place in a Winnipeg hotel, as well. “As there will be hundreds of people who will be unable to attend the game, the management of the Manitoba Hotel has made arrangements to have a telegraphic report of the match read in the spacious rotunda of the hotel,” reported the *Manitoba Free Press*. “A special wire will be run from the rink to the hotel, and every move of the puck will be announced.”⁴² Finally, “[t]he progress of the game was also announced at the Grand and Bijou opera houses.”⁴³

According to the *Montreal Star*, “Persons living elsewhere can hardly imagine what a hold the prospect of the big game has taken upon people here. Wednesday’s event is the only thing talked of upon the streets and in the hotels

⁴¹ *Montreal Star*, 28 December 1896, 4. See also *Montreal Star*, 29 December 1896, 8. On efforts to improve accommodations for spectators in Montreal, see *Montreal Star*, 8 March 1895, 5.

⁴² *Manitoba Free Press*, 29 December 1896, 5. See also 31 December 1896, 5; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 29 December 1896, 4. Reports were also received by wire at a hotel in Portage la Prairie.

⁴³ *Manitoba Free Press*, 31 December 1896, 5.

and stores.”⁴⁴ Looking ahead to the match, the *Montreal Star* reported, “The town is fairly wild with hockey excitement. People are too nervous to do business and they talk of nothing else but to-night’s struggle....The police will have all they can do to prevent the anxious crowds who cannot obtain tickets from storming the rink. The excitement is something really unprecedented....”⁴⁵ The *Montreal Gazette* also devoted considerable attention to the tremendous support and enthusiasm shown by hockey fans in Winnipeg.⁴⁶ In addition, reporting on Winnipeg hockey fans continued following the first Stanley Cup match held in the city. For example, the *Manitoba Free Press* gave extensive coverage to the ticket line-up that formed at the arena on the day of the game. Outside the McIntyre Rink, “old and young, high and low, jostled each other and froze for two hours and a half in order to be numbered among the chosen few that could find standing room inside.” This detailed description of the wait for standing room tickets appeared on the front page of the *Manitoba Free Press*. In fact, the story about the crowd “BEFORE THE GAME” was positioned more prominently than the newspaper’s account of “THE PLAY” itself.⁴⁷ Similarly, the *Winnipeg Tribune* reported on its front page, “After the doors were opened, it was not very long

⁴⁴ *Montreal Star*, 29 December 1896, 8.

⁴⁵ *Montreal Star*, 30 December 1896, 8.

⁴⁶ *Montreal Gazette*, 31 December 1896, 8.

⁴⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 31 December 1896, 1.

before the rink was filled with red hot Winnipeg Victorias' partisans. All of the reserved seats were occupied and within five minutes of the rink being opened the east gallery of the rink was packed. Then they commenced to pile in two deep, three deep and yet four deep in many parts of the rink on the ground floor. The crowd was a very good humored one and passed the time pleasantly in speculating on the number of goals Winnipegs would win the match by."⁴⁸ Thus, newspapers in both cities conveyed a sense that the people of Winnipeg had successfully demonstrated their energy and vitality by turning out to watch the hockey game in such strong numbers.

Commentary on the anticipation and atmosphere in Winnipeg was just one aspect of the comprehensive coverage of the December 1896 challenge provided by Montreal newspapers. Both the *Montreal Gazette* and the *Montreal Star* reported extensively on the rematch, beginning with the Victorias' departure from Montreal and their arrival in Winnipeg.⁴⁹ For several days before the match, the *Montreal Star's* sports page was topped by banner headlines focused on the upcoming game.⁵⁰ The *Star* sent a reporter to Winnipeg to cover the contest, and

⁴⁸ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 31 December 1896, 1.

⁴⁹ *Montreal Gazette*, 26 December 1896, 8; 28 December 1896, 6; *Montreal Star*, 28 December 1896, 4.

⁵⁰ *Montreal Star*, 28 December 1896, 4; 29 December 1896, 8; 30 December 1896, 8.

carried stories written from the perspective of observers in Montreal, as well.⁵¹ Montreal newspaper readers were informed about Winnipeg hospitality, the visiting team's practice sessions, the anticipated weather and ice conditions for the match, the activities of bettors and ticket speculators, and the possible implications of the unique features of the McIntyre Rink for the competing clubs.⁵² The *Gazette* declared that the contest "was, perhaps, the most exciting in hockey history," and provided a careful analysis of "WINNIPEG'S WOE" when the home club lost the game.⁵³ The *Star* carried even more extensive coverage of what the paper called "the finest hockey match ever played in Canada." The headline, "OUR VICTORIAS VICTORIOUS," stretched across four of the six columns of the sports page. The *Star*'s treatment of the game consisted of five main elements: a brief reflection and comment from Montreal; a game report from a writer in Winnipeg ("How the Star's Expert in Winnipeg Saw the Game"); a discussion and transcript of the telegraph report received during the match ("How the Good News Came to the Star Booth" and "The Bulletin Story"); a description of each player on the Montreal roster ("The Victorious Team"); and an account of the scene at the Victoria Rink in Montreal, where "live" telegraph reports were received as the game was being played in Winnipeg ("How the

⁵¹ See, for example, *Montreal Star*, 31 December 1896, 3.

⁵² *Montreal Gazette*, 29 December 1896, 5; 30 December 1896, 5; *Montreal Star*, 29 December 1896, 8; 30 December 1896, 8, 12.

⁵³ *Montreal Gazette*, 31 December 1896, 8.

People in the Rink Received the Good News”).⁵⁴ Visits by the Montreal team to the opera and the Cricket Club ball were covered, as well.⁵⁵ Finally, when the Victorias returned to Montreal, the *Star* carried stories and interviews that recapped and analyzed the championship game, and the western trip as a whole.⁵⁶

While newspaper coverage was both timely and thorough, experiencing hockey games through the sports page lacked the immediacy of the telegraph reconstructions that were so popular in Winnipeg and Montreal during the two 1896 Stanley Cup challenges. These telegraph reports were one of the most significant aspects of the first Winnipeg-Montreal championship hockey matches.⁵⁷ The 1896 Stanley Cup contests were likely the first two games in

⁵⁴ *Montreal Star*, 31 December 1896, 3.

⁵⁵ *Montreal Star*, 2 January 1897, 12; *Montreal Star*, 6 January 1897, 7.

⁵⁶ *Montreal Star*, 6 January 1897, 7.

⁵⁷ Cities in the eastern part of Canada were linked by telegraph to each other and to major cities in the United States in the late 1840s and early 1850s. The undersea cable connecting Canada to Europe across the North Atlantic was in place by 1866. Canadian prairie settlements had been added to the telegraph network by the end of the 1880s. See Vipond, *Mass Media in Canada*, 5; Rutherford, *Making of the Canadian Media*, 8; Rutherford, *Victorian Authority*, 41; Donald G. Wetherell and Irene Kmet, *Useful Pleasures: The Shaping of Leisure in Alberta 1896-1945* (Regina: Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism/Canadian Plains Research Center, 1990), 20. On the broader development and influence of the telegraph, see James W. Carey, “Technology and Ideology: The Case of the Telegraph,” in *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 201-230; Menahem Blondheim, *News over the Wires: The Telegraph and the Flow of Public Information in America, 1844-1897* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,

which the technology of telegraphy was applied to the sport of hockey in such a way that large crowds in distant cities could experience matches as they were being played.⁵⁸ The telegraph opened up the possibility of a completely new experience of hockey when someone had the idea of bringing telegraphers right to the arena in order to create simultaneous coverage of games. In this way, fans did not have to wait for their daily newspaper to follow the games; they could share immediately in the drama transpiring on the ice. Richard Gruneau and David Whitson summarize this process:

Whatever the origin, the practice of stationing telegraph operators at rinkside or up in the press box with a sportswriter or a couple of knowledgeable hockey fans had become widespread by the late 1890s. At the receiving end, decoded game accounts were either read aloud to

1994); Tom Standage, *The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's On-line Pioneers* (New York: Walker and Company, 1998).

⁵⁸ It is certainly possible that hockey fans gathered at newspaper offices or perhaps even in hotels to receive telegraph updates of games on other occasions prior to 1896. In boxing, for instance, the practice was widespread by the early 1890s, and the telegraph was frequently used to transmit baseball news, as well. However, I have not found evidence of earlier telegraph reconstructions in hockey. Jenish also suggests that during the 1896 Stanley Cup matches “a few anonymous men invented the play-by-play account of a hockey game.” See Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 21; Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 84; Lorenz, “A Lively Interest on the Prairies,” 200-203; Lorenz, “In the Field of Sport,” 147-148, 154-155; *Hockey: A People's History - Episode 1: A Simple Game*, dir. Laine Drewery, prod. Wayne Chong, DVD, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation/Radio-Canada, 2006.

assembled fans, or transcripts were posted on bulletin boards. Hotel, theatre, and newspaper owners quickly came to realize the financial and public relations value of telegraphed accounts and made facilities of varying types available for fans to gather and “hear” the game.⁵⁹

In particular, the scale of the December 1896 effort to bring immediate Stanley Cup results to people in Montreal was something new in hockey. In addition, the 1896 Winnipeg and Montreal telegraph reconstructions established a pattern and a precedent for similar projects in those cities, and elsewhere, during subsequent Stanley Cup series.

In February 1896, Winnipeg newspapers focused considerable attention on how people in Winnipeg closely followed the match in Montreal, despite the distance between the two cities. Hundreds of hockey fans met at three of Winnipeg’s most prominent hotels to listen to telegraph reports sent from Montreal over Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.) wires, while, as Jenish notes, “Other fans stayed home and relied on the latest technological wonder, the telephone, to keep them abreast of the plays.”⁶⁰ For example, in a front-page article titled, “THE NEWS IN THE CITY,” the *Manitoba Free Press* described how a local audience kept track of the home team’s fortunes through media

⁵⁹ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 84. See also Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 21-22.

⁶⁰ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 17.

reports: “It is seldom that Winnipeg has had many evenings of rejoicing in manly sporting circles equal to last night. Every one was interested in the success of the hockey team in the east, and by 8 o’clock hundreds of persons had gathered in the city hotels – Manitoba, Queen’s and Clarendon, to listen to the returns as received by C.P.R. wires from Montreal, while the telephone of the Free Press was never idle or the bell weary of ringing in response to the request of the anxious inquirer from the suburbs.”⁶¹ The newspaper then provided a virtual “play-by-play” of the crowd reaction to the telegraph reports throughout the contest. For instance, word of a potential Montreal score – which was later called back as a result of an offside call – “dampened the ardor of the enthusiasts.” Later, a goal by Winnipeg “was received with a cheer,” and there were periods of “anxious waiting” when “the minutes hung very heavily upon the minds of all present.” At the conclusion of the game, “cheer after cheer went up from the crowd until the spacious rotunda echoed again and again with the triumphant shouts. Everybody wanted to shake hands with everybody else and for several minutes old enmities were forgotten in the magnificent victory.”⁶² Thus, despite being far from the action in Montreal, crowds in Winnipeg became enthusiastic participants in the city’s first experience of a local team’s involvement in a Stanley Cup championship game.

⁶¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 February 1896, 1. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 14 February 1896, 4; 15 February 1896, 1; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 17-18; McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter*, 35-36.

⁶² *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 February 1896, 1.

When Winnipeg hosted its initial Stanley Cup challenge in December 1896, newspapers in Winnipeg and Montreal discussed the provisions made at the McIntyre Rink for sending information about the progress of the match to fans in other locations. In an article called, “Spreading the News,” the *Manitoba Free Press* explained, “Telegraph communication had been established with the rink by both the telegraph companies [C.P.R. and Great North Western], and as the game progressed the operators flashed the news in full detail to Montreal and all intervening points.”⁶³ In Montreal, bulletins were planned for the Victoria Rink. However, the Stanley Cup challenge was scheduled for the same night as the Victoria Skating Club carnival - “[t]he first fancy dress carnival of the season.”⁶⁴ As a result, this masquerade skating ball would also feature a gigantic “bulletin board, on which will be displayed messages regarding the progress of the big hockey match in Winnipeg.”⁶⁵

The *Montreal Star* newspaper was the main organizer of the system of updates planned for the Victoria Rink. On the day of the Stanley Cup game, the paper furnished a detailed account of “How the Star Will Bulletin the Result.” Another *Star* headline pointed out that “Score and Incidents Will be Given in

⁶³ *Manitoba Free Press*, 31 December 1896, 5. See also *Montreal Star*, 28 December 1896, 4.

⁶⁴ *Montreal Gazette*, 28 December 1896, 6.

⁶⁵ *Montreal Gazette*, 30 December 1896, 5. See also the Victoria Skating Club advertisement, *Montreal Star*, 29 December 1896, 6.

Detail by Direct Wire.”⁶⁶ This was the first time that hockey results had been experienced in this way in Montreal. “The bulletining of the result of the world’s championship match by the Star in the Victoria Rink to-night will be a novelty in many ways,” declared the *Montreal Star*. “Not only is it the first time that such a thing has happened in the rink since its erection, but the manner in which it will be done is entirely out of the common.” The newspaper then explained the unique provisions that were being made to enable Montrealers to follow the hockey game:

A large and handsomely decorated booth twelve feet square and fifteen feet high has been erected in the very centre of the ice. Each side contains two bulletin boards which revolve on pivots.

One board on each side will register the simple score, while the other will be used to record all the noteworthy incidents of the game. It is well to remember that to prevent confusion the score made by the Montreal Victorias will be recorded in red and the score made by the Winnipeg Victorias will be recorded in blue.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ *Montreal Star*, 30 December 1896, 8, 12.

⁶⁷ *Montreal Star*, 30 December 1896, 8. See also *Manitoba Free Press*, 31 December 1896, 5.

The *Montreal Star* also emphasized that these telegraph arrangements would create a strong sense of immediacy and participation among fans in Montreal who could not attend the game in person. Events on the ice in Winnipeg and updates at the arena in Montreal would occur almost simultaneously:

The booth on the ice in the Victoria Rink will be directly connected with the instrument of the operator who will telegraph every detail of the game from the McIntyre Rink in Winnipeg. This operator will be situated immediately next to the umpire's cage and will be assisted in his work by a well known hockey expert. Every incident of the game will be sent in as it occurs over the Star's special wire to the Star's operator in the booth in the Victoria Rink, and will be posted without loss of time on the bulletin boards so that the people here will be told of what has happened almost as soon as the people in Winnipeg see it happen. The arrival of every new report will be announced by the sounding of a gong, and it should not be forgotten, to prevent misunderstanding, that Winnipeg victories will be announced in blue and Montreal's in red.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ *Montreal Star*, 30 December 1896, 8.

The *Star* added, “Naturally all people interested in hockey are more than anxious to know the result, and though the match will be played in a rink some fifteen hundred miles distant, the *Star* will this evening in the Victoria Rink not only give the result, but full details of the match as quickly as it is being played.”⁶⁹

Following the game, the *Star* confirmed the quality of the experience: “When the bulletins once began to come in, they came in so fast that the five *Star* men had all they could do to keep up with them, and the service was so prompt that at the most there was a fraction of a minute difference between the time that things happened at the McIntyre Rink and the time the crowd in the Victoria was notified of them.” The only minor difficulty noted was some competition with the band that was playing during the skating carnival. The *Star* reported that when Montreal scored, “the band, not knowing of the great news insisted on playing out a very enjoyable, but very long selection....The band interfered terribly with the telegraph ticker.”⁷⁰

The day after the match, the *Montreal Star* published a play-by-play telegraph account, based on the reports received from Winnipeg during the game. “As, notwithstanding the eight bulletin boards, the space at disposal was limited, it was only possible to give the pith of the news, but the following bulletins show how well the *Star* was kept posted on every move.” This lengthy transcript of the

⁶⁹ *Montreal Star*, 30 December 1896, 12.

⁷⁰ *Montreal Star*, 31 December 1896, 3.

game summary from Winnipeg was followed by a detailed description of the scene in the Victoria Rink as those reports were received. For example, the *Star* depicted the atmosphere near the end of the contest, when Montreal scored to take the lead:

Then a cheer went up from the inside of the booth and the gong was sounded vigorously for some minutes without cessation: Montreal was a game ahead. To describe the cheers at that time was almost impossible. Notwithstanding the surprise of it all people seemed to have become confident then that their team could not lose and the cheers increased and increased till it was all over and Montreal Victorias had won by six to five.⁷¹

The *Manitoba Free Press* also commented on the enthusiasm generated by the telegraph returns in Winnipeg. “Even in the city telegraph offices, little excited groups of men listened to the details as they came,” the *Free Press* pointed out. “Here the excitement raged almost as keenly as it did in the rink, good news being received with hearty applause.”⁷²

The shared experience of Stanley Cup games through telegraph reports was the clearest expression of a broader process in which the media was starting

⁷¹ *Montreal Star*, 31 December 1896, 3.

⁷² *Manitoba Free Press*, 31 December 1896, 5.

to construct similar understandings of hockey in Winnipeg and Montreal – and, to some extent, in other Canadian cities. Media accounts surrounding the 1896 Winnipeg-Montreal Stanley Cup challenges contributed to the creation of a shared “world of hockey” among newspaper readers in the two competing cities. This sense of a developing community of interest around high-level hockey was facilitated by newspaper coverage of Montreal hockey in Winnipeg, and Winnipeg hockey in Montreal. For instance, prior to the Winnipeg Vics’ first Stanley Cup challenge in February 1896, the *Winnipeg Tribune* set up the match by running a lengthy story from the *Montreal Herald*. The article described in considerable detail the Montreal Victorias’ recent game against Ottawa.⁷³ Following Winnipeg’s successful challenge, the *Manitoba Free Press* carried an assessment of “EASTERN OPINION” which analyzed comments from the *Montreal Herald* and the *Montreal Gazette*.⁷⁴ Similarly, before the next Stanley Cup match took place in Winnipeg in December 1896, the *Manitoba Free Press* printed a *Montreal Gazette* story on the Montreal Victorias’ match with the Montreal Amateur Athletic Association.⁷⁵ In addition, the *Free Press* conveyed to its readers the *Montreal Herald*’s observations on the Montreal Victorias’ practices, other news about the team, and plans for the club’s impending trip to

⁷³ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 13 February 1896, 4.

⁷⁴ *Manitoba Free Press*, 17 February 1896, 5.

⁷⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 24 December 1896, 5. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 21 December 1896, 5.

Winnipeg.⁷⁶ When the Montreal Victorias travelled west to reclaim the Cup, Winnipeg papers covered the arrival of the visitors, their tour of the city, the home team's hospitality, the Montreal practices, the strengths and weaknesses of the Montreal players, the style of their sweaters, and their visit to a local opera house.⁷⁷ By providing coverage of the Montreal Victorias and commentary from Montreal newspapers, Winnipeg dailies gave their readers a sense of belonging to a "hockey world" – and a "world of sport" – that extended far beyond the city.

This process continued after the December 1896 game as the *Manitoba Free Press* published extensive "Eastern Comment" from the *Montreal Gazette*, the *Toronto Globe*, the *Montreal Star*, and the *Montreal Herald*.⁷⁸ Similarly, the *Montreal Gazette* carried excerpts from two Winnipeg newspapers, under the headline, "Winnipeg Views of the Great Match."⁷⁹ At the same time, the *Montreal Star* furnished analysis of the championship game from the Winnipeg *Nor'-Wester* and the *Manitoba Free Press*.⁸⁰ Finally, when the victorious Montrealers returned home, the *Winnipeg Tribune* reprinted much of the *Montreal*

⁷⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, 26 December 1896, 5.

⁷⁷ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 26 December 1896, 4; 28 December 1896, 4; 29 December 1896, 4; 30 December 1896, 4; *Manitoba Free Press*, 28 December 1896, 5; 29 December 1896, 5.

⁷⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, 4 January 1897, 5. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 31 December 1896, 8.

⁷⁹ *Montreal Gazette*, 4 January 1897, 5.

⁸⁰ *Montreal Star*, 4 January 1897, 8.

Star's coverage of the day's events, including interviews with Montreal players and team officials and extensive analysis of the trip to Winnipeg, the club's training and preparations, the features of the rink, the atmosphere surrounding the match, and the course of the championship game itself.⁸¹ In some cases, then, followers of hockey in Montreal and Winnipeg read the same stories and descriptions of Stanley Cup contests and their aftermath. Thus, in conjunction with "live" telegraph reconstructions of the games, these common media experiences of hockey in different parts of Canada demonstrate that a broad-based hockey information-system was starting to emerge by the mid-1890s.

Stanley Cup challenges received substantial media coverage in the cities whose teams were participating in the games. As a result, an awareness of a larger, interconnected "world of hockey" developed between Montreal and Winnipeg during the February and December 1896 championship matches. Did people in other parts of Canada feel an attachment to this broader community of interest? To what extent did newspapers in cities that were not participating directly in Stanley Cup games provide information on these contests? When did major hockey championships become "national" Canadian events, followed by newspaper readers across the country?

⁸¹ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 12 January 1897, 3; *Montreal Star*, 6 January 1897, 7.

The February 1896 Winnipeg-Montreal challenge was noted by a number of daily newspapers in Canada, although it was not a major focus of national media attention. Outside of Winnipeg and Montreal, the most thorough treatment of the game could be found in the *Ottawa Evening Journal*. The Ottawa paper's reports on the upcoming match concentrated mainly on a dispute over the choice of referee for the contest.⁸² The *Evening Journal* also published a detailed game story following the challenge. In fact, its summary of the play was more comprehensive than that of the *Montreal Star*.⁸³ In addition, the *Toronto Globe* gave considerable attention to the match, although its coverage was not as extensive as the *Ottawa Evening Journal*'s reporting. On the day of the game, the *Toronto Globe* ran a two-sentence preview in its sports columns. This preview stated, "The Winnipeg Victorias will play the Montreal Victorias to-night. The Winnipeggers are said to be 40 per cent. stronger than they were on their last visit." A concise, but informative, game report describing Winnipeg's Stanley Cup victory also appeared on the next day's sports page.⁸⁴

Reporting in other Canadian dailies was much less substantial, although, in some cases, information about the game was still prominently positioned in the paper. The *Vancouver World* published a four-sentence story on its front page,

⁸² *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 13 February 1896, 3; 14 February 1896, 7.

⁸³ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 15 February 1896, 7; *Montreal Star*, 15 February 1896, 12.

⁸⁴ *Toronto Globe*, 14 February 1896, 8; 15 February 1896, 18.

while the *Halifax Herald*'s front page carried the following acknowledgement: "MONTREAL, February 14. – The hockey match between Winnipeg and the Victorias resulted in an easy victory for the former."⁸⁵ The *Ottawa Citizen* ran a similar one-sentence statement in its sports columns.⁸⁶ Meanwhile, the weekly *Regina Leader* printed a two-sentence report among a series of general news items: "The Victoria hockey club, of Winnipeg, won the hockey championship of Canada, which is virtually the championship of the world, on Friday last at Montreal, beating the crack club of that city by two goals to none. In addition to the championship the winning club captures the Stanley cup, a Governor-General's trophy."⁸⁷ On the other hand, such papers as the *Fredericton Gleaner*, *Toronto Star*, and *Victoria Colonist* appear to have reported no results or information about the match.⁸⁸

A comparison to boxing also offers evidence of public perceptions of Stanley Cup hockey at this time. A major heavyweight fight between Peter Maher and Bob Fitzsimmons was scheduled to take place in El Paso, Texas, on 14 February, as well. Press coverage of the Maher-Fitzsimmons fight far exceeded

⁸⁵ *Vancouver World*, 15 February 1896, 1; *Halifax Herald*, 15 February 1896, 1.

⁸⁶ *Ottawa Citizen*, 15 February 1896, 3. See also 13 February 1896, 3.

⁸⁷ *Regina Leader*, 20 February 1896, 8.

⁸⁸ *Fredericton Gleaner*, 14 February 1896, 1-4; 15 February 1896, 1-6; *Toronto Star*, 15 February 1896, 1-8; 17 February 1896, 3; *Victoria Colonist*, 14 February 1896, 1-8; 15 February 1896, 1-8.

coverage of the Winnipeg-Montreal hockey challenge in newspapers throughout Canada. Although the *Ottawa Evening Journal* paid considerable attention to the hockey game, its reports on “The Latest Gossip from the Scene of the Pugilistic War” were more numerous than its stories from the Stanley Cup challenge.⁸⁹ On the west coast, “The Pugilistic Carnival” was front-page news in the *Vancouver World* two days in a row.⁹⁰ The boxing stories carried by the *World* were also much longer than the Stanley Cup summary printed by the paper.⁹¹ Similarly, the *Ottawa Citizen*’s reports on “The Harassed Pugs” and, ultimately, what it described as “The Fistic Fiasco” unfolding in Texas significantly outstripped its Stanley Cup coverage.⁹² The *Fredericton Gleaner* did not report on the hockey game at all, but provided its readers with several stories related to “The Big Fight.”⁹³ Likewise, coverage of the Fitzsimmons-Maher match overshadowed the Winnipeg-Montreal challenge in the *Halifax Herald*.⁹⁴ In addition, while there

⁸⁹ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 14 February 1896, 7; 15 February 1896, 7. The fight was postponed until 21 February.

⁹⁰ *Vancouver World*, 13 February 1896, 1; 14 February 1896, 1.

⁹¹ *Vancouver World*, 15 February 1896, 1.

⁹² *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 February 1896, 3; 14 February 1896, 3; 15 February 1896, 3; 17 February 1896, 3. The main storyline related to the questionable legality of the fight and efforts by the authorities to ensure that the match would not be held.

⁹³ *Fredericton Gleaner*, 14 February 1896, 1, 3; 15 February 1896, 5, 6.

⁹⁴ *Halifax Herald*, 14 February 1896, 2, 8; 15 February 1896, 1, 6.

does not seem to have been sufficient interest in the Winnipeg-Montreal hockey game to justify making “live” telegraph updates available to fans in other cities, telegraph bulletins from the Maher-Fitzsimmons fight were going to be provided at the Princess Theatre in Toronto, beginning at noon on 14 February. “Direct line from battle ground,” said the advertisement for the bulletins. “Admission 25c to any part of house.”⁹⁵ Finally, the *Halifax Herald* reported that telegraph reports of the boxing match would be received at several hotels and billiard halls in the city.⁹⁶ Therefore, in relation to a heavyweight boxing match scheduled for the same day, the Stanley Cup game did not garner as much public interest across Canada.

In comparison to the February 1896 challenge in Montreal, information about the December 1896 Stanley Cup contest in Winnipeg was available to a broader national audience. Most of the newspapers examined in this study covered the December 1896 game more thoroughly than the February 1896 game.⁹⁷ “The interest is not confined to Winnipeg,” claimed the *Manitoba Free Press* on the day of the rematch. “Wires directly from the rink will convey an

⁹⁵ *Toronto Globe*, 14 February 1896, 2. See also 14 February 1896, 8; 17 February 1896, 6.

⁹⁶ *Halifax Herald*, 14 February 1896, 8.

⁹⁷ However, the *Ottawa Evening Journal*, *Halifax Herald*, and *Vancouver World* covered the February game more thoroughly than the December rematch.

account of the game to all parts of the Dominion.”⁹⁸ Although the *Ottawa Evening Journal* provided fewer previews and a less detailed game story in December than in February, its coverage of the second match still surpassed the coverage of the initial Winnipeg-Montreal challenge by any newspaper outside of the competing cities.⁹⁹ In addition, only the *Toronto Globe* and the *Ottawa Citizen* appeared to provide as much information on the December contest as the *Ottawa Evening Journal*. The *Ottawa Citizen*, in particular, dramatically increased its coverage of the Stanley Cup challenges between February and December 1896.¹⁰⁰ However, the *Vancouver World* reduced its reporting on the rematch to a one-sentence note which stated, “The championship hockey match at Winnipeg was won by the Montreals by a score of 6 to 5 against the Victorias of the first named city.”¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, the *Halifax Herald* – which provided minimal news about the February contest – did not seem to report on the December game at all.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, 30 December 1896, 5.

⁹⁹ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 29 December 1896, 7; 30 December 1896, 1-8; 31 December 1896, 7.

¹⁰⁰ *Toronto Globe*, 30 December 1896, 10; 31 December 1896, 10; *Ottawa Citizen*, 29 December 1896, 5; 31 December 1896, 5.

¹⁰¹ *Vancouver World*, 2 January 1897, 8. See also 30 December 1896, 1-8; 31 December 1896, 1-8.

¹⁰² *Halifax Herald*, 30 December 1896, 1-8; 31 December 1896, 1-8.

In Toronto, the December 1896 rematch attracted more media attention than the first Winnipeg-Montreal challenge in February. For instance, while the *Toronto Star* again appears to have provided no preview or announcement of the upcoming game, the *Star* did carry stories about the result of the match on its front page and in its sports column the next day. Two short front-page stories from Winnipeg and Montreal examined reaction to the game in both cities, including a brief description of the bulletin service provided at the Victoria Rink in Montreal. A concise game report listed the goal scorers and offered some comments on the quality and style of play.¹⁰³ On the day of the game, the *Toronto Globe* offered a brief note about the upcoming match, as well as some comments on Winnipeg captain Jack Armytage.¹⁰⁴ Montreal's victory was the next day's top sports story, with a significant headline on the sports page – "MONTREALERS TRIUMPH" – and a fairly thorough game story and summary. The *Toronto Globe* also offered an analysis of betting on the match. Apparently, there was keen interest in the game in Toronto, but the expectation that Winnipeg would easily win on home ice limited the amount of money wagered on the game: "In Toronto, although almost as great interest was taken in the battle as in places which the belligerents represented, but for all that the copper-riveted, lead-pipe cinch that the wild and woolly westerners were supposed to have deterred the

¹⁰³ *Toronto Star*, 30 December 1896, 1-4; 31 December 1896, 1, 3.

¹⁰⁴ *Toronto Globe*, 30 December 1896, 10.

sports from breaking their rolls to bet on the game.”¹⁰⁵ However, there is no evidence of telegraph bulletins being provided in Toronto during the match.¹⁰⁶

The *Regina Leader* is another example of a newspaper that bolstered its coverage of the December 1896 challenge. Prior to the contest, the *Leader* alerted its readers to the upcoming clash in Winnipeg, and suggested that telegraph updates would be available to interested fans: “Mr. Williamson has arranged to receive telegraphic reports of the progress of the big game in Winnipeg every 15 minutes.”¹⁰⁷ Then, in the first issue of the paper after the game, a six-sentence article made the *Leader*’s front page. The story referred to the high level of suspense and excitement throughout the contest, and gave readers a sense of how the scores changed during the match.¹⁰⁸ In addition, the *Victoria Colonist* had provided no coverage of the February 1896 game, but ran a short article on the “CHAMPIONSHIP HOCKEY MATCH” on its front page following the December game.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, the *Fredericton Gleaner* now included the following item in the middle of its “NEWS OF THE WORLD” summary: “The Victorias of Montreal defeated the Winnipeg hockey team at Winnipeg last night

¹⁰⁵ *Toronto Globe*, 31 December 1896, 10.

¹⁰⁶ *Toronto Star*, 30 December 1896, 1-4; *Toronto Globe*, 30 December 1896, 1-12.

¹⁰⁷ *Regina Leader*, 24 December 1896, 8.

¹⁰⁸ *Regina Leader*, 31 December 1896, 1.

¹⁰⁹ *Victoria Colonist*, 31 December 1896, 1.

and thus captured the championship of Canada.”¹¹⁰ Overall, then, it appears that people in most parts of Canada had access to more information about the December 1896 challenge than the February 1896 championship game.

With its power to express community aspirations, sport acted as a vehicle for the dramatization of regional and interurban rivalries during the late nineteenth century. A dominant narrative in the discussions surrounding the 1896 Stanley Cup games was the depiction of Montreal and Winnipeg hockey teams as representatives of east-west conflict and difference. An economic downturn in the 1880s aggravated tensions between Eastern Canada and Western Canada, and fuelled a growing sense of regional disillusionment. In the words of Doug Ooram, prairie settlers “felt that the development of the West was being deliberately hindered by easterners who, in their short-sighted selfishness, failed to understand either the value of the West or the aspirations of the people.”¹¹¹ Narratives of east-west antagonism drew upon widely held perceptions of regional cultural distinctions in Canada during this period. By the early twentieth century, “Canadians came to believe that a new community had crystallized in the Prairie West,” summarizes Gerald Friesen. “Its characteristics...included frontier vitality

¹¹⁰ *Fredericton Gleaner*, 31 December 1896, 3.

¹¹¹ Doug Ooram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 173.

and economic grievance and political protest.”¹¹² In 1896, ideas about “frontier vitality” were especially evident in Stanley Cup hockey reporting, as the Winnipeg Vics were viewed as heroic figures emerging from a land of “romantic primitivism.”¹¹³ For example, newspapers referred repeatedly to the “effete east” and the “wild and woolly west” in their coverage of the hockey challenges, describing the competing clubs as symbols of “old” Canada and “new,” or civilization versus the frontier.¹¹⁴ On the whole, Montreal players were seen as the representatives of a tired and over-civilized Eastern Canada, while Winnipeg players were portrayed as the bold and youthful exemplars of a rising Prairie West.

The clearest expression of this narrative was the front-page story in the *Manitoba Free Press* following the Winnipeg Vics’ triumph in February 1896. The headline read, “A FAMOUS VICTORY. STANLEY CUP WRESTED

¹¹² Gerald Friesen, “The Prairies as Region: The Contemporary Meaning of an Old Idea,” in *River Road: Essays on Manitoba and Prairie History* (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1996), 172-173. See also Owram, *Promise of Eden*; R. Douglas Francis, *Images of the West: Changing Perceptions of the Prairies, 1690-1960* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989).

¹¹³ R.G. Moyles and Doug Owram, *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities: British Views of Canada, 1880-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 41. See also Francis, *Images of the West*, 121-122.

¹¹⁴ Friesen, “The Prairies as Region,” 168-169, 180-181. The “wild and woolly west” was also the dominant view of Western Canada expressed in the adventure stories of British juvenile literature during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See Moyles and Owram, *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities*, especially Ch. 2, “‘The Wild and Woolly West’: A ‘Boy’s Own’ View of Canada,” 37-59.

FROM MONTREAL. The Stalwart Sons of the Prairie Capital Show Easterners How to Play Hockey.” Referring to the Vics’ 2-0 shutout, the article stated that “for the first time in the history of the hockey champions of the effete east they had to submit to a complete whitewash.”¹¹⁵ The *Montreal Gazette* put forward a similar portrayal of the match as a clash of east and west: “The visitors travelled east in search of wisdom and found victory; but they left a lot of wisdom mixed up with sadness behind them; and after a while we Eastern remnants of an effete hockey civilization will arrive at the conclusion that it is possible to extract some sort of good out of the Wild and Woolly West.”¹¹⁶ The *Ottawa Citizen* proclaimed, “Wild Woolly Westerners Win.”¹¹⁷ The *Winnipeg Tribune* expressed feelings of pride in the western contingent’s ability to overcome its lack of hockey experience: “This was the first time the eastern men had to submit to a defeat at the hands of comparative babes in the art of hockey, and yet it was not only a defeat, but a complete whitewash.”¹¹⁸ From Winnipeg’s perspective, the satisfying way in which the prairie club proved Montreal perceptions of western inferiority to be wrong also found expression in the media. For example,

¹¹⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 February 1896, 1.

¹¹⁶ *Montreal Gazette*, 15 February 1896, 2. See also *Manitoba Free Press*, 17 February 1896, 5.

¹¹⁷ *Ottawa Citizen*, 15 February 1896, 3.

¹¹⁸ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 15 February 1896, 1.

Winnipeg club official Hugh J. Macdonald highlighted the lack of respect which the eastern Victorias demonstrated toward their western counterparts:

They were going to meet great men – men who thought they were champions, and did not consider our western men as fit players to cross sticks with. We might do very well for some of their junior teams, but we were out of it altogether with them. So much were they imbued with this idea of our unworthiness that they pooh-poohed the idea of two matches out of three, and resolved to play but one – couldn't spare any more time. It was a brave fight and a gallant victory for the little-thought-of western team.¹¹⁹

When Montreal recaptured the Cup from “the Prairie country men” in December 1896, the *Montreal Gazette* drew upon similar images of east and west in what the paper described as the renewal of a regional rivalry:

[T]he weary Winnipeggers are weeping wet weeps for the cup they thought their own. Well, well, it may go back

¹¹⁹ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 25 February 1896, 4. The son of long-serving Canadian prime minister Sir John A. Macdonald, Hugh John Macdonald represented Winnipeg as a Member of Parliament from 1891 to 1893 and from 1896 to 1897. He also served as Premier of Manitoba in 1900, and as police magistrate of Winnipeg from 1911 to 1929. See John English and Réal Bélanger, eds., *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. XV (University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2000), http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=8255; W. Stewart Wallace, ed., *The Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 3rd ed. (London and Toronto: Macmillan, 1963), 438; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 20.

some day. Western men are invariably self-confident; they have no idea that anything good or worth mentioning could come out of the effete East, and like the battle of Alma the good people of Winnipeg paid largely of their dollars to see presumptuous Montrealers sent back home with bowed heads and the mourning crape of defeat dragging from their brows. Instead of that there was a surprise, and seven scalps of the Prairie men dangled at the belts of the victors and scalloped the edges of the Stanley Cup.¹²⁰

These kinds of regional stereotypes also formed the basis for a victory song published by the *Montreal Herald*, and reprinted by the *Manitoba Free Press*. First, the verse depicted the earlier Winnipeg victory as a triumph of frontier hardiness and dedication:

We fellows in the Woolly West,
Play hockey every day;
We start to practice in July
And keep it up till May.
While down in poor old Montreal,
Though now and then they've snow,
They never know the keen delight

¹²⁰ *Montreal Gazette*, 31 December 1896, 8. See also *Manitoba Free Press*, 4 January 1897, 5.

Of “eighty-three below.”¹²¹

In particular, this passage connected the relatively cold climate of the Canadian prairies to the development of a strong, northern character. As R. Douglas Francis notes, “Since the Canadian West was in the northern latitudes and northerly climes, the image was of a hearty, healthy, wholesome West.”¹²² The song then concluded with a reassertion of eastern vigour:

And so the Vics got on the train,
And headed for the West,
They were not saying very much,
But meant to do their best.
They showed that this effete old east
Is very much alive;
They played those plucky Winnipegs,
And beat them six to five!¹²³

¹²¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 4 January 1897, 5.

¹²² Francis, *Images of the West*, 110. See also Mott, “Flawed Games, Splendid Ceremonies,” 183; Carl Berger, “The True North Strong and Free,” in *Twentieth Century Canada: A Reader*, ed. J.L. Granatstein et al. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1986), 5-28; Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 128-133; Dave Brown, “The Northern Character Theme and Sport in Nineteenth-Century Canada,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 20, no. 1 (1989): 47-56.

¹²³ *Manitoba Free Press*, 4 January 1897, 5.

Narratives of regional representation were just one example of the ways in which hockey teams embraced and reflected a range of identities. For instance, in choosing a name that attached both teams to Queen Victoria, the Winnipeg Vics and the Montreal Vics emphasized Canada's links to the British Empire. The cultivation of this imperial connection was a key component of various strands of English Canadian nationalism in this period. In the words of Carl Berger, "Canadian imperialism was one variety of Canadian nationalism."¹²⁴ The name, "Victorias," can therefore be read as representing both an affinity for Empire and a "sense of nationality" that aspired to transcend colonialism.¹²⁵ Meanwhile, other sports teams in Canada signified ethnic or religious identities. For example, the highly successful Shamrock Lacrosse Club and Shamrock Hockey Club were rooted in Montreal's Irish, Roman Catholic community.¹²⁶ Moreover, as John Matthew Barlow points out, "the Montreal HC [Hockey Club] and the Victorias were predominately Anglo-Protestant clubs; thus, it is not fair to point to the Shamrocks as the only club defined by the ethno-religious identities of its

¹²⁴ Berger, *The Sense of Power*, 9.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 259. See also Moyles and Oworm, *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities*, 11-35; Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2001), 21-25.

¹²⁶ Metcalfe, *Canada Learns to Play*, 182-203; John Matthew Barlow, "'Scientific Aggression': Irishness, Manliness, Class, and Commercialization in the Shamrock Hockey Club of Montreal, 1894-1901," in *Coast to Coast*, ed. Wong, 35-85.

players.”¹²⁷ Teams with Scottish names and connections also formed across the country. For instance, the “Caledonians” and the “Granites” were the first two hockey teams in Toronto, while the “Thistles” – along with the “Shamrocks” – were the first hockey clubs organized in Edmonton.¹²⁸ In addition, soccer and baseball teams sometimes adopted names that expressed ethnic loyalties, or connected immigrant groups to their home countries.¹²⁹

In the growing urban centers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, high-level amateur and professional sports teams also came to be viewed as symbolic representatives of their communities. Gruneau and Whitson note that, despite class and ethnic divisions within cities, sport lent “itself well to broader forms of civic identification, to a shared sense of belonging to a particular town or city as a whole.”¹³⁰ Whitson adds that, “when local champions went forward into provincial or national competitions, the whole city soon followed

¹²⁷ Barlow, “Scientific Aggression,” 45.

¹²⁸ Gerald Redmond, *The Sporting Scots of Nineteenth-Century Canada* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1982), 268. Until hockey teams obtained their own more suitable facilities, the rinks of curling clubs were often used for indoor ice hockey games and practices. See *Ibid.*, 268-271.

¹²⁹ See, for example, Metcalfe, *Canada Learns to Play*, 78, 94; Colin D. Howell, *Northern Sandlots: A Social History of Maritime Baseball* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 37-54.

¹³⁰ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 68. See also Whitson, “Sport and Civic Identity,” 126-130; Morris Mott, “One Town’s Team: Souris and its Lacrosse Club, 1887-1906,” *Manitoba History* 1 (1980): 10-16; Stephen Hardy, *How Boston Played: Sport, Recreation, and Community, 1865-1915* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1982), 168-194.

their progress with interest.”¹³¹ In Winnipeg, for example, the Vics’ Stanley Cup success was seen as something to be widely shared among the city’s residents. As Morris Mott explains, hockey fans “genuinely believed that one group of players on the ice represented them, and that through their performance they were saying something significant about their supporters. The fans assumed, in other words, that entire communities of people were incarnate in the competing teams.” When the Winnipeg Victorias competed for the Stanley Cup, “the communities symbolized by the Vics were Winnipeg, and to some extent Manitoba and Western Canada.”¹³² However, support for Montreal teams was more complex, as loyalties were divided between the city’s leading senior teams – particularly the M.A.A.A., the Shamrocks, and the Victorias. As a result, “the Winnipeggers always received loud, vocal support from a large contingent of Montreal fans when they were playing in the East,” states Jenish. “In those days, all three Montreal senior teams had their own loyal fans, and many of them would cheer for the westerners rather than a crosstown rival.”¹³³

Driven mainly by immigration, Winnipeg’s population grew dramatically in the last few decades of the nineteenth century, from just 241 in 1871 to 31 649

¹³¹ Whitson, “Hockey and Canadian Popular Culture,” 191.

¹³² Mott, “Flawed Games, Splendid Ceremonies,” 180. See also Whitson, “Hockey and Canadian Popular Culture,” 191-192; Gerald Friesen, “Hockey and Prairie Cultural History,” in *River Road: Essays on Manitoba and Prairie History* (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1996), 215-229.

¹³³ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 16.

in 1896. This rapid expansion made Winnipeg the dominant city in Western Canada.¹³⁴ During this time, “there sprang up among the business and professional group – the commercial elite – an unshakeable conviction of optimism that was to be of great significance for the future of the city,” writes Alan F.J. Artibise. “If there was one characteristic that was shared by nearly all Winnipeggers in this period it was the firm belief that the future of their community was boundless....From the outset Winnipeggers were self-centred and aggressive, determined to protect their position against any town which appeared to challenge them.”¹³⁵ Winnipeg’s business leaders also believed that promotion and publicity were essential to continued progress and population growth.¹³⁶ This outlook was shared with other civic boosters on the Canadian prairies prior to the First World War, as newly emerging communities in the region battled fiercely to attract businesses and settlers.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Alan F.J. Artibise, ed., *Gateway City: Documents on the City of Winnipeg 1873-1913* (Winnipeg: The Manitoba Record Society/The University of Manitoba Press, 1979), 6-7; Alan F.J. Artibise, *Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth, 1874-1914* (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1975), 130-133. Winnipeg’s population had climbed to 163 000 by 1916. In comparison, Montreal was Canada’s largest city in this period, with a population of 328 000 in 1901 and over 600 000 by 1921.

¹³⁵ Artibise, ed., *Gateway City*, 7. See also Artibise, *Winnipeg*, 12-15, 23.

¹³⁶ Artibise, *Winnipeg*, 102-125.

¹³⁷ On boosterism in the prairie West in this period, see Alan F.J. Artibise, “Boosterism and the Development of Prairie Cities, 1871-1913,” in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, ed. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, 2nd ed. (Edmonton: Pica Press, 1992), 515-543; Paul Voisey, “Boosting the Small Prairie

In this competitive environment, sport functioned as an advertising agent for growing towns and cities eager to bolster their image and gain attention and recognition. Civic boosters believed that a winning hockey team generated favourable publicity and demonstrated the vitality of the community it represented. For instance, a discussion of the Winnipeg Vics' training methods and preparations in the *Manitoba Free Press* illustrates the perceived connection between the city, hockey fans, and players:

It would open the eyes of some to know what a severe course of training men have to undergo to put them into shape to retain in Winnipeg the proud title of champions of the world. It does not consist merely in practising three times a week. Running, club swinging and other forms of athletic exercises have been indulged in. The men have dieted themselves carefully and have denied themselves all the luxuries of life for weeks past. If the Stanley Cup remains here the citizens will certainly have reasons to be proud of the seven sturdy players who defend it, and

Town, 1904-1931: An Example from Southern Alberta," in *Town and City: Aspects of Western Canadian Urban Development*, ed. Alan F.J. Artibise (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre and the University of Regina, 1981), 147-176; Paul Voisey, *Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 16, 25-26, 53-74, 163-164, 238-240; Whitson and Macintosh, "Becoming a World-Class City," 223-224; Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 210-211; Sotiron, *From Politics to Profit*, 65-68.

especially of J.C.G. Armytage, the captain, who has worked untiringly and incessantly to put his men in the pink of condition.¹³⁸

Major sporting events like Stanley Cup challenges provided opportunities for cities to uphold civic pride and advance community prestige. “Winnipeg is the abiding place of champions,” declared the *Manitoba Free Press* in the aftermath of the Vics’ February 1896 victory. “We have the champion skater, the champion hockeyists, the champion cricketers, the champion oarsmen, and, of course, the curlers. In the parlance of the street, ‘we are strictly in it.’”¹³⁹

When the Victorias returned to Winnipeg after capturing the Stanley Cup, Mayor Richard Willis Jameson thanked team members “for the magnificent reputation they have established for our city.” He added,

Our fair city has good reason to be proud of herself. She is the abode of champions in many lines of athletic sports, but more especially for curlers, skaters and hockeyists...Such examples should stimulate others of our young men to deeds of fame. We may not be a rich city in silver and

¹³⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, 24 December 1896, 5. See also *Montreal Star*, 29 December 1896, 8; 30 December 1896, 8.

¹³⁹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 February 1896, 8.

gold, but for manliness and a clean and good record for athletics we can hold our own against the world.¹⁴⁰

The *Manitoba Free Press* also expressed these feelings of community pride in its report on Winnipeg's celebration of the Vics' triumph. "A right royal welcome was extended to the Victoria hockey team yesterday afternoon on the occasion of their return from Montreal, where they gained glory for themselves and fame for the province which was never prouder than yesterday to call them her sons," stated the newspaper. "It was a welcome in keeping with the high honors which the Vics. have won, and showed in a marked degree the interest which Winnipeggers take in manly sports."¹⁴¹

A large group of people met the train that carried the Cup holders home after their successful challenge, as, reportedly, "a crowd of several thousand people...swarmed the platform."¹⁴² A band greeted the victors, and hockey sticks employed in the title game, the puck used in the match, and the Stanley Cup itself were displayed to Winnipeggers in attendance. The team and its supporters gathered at the Manitoba Hotel, and a banquet was planned to honour the

¹⁴⁰ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 25 February 1896, 4.

¹⁴¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 25 February 1896, 5. On the "manly" qualities produced by hockey and other team sports, see Mott, "Flawed Games, Splendid Ceremonies," 178-179; Morris Mott, "The British Protestant Pioneers and the Establishment of Manly Sports in Manitoba, 1870-1886," *Journal of Sport History* 7, no. 3 (1980): 25-36; Metcalfe, *Canada Learns To Play*, 69.

¹⁴² *Manitoba Free Press*, 25 February 1896, 5.

champions.¹⁴³ The *Winnipeg Tribune* captured the feeling of a hockey team as representative of an entire community through its expressions of concern about the most appropriate form of civic celebration to mark the city's first Stanley Cup victory. Rather than an exclusive dinner limited to the city's elite, the *Tribune* demanded a more accessible event open to a wider range of the team's fans:

There is considerable talk in the city as to the best and most suitable way to fittingly celebrate the Victorias' successful eastern trip. That it should take the form of a banquet hardly seems the right thing for the occasion. Tickets at \$1.50 or \$2 each will debar many a warm partisan from attending, more especially as it would in all probability be a full dress affair. If the near friends of the Victorias wish to give them a banquet well and good, but first and foremost let 'Winnipeg' tender them its congratulations and thanks for the honor and glory they have brought to the city.

In sum, the *Tribune* preferred a more "informal affair" that could embrace "a whole city, not a few warm partisans."¹⁴⁴ This would allow "Winnipeg" as a whole to express its identification with the success of the city's hockey team. When the Montreal Victorias reclaimed the Cup, they were supposed to be

¹⁴³ *Manitoba Free Press*, 21 February 1896, 5; 24 February 1896, 5; 25 February 1896, 5; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 25 February 1896, 4.

¹⁴⁴ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 24 February 1896, 4.

welcomed home with similar festivities. “The Champions of the World will be met this evening by a large and enthusiastic crowd and the Victoria Rifles Band will escort them to the Victoria Rink where they will be met by the officers of the Victoria Skating Club,” reported the *Montreal Gazette*. “Their reception will be worthy of their title.”¹⁴⁵ However, poor weather delayed the arrival of the team’s train, so the activities were postponed.¹⁴⁶

Newspaper coverage of games in competing communities also contributed to the spirit of civic rivalry surrounding Stanley Cup games. For example, the *Manitoba Free Press* observed the differences between Montreal and Winnipeg following the western club’s victory in February 1896 – and, in particular, the consequences for bettors in each city. “Montreal to-night is clothed in sackcloth and ashes, and the sports have gone to sleepless beds with empty pocketbooks,” stated the *Free Press*, with an air of satisfaction. “The ‘Peg’ contingent on the other hand have enough money to start a private bank. No less than two thousand cold plunkers were passed over the Windsor hotel counter after the match to-night, and went down into the jeans of the Winnipeg supporters.”¹⁴⁷ Newspapers in different cities carried competing accounts of games, and rivalries on the ice were mirrored by rivalries between newspapers in teams’ home cities. For

¹⁴⁵ *Montreal Gazette*, 5 January 1897, 5. See also *Montreal Star*, 5 January 1897, 8.

¹⁴⁶ *Montreal Star*, 6 January 1897, 7.

¹⁴⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 February 1896, 1.

instance, after the first Winnipeg-Montreal challenge, the *Manitoba Free Press* highlighted the violent play of the Montreal Victorias: “After the victory of last night the Winnipeg hockeyists...all carry some bruises after the battle, the result of the slashing style of play indulged in by their opponents.” The Manitoba reporter also disagreed with the *Montreal Herald*’s assessment that “the utter and awful incompetency of the referee” was a key factor in Winnipeg’s victory. According to the *Free Press*, “There were mistakes which told just as heavily against the victors as the vanquished.”¹⁴⁸ The *Winnipeg Tribune* also called attention to these different perceptions, stating, “As in the case of all things, where a something big rested on the issue, there was the usual lot of excuses made for the losing team by some of the eastern papers, whilst others again were most unbiassed in their report of the match...[W]e may find out that eastern papers are not altogether to be depended upon for a strict, impartial account of a match won against them by an outside team.”¹⁴⁹

The *Winnipeg Tribune* and the *Montreal Gazette* renewed this rivalry in the weeks leading up to the rematch in December 1896. The *Winnipeg Tribune*’s headlines on 24 November 1896 expressed the newspaper’s outrage over recent comments made in the *Montreal Gazette*: “VICTORIAS IMPUGNED. - They Won the Stanley Cup Solely and Simply By Luck. - Their Skillful Play was Only

¹⁴⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, 17 February 1896, 5.

¹⁴⁹ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 22 February 1896, 4.

Mediocre in the Eyes of the Easterners. - Easterners will Wipe the Ice With Westerners in the West.” The *Tribune* printed several statements from the *Gazette* which suggested that Winnipeg’s Stanley Cup victory was not “a victory of hockey,” but “a victory of luck over hockey.” “The western men were very lucky last year,” claimed the *Gazette*. “They played an excellent game, but they had an element of what common people call luck attaching to them.” The *Tribune*’s rebuttal noted that the *Gazette* writer “has forgotten the facts of that game,” and recalled Winnipeg’s domination of the Montreal squad.¹⁵⁰

Differences in opinion emerged again over arrangements for the December 1896 challenge. Prior to the game, team representatives from Winnipeg and Montreal disagreed about the officials to be chosen for the match, as well as the format of the challenge. The Montreal contingent suggested a best-of-three series, while Winnipeg representatives preferred a one-game playoff. According to a letter from the Montreal Victorias, the early date of the Stanley Cup challenge – at the beginning of the 1896-97 season – meant that the club would have little opportunity to practice before travelling to Winnipeg. As a result, a single-game championship would be unfair. However, the *Winnipeg Tribune* suggested that the Montreal team could alter their league schedule to create an opportunity to travel west closer to the middle of the season, noting, “And besides, at such a time they would be in the pink of condition, and would not have to [be] making the

¹⁵⁰ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 24 November 1896, 4.

babyish, unmanly and unsportsmanlike excuse of playing before they were in shape, that they have made to the trustees at the present time.” The *Tribune* also suggested that the Montreal Victorias were exaggerating their inability to prepare properly prior to the trip. According to “reliable” sources, the Montrealers were “practicing day and night,” and had two exhibition matches arranged before leaving for Winnipeg.¹⁵¹ Thus, before the teams resumed their competition on the ice, antagonism between newspapers fuelled the growing rivalry between Winnipeg and Montreal.

While narratives of east-west conflict and local identity were constructed through media coverage of the 1896 challenges, discourses of sportsmanship and mutual respect were also key elements of the discussion surrounding the games. After the Montreal Victorias lost their claim to the Stanley Cup in February 1896, the *Montreal Star* kept local favouritism in check: “There can be no doubt that the better team won. The Winnipeg team is certainly the best team in Canada.” Similarly, the *Montreal Gazette* noted that the Winnipeg Vics “fully deserved” the victory, “especially by their play in the first half, which was certainly superior to that of the home club.”¹⁵² Likewise, when Winnipeg failed to defend the Cup in December, the reaction from the *Manitoba Free Press* was notable for its gracious

¹⁵¹ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 December 1896, 4. See also 9 December 1896, 6.

¹⁵² *Montreal Star*, 15 February 1896, 12; *Montreal Gazette*, 15 February 1896, 2.

tone and lack of bitterness. Under the headline, “THE OTHER VICS WON,” the newspaper stated,

All westerners will deeply regret that the cup goes east, but they will be unanimous in the opinion that it now becomes the property of most worthy holders. The seven young gentlemen from Montreal played a magnificent game and are to be most heartily congratulated on the victory. The Victorias of Winnipeg did their best to win. They trained hard and conscientiously. They lost but in their defeat they have the satisfaction of knowing that they fell before most worthy opponents. The game was a good one and the best team won.¹⁵³

Similarly, the *Winnipeg Tribune*’s front-page headlines gave credit to the visitors: “HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP OF CANADA. - Won at the Granite Rink Last Night by the Crack Victoria Team of Montreal – Their Play Was Superb in Nearly Every Respect. - Winnipeg Boys Put Up a Sterling Game, but It Was Not Equal to That of the Easterners, Whose Team Play Was Magnificent.” Inside the paper, a *Tribune* reporter added, “For the Victorias of Winnipeg there is no excuse to be offered. They were undoubtedly defeated by better team than themselves.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ *Manitoba Free Press*, 31 December 1896, 1. See also *Manitoba Free Press*, 2 January 1897, 5.

¹⁵⁴ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 31 December 1896, 1, 4.

Winnipeg papers expressed respect and admiration for the Montrealers when they left for home. “The visit of the eastern men has been a source of great pleasure both to themselves and to the large number of people they met here,” declared the *Manitoba Free Press*. “The Stanley cup has left Winnipeg, but it was won by good, clean hockey, and the Victorias of Montreal increased their popularity here by their fine playing.”¹⁵⁵ A Montreal player told the *Montreal Star*,

We shall never forget the universal and whole-souled
kindness and hospitality which were extended to us.

Not an incident occurred of a nature to mar the pleasure
of our intercourse with the people of Winnipeg, and as for
our treatment by the hockey clubs, it was sportsmanlike and
of the highest character throughout.¹⁵⁶

Following both 1896 challenges, the home team hosted a post-game meal for the visiting club. For instance, the *Manitoba Free Press* reported that Winnipeg’s win in Montreal was accompanied by a social component. “After the match the Winnipegs were entertained to a pleasant supper by the officers of the vanquished club, and the best of feeling prevailed,” noted the newspaper.¹⁵⁷ Meanwhile, the

¹⁵⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 4 January 1897, 5. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 2 January 1897, 4.

¹⁵⁶ *Montreal Star*, 6 January 1897, 7. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 12 January 1897, 3.

¹⁵⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 February 1896, 1. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 15 February 1896, 1; *Manitoba Free Press*, 31 December 1896, 5.

Montreal Victorias' excursion to Winnipeg in December 1896 included attendance at the opera and the local Cricket Club ball.¹⁵⁸

This chapter has analyzed media coverage of the 1896 Winnipeg-Montreal Stanley Cup hockey challenges in relation to the emergence of local and national communities of sporting interest in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Canada. It has examined media experiences and narratives of hockey in the context of Canadian regionalism and civic boosterism, and considered hockey reporting within the framework of the development of national sports coverage in Canada. Urban daily newspapers played a crucial role in the construction of hockey – and other sports – as a popular spectacle. In February and December 1896, the daily press in both Winnipeg and Montreal covered hockey games in ways that appealed to audiences in each city. Some of these fans watched the matches inside the Victoria Rink in Montreal or the McIntyre Rink in Winnipeg, while other audiences experienced the games through telegraph or newspaper reports in both “home” cities. In addition, another audience of people throughout Canada read about the Stanley Cup challenges in the pages of their local newspaper. Therefore, the daily press in Winnipeg, Montreal, and other cities helped to build local and national audiences for sport in Canada through coverage of the February and December 1896 Stanley Cup hockey games.

¹⁵⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, 2 January 1897, 5; *Montreal Gazette*, 2 January 1897, 5.

By the late nineteenth century, Canadian daily newspapers carried regular sports coverage which brought readers reports of local, national, and international events. Urban dailies helped to construct a community of interest around sport in the city by publicizing events and providing people with a steady supply of information about local clubs and athletes. Local sports teams like the Montreal Victorias and Winnipeg Victorias were embodiments of collective identity and emblems of civic pride. Many people in Montreal and Winnipeg felt shared attachments to the goals and performance of these teams. Sport furnished a focus for community cohesion among local fans. As urban residents attended local sporting events or telegraph reconstructions, read about their city's teams in the newspaper, and exchanged opinions about what they saw and heard, they developed a feeling of having something in common. In this way, sport combined with the media to create opportunities for regular rehearsals of collective identity in urban centres.¹⁵⁹

Media coverage of sport also transcended these local meanings and identities, and drew Canadians into a national and international community of interest centred on sport. This community of interest was made up of people who followed the same teams and events, despite living in different places. Shared press coverage and telegraph re-enactments of Stanley Cup games forged a wider “hockey world” between Winnipeg and Montreal. At the same time, the 1896

¹⁵⁹ See Whitson, “Hockey and Canadian Popular Culture,” 190.

Cup challenges were beginning to become more “national” in scope, as there was considerable information about these games carried by newspapers across Canada. While it would be an exaggeration to suggest that the 1896 Winnipeg-Montreal hockey matches were intensely followed by a national audience, the games received sufficient attention across Canada to demonstrate that a national “world of hockey” was starting to emerge. Clearly, national and international hockey reporting lagged behind North American media coverage of sports like boxing and baseball in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, through newspaper reports and telegraph reconstructions, major events like Stanley Cup challenges were beginning to be experienced and remembered by national audiences. As a result, people’s involvement in sport was no longer limited to local athletes, clubs, and events. Thus, coverage of the rival Vics not only strengthened the bonds between cities and their teams, it also positioned those teams within a larger “world of sport” that extended across provincial and national boundaries. Involvement in local sporting events connected people in a city together, while knowledge of the broader “world of sport” linked people in different regions together. Media coverage of the 1896 Stanley Cup hockey challenges helped to unite people in Canada in overlapping

¹⁶⁰ Metcalfe, *Canada Learns To Play*, 85; Lorenz, “A Lively Interest,” 202-205; Lorenz, “In the Field of Sport,” 154-155; Stacy L. Lorenz, “‘Bowling Down to Babe Ruth’: Major League Baseball and Canadian Popular Culture, 1920-1929,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 23, no. 1(1995): 22-39.

communities of interest – one centred on the local experience of sport, and the other on involvement in a wider “world of sport.”

Chapter Three

National Media Coverage and the Creation of a Canadian “Hockey World”:

The Winnipeg-Montreal Stanley Cup Hockey Challenges, 1899-1903

Before the birth of television and the spread of professional sports franchises across the continent, many people in North America did not have the opportunity to watch high-level sporting performances regularly, if at all. Nevertheless, even in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the mass media brought powerful representations of sporting events to people who were unable to witness them first-hand. Canadian sports fans generally could not see heavyweight title fights or the World Series, for instance, but they could still experience distant boxing matches and baseball games through telegraph re-enactments and daily newspapers.¹ Media coverage of significant sporting

¹ See Stacy L. Lorenz, “‘A Lively Interest on the Prairies’: Western Canada, the Mass Media, and a ‘World of Sport,’ 1870-1939,” *Journal of Sport History* 27, no. 2 (2000): 195-227; Stacy L. Lorenz, “‘In the Field of Sport at

contests connected people to a wide-ranging community of fans and followers of sport. This community of interest was composed of people who discussed, cared about, and paid attention to the same athletes, teams, leagues, and events, no matter where they lived. A unified “world of sport” was created by the mass media – one that embraced both amateur and professional sports, and included leagues, games, teams, athletes, events, stories, statistics, myths, and heroes.² This “world of sport” can also be viewed as a shared pool of “information” about sport. In other words, the “world of sport” is an “information-system” that links people together in a broad-based community of interest.³ In addition, media experiences of major sporting events contributed to an emerging Canadian

Home and Abroad’: Sports Coverage in Canadian Daily Newspapers, 1850-1914,” *Sport History Review* 34, no. 2 (2003): 133-167.

² My usage of the term “world of sport” is very similar to that of David Whitson and Donald Macintosh, who explore briefly the “world of sport” which developed out of continental media coverage of “big league” professional sport in North America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See David Whitson and Donald Macintosh, “Becoming a World-Class City: Hallmark Events and Sport Franchises in the Growth Strategies of Western Canadian Cities,” *Sociology of Sport Journal* 10, no. 3 (1993): 224-225. See also David Whitson, “Sport and Civic Identity in the Modern Canadian City,” *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 22, no. 1 (1995): 130; Dave Whitson, “Hockey and Canadian Popular Culture: The Making and Remaking of Identities,” in *Method and Methodology in Sport and Cultural History*, ed. K.B. Wamsley (Dubuque: A Times Mirror Higher Education Group, 1995), 193-196; Lorenz, “A Lively Interest on the Prairies.”

³ Joshua Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Whitson and Macintosh, “Becoming a World-Class City,” 225-226; Whitson, “Sport and Civic Identity,” 133-134.

“national” popular culture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴

For people in Canada, high-level hockey was a key component of this emerging “world of sport.” Beginning in 1893, Canadian hockey culminated in competition for the Stanley Cup, a challenge trophy that symbolized the national championship.⁵ Teams from Winnipeg and Montreal dominated the first decade of Stanley Cup play. After meeting in two Stanley Cup games in 1896, clubs based in Winnipeg and Montreal competed for the trophy five more times between 1899 and 1903. As a result, the Winnipeg-Montreal rivalry is a useful case study for assessing the cultural significance of Canadian hockey in this time period. This chapter examines local and national newspaper coverage of the five Winnipeg-Montreal Stanley Cup hockey challenges that occurred from February

⁴ Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport, Identities, and Cultural Politics* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1993), 94-95.

⁵ During the 1890s and early 1900s, Stanley Cup champions usually maintained possession of the trophy until they either lost a league title to another club, or lost a special “challenge” game or series to a team from outside their league. Prior to 1912, challenges could be accepted at any time during the hockey season, and teams may have defended their claim to the Cup several times over the course of the year. For summaries and overviews of early Stanley Cup games, see Henry Roxborough, *The Stanley Cup Story* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1964); Brian McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever* (Toronto: Pagurian Press, 1978); Dan Diamond, ed., *The Official National Hockey League Stanley Cup Centennial Book* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992); D’Arcy Jenish, *The Stanley Cup: A Hundred Years of Hockey at Its Best* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992); Michael McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter: Hockey’s Rise from Sport to Spectacle* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2000); Andrew Podnieks, *Lord Stanley’s Cup* (Bolton, Ont.: Fenn, 2004).

1899 to February 1903.⁶ In particular, this study analyzes Canadian newspaper reporting on the Winnipeg-Montreal hockey matches in the context of a developing “world of sport” experienced through the mass media. Historians have made few attempts at considering either the role of the media in Canadian sport, or the place of sports coverage and sports programming within the Canadian media.⁷ By assessing media coverage of early hockey, this research

⁶ One of the limitations of this study is that it is based on English Canadian newspapers only. Because this research does not examine French Canadian newspapers, we must be cautious about applying its conclusions to French Canada or to French Canadian media experiences of hockey.

⁷ The most helpful discussions of the connections between hockey, media, and culture in Canada can be found in Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, especially Chapter 4, “Media, Audiences, and the NHL Monopoly,” 79-106. See also David Whitson, “Circuits of Promotion: Media, Marketing and the Globalization of Sport,” in *MediaSport*, ed. Lawrence A. Wenner (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 57-72. Recent work related to Canadian sports journalism includes M. Ann Hall, “Alexandrine Gibb: In ‘No Man’s Land of Sport,’” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 18, no. 1 (2001): 149-172; Don Morrow and Kevin B. Wamsley, Ch. 7, “Sports Journalism and the Media,” in *Sport in Canada: A History*, 2nd ed. (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2010), 143-164; Duncan Koerber, “Constructing the Sports Community: Canadian Sports Columnists, Identity, and the Business of Sports in the 1940s,” *Sport History Review* 40, no. 2 (2009): 126-142; Howard Ramos and Kevin Gosine, “‘The Rocket’: Newspaper Coverage of the Death of a Quebec Cultural Icon, A Canadian Hockey Player,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 36, no. 4 (2001): 9-31. A number of studies of the Canadian sports media have focused on television, rather than newspapers or radio. See, for example, Garry J. Smith and Cynthia Blackburn, *Sport in the Mass Media* (Ottawa: Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 1978); Susan Marie Nattrass, “Sport and Television in Canada: 1952 to 1982” (Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 1988); Hart Cantelon and Richard Gruneau, “The Production of Sport for Television,” in *Not Just A Game*, ed. Jean Harvey and Hart Cantelon (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988); Richard Gruneau, “Making Spectacle: A Case Study in Television Sports Production,” in *Media, Sports, and Society*, ed. Lawrence A. Wenner (Newbury Park: Sage, 1989), 134-154; Paul Rutherford,

addresses important gaps in the study of Canadian sport history and the analysis of hockey and Canadian popular culture. More specifically, it begins to answer the need for careful, focused case studies that examine the Canadian sports media, as well as North American hockey, in a historical context.⁸

When Television Was Young: Primetime Canada 1952-1967 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), especially "Hockey and the Male Ethos," 241-255; Robert Sparks, "'Delivering the Male': Sports, Canadian Television, and the Making of TSN," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 17, no. 3 (1992): 319-342; Neil Earle, "Hockey as Canadian Popular Culture: Team Canada 1972, Television and the Canadian Identity," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 30, no. 2 (1995): 107-123; Margaret MacNeill, "Networks: Producing Olympic Ice Hockey for a National Television Audience," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 13, no. 2 (1996): 103-124; James Gillet, Philip White, and Kevin Young, "The Prime Minister of Saturday Night: Don Cherry, the CBC, and the Cultural Production of Intolerance," in *Seeing Ourselves: Media Power and Policy in Canada*, ed. Helen Holmes and David Taras, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1996), 59-72; Steve Jackson, Jay Scherer, and Scott G. Martyn, Ch. 10, "Sport and the Media," in *Canadian Sport Sociology*, ed. Jane Crossman, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Thomson Nelson, 2008), 177-195; Jay Scherer and David Whitson, "Public Broadcasting, Sport, and Cultural Citizenship: The Future of Sport on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation?," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 44, no. 2-3 (2009): 213-229.

⁸ On media coverage of violence in hockey during the early 1900s, see Daniel S. Mason and Gregory H. Duquette, "Newspaper Coverage of Early Professional Ice Hockey: The Discourses of Class and Control," *Media History* 10, no. 3 (2004): 157-173; Stacy L. Lorenz and Geraint B. Osborne, "'Talk About Strenuous Hockey': Violence, Manhood, and the 1907 Ottawa Silver Seven-Montreal Wanderer Rivalry," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 1 (2006): 125-156; Stacy L. Lorenz and Geraint B. Osborne, "Brutal Butchery, Strenuous Spectacle: Hockey Violence, Manhood, and the 1907 Season," in *Coast to Coast: Hockey in Canada to the Second World War*, ed. John Chi-Kit Wong (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 160-202. Other academic studies of hockey in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries include Don Morrow, "The Little Men of Iron: The 1902 Montreal Hockey Club," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 12, no. 1 (1981): 51-65; Morris Mott, "Flawed Games, Splendid Ceremonies: The Hockey Matches of the Winnipeg Vics, 1890-1903," *Prairie Forum* 10, no. 1 (1985): 169-187; Michel Vigneault, "La diffusion du Hockey à

This analysis of newspaper coverage of the 1899-1903 Winnipeg-Montreal hockey rivalry aims to shed new light on how sport was experienced through the media during this period. As improved communications and other technological achievements rapidly dissolved the pre-industrial experience of time

Montreal, 1895-1910,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 17, no. 1 (1986): 60-74; Alan Metcalfe, *Canada Learns To Play: The Emergence of Organized Sport, 1807-1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), 61-73, 168-172; R.S. Lappage, “The Kenora Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 19, no. 2 (1988): 79-100; David Mills, “The Blue Line and the Bottom Line: Entrepreneurs and the Business of Hockey in Canada, 1927-1990,” in *The Business of Professional Sports*, ed. Paul Staudohar and James A. Mangan (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 175-201; Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 31-92; Daniel Scott Mason, “The Origins and Development of the International Hockey League and Its Effects on the Sport of Professional Ice Hockey in North America” (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1994); David Seglins, “‘Just Part Of The Game:’ Violence, Hockey and Masculinity in Central Canada, 1890-1910” (M.A. thesis, Queen’s University, 1995); Daniel Mason and Barbara Schrod, “Hockey’s First Professional Team: The Portage Lakes Hockey Club of Houghton, Michigan,” *Sport History Review* 27, no. 1 (1996): 49-71; Stephen Hardy, “Memory, Performance, and History: The Making of American Ice Hockey at St. Paul’s School, 1860-1915,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 14, no. 1 (1997): 97-115; Daniel S. Mason, “The International Hockey League and the Professionalization of Ice Hockey, 1904-1907,” *Journal of Sport History* 25, no. 1 (1998): 1-17; Michael A. Robidoux, “Imagining a Canadian Identity through Sport: A Historical Interpretation of Lacrosse and Hockey,” *Journal of American Folklore* 115, no. 456 (2002): 209-225; Andrew C. Holman, “Playing in the Neutral Zone: Meanings and Uses of Ice Hockey in the Canada-U.S. Borderlands, 1895-1915,” *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 34, no. 1 (2004): 33-57; John Chi-Kit Wong, *Lords of the Rinks: The Emergence of the National Hockey League, 1875-1936* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); John Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora: The Death of a (Big-Time) Hockey Dream,” *Journal of Sport History* 33, no. 2 (2006): 175-191; John Chi-Kit Wong, ed., *Coast to Coast: Hockey in Canada to the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Andrew Holman, “Frank Merriwell on Skates: Heroes, Villains, Canadians and Other Others in American Juvenile Sporting Fiction, 1890-1940,” in *Now Is the Winter: Thinking About Hockey*, ed. Jamie Dopp and Richard Harrison (Hamilton: Wolsak and Wynn, 2009), 53-67.

and distance, people increasingly imagined themselves as belonging to larger and larger communities.⁹ In the words of Peter Putnis, the media “enabled communities to imaginatively participate, on a recurring regular basis, in a ‘larger world.’”¹⁰ Along with the telegraph and wire services, daily newspapers constructed a shared sports information-system throughout Canada.¹¹ This chapter assesses how media coverage of early Stanley Cup hockey games drew Canadians into a national community of interest centred on sport. First, telegraph reconstructions and media accounts of the Winnipeg-Montreal Stanley Cup challenges contributed to the creation of a shared “hockey world” among fans in the two competing cities. In addition, press coverage of the games in other

⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1983). See also Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); John B. Thompson, *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 31-37. Although Anderson focuses on the role of media in the construction of national identities, other “imagined communities” based on regional, continental, imperial, and global affinities were also developing at this time. See, for example, Simon J. Potter, *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System, 1876-1922* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Simon J. Potter, “Communication and Integration: The British and Dominions Press and the British World, c. 1876-1914,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 31, no. 2 (2003): 190-206; Simon J. Potter, “Webs, Networks, and Systems: Globalization and the Mass Media in the Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century British Empire,” *Journal of British Studies* 46 (2007): 621-646; Peter Putnis, “News, Time and Imagined Community in Colonial Australia,” *Media History* 16, no. 2 (2010): 153-170.

¹⁰ Putnis, “News, Time and Imagined Community,” 154.

¹¹ See Lorenz, “In the Field of Sport,” 148-155; Lorenz, “A Lively Interest on the Prairies,” 195-203.

Canadian centres extended the audience for Stanley Cup matches beyond Winnipeg and Montreal. By 1903, Stanley Cup hockey challenges had become “national” Canadian events, followed across the country through “live” telegraph bulletins and daily newspaper reports.

The emergence of the mass press – particularly large, urban daily newspapers – was instrumental in creating local, national, and international audiences for sport.¹² By the end of the nineteenth century, detailed summaries of sporting events appeared in Canada’s leading dailies almost every day, and reporters were hired specifically to cover local athletes and competitions. Rather than scattering sports reports at random throughout the newspaper, editors and publishers also began grouping all sports news together on the same page. By 1895, for example, such widely read papers as the *Montreal Star*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Toronto Globe*, *Toronto World*, *Manitoba Free Press*, and *Winnipeg Tribune* brought people in their cities a page of sports information (the “sports

¹² On the development of the modern mass press in Canada, see P.F.W. Rutherford, “The People’s Press: The Emergence of the New Journalism in Canada, 1869-99,” *Canadian Historical Review* 56, no. 2 (1975): 169-91; Paul Rutherford, *The Making of the Canadian Media* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978); Paul Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority: The Daily Press in Late Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982); Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1989); Minko Sotiron, *From Politics to Profit: The Commercialization of Canadian Daily Newspapers, 1890-1920* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997). For an alternative perspective that examines the rural weekly press, see Paul Voisey, *High River and the Times: An Alberta Community and Its Weekly Newspaper, 1905-1966* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2004).

page”) on a daily basis. Newspapers that had not yet developed a distinct sports page usually printed a special column or two of sports-related material each day. Through these sports pages and sports columns, Canadian dailies helped to build a broad-based sports information-system throughout the country.¹³

Another significant development in sports journalism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the increasingly national and international scope of sports coverage. The advent of telegraphic communications contributed to the creation of a “world of sport” by permitting the rapid dissemination of news, including information about sporting events, across the continent and around the globe.¹⁴ The telegraph was the first element of the electronic media to have a significant impact on sport. Cities in the eastern part of Canada were linked by telegraph to each other and to major centres in the United States in the late 1840s and early 1850s. The undersea cable connecting Canada to Europe across the North Atlantic was in place by 1866, and settlements on the Canadian prairies were added to the telegraph network by the end of the 1880s.¹⁵

¹³ Lorenz, “In the Field of Sport,” 142-145; Lorenz, “A Lively Interest on the Prairies,” 200; Rutherford, “The People’s Press,” 178; Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority*, 74, 138-140, 151; Rutherford, *The Making of the Canadian Media*, 60-61; Sotiron, *From Politics to Profit*, 17.

¹⁴ For a more thorough discussion of the role of the telegraph and wire services in sports reporting, see Lorenz, “A Lively Interest on the Prairies,” 200-202; Lorenz, “In the Field of Sport,” 146-148.

¹⁵ Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority*, 41; Rutherford, *The Making of the Canadian Media*, 8; Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, 5; Donald G. Wetherell and Irene Kmet, *Useful Pleasures: The Shaping of Leisure in Alberta 1896-1945*

Newspapers quickly “became some of the biggest customers of the telegraph companies, and the...information in their pages became both fuller and timelier.”¹⁶

The telegraph gave Canadian newspapers much greater access to sports news from other parts of Canada, as well as from the United States, Great Britain, and the rest of Europe.

The telegraph also opened up the possibility of a completely new experience of hockey when someone had the idea of bringing telegraphers right to the arena in order to create simultaneous coverage of games. In this way, fans did not have to wait for their daily newspaper to follow the games; they could share immediately in the drama transpiring on the ice. Richard Gruneau and David Whitson summarize this process:

Whatever the origin, the practice of stationing telegraph operators at rinkside or up in the press box with a sportswriter or a couple of knowledgeable hockey fans had

(Regina: Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism/Canadian Plains Research Center, 1990), 20. On the broader development and influence of the telegraph, see James W. Carey, “Technology and Ideology: The Case of the Telegraph,” in *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 201-230; Tom Standage, *The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century’s On-line Pioneers* (New York: Walker and Company, 1998).

¹⁶ Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, 5. On the impact of the telegraph and wire services on the newspaper industry and the standardization of national news in the United States, see Menahem Blondheim, *News over the Wires: The Telegraph and the Flow of Public Information in America, 1844-1897* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

become widespread by the late 1890s. At the receiving end, decoded game accounts were either read aloud to assembled fans, or transcripts were posted on bulletin boards. Hotel, theatre, and newspaper owners quickly came to realize the financial and public relations value of telegraphed accounts and made facilities of varying types available for fans to gather and “hear” the game.¹⁷

The 1896 Stanley Cup contests between Winnipeg and Montreal were likely the first two games in which the technology of telegraphy was applied to the sport of hockey in such a way that large crowds in distant cities could experience matches as they were being played.¹⁸ The telegraph reconstructions that occurred regularly in Winnipeg and Montreal during the 1899-1903 Stanley Cup challenges built successfully on these earlier efforts to bring immediate results to people who

¹⁷ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 84. See also Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 21-22; Lorenz, “A Lively Interest on the Prairies,” 201-203; Lorenz, “In the Field of Sport,” 147-148, 154-155. On telegraph re-enactments of World Series baseball games, see W.A. Hewitt, *Down the Stretch: Recollections of a Pioneer Sportsman and Journalist* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1958), 135; Wetherell and Kmet, *Useful Pleasures*, 139; John Herd Thompson and Allen Seager, *Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 187; Stacy L. Lorenz, ““Bowling Down to Babe Ruth’: Major League Baseball and Canadian Popular Culture, 1920-1929,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 23, no. 1(1995): 29-30; Lorenz, “A Lively Interest on the Prairies,” 211-212.

¹⁸ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 21; Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 84; McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter*, 35-37; *Hockey: A People’s History – Episode 1: A Simple Game*, dir. Laine Drewery, prod. Wayne Chong, DVD, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation/Radio-Canada, 2006.

were not present at the games themselves. Telegraph re-enactments were part of what Stephen Kern describes as “the vast, shared experience of simultaneity.” Kern argues that “simultaneity had an extensive impact, since it involved many people in widely separate places, linked in an instant by the new communications technology.”¹⁹ Similarly, John B. Thompson notes, “It became possible to experience events as simultaneous despite the fact that they occurred in locales that were spatially remote.”²⁰ Even before the development of radio networks, large numbers of people in distant locations could follow the same events at the same time.²¹

In February 1899, Winnipeg newspapers focused considerable attention on how people in Winnipeg closely followed the Stanley Cup matches in Montreal, despite the distance between the two cities. The *Manitoba Free Press* expected an “immense crowd” at the Auditorium Rink in Winnipeg for the telegraph

¹⁹ Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space*, 314, 315. See also *Ibid.*, 67-81.

²⁰ Thompson, *The Media and Modernity*, 32.

²¹ David E. Nye, “Shaping Communication Networks: Telegraph, Telephone, Computer,” *Social Research* 64, no. 3 (1997): 1083-1084; Gene Allen, “Old Media, New Media, and Competition: Canadian Press and the Emergence of Radio News,” in *Communicating in Canada’s Past: Essays in Media History*, ed. Gene Allen and Daniel J. Robinson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 49-50. Allen does not specifically discuss telegraph reconstructions, but when he notes the ability of radio to create “imagined communities,” his description appears to be applicable to the telegraph, as well. Allen states that the “experience of simultaneity across long distances had a powerful effect on listeners’ sense of being connected to a larger social reality.” See *Ibid.*, 72.

bulletins of the two-game 1899 Stanley Cup series between the Montreal Victorias and the Winnipeg Victorias:

The Free Press has made complete arrangements for a direct wire service from the Arena rink, Montreal, to the Auditorium rink, Winnipeg, to-night and on Saturday evening when the progress of the matches between Winnipeg and Montreal, will be promptly bulletined and announced, precisely as seen by Free Press Representatives at the Montreal end of the wire.²²

According to the *Free Press*, “Two telegraph instruments had been placed in the rink and the messages were received almost simultaneously over the C.P.R. [Canadian Pacific Railway] and G.N.W. [Great North Western] wires.”²³ Another innovation was the use of “a lime light transparency” to provide visual representations of key happenings in Montreal.²⁴ As the *Free Press* reported, bulletins received in Winnipeg would be “announced to the audience as fast as they are received by means of a lantern thrown on a screen, one end of the rink

²² *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 February 1899, 1. See also 14 February 1899, 3; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 15 February 1899, 1. The championship was decided through a best-of-two total-goals series, rather than a single game. See Podnieks, *Lord Stanley's Cup*, 26.

²³ *Manitoba Free Press*, 16 February 1899, 5. See also *Montreal Star*, 16 February 1899, 2.

²⁴ *Manitoba Free Press*, 20 February 1899, 2.

being darkened for this purpose. The megaphone will also be used if considered necessary.”²⁵

On this particular occasion, results of the hockey game were received while a “masquerade carnival” was underway in the Auditorium, reportedly drawing over 2000 people.²⁶ The *Manitoba Free Press* carried a long and detailed story explaining how the telegraph bulletins were received in the arena. There were skaters on the ice, fans gathered in the bleachers, and an announcer delivering descriptions of the play to an anxious and enthusiastic crowd.²⁷ The *Winnipeg Tribune* also produced a comprehensive account – “The News at Home” – which depicted the atmosphere in the building in similar ways. According to the *Tribune*,

The scene in the Auditorium rink Wednesday night was one to be remembered. It is doubtful if there was ever a larger crowd on a sheet of ice in Manitoba or the west. Besides the hundreds on skates were almost as many in the seats. The fever point of excitement was reached early in the evening when it was announced that the great Vics vs. Vics

²⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 18 February 1899, 1. See also 18 February 1899, 5.

²⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, 20 February 1899, 3. See also 15 February 1899, 5, 6; 16 February 1899, 5; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 23.

²⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 16 February 1899, 5. See also 20 February 1899, 1, 2.

game at Montreal had started. The thoughts of the fast circling crowd were of those seven Winnipeg boys many miles away on the ice in the midst of thousands of spectators clamoring for Montreal.²⁸

The combination of costumed skaters and Stanley Cup news from across the continent was captured effectively by a *Manitoba Free Press* reporter, who wrote, “There were tiers of warmly clad Winnipeggers, alternately applauding the wearers of costumes of particularly clever conception or cheering the achievements of a Winnipeg hockeyist 1,500 miles away two minutes before.”²⁹ This thorough coverage of the local experience of distant games was a staple of Stanley Cup reporting in Winnipeg throughout this period.³⁰

When the Winnipeg Vics returned to Montreal in February 1900 to face the Montreal Shamrocks in a best-of-three series, fans again gathered in the Auditorium Rink to follow the progress of the games.³¹ The scene was very

²⁸ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 16 February 1899, 4. See also 20 February 1899, 1, 5.

²⁹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 20 February 1899, 3.

³⁰ See, for example, *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 February 1900, 5; 15 February 1900, 2; 17 February 1900, 8; 30 January 1901, 2; 1 February 1901, 6; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 13 February 1900, 4; 15 February 1900, 4; 17 February 1900, 4; 30 January 1901, 3, 5.

³¹ For advertisements publicizing the plan to present telegraph reports, see *Winnipeg Tribune*, 12 February 1900, 1; *Manitoba Free Press*, 12 February 1900, 3, 5; 14 February 1900, 3; 16 February 1900, 3. The Montreal Shamrocks captured the Stanley Cup from the Montreal Victorias by finishing in first place in

similar to the previous year. “The returns were bulletined by lime light on a screen at the end of the rink, and the crowd, which had gone on the ice to skate, collected in the centre of the rink, and kept their eyes glued to this for the announcements,” reported the *Manitoba Free Press*.³² The *Winnipeg Tribune* noted, “There were hundreds on skates forming a well packed procession around the rink, while the waiting rooms and the room above were packed with interested spectators watching the game as pictured by the announcements on the canvas.”³³ Similarly, the *Manitoba Free Press*’s account of the third match of the series stated, “The crowd which collected at the Auditorium to watch the progress of the great game as it was flashed on the screen at the end of the rink was tremendous. Skaters covered the big sheet of ice like one black mass. The waiting-rooms were packed and a large number sat around the benches at the side.”³⁴ Finally, bulletins were received at other locations in Winnipeg. After the second game of

the Canadian Amateur Hockey League (C.A.H.L.) in 1899. The Shamrocks also defeated Queen’s University in a March 1899 challenge. The Shamrock Hockey Club was affiliated with the Shamrock Amateur Athletic Association, an Irish-Catholic sport club. See Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 25-27; Podnieks, *Lord Stanley’s Cup*, 27; McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever*, 31; John Matthew Barlow, “‘Scientific Aggression’: Irishness, Manliness, Class, and Commercialization in the Shamrock Hockey Club of Montreal, 1894-1901,” in *Coast to Coast*, ed. Wong, 35-85.

³² *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 February 1900, 5. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 13 February 1900, 4.

³³ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 15 February 1900, 4. See also *Montreal Star*, 15 February 1900, 3.

³⁴ *Manitoba Free Press*, 17 February 1900, 8.

the series, the *Manitoba Free Press* pointed out that the crowd at the Auditorium “was not so large as on the evening of the first game, owing to the fact that the returns were being given at other places of interest.”³⁵ For instance, at the Winnipeg Theatre, there were “Full Reports of Hockey Match Between Acts.”³⁶

During the January 1901 series between the Winnipeg Vics and the Montreal Shamrocks, the number of places providing “live” telegraph updates of the matches as they were played in Montreal increased significantly. Winnipeg newspapers confirmed that bulletins were provided at the Auditorium Rink and the McIntyre Rink, as well as the Winnipeg Theatre, the Catholic Club, the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, the Young Men’s Liberal Club, and the Clarendon, Queens, and Leland hotels.³⁷ The *Montreal Gazette* stated, “Returns were received at the Winnipeg theatre, all the skating rinks, and all hotels; in fact every one in town was hockey crazy tonight.”³⁸ Other fans tried to follow the progress of the games by telephone. The *Manitoba Free Press* reported that, “anyone who could not go out kept the girls at the central busy making connections with the

³⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 February 1900, 2.

³⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, 14 February 1900, 3. See also 16 February 1900, 3.

³⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 26 January 1901, 5; 28 January 1901, 3, 5; 29 January 1901, 3, 5, 10; 30 January 1901, 2; 31 January 1901, 3, 10; 1 February 1901, 6; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 29 January 1901, 3; 30 January 1901, 3, 5; Podnieks, *Lord Stanley’s Cup*, 29; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 27-29.

³⁸ *Montreal Gazette*, 30 January 1901, 2. See also 1 February 1901, 2; 2 February 1901, 2.

Free Press and other places where prompt returns were received.”³⁹ Another technological advancement was used on the stage of the Winnipeg Theatre: “As the returns are received they will be thrown upon a screen by a stereopticon, by which means every one in the house gets a clear view, and no matter how noisy the enthusiasm becomes the returns are not interfered with.”⁴⁰ The *Free Press* added, “The management is to be congratulated upon the successful outcome of the innovation of enjoying a hockey game in warm upholstered chairs.”⁴¹ Transcripts of the C.P.R. and G.N.W. bulletins were also available in the newspaper the next day.⁴²

After the Vics’ triumph over the Shamrocks and a successful defence of their Stanley Cup title against the Toronto Wellingtons, Winnipeg hosted the Montreal Hockey Club – representing the Montreal Amateur Athletic Association (M.A.A.A.) – in March 1902. This time, the championship series was closely followed by telegraph in Montreal. Both telegraph companies had operators and reporters at the Auditorium in Winnipeg, and their bulletins were received by

³⁹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 30 January 1901, 2. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 30 January 1903, 8.

⁴⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, 29 January 1901, 5. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 30 January 1901, 3; Paul Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle: The Inside Story of the Old Ottawa Senators 1883-1935* (Manotick, ON: Penumbra Press, 2008), 120-121.

⁴¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 30 January 1901, 2.

⁴² *Manitoba Free Press*, 30 January 1901, 1, 2; 1 February 1901, 1, 2, 6; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 30 January 1901, 5. See also Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 21-22.

large audiences at the M.A.A.A. gymnasium and at the Arena in Montreal. Thousands of Montreal supporters also gathered around newspaper offices to read special telegraph bulletins sent as the games were played in Winnipeg.⁴³ As in earlier Stanley Cup matches, some of these reports were accompanied by other forms of entertainment. During the first game of the series, bulletins at the Montreal Arena were enjoyed alongside skating and a band, while updates for the second match were provided as two local clubs played a hockey game.⁴⁴ The M.A.A.A. gathering seemed to be particularly festive, as it was described as a “SMOKER AND BULLETIN COMBINED.” In the words of the *Montreal Gazette*, “The M.A.A.A. rooms should be crowded when the bulletins of the big match in Winnipeg are going on. A feature is to be made out of this arrangement. The boys will be able to smoke, sing songs, and even get into the extravagance of the ping-pong room, while the ticker will tell – well, what will it tell? Let us hope it is a rise in the stock we are all taking.”⁴⁵

The *Montreal Star* operated the telegraph service in the gymnasium of the M.A.A.A., at the newspaper’s Uptown Branch Office, and at the *Star*’s branch

⁴³ Morrow, “The Little Men of Iron,” 61-63; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 31-34; McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter*, 40-41; *Montreal Star*, 14 March 1902, 2; *Montreal Gazette*, 14 March 1902, 2; *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 March 1902, 5; 14 March 1902, 1; 17 March 1902, 6; 18 March 1902, 6; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 14 March 1902, 7.

⁴⁴ *Montreal Gazette*, 12 March 1902, 7; 15 March 1902, 9.

⁴⁵ *Montreal Gazette*, 12 March 1902, 2.

office in Point St. Charles. According to the *Star*, “In the Auditorium Rink at Winnipeg, the Great North Western operator, with his little table and telegraph instrument was seated on the edge of the ice, where he could see everything, and where experienced hockey men, like Armytage of the Vics and one or two others dictated the progress of the game to him, so that the people at the different *Star* bulletin stations were kept continuously and immediately informed of almost every move of the match.”⁴⁶ After each game, the *Star* provided summaries of how the telegraph bulletins were received by groups at all three locations.⁴⁷ According to the *Star*, the reports attracted “A Record Crowd of Thousands” to the streets outside the main offices of the newspaper. After the second game of the series, the *Star* commented, “It is doubtful if, even during Dominion elections or during America’s Cup races, such a crowd has been seen there.”⁴⁸ An even bigger audience gathered to watch the bulletins for the third game, and the *Star* concluded, “Never before had a sporting event drawn together so many people in Montreal.” The newspaper described the scene in this way:

⁴⁶ *Montreal Star*, 14 March 1902, 2. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 14 March 1902, 2.

⁴⁷ *Montreal Star*, 13 March 1902, 3; 14 March 1902, 2; 15 March 1902, 18; 17 March 1902, 2; 18 March 1902, 2.

⁴⁸ *Montreal Star*, 17 March 1902, 2.

On the corner of St. Catherine and Peel streets, it was simply tremendous. How the street cars managed to get through them was a marvel.

Not satisfied with standing on the pavement, they climbed on top of every possible thing that could afford them a place to see, and cabs with their roofs threatening to cave in under the burdens of legitimate and illegitimate fares were numerous.

When it was all over, and there were no more bulletins, they divided up into battalions, and paraded the streets, literally singing the praises of their heroes, till a very early hour this morning.⁴⁹

Finally, the *Montreal Gazette* observed, “How many people anxious there were last night around the bulletins and bothering the telephones could hardly be enumerated unless somebody took on himself to get up a new and improved census report....The telegraph and newspaper offices were besieged.”⁵⁰

One of the most notable features of these telegraph reconstructions was the sense of direct involvement that fans experienced while following events occurring in other cities. The *Manitoba Free Press* called attention to this

⁴⁹ *Montreal Star*, 18 March 1902, 2.

⁵⁰ *Montreal Gazette*, 18 March 1902, 2.

phenomenon while reporting on the bulletins at the Winnipeg Auditorium in 1900: “The knowledge that the two rinks were united by a direct wire and that every move of the conflicting teams in the Arena rink, 1,400 miles away, would be known simultaneously here, made the excitement almost as intense as if the game was in progress before the crowd.”⁵¹ Likewise, the *Free Press* observed that, at Winnipeg’s Clarendon hotel in 1901, “the messages were read smoking hot off the wire by that accomplished elocutionist, Mr. Joe Baker. The bulletins came in a continuous stream, and gave a very accurate idea of the play, so that a person with any imagination could picture it for himself and see it in his mind’s eye.”⁵² There was a similar feeling of immediacy at the Auditorium, where “many well-known patrons of athletic sports” claimed that telegraph updates “enabled them to judge the game almost as well as if they were right on the spot, while it was doubly exciting.” In addition, “Much satisfaction was expressed regarding the bulletins, which were of a most concise nature, and as they were announced within ten seconds after the actual play, enabled the audience to clearly and intelligently follow the play.”⁵³ Finally, in 1902, the *Montreal Star* recognized the simultaneity of experience between the Auditorium Rink in Winnipeg and the M.A.A.A. gymnasium: “[T]he returns were received over the

⁵¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 February 1900, 5.

⁵² *Manitoba Free Press*, 1 February 1901, 6.

⁵³ *Montreal Gazette*, 2 February 1901, 2. See also *Ottawa Citizen*, 2 February 1901, 6.

Star special wire, and the audience were almost as closely in touch with what was happening as if they were looking at the game. The service was most complete, for every move was flashed over the wire as it was made.”⁵⁴

The last instalment of the Winnipeg-Montreal Stanley Cup rivalry was played in 1903 in Montreal, as the Winnipeg Victorias again clashed with the Montreal Hockey Club. The experience of telegraph reconstructions in Winnipeg reached new heights during these matches. First, telegraph reports were available at a wide range of locations in Winnipeg. “HOCKEY BULLETINS TO-NIGHT – Direct Wires to Numerous Places in the City – Great Interest,” summarized a *Manitoba Free Press* headline. “The hockey match between the Montreals and the Victorias this evening is arousing a very great deal of interest throughout the city and everyone is anxious to obtain the news as early and as red hot from the wires as possible,” explained the *Free Press*. “Excitement is fairly brimming over as may be adjudged from the number of places where bulletins of the games will be received by direct wire, and the fact that a number of places are preparing to accommodate the ladies is proof of the interest the gentle sex are manifesting.”⁵⁵

Fans assembled at the *Manitoba Free Press* and *Winnipeg Tribune* offices, as well

⁵⁴ *Montreal Star*, 17 March 1902, 2. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 17 March 1902, 5.

⁵⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 29 January 1903, 6. Women were considered to be markers of respectability, and a moderating influence on rowdyism among competitors and in the crowd. See Colin D. Howell, *Northern Sandlots: A Social History of Maritime Baseball* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 74-78.

as the Y.M.C.A. hall, the Winnipeg Theatre, the Auditorium Rink, the Granite Rink, and the Clarendon, Queen's, Royal Oak, Brunswick, and Leland hotels. Updates could also be heard at such venues as the Commercial Club, the Catholic Club, the Young Conservative Club, a meeting of the Young Liberals, the grain exchange, and the Rialto Cigar store.⁵⁶ "At each of these places there were large crowds of enthusiasts, and there was just as much excitement there as if the big game had been going on before them," stated the *Manitoba Free Press*.⁵⁷

The *Manitoba Free Press* and the Y.M.C.A. offered a unique experience by using a stereopticon to project images related to the games upon a large screen.⁵⁸ The process was similar to the one described by Paul Kitchen in his examination of how the *Free Press* covered the 1904 Stanley Cup challenge involving the Winnipeg Rowing Club and the Ottawa Hockey Club:

A correspondent in the press booth [at the Aberdeen Pavilion in Ottawa] described the play as it unfolded to a telegraph operator seated beside him. He relayed the messages to the *Free Press*, where a receiving telegrapher

⁵⁶ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 29 January 1903, 1, 8; 30 January 1903, 8; 4 February 1903, 1; *Manitoba Free Press*, 24 January 1903, 5; 26 January 1903, 5; 29 January 1903, 6; 30 January 1903, 6; 2 February 1903, 7, 12; 4 February 1903, 9; *Montreal Star*, 30 January 1903, 10.

⁵⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 2 February 1903, 7.

⁵⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, 24 January 1903, 5; 26 January 1903, 5; 27 January 1903, 5; 28 January 1903, 5; 29 January 1903, 5, 6; 31 January 1903, 5; 3 February 1903, 9; 5 February 1903, 6.

decoded them. They were then converted into transparent slides, which were magnified through a stereopticon projector onto a large screen in the front window of the newspaper office. Not only did the hundreds of residents who gathered on the street through the cold evening enjoy a written description of the play as it went on, they chuckled at the humorous accompanying sketches hurriedly done up by staff illustrators.⁵⁹

The Y.M.C.A.'s presentation of the telegraph reports also "include[d] cartoons by Mr. Holtby, thrown upon the screen."⁶⁰ The *Free Press* declared its stereopticon system a success:

There were over one thousand people congregated in front of the Free Press office last night to receive the bulletins giving the progress of the Stanley cup game in Montreal which were thrown upon canvas by a powerful stereopticon which had been specially arranged for the occasion. The chilly night had no deterring effect upon the enthusiasm or dimension of the crowd which continued to grow as the

⁵⁹ Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 120-121. See also Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 45.

⁶⁰ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 1 February 1903, 2.

game progressed. Everyone declared that the Free Press bulletin service was all right.⁶¹

Another dimension of media coverage of important hockey games was the use of “live” bulletins as a means of gaining an edge over rival newspapers within a city. As daily papers vied for readers and advertisers, they tried to demonstrate that their telegraph re-enactments were superior to those of their competitors. The battle between the *Winnipeg Tribune* and the *Manitoba Free Press* is an excellent example of such a rivalry. During the 1903 Stanley Cup challenge, each newspaper claimed that its telegraph service was the best offered in Winnipeg. “The Tribune has arranged for special bulletins of the hockey match at Montreal tonight,” noted the paper on its sports page at the beginning of the series. “The Tribune is recognized as the leader for bulletin facilities and tonight’s service will be strictly up-to-date.”⁶² While advertising its telegraph service, the *Tribune* highlighted its immediacy and intensity. “A direct wire from the Arena, Montreal, to The Tribune office, will bring news tonight of the great hockey match,” the newspaper pointed out. “The service will be practically instantaneous, and there will scarcely be a second’s delay posting the results of the games, as the operator will be located in the room from which the bulletins are posted....The C.P.R. wire in The Tribune office, as stated above, is direct. In

⁶¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 3 February 1903, 9.

⁶² *Winnipeg Tribune*, 29 January 1903, 8.

addition to the goals, details as to the play will be posted as the match progresses.”⁶³ The *Tribune* followed up with this assessment: “The hundreds of people who blocked McDermott avenue in front of The Tribune office last evening, got the returns of the hockey some seconds before they were obtained anywhere else. The Tribune had the only direct wire to the Arena in Montreal, and so were able not only to out-distance all competitors, but gave fuller and more complete returns.”⁶⁴

The *Manitoba Free Press* countered these claims with assertions of the supremacy of its own telegraph service. Under the headline, “BIG CROWD AT FREE PRESS,” the newspaper claimed, “The returns in several cases were two minutes ahead of any other service in the city.”⁶⁵ After the final match of the series, the paper asserted that “undoubtedly the first news of the game was given from the Free Press office.” The *Free Press* also suggested that the large number of people present at its telegraph re-creations confirmed the quality of its presentation. “The largest crowd of men and boys was congregated last night around the Free Press, where the returns were bulletined as on Monday, by means of stereopticon views on a screen, and the enthusiasm was maintained up to the last minute. McDermot avenue was lined from side to side from Albert street

⁶³ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 4 February 1903, 1.

⁶⁴ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 5 February 1903, 8.

⁶⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 3 February 1903, 9.

down to Main,” reported the *Free Press*.⁶⁶ Fans responded enthusiastically to updates provided by the newspaper:

Excitement was almost at fever point. When the first news was thrown on the canvas showing that Montreal had made the first score in 22 minutes a wave of depression swept over the crowd, but the announcement a few seconds later that it was an off-side was received with a demonstration of pleasure, and the progress of the game was watched with breathless interest. The first score announced for the Victorias was received with deafening cheers, which were repeated with the announcements of each succeeding score.⁶⁷

The *Winnipeg Tribune* reported similar crowds at its offices. For instance, following the opening match of the series, the *Tribune* wrote, “Although the weather was far from comfortable, the sidewalk in front of the building was lined with enthusiastic hockey supporters, out into the street.”⁶⁸ Similarly, after a Winnipeg victory in the second game of the series, the *Tribune* stated that, “about

⁶⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, 5 February 1903, 6. See also *Montreal Star*, 5 February 1903, 8.

⁶⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 3 February 1903, 9.

⁶⁸ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 30 January 1903, 8.

1,500 enthusiasts took a chance on pneumonia by remaining out till 11 p.m. watching the latest returns as posted on the Tribune windows.”⁶⁹

The experience of Stanley Cup games through telegraph reports was the clearest expression of a broader process in which the media was starting to construct similar understandings of hockey in Winnipeg and Montreal – and, to some extent, in other Canadian cities. “With the invention and use of the telegraph, the informational distances between different places began to erode,” writes Joshua Meyrowitz. Faraway places were brought “closer together informationally. Physical distance as a social barrier began to be bypassed through the shortening of communication ‘distance.’”⁷⁰ Media coverage of the February and December 1896 Stanley Cup challenges between the Winnipeg Victorias and the Montreal Victorias had established a foundation for shared hockey experiences between the two cities. As a result, an awareness of a larger, interconnected “hockey world” began to develop between Montreal and Winnipeg.⁷¹ Coverage of the 1899-1903 championship matches strengthened this relationship, as telegraph bulletins allowed games to be experienced

⁶⁹ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 3 February 1903, 8.

⁷⁰ Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place*, 116. See also Carey, “Technology and Ideology,” 203-204.

⁷¹ See Ch. 2, “‘Our Victorias Victorious’: Media, Rivalry, and the 1896 Winnipeg-Montreal Stanley Cup Hockey Challenges.”

simultaneously in both cities and newspaper reports enabled observations and opinions to flow between Winnipeg and Montreal. In addition, the links between these competing communities were not limited to the time of Stanley Cup series. Between 1899 and 1903, reporting on potential Stanley Cup opponents became a regular element of the sports pages in both cities throughout the hockey season. As a result, newspapers in Montreal gave increasing attention to hockey in Winnipeg, while papers in Winnipeg demonstrated greater interest in hockey in Montreal. This led to the development of “a common information environment” between the two cities.⁷²

During the 1899 Winnipeg-Montreal series, a similar pool of hockey information was available to newspaper readers in both cities. For instance, under the headline, “What the Papers Say,” the *Manitoba Free Press* carried hockey stories from a number of other newspapers, including the *Montreal Herald* and the *Montreal Gazette*.⁷³ The *Free Press* also published player profiles from the *Montreal Herald* and updates written by a “hockey correspondent” in Montreal.⁷⁴ Similarly, the *Winnipeg Tribune* printed Stanley Cup game summaries and

⁷² Blondheim, *News over the Wires*, 195. The “sharing of news” is also cited by Potter as a crucial element binding the “British world” together. See Potter, “Communication and Integration,” 191.

⁷³ *Manitoba Free Press*, 17 February 1899, 5. See also 23 February 1899, 5.

⁷⁴ *Manitoba Free Press*, 18 February 1899, 5.

commentary from Montreal, Toronto, and Ottawa papers.⁷⁵ Meanwhile, the *Montreal Star* carried news about the Winnipeg Vics prior to the team's departure for Montreal.⁷⁶ While Montreal dailies focused mainly on the high level of local interest in the series,⁷⁷ they supplemented this Montreal coverage with analysis of how people in Winnipeg followed the matches. For example, the *Montreal Star* and the *Montreal Gazette* carried almost identical reports on the "Great Excitement and Dampened Ardour" at the Auditorium Rink in Winnipeg during the first game of the series as "the returns [were] announced by bulletin boards and megaphones."⁷⁸

A dispute over violent play by Montreal late in the second match also attracted a great deal of attention, and sparked debate between Winnipeg and Montreal papers. Referee J.A. Findlay left the ice – and the arena – during the disagreement, and by the time he was persuaded to return to the rink, several Winnipeg players had also departed. The remaining members of the team refused to resume play. As a result, Findlay disqualified the visitors and awarded

⁷⁵ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 16 February 1899, 1; 20 February 1899, 1; 22 February 1899, 1; 24 February 1899, 1.

⁷⁶ *Montreal Star*, 10 February 1899, 7; 11 February 1899, 20. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 13 February 1899, 2.

⁷⁷ See, for example, *Montreal Star*, 16 February 1899, 2; 20 February 1899, 8; *Montreal Gazette*, 15 February 1899, 2; 16 February 1899, 2; 17 February 1899, 5; 18 February 1899, 5; 20 February 1899, 2.

⁷⁸ *Montreal Star*, 16 February 1899, 2. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 16 February 1899, 2; 20 February 1899, 2.

Montreal the game, along with the Stanley Cup.⁷⁹ “While the bulk of public opinion stays on the side of the Winnipegs in regard to Saturday night’s match, the newspapers continue to be unfair to the visitors,” stated the *Manitoba Free Press*. “Here is a specimen from the Gazette, always incapable of rising above narrow localism.”⁸⁰ The *Winnipeg Tribune* also provided rebuttals to a series of points raised by the press in Montreal.⁸¹ At the same time, the *Montreal Gazette* reprinted comments from a *Winnipeg Tribune* editorial under the headline, “THE WINNIPEG VIEW. – EVIDENTLY EXPECT THEIR TEAM TO ARRIVE HOME ON HOSPITAL STRETCHERS.” The *Ottawa Evening Journal* and the *Toronto Globe* included the same commentary in their sports pages.⁸² The *Gazette* also published excerpts from a column written by the sports editor of the *Manitoba Free Press*, under the title, “WINNIPEG IS WARM.” The same article appeared in the *Toronto Globe* and the *Ottawa Citizen*, as well.⁸³ In addition, the *Montreal Gazette* printed “A TORONTO OPINION” from the *Telegram* which

⁷⁹ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 23-24; Podnieks, *Lord Stanley’s Cup*, 26; McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever*, 30-31; Barlow, “Scientific Aggression,” 59.

⁸⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, 21 February 1899, 3. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 20 February 1899, 2; *Manitoba Free Press*, 27 February 1899, 5.

⁸¹ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 21 February 1899, 4.

⁸² *Montreal Gazette*, 21 February 1899, 2; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 21 February 1899, 6; *Toronto Globe*, 22 February 1899, 10.

⁸³ *Montreal Gazette*, 22 February 1899, 2; *Toronto Globe*, 22 February 1899, 10; *Ottawa Citizen*, 23 February 1899, 6. See also *Manitoba Free Press*, 21 February 1899, 3; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 23 February 1899, 6.

defended the Winnipeg players involved in the Stanley Cup controversy: “The experience of many a Toronto team was duplicated in the sufferings of the Winnipeg players at the hands of their Montreal rivals.”⁸⁴ Finally, the *Gazette* covered the “Winnipeggers in Toronto” as they travelled back to the west.⁸⁵ These newspaper reports connected people in Winnipeg and Montreal – as well as Ottawa and Toronto – to a “hockey world” focused on the contentious 1899 Stanley Cup championship.

The *Winnipeg Tribune*’s coverage of the 1900 challenge included reports from the *Montreal Gazette*, *Montreal Star*, *Montreal Witness*, and *Montreal Herald*, as well as the *Toronto Mail* and the *Toronto Globe*. The *Manitoba Free Press* also drew extensively upon Montreal newspapers in its coverage.⁸⁶ Before the series, both the *Tribune* and the *Free Press* shared the *Montreal Star*’s analysis of the Montreal Shamrocks with readers in Winnipeg.⁸⁷ Similarly, Montreal newspapers discussed the arrival of the “Winnipeg men” and their itinerary on their first day in Montreal. The *Montreal Star* supplied portraits of each visiting player. A *Montreal Gazette* reporter observed the Winnipeg club at

⁸⁴ *Montreal Gazette*, 23 February 1899, 2.

⁸⁵ *Montreal Gazette*, 22 February 1899, 2.

⁸⁶ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 13 February 1900, 1; 15 February 1900, 1; 17 February 1900, 1; *Manitoba Free Press*, 14 February 1900, 6; 16 February 1900, 5; 19 February 1900, 5.

⁸⁷ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 February 1900, 4; *Manitoba Free Press*, 8 February 1900, 5.

practice, and assembled a careful analysis of the team.⁸⁸ The *Star* and the *Gazette* provided comprehensive game stories and extensive coverage between games.⁸⁹ Again, the *Gazette* wrote about the “WINNIPEGGERS AT TORONTO” at the conclusion of the series.⁹⁰ Through this type of reporting, knowledge of the competing teams and the games they played was becoming more thorough – and more similar – in Winnipeg and Montreal.

In the weeks before the 1901 Stanley Cup challenge, the *Manitoba Free Press* and the *Winnipeg Tribune* relayed to their readers comments from Ottawa, Toronto, and Montreal, assessing Winnipeg’s chances of bringing the Stanley Cup to the west.⁹¹ Over the course of the season, Winnipeg papers carried accounts and analysis of matches from Montreal – particularly those involving the Montreal Shamrocks. The *Free Press* and the *Tribune* also covered such clubs as the Montreal Victorias, the Montreal A.A.A., and the Ottawa Senators.⁹² During

⁸⁸ *Montreal Star*, 10 February 1900, 18; *Montreal Gazette*, 9 February 1900, 2; 12 February 1900, 7.

⁸⁹ *Montreal Star*, 13 February 1900, 3; 14 February 1900, 8; 15 February 1900, 3; 16 February 1900, 8; 17 February 1900, 18; *Montreal Gazette*, 13 February 1900, 2; 14 February 1900, 2; 15 February 1900, 2; 17 February 1900, 2. See also Barlow, “Scientific Aggression,” 63-64.

⁹⁰ *Montreal Gazette*, 21 February 1900, 2; 23 February 1900, 2.

⁹¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 23 January 1901, 5; 25 January 1901, 5; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 29 January 1901, 3.

⁹² See, for example, *Winnipeg Tribune*, 11 January 1901, 3; 14 January 1901, 3; 15 January 1901, 3; 16 January 1901, 3; 21 January 1901, 3; 24 January

the Stanley Cup series, Winnipeg readers were informed about opinions put forward in Montreal newspapers, as well as the *Free Press*'s and the *Tribune*'s analysis of these perspectives.⁹³ For instance, the *Winnipeg Tribune* ran a front-page story – “EASTERN PRESS COMMENT ON THE GREAT HOCKEY MATCH” – which included reports and commentary from the *Montreal Witness*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Montreal Star*, *Montreal Herald*, *Toronto Mail*, and *Toronto World*.⁹⁴ The *Montreal Gazette* and the *Montreal Star* also paid considerable attention to the challengers, writing about the club's departure from Winnipeg, arrival in Montreal, attendance at the Ottawa-Shamrock game, practices, injuries, and probable line-up. The Montreal papers also analyzed the visitors' prospects for the series, and provided portraits of each player.⁹⁵ In addition, the *Gazette* and the *Star* published stories about how the games were being received in Winnipeg, under such headlines as, “WINNIPEG WILD WITH JOY,” and “THE GREAT

1901, 3; 23 February 1901, 4; *Manitoba Free Press*, 29 January 1901, 5; 11 February 1901, 1.

⁹³ *Manitoba Free Press*, 31 January 1901, 5; 2 February 1901, 5; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 31 January 1901, 3. Some of these reports and analysis were virtually identical, suggesting that the same reporter was writing stories for both newspapers.

⁹⁴ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 1 February 1901, 1.

⁹⁵ *Montreal Gazette*, 24 January 1901, 2; 25 January 1901, 2; 28 January 1901, 4; 29 January 1901, 2; *Montreal Star*, 28 January 1901, 2; 29 January 1901, 2.

NEWS IN WINNIPEG.” Finally, the Montreal press covered a planned reception for the champion Vics back in Winnipeg.⁹⁶

The emergence of a Canadian “hockey world” escalated during the 1902 season, as Winnipeg hosted two Stanley Cup challenges involving eastern teams. In anticipation of Stanley Cup games against the leading clubs in Canada, Winnipeg newspapers boosted their coverage of hockey in Toronto and Montreal, in particular. For instance, when the 1902 season opened in the eastern leagues, the *Manitoba Free Press* began its “Sport Comment” column with the following observations: “In the opening games of the east’s premier league played Saturday night, the Ottawa and Montreal teams came out on top. It was a close game at Ottawa, but the rough and ready style of last year’s champions served its purpose and the faster Victorias were unable to win. The once famous wearers of the green received a bad beating from the M.A.A.A. septette. It will likely be a long time before the Shams. get together such another team as defended the Stanley cup so long and ably, but with Harry Trihey at the helm, there should be a decided reversal in form before the season is over.” Later in the same column, the *Free Press* writer assessed the performance of the Toronto Wellingtons in a game at Galt, Ontario. In addition, the paper included brief game stories summarizing the outcome of matches between the Wellingtons and the St. George’s club in

⁹⁶ *Montreal Gazette*, 30 January 1901, 2; 1 February 1901, 2; 2 February 1901, 2; 11 February 1901, 5. See also *Montreal Star*, 30 January 1901, 2; 1 February 1901, 2.

Toronto (“WELLINGTONS WON HARD GAME”), the Montreal Shamrocks and the M.A.A.A. in Montreal (“SHAMROCKS OUTCLASSED”), and Ottawa and the Montreal Victorias in Ottawa (“OTTAWAS 5, VICTORIAS 4”).⁹⁷

Over the next two weeks, the *Manitoba Free Press* borrowed analysis of the Toronto Wellingtons and the Winnipeg Vics from the *Toronto Star*, the *Toronto Telegram*, and the *Toronto Globe*.⁹⁸ Game stories featured in the *Free Press* included such matches as the Wellingtons vs. University of Toronto Varsity, Shamrocks vs. Ottawa, Montreal Victorias vs. Quebec, Montreal A.A.A. vs. Montreal Victorias, and Montreal Victorias vs. Shamrocks.⁹⁹ The *Manitoba Free Press* editorial page weighed the relative strength of eastern hockey leagues: “There has been an impression down east that the Ontario Hockey League covering Ontario territory as far east as Kingston is a much less important organization than the Senior Hockey League which includes the teams at Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec and that the general style of play is much inferior to that prevailing farther east. This is largely assumption, for the athletic standards of Toronto have usually been quite up to those of Montreal, and there is no reason

⁹⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 6 January 1902, 5.

⁹⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, 10 January 1902, 5; 11 January 1902, 5; 16 January 1902, 5; 18 January 1902, 5.

⁹⁹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 January 1902, 5; 23 January 1902, 5; 27 January 1902, 5.

why Toronto should not have a first-rate hockey seven.”¹⁰⁰ Leading up to the January 1902 challenge between the Winnipeg Victorias and the Toronto Wellingtons, the *Winnipeg Tribune* and the *Manitoba Free Press* assessed the Wellingtons’ roster, profiled their players, and covered their games.¹⁰¹ During the series, Winnipeg newspapers paid close attention to perceptions and reactions in Toronto.¹⁰² At the same time, the *Toronto Globe* and *Toronto Star* printed game summaries and commentary from Winnipeg, Montreal, Ottawa, and Hamilton papers.¹⁰³ The *Montreal Gazette* also provided thorough coverage of the Vics-Wellingtons challenge.¹⁰⁴

Following Winnipeg’s successful Stanley Cup defence against the Wellingtons, the city’s newspapers began to focus even more attention on hockey in Montreal. For example, on 1 February 1902, the *Manitoba Free Press* devoted

¹⁰⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, 21 January 1902, 4.

¹⁰¹ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 3 January 1902, 5; 6 January 1902, 4; 8 January 1902, 1; 11 January 1902, 1; 13 January 1902, 4; 14 January 1902, 1; 15 January 1902, 4; 18 January 1902, 4; *Manitoba Free Press*, 14 January 1902, 5; 20 January 1902, 5, 6.

¹⁰² *Winnipeg Tribune*, 22 January 1902, 1; 24 January 1902, 1; 25 January 1902, 4; 29 January 1902, 2; *Manitoba Free Press*, 22 January 1902, 5; 23 January 1902, 5.

¹⁰³ *Toronto Globe*, 23 January 1902, 10; 24 January 1902, 8; 25 January 1902, 29; *Toronto Star*, 20 January 1902, 8; 23 January 1902, 8; 24 January 1902, 8; 25 January 1902, 9, 13.

¹⁰⁴ *Montreal Gazette*, 16 January 1902, 2; 17 January 1902, 2; 18 January 1902, 2; 21 January 1902, 2; 22 January 1902, 10; 23 January 1902, 2; 24 January 1902, 12; 25 January 1902, 2.

most of its “Sporting Comment” column to a discussion of the eastern teams in contention for the right to challenge the Winnipeg Vics for the Stanley Cup, particularly the Montreal A.A.A. and the Montreal Victorias. The column included the *Montreal Star*’s assessment of “the hockey situation in the eastern league” during the first part of the season. On the same page, the *Free Press* also printed a story that featured interviews from Montreal, under the headline, “NEXT CHALLENGERS FOR STANLEY CUP – Montreal Vics and Montreals are Ready to Come West.”¹⁰⁵ Over the next few weeks, the *Free Press* brought its readers more game stories from Montreal and further analysis of the C.A.H.L. championship race.¹⁰⁶ The Winnipeg paper ran a detailed story – “HOCKEY HONORS FOR MONTREALS” – when the Montreal A.A.A. clinched the league title with a 3-0 win over the Montreal Victorias. Later, the *Free Press* reprinted a *Montreal Star* report on the Montreal-Victoria match.¹⁰⁷

When the Montreal A.A.A. club was confirmed as the Winnipeg Vics’ next opponent, coverage of the impending Stanley Cup challenge intensified in

¹⁰⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 1 February 1902, 5.

¹⁰⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, 3 February 1902, 5; 8 February 1902, 5; 10 February 1902, 5; 11 February 1902, 5; 12 February 1902, 5; 17 February 1902, 5; 24 February 1902, 6. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 22 February 1902, 1; 25 February 1902, 4; 27 February 1902, 4.

¹⁰⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 27 February 1902, 5; 4 March 1902, 5. For the *Montreal Witness*’s account of this match, see *Manitoba Free Press*, 17 March 1902, 6, 7.

both Winnipeg and Montreal.¹⁰⁸ For instance, on 4 March 1902, the *Manitoba Free Press* looked ahead to a competitive challenge on its editorial page, and included a thorough analysis of the Montreal team's personnel and playing style in its sports coverage.¹⁰⁹ On 8 March 1902, the Winnipeg paper carried reports wired from the "Montreal correspondent of the Free Press," as well as a detailed discussion of the roster of the challengers as reported in the *Montreal Herald*.¹¹⁰ The next day, the *Free Press* reported on the Montreal Hockey Club's departure for Winnipeg, as well as changes to the team's line-up. The newspaper also reprinted analysis of the Winnipeg Vics by the *Montreal Herald*, and followed this up with a lengthy analysis of the series by the *Montreal Witness*.¹¹¹ Meanwhile, reports from Winnipeg and assessments of the Winnipeg Vics – and the weather in the west – appeared in the pages of the *Montreal Gazette*.¹¹² For example, on 8 March 1902, the *Gazette* provided two stories about Winnipeg

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, *Manitoba Free Press*, 28 February 1902, 6; 4 March 1902, 4, 5; 5 March 1902, 5; 6 March 1902, 4; 8 March 1902, 5, 6; 10 March 1902, 5; 11 March 1902, 5; 12 March 1902, 5; 13 March 1902, 5; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 4 March 1902, 4; 5 March 1902, 1, 5; 6 March 1902, 1, 5; 7 March 1902, 4; 8 March 1902, 4; 10 March 1902, 4; 11 March 1902, 1, 4; 12 March 1902, 1; 13 March 1902, 1; *Montreal Gazette*, 3 March 1902, 2; 4 March 1902, 2; 6 March 1902, 2; 7 March 1902, 2; 8 March 1902, 2; 10 March 1902, 2; 11 March 1902, 2; 12 March 1902.

¹⁰⁹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 4 March 1902, 4, 5.

¹¹⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, 8 March 1902, 6.

¹¹¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 10 March 1902, 5; 11 March 1902, 5.

¹¹² *Montreal Gazette*, 3 March 1902, 2; 5 March 1902, 2; 11 March 1902, 2.

opinion on the selection of a referee – “WHAT THEY THINK IN WINNIPEG” and “THE WINNIPEG IDEA” – as well as a thorough game story summarizing a match between the Winnipeg Victorias and the Winnipeg hockey club.¹¹³

During the March 1902 series, hosted by Winnipeg, the local press supplied detailed game stories, reactions from Montreal, and analysis between games.¹¹⁴ Coverage of the telegraph bulletin service in Montreal made the front page of the *Manitoba Free Press* (“How News of Defeat Was Received in Montreal”), alongside an evaluation of the match itself.¹¹⁵ The *Free Press* printed reaction from the *Montreal Gazette*, *Montreal Witness*, *Montreal Herald*, and *Montreal Star*.¹¹⁶ At the conclusion of the series, the *Free Press* again published “a few extracts” from Montreal dailies, and reported, “7,000 CHEERED THE CUP WINNERS – Montreal Hockey Team Welcomed Home.”¹¹⁷ Likewise, Montreal newspapers furnished extensive coverage of the series, including game stories and updates from Winnipeg, complete telegraph transcripts of the action

¹¹³ *Montreal Gazette*, 8 March 1902, 2.

¹¹⁴ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 14 March 1902, 1, 2, 4, 7; 15 March 1902, 4; 17 March 1902, 1, 4; 18 March 1902, 1, 4; 19 March 1902, 1; *Manitoba Free Press*, 14 March 1902, 1; 15 March 1902, 5; 17 March 1902, 6, 7; 18 March 1902, 6; 20 March 1902, 5; 22 March 1902, 5.

¹¹⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 14 March 1902, 1.

¹¹⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 March 1902, 5; 19 March 1902, 5.

¹¹⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 22 March 1902, 5; 26 March 1902, 5; 27 March 1902, 5.

on the ice, and local reaction in Montreal.¹¹⁸ The *Montreal Star* incorporated “ONTARIO OPINIONS” from the *Toronto Globe*, the *Toronto Mail and Empire*, and the *Toronto World* into its reporting.¹¹⁹

Discussions and debates between newspapers were crucial elements of Stanley Cup press coverage. For example, the *Winnipeg Tribune*’s front-page headline on 17 March 1902 declared, “THEY MAY BE DISAPPOINTED. Montreal Newspapers Seem to Think the Stanley Cup is Going East – What the Experts are Saying.”¹²⁰ After the 1902 Vics-M.A.A.A. challenge, the *Manitoba Free Press* expressed considerable disagreement with Toronto newspapers. “It is really very amusing to read the comment in some of the Toronto papers on the Montreal-Victoria series of games,” stated the *Free Press*. The Winnipeg writer criticized the *Toronto Globe* and the *Toronto Telegram*, and described Toronto reporters as “arm-chaired critics, who viewed the hockey matches played in Winnipeg this season through the medium of their own prejudiced imagination.” However, the *Free Press* complimented its counterparts in Montreal: “Now, unlike the Toronto press, the Montreal papers, as a usual thing, are only too willing to give Winnipeg a fair shake. Down in the metropolis they appreciate a

¹¹⁸ *Montreal Star*, 14 March 1902, 2; 15 March 1902, 18; 17 March 1902, 2; 18 March 1902, 2, 12; *Montreal Gazette*, 12 March 1902, 2; 13 March 1902, 2; 14 March 1902, 2; 15 March 1902, 2; 17 March 1902, 5; 18 March 1902, 2; 19 March 1902, 2; 21 March 1902, 2; 22 March 1902, 2.

¹¹⁹ *Montreal Star*, 17 March 1902, 2, 18 March 1902, 2.

¹²⁰ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 17 March 1902, 1.

worthy opponent, and Montreal is known as a good sporting town; which is much more than can be said of Hog-town.”¹²¹ Such exchanges of opinion and ideas were instrumental in the construction of a national “hockey world” centred on Stanley Cup challenges.

The last series of the Winnipeg-Montreal rivalry occurred in late January and early February 1903, when the Winnipeg Vics again travelled to Montreal in an effort to regain the championship from the M.A.A.A. Press coverage of the Vics’ pursuit of the Stanley Cup centred initially on the question of whether or not a team from Winnipeg could challenge for the Cup in the middle of the season, or if a challenge series could only be held after the completion of regular season play. Would other clubs in the C.A.H.L. permit Montreal to play in the middle of the league schedule?¹²² Another focus of media attention was the performance of the Winnipeg Vics early in the season – especially the three losses that the Vics recorded against the Winnipeg Rowing Club.¹²³ Following the Vics’ second

¹²¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 25 March 1902, 5.

¹²² Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*, 29-30; McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever*, 35-36; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 12 December 1902, 8; 17 December 1902, 1; 19 December 1902, 8; 23 December 1902, 8; 24 December 1902, 1; 26 December 1902, 1; 27 December 1902, 8; 29 December 1902, 1; 31 December 1902, 8; 2 January 1903, 1; 5 January 1903, 8; 6 January 1903, 1; 7 January 1903, 8; 8 January 1903, 8; *Manitoba Free Press*, 1 January 1903, 5; 3 January 1903, 6; 5 January 1903, 5; 6 January 1903, 5; 7 January 1903, 5; 8 January 1903, 5; 10 January 1903, 5; *Montreal Gazette*, 3 January 1903, 2; 5 January 1903, 4; 7 January 1903, 2; 8 January 1903, 2; 9 January 1903, 2; 10 January 1903, 2.

¹²³ *Manitoba Free Press*, 9 January 1903, 5; 19 January 1903, 5; 20 January 1903, 5; 21 January 1903, 5.

defeat, the *Montreal Gazette* raised doubts about the team's quality: "HOCKEY QUESTION – And Where Are the Stanley Cup Challengers? – BADLY BEATEN AGAIN – Rowing Club Shows Them Up. Will It Be a Good Drawing Card?" Several days later, the *Gazette* printed comments on the Rowing Club's victory from players and officials in Winnipeg, as reported by the *Winnipeg Tribune*.¹²⁴ The *Gazette* also published a thorough game report when the Vics were "BEATEN AGAIN" in another match with the Rowing Club.¹²⁵ The Montreal paper continued to provide updates from Winnipeg – including observations on the Vics' line-up and practices – as the team prepared to challenge the M.A.A.A.¹²⁶

Prior to the 1903 series, the *Manitoba Free Press* engaged the "hockey world" in several ways. First, the newspaper defended Winnipeg hockey in response to "eastern" media criticism. "The eastern press, aided to some extent by prejudicial correspondents, are making nasty remarks regarding the defeat of the Victorias by the Rowing club," wrote the *Free Press*. "The Ottawa Free Press shows its lack of knowledge when it heads its little report in glaring lines: 'A red hot championship – Stanley cup aspirant beaten by juniors.' The only attention such an absurd mis-statement as this requires is to remark that if that Rowing club

¹²⁴ *Montreal Gazette*, 9 January 1903, 2; 14 January 1903, 2.

¹²⁵ *Montreal Gazette*, 21 January 1903, 2.

¹²⁶ *Montreal Gazette*, 19 January 1903, 2; 23 January 1903, 2; 24 January 1903, 2.

bunch are juniors, then they could make most of the teams down east look like kindergartens.”¹²⁷ The *Manitoba Free Press* shared opinions on the question of a mid-season Stanley Cup challenge from the *Toronto Globe*, the *Toronto Mail*, and the *Montreal Witness*.¹²⁸ The Winnipeg paper covered in considerable depth such important matches as M.A.A.A. vs. Shamrocks, Montreal Victorias vs. Ottawa, and M.A.A.A. vs. Montreal Victorias.¹²⁹ Results of other games from Toronto, other parts of Ontario, Montreal, Quebec City, and the M.A.A.A.’s trip to New York also appeared in the *Free Press*.¹³⁰ When the M.A.A.A. lost to Ottawa, the *Manitoba Free Press* carried substantial reports about the match from both Montreal and Ottawa. The *Free Press*’s coverage was not as detailed as reporting in Montreal, but people in different cities were still able to read accounts of the same game.¹³¹ Moreover, even after the unsuccessful challenge by the Winnipeg Vics, the *Free Press* continued to provide schedules, standings, and brief game stories related to the top-level clubs in Montreal, Quebec City, and Ottawa.¹³²

¹²⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 5 January 1903, 5.

¹²⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, 6 January 1903, 5; 15 January 1903, 5.

¹²⁹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 5 January 1903, 5; 22 January 1903, 5.

¹³⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, 12 January 1903, 7; 26 January 1903, 5.

¹³¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 19 January 1903, 5; *Montreal Gazette*, 19 January 1903, 2.

¹³² *Manitoba Free Press*, 16 February 1903, 5; 21 February 1903, 5; 23 February 1903, 5; 26 February 1903, 5.

In the days leading up to the 1903 Winnipeg-Montreal championship series, newspapers in both cities carried the key information that constituted the Stanley Cup “hockey world.” This coverage included previews, predictions, rosters, updates on ticket sales, assessments of team practices, and other analysis.¹³³ When the challenge began, Winnipeg newspapers printed detailed game summaries and play-by-play telegraph bulletins, as well as other reports and observations from Montreal.¹³⁴ Similarly, Montreal dailies supplied thorough coverage of the games and the atmosphere surrounding each match.¹³⁵ A notable feature of the Montreal perspective on the series was the significant amount of attention paid to fans in Winnipeg. A clear sense of a shared hockey experience emerged out of such stories as, “WHAT WINNIPEG THINKS OF RESULT YESTERDAY’S MATCH,” “JOY IN WINNIPEG WAS VERY GREAT SATURDAY NIGHT,” “CROWDS PARADED WINNIPEG STREETS,

¹³³ *Manitoba Free Press*, 19 January 1903, 5; 20 January 1903, 5; 24 January 1903, 5; 26 January 1903, 5; 27 January 1903, 5; 28 January 1903, 5; 29 January 1903, 5; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 23 January 1903, 8; 27 January 1903, 1; 28 January 1903, 1; 29 January 1903, 8; *Montreal Gazette*, 15 January 1903, 2; 22 January 1903, 9; 26 January 1903, 8; 28 January 1903, 2; 29 January 1903, 2; *Montreal Star*, 29 January 1903, 2.

¹³⁴ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 30 January 1903, 1, 2, 8; 1 February 1903, 1, 2, 8; 3 February 1903, 1, 8; 5 February 1903, 1, 8; *Manitoba Free Press*, 30 January 1903, 1, 6; 31 January 1903, 5; 2 February 1903, 1, 7; 3 February 1903, 1, 8, 9; 4 February 1903, 5; 5 February 1903, 5, 6.

¹³⁵ *Montreal Star*, 30 January 1903, 10; 31 January 1903, 1, 18; 2 February 1903, 8; 3 February 1903, 8; 5 February 1903, 8; *Montreal Gazette*, 30 January 1903, 2; 31 January 1903, 2; 2 February 1903, 2; 3 February 1903, 2; 4 February 1903, 2; 5 February 1903, 2; 6 February 1903, 2.

SHOUTING VICTORY,” and “SULLEN SILENCE AT WINNIPEG BULLETIN BOARDS GIVING RESULT.”¹³⁶ Connections between Winnipeg and Montreal also continued to develop through the news stories that appeared in papers in each city. For example, the *Manitoba Free Press* reprinted comments from the *Montreal Herald* and lengthy articles from the *Montreal Star* during the series.¹³⁷ The front-page headline in the *Winnipeg Tribune* after the second game of the challenge read, “’T WAS HOT STUFF – Eastern Press on the Great Contest – Winnipegs Had the Best of the Play.” The story that followed included excerpts from Montreal, Toronto, and Ottawa newspapers.¹³⁸ Two days later, comment from eastern Canada was again featured on the front page of the *Tribune*: “SPLENDID WORK. Tribute of the Montreal Press to the Magnificent Hockey Put Up by the Vics.”¹³⁹ After the final game of the series, a selection of “PRESS ON THE FINAL MATCH” – with stories from the *Montreal Herald* and the *Montreal Star* – topped the paper’s front page once more.¹⁴⁰ The prominence of Montreal media accounts in Winnipeg papers demonstrates the extent to which a

¹³⁶ *Montreal Star*, 30 January 1903, 10; 31 January 1903, 18; 2 February 1903, 8; 3 February 1903, 8; 5 February 1903, 8. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 30 January 1903, 2; 2 February 1903, 2.

¹³⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 31 January 1903, 5; 3 February 1903, 9; 4 February 1903, 5.

¹³⁸ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 1 February 1903, 1, 2.

¹³⁹ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 3 February 1903, 1.

¹⁴⁰ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 5 February 1903, 1.

Canadian “hockey world” had emerged by the time of the 1903 Stanley Cup series.

Stanley Cup challenges received substantial media coverage in the cities whose teams were participating in the games. As a result, telegraph bulletins and newspaper reports contributed to the creation of a common experience of hockey between Winnipeg and Montreal. However, followers of the sport in Winnipeg and Montreal were not the only people in Canada who felt an attachment to this broader “hockey world.” During the 1900 series, the *Montreal Star* observed, “Just for the moment the Stanley Cup matches overshadow the regular senior matches and all interest is centred in these games.”¹⁴¹ Interest in these challenges was also high in cities that were not involved directly in Stanley Cup matches. Canadian dailies provided their readers with considerable coverage of these contests, and telegraph reconstructions were also available in many places across Canada. Between 1899 and 1903, the Winnipeg-Montreal Stanley Cup games became a focus of national media attention, although the available information about each series varied throughout the country.

Outside of Winnipeg and Montreal, the 1899 challenge garnered the greatest attention in Ottawa. The *Ottawa Evening Journal* began with a

¹⁴¹ *Montreal Star*, 10 February 1900, 18.

background story that outlined the history of previous Stanley Cup series.¹⁴² Following the first match, the *Evening Journal* printed a substantial game story and “A Montreal View” from the *Montreal Gazette*. The Ottawa paper also reproduced an extensive analysis of the Winnipeg Vics by the *Montreal Herald*.¹⁴³ Most of the *Ottawa Evening Journal*’s coverage was devoted to a controversial event in the second game involving an injury to Winnipeg’s Tony Gingras, who was slashed by a Montreal player. The *Evening Journal* devoted more than a full column on its front page to what the paper described as a “FIASCO OVER THE STANLEY CUP.” This article included statements from the Winnipeg club and the referee. The game story filled another one and a half columns inside the paper.¹⁴⁴ The next day, the *Evening Journal* addressed the incident from a variety of perspectives. “There was a great deal of admiration in Ottawa for the Winnipeg team,” suggested the paper, in a sympathetic article titled, “WINNIPEGGERS ARE GOOD SPORTS – THAT IS THE GENERAL OPINION OF OTTAWA HOCKEYISTS.” The *Evening Journal* also published “A Winnipeg View” from the *Winnipeg Tribune* and “An Opposite View” from the *Montreal Herald*.¹⁴⁵ The Ottawa paper concluded its examination of the issue

¹⁴² *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 15 February 1899, 6.

¹⁴³ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 16 February 1899, 6; 17 February 1899, 6.

¹⁴⁴ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 20 February 1899, 1, 6.

¹⁴⁵ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 21 February 1899, 6.

with comments from the president of the Winnipeg Vics and opinions on a *Manitoba Free Press* article about the matter.¹⁴⁶

The *Ottawa Citizen* provided similar coverage of the series, beginning with a detailed analysis of Winnipeg's practice and personnel following the team's arrival in Montreal.¹⁴⁷ After the opening match, the *Citizen* published an informative game summary, an update on the Gingras injury, and a story about fans' reaction in Winnipeg.¹⁴⁸ The *Citizen* printed a full column on the disputed final game, and examined the aftermath of the incident in six different stories: "A Manly Statement" (comments issued by the Winnipeg Vics); "Gingras' Injury"; "Sore on Finley" (response to the conduct of the referee from people in Winnipeg); "Winnipeggers Will Not Play"; "How the Foul Was Committed" (an account from the *Montreal Star*); and "Winnipeggers Going Home."¹⁴⁹ In an article titled, "Talk About the Winnipeggers," the *Citizen* discussed the support for the Vics among people in Ottawa. "The Winnipeg hockey team had the sympathy of Ottawans generally in the Stanley cup matches and there was much disappointment expressed in the city when it was learned that the western boys would return home without the cup," stated the *Citizen*. In contrast, the paper

¹⁴⁶ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 22 February 1899, 6; 23 February 1899, 6.

¹⁴⁷ *Ottawa Citizen*, 15 February 1899, 6.

¹⁴⁸ *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 February 1899, 6; 17 February 1899, 6; 18 February 1899, 6. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 16 February 1899, 2.

¹⁴⁹ *Ottawa Citizen*, 20 February 1899, 6; 21 February 1899, 6.

labelled opinions expressed by the *Montreal Herald* as “mean and contemptible” in a report called, “Dirt from the Herald.”¹⁵⁰ Finally, comments made by the *Manitoba Free Press* and the *Toronto Telegram* were also made available to readers of the *Ottawa Citizen*.¹⁵¹

While Ottawa press coverage surpassed that of other Canadian newspapers, stories about the 1899 Stanley Cup challenge circulated across the country. The *Halifax Herald*, for instance, published a thorough report on the first match of the series, and a shorter, front-page account of the second contest.¹⁵² The *Herald*’s headline following the opening game captured the key elements of hockey coverage in this period, as the paper stressed the appeal of the sport to spectators: “IT WAS A GREAT HOCKEY MATCH. – Four Thousand Persons Witness the Victorias, of Montreal, Defeat Winnipeg. – CROWD WILD WITH EXCITEMENT.”¹⁵³ This emphasis on the exciting quality of play and the size of the crowd in attendance was characteristic of Stanley Cup reporting at this time, particularly in newspapers located outside of the competing cities. On the other hand, the *Fredericton Gleaner* provided almost no coverage of any of the five Winnipeg-Montreal Stanley Cup challenges which took place between 1899 and

¹⁵⁰ *Ottawa Citizen*, 22 February 1899, 6.

¹⁵¹ *Ottawa Citizen*, 23 February 1899, 6.

¹⁵² *Halifax Herald*, 17 February 1899, 2; 20 February 1899, 1.

¹⁵³ *Halifax Herald*, 17 February 1899, 2.

1903.¹⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the *Manitoba Free Press* reported in 1899 that people in New Brunswick were following the games by telegraph. The second game of the 1899 playoff coincided with a provincial election, giving the *Free Press* an opportunity to comment on the level of interest in the Winnipeg-Montreal hockey series: “The fate of the New Brunswick government will not be allowed to interfere with the account of the hockey match. That gets the preference. The election returns will be announced in the intervals.”¹⁵⁵

Newspaper readers in Toronto could also pay close attention to the action on the ice in Montreal – and on the streets of Winnipeg. For example, the *Toronto Globe* ran detailed game stories, a short update between matches, and comments following the series, including reactions from Winnipeg.¹⁵⁶ The *Toronto Star* published a brief preview of the series and concise game summaries

¹⁵⁴ See *Fredericton Gleaner*, 16 February 1899, 1-8; 17 February 1899, 1-8; 18 February 1899, 1-8; 20 February 1899, 1-8; 12 February 1900, 1-8; 13 February 1900, 1-8; 14 February 1900, 1-8; 15 February 1900, 1-8; 16 February 1900, 1-8; 17 February 1900, 1-10; 19 February 1900, 1-8; 29 January 1901, 1-8; 30 January 1901, 1-8; 31 January 1901, 1-8; 1 February 1901, 1-8; 13 March 1902, 1-8; 14 March 1902, 1-8; 15 March 1902, 1-12; 17 March 1902, 1-8; 18 March 1902, 1-8; 29 January 1903, 1-8; 30 January 1903, 1-8; 31 January 1903, 1-10; 2 February 1903, 7; 3 February 1903, 1-8; 4 February 1903, 1-8; 5 February 1903, 1-10.

¹⁵⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 18 February 1899, 1.

¹⁵⁶ *Toronto Globe*, 16 February 1899, 10; 18 February 1899, 25; 20 February 1899, 10; 21 February 1899, 10; 22 February 1899, 10.

after each match.¹⁵⁷ Some of the reports from Winnipeg carried by the *Globe* were the same as those appearing in the *Montreal Gazette* and the *Manitoba Free Press*.¹⁵⁸ Meanwhile, the weekly *Regina Leader* furnished a four-sentence account of the first game, and a longer, more informative description of the controversial second game.¹⁵⁹ The *Vancouver World* provided a substantial, seven-sentence report on the first game, but no reports on the second match.¹⁶⁰ Finally, the *Victoria Colonist* supplied both an informative summary of the opening match and a report on how the game was experienced by telegraph in Winnipeg. The *Colonist*'s account of "the greatest excitement in the big Auditorium Rink" in Winnipeg was almost identical to stories that appeared in the *Montreal Star* and *Montreal Gazette*.¹⁶¹ The *Colonist* also offered a thorough account of the chaotic second match of the series ("THE WINNIPEG'S QUIT. – Hockey Championship Awarded to Montreal by the Referee."), as well as a follow-up story that assessed different views of the incident that ended the game

¹⁵⁷ *Toronto Star*, 15 February 1899, 2; 16 February 1899, 7; 17 February 1899, 2; 18 February 1899, 3; 20 February 1899, 5. There is no evidence of telegraph reconstructions in Toronto during this series.

¹⁵⁸ *Montreal Gazette*, 20 February 1899, 2; 22 February 1899, 2; *Toronto Globe*, 20 February 1899, 10; 22 February 1899, 10; *Manitoba Free Press*, 21 February 1899, 3.

¹⁵⁹ *Regina Leader*, 16 February 1899, 1; 23 February 1899, 8.

¹⁶⁰ *Vancouver World*, 16 February 1899, 1; 20 February 1899, 1-8.

¹⁶¹ *Victoria Colonist*, 16 February 1899, 2; *Montreal Star*, 16 February 1899, 2; *Montreal Gazette*, 16 February 1899, 2.

(“THE HOCKEY TROUBLE. – Winnipeg Claims to Have Support of Public Opinion in Montreal.”).¹⁶² Such reports suggest that the 1899 Stanley Cup challenge was a focal point for media interest across Canada.

In 1900, Canadian newspapers again devoted significant coverage to the challenge between the Winnipeg Vics and the Montreal Shamrocks. Media commentary on the games also indicated that a stronger awareness of a common experience of hockey was developing throughout the country. The clearest expression of this sense of an emerging national “hockey world” was contained in the *Ottawa Citizen*’s extensive preview of the series. According to the *Citizen*, the upcoming Stanley Cup matches

will without doubt be the greatest contests which have taken place since the introduction of the national winter game. When it is considered that the visitors are coming hundreds of miles to try and capture a trophy that carries with it the title of hockey championship of the world, an idea may be obtained of the importance of the games the result of which will be watched with the keenest interest in [e]very city and town, in Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. No matches in the athletic world have ever engaged such general attention. At Winnipeg the Victorias

¹⁶² *Victoria Colonist*, 19 February 1899, 2; 21 February 1899, 1.

were given a send off on their trip eastwards that was fit for a king. Every leading city in Canada within a day's travel of Montreal will have its representation at the rink side, while the citizens of Montreal of every class and sex, the hot enthusiasts, and the phlegmatic occasional spectators who only witness such events on rare occasions, all will be there to see the great contest.¹⁶³

The *Ottawa Citizen* perceived a high degree of public enthusiasm for the Winnipeg-Montreal series, both inside and outside the competing cities. Even allowing for some exaggeration by the writer, this passage offers evidence of intense fan and media interest in Stanley Cup play-off games in this period.

The *Ottawa Citizen* printed informative game stories after the first two matches of the 1900 challenge.¹⁶⁴ The *Citizen's* sports page featured assessments of the Winnipeg Vics by Ottawa players and team officials, as well as a report on the "highest hopes" in Winnipeg after a victory in the opening game.¹⁶⁵ After the third match of the series, the *Citizen's* sports column, "On the Side," included a substantial game report and other observations by the writer.¹⁶⁶ While the *Citizen*

¹⁶³ *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 February 1900, 6.

¹⁶⁴ *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 February 1900, 6; 15 February 1900, 6.

¹⁶⁵ *Ottawa Citizen*, 14 February 1900, 6.

¹⁶⁶ *Ottawa Citizen*, 17 February 1900, 6.

seems to have sent a member of its staff to report from Montreal, the *Ottawa Evening Journal* appears to have relied on Montreal newspapers for most of its coverage. Like the *Citizen*, the *Evening Journal* previewed the series and provided an informative game story after the opening contest. This was a much shorter version of the *Montreal Gazette*'s report on the match.¹⁶⁷ Two days later, the *Evening Journal* carried another *Gazette* description of the "sensational" opening contest.¹⁶⁸ The *Ottawa Evening Journal* printed a brief Winnipeg perspective on the first game ("DELIGHTED IN WINNIPEG"), as well as "Some Opinions About That Stanley Cup Game" from the *Montreal Herald*, the *Montreal Star*, and various Ottawa observers.¹⁶⁹ Likewise, after the second game of the series, the Ottawa paper utilized reports from the *Montreal Star* and *Montreal Herald*.¹⁷⁰ The *Evening Journal*'s story about the final game was more than a full column in length, written by a "Journal Representative" in Montreal. Under the main headline, "STANLEY CUP TO STAY EAST," a smaller headline stated, "Big Crowd – Great Excitement." The article then expanded on this theme:

¹⁶⁷ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 12 February 1900, 2; 13 February 1900, 7; *Montreal Gazette*; 13 February 1900, 2.

¹⁶⁸ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 15 February 1900, 7.

¹⁶⁹ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 14 February 1900, 2.

¹⁷⁰ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 16 February 1900, 2.

Last night's struggle was played in a scene of the wildest excitement. Take six thousand people – everyone an ardent admirer of one team or the other – everyone a hockey enthusiast of the most pronounced type – pack them into a dozen rows of seats and half a dozen rows of standing room, so that the ice space is literally surrounded by four walls of surging humanity – and you have a setting worthy of the supremest efforts of the best athletes that ever took part in any contest....The conditions, the crowd, and the excitement, just as much as the hockey put up went towards making the match one of the greatest ever played.¹⁷¹

The *Halifax Herald's* coverage of the 1900 series was uneven, with no reports on the opening match, a fairly substantial account of the second game, and a brief, front-page overview of the final contest. Rather than focusing on the details of play, the *Herald* emphasized the overall quality of the hockey and the response of the audience.¹⁷² Toronto newspapers covered the challenge more thoroughly. The *Toronto Star* presented a brief preview and relatively detailed

¹⁷¹ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 17 February 1900, 7.

¹⁷² *Halifax Herald*, 12 February 1900, 1-10; 13 February 1900, 1-14; 14 February 1900, 1-10; 15 February 1900, 1-10; 16 February 1900, 10; 17 February 1900, 1.

game stories during the series.¹⁷³ The *Star* also put forward analysis from the *Montreal Herald* and the *Montreal Gazette*.¹⁷⁴ The *Toronto Globe* provided similar coverage.¹⁷⁵ In fact, the *Toronto Star* and the *Toronto Globe* printed identical game stories after the opening match, while a similar report ran in the *Ottawa Citizen*. This summary stated, “It was fast, clean hockey from start to finish, and the spectators, numbering about 7,000, went wild with enthusiasm at the magnificent play.”¹⁷⁶ Following the second game, the same article – with some cuts – appeared in the *Manitoba Free Press*, *Toronto Globe*, *Toronto Star*, and *Victoria Colonist*.¹⁷⁷ As people in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Victoria read the same accounts of Stanley Cup matches, they participated in a “hockey world” that extended across the country.

West of Winnipeg, the *Regina Leader*’s treatment of the series consisted of a one-sentence statement on the opening game and a four-sentence overview of the second match. The *Leader* also indicated that telegraph reports were available

¹⁷³ *Toronto Star*, 12 February 1900, 6; 13 February 1900, 6; 15 February 1900, 6; 17 February 1900, 6.

¹⁷⁴ *Toronto Star*, 14 February 1900, 6; 16 February 1900, 6.

¹⁷⁵ *Toronto Globe*, 12 February 1900, 10; 13 February 1900, 10; 15 February 1900, 10; 17 February 1900, 25.

¹⁷⁶ *Toronto Star*, 13 February 1900, 6; *Toronto Globe*, 13 February 1900, 10; *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 February 1900, 6.

¹⁷⁷ See *Manitoba Free Press*, 17 February 1900, 1; *Toronto Globe*, 17 February 1900, 25; *Toronto Star*, 17 February 1900, 6; *Victoria Colonist*, 17 February 1900, 2.

in Regina. The paper informed its readers that, “W. M. Williamson will arrange to have a bulletin board at the Regina rink on Friday night to give the results of the final in the Winnipeg-Montreal hockey contest.”¹⁷⁸ The *Victoria Colonist* supplied a brief four-sentence game summary, then a three-sentence report, and, finally, a more thorough, three-paragraph article on the concluding match.¹⁷⁹ The *Vancouver World* printed a substantial front-page game story following the opening game, and more concise summaries of the second and third matches.¹⁸⁰ After the series, the *World* noted, “Considerable interest was manifested in the city over the [final] game, and quite a crowd assembled at the C.P.R. telegraph office last night to learn the result.”¹⁸¹

The *Vancouver Province* provided a useful window into the “hockey world” by describing how people from different parts of Canada felt a sense of participation in a national community of interest during Stanley Cup challenges. The *Province* emphasized the experiences of fans in Vancouver – and other places across Canada – over the events of the game itself. “A big crowd of hockey enthusiasts gathered at the C.P.R. telegraph offices last night to follow the

¹⁷⁸ *Regina Leader*, 15 February 1900, 8; 22 February 1900, 8.

¹⁷⁹ *Victoria Colonist*, 13 February 1900, 2; 15 February 1900, 7; 17 February 1900, 2.

¹⁸⁰ *Vancouver World*, 13 February 1900, 1; 14 February 1900, 8; 15 February 1900, 8; 17 February 1900, 1.

¹⁸¹ *Vancouver World*, 17 February 1900, 1.

bulletining of the final match which was being played in Montreal,” reported the *Province*. “Many of the eastern towns were represented, but the atmosphere was distinctly western, Winnipeg having by far the sympathy of the local sports.” Looking back to the beginning of the Winnipeg-Montreal rivalry in 1896, the newspaper continued, “The Stanley cup, which is the championship trophy of the game, was four years ago held for a season by the Victorias of the west, but the following winter their namesakes in Montreal carried it from the Red river back to the St. Lawrence. Each season since has seen a vigorous effort to bring it west once more, and these games between the Montreal and Winnipeg puck-chasers have been the great events of the hockey year.” Echoing the comments of the *Ottawa Citizen* prior to the series, the *Province* concluded by connecting fans in Vancouver to followers of hockey from coast to coast: “Last night’s game proved no exception and from Halifax to this city thousands waited the telegraphic ticks with the keenest excitement.”¹⁸²

In 1901, the *Ottawa Evening Journal* and the *Ottawa Citizen* supplied similar stories about the Winnipeg-Montreal series, beginning with observations on the arrival of the Winnipeg Vics in Montreal, a brief history of Cup challenges, and an analysis of the competing teams.¹⁸³ The Ottawa papers also printed informative game stories, including reports on the various places at which the

¹⁸² *Vancouver Province*, 18 February 1900, 2.

¹⁸³ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 28 January 1901, 6; 29 January 1901, 3; *Ottawa Citizen*, 28 January 1901, 6; 29 January 1901, 6.

game had been followed in Winnipeg.¹⁸⁴ Their coverage concluded with speculation about further Stanley Cup playoffs and discussion of the merits of mid-season challenges, including opinions from the *Montreal Star* and *Montreal Herald*.¹⁸⁵ The *Halifax Herald* published two front-page stories about the playoff, as well as a brief article on its second page.¹⁸⁶ During the 1901 series, the top sports headline in the *Toronto Globe* and the *Toronto Star* referred to Stanley Cup games. Both papers ran fairly long game stories, as well as updates from Montreal between matches. In addition, some of the game reports appearing in the *Globe* and the *Star* were very similar, suggesting that the two newspapers were utilizing the same correspondent.¹⁸⁷

In western Canada, newspaper coverage was not as extensive, but interest in the series seemed to be strong. For instance, the *Regina Leader* reminded its readers that, “A full report of the Montreal-Winnipeg hockey match will be given

¹⁸⁴ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 30 January 1901, 9; 1 February 1901, 9; *Ottawa Citizen*, 30 January 1901, 6; 1 February 1901, 6; 2 February 1901, 6.

¹⁸⁵ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 2 February 1901, 6; 5 February 1901, 6; 6 February 1901, 6; *Ottawa Citizen*, 2 February 1901, 6.

¹⁸⁶ *Halifax Herald*, 29 January 1901, 1-8; 30 January 1901, 1; 31 January 1901, 2; 1 February 1901, 1.

¹⁸⁷ *Toronto Globe*, 30 January 1901, 8; 31 January 1901, 10; 1 February 1901, 1, 8; *Toronto Star*, 28 January 1901, 8; 29 January 1901, 8; 30 January 1901, 8; 31 January 1901, 8. There was no indication of telegraph bulletins or updates in Toronto theatres during the series. See, for example, *Toronto Globe*, 29 January 1901, 2; *Toronto Star*, 29 January 1901, 3.

this (Thursday) evening in the skating rink.”¹⁸⁸ However, the weekly paper did not publish any further updates following the completion of the challenge.¹⁸⁹ The *Vancouver Province* provided thorough game stories and other reports during the series.¹⁹⁰ Meanwhile, the *Vancouver World* carried a preview of the Stanley Cup playoff, and a game report that also described Vancouver interest in the match. “An immense crowd was present in front of the C.P.R. telegraph office and eagerly read the bulletins,” stated the *World*. “A cheer went up when the flash came that the Winnipegs were the winners.”¹⁹¹ The *World* also supplied comment and analysis of the series from Vancouver, likely by the paper’s sports editor.¹⁹² Finally, the *Victoria Colonist* printed two very brief articles about the series.¹⁹³ The *Victoria Colonist* and the *Vancouver World* carried the same dispatch from Montreal after the opening match. The report emphasized, “It was a great game, witnessed by an immense crowd.”¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ *Regina Leader*, 31 January 1901, 8.

¹⁸⁹ *Regina Leader*, 7 February 1901, 1-8.

¹⁹⁰ *Vancouver Province*, 30 January 1901, 6; 31 January 1901, 6; 1 February 1901, 4.

¹⁹¹ *Vancouver World*, 29 January 1901, 7; 30 January 1901, 7.

¹⁹² *Vancouver World*, 31 January 1901, 7.

¹⁹³ *Victoria Colonist*, 30 January 1901, 2; 1 February 1901, 2.

¹⁹⁴ *Victoria Colonist*, 30 January 1901, 2; *Vancouver World*, 30 January 1901, 7.

The coverage provided by Ottawa papers in March 1902 again represents the best example of the emerging “hockey world” that connected sports fans in different cities. First, the *Ottawa Citizen* discussed the quality of the ice in Winnipeg, the arrival of the Montrealers, and the strength of the Winnipeg lineup.¹⁹⁵ The *Citizen* then published detailed game reports, as well as articles describing reaction from Montreal. Many of the same stories appeared in the *Montreal Gazette*.¹⁹⁶ At the same time, the *Citizen* assessed what Toronto and Winnipeg newspapers were writing about the series.¹⁹⁷ Similarly, the *Ottawa Evening Journal*’s thorough treatment of the first match was divided into three parts: an informative game summary from Winnipeg, a report on “CONFIDENCE IN MONTREAL,” and a collection of “OPINIONS IN WINNIPEG,” which included coverage from the *Winnipeg Telegram*, *Manitoba Free Press*, and *Winnipeg Tribune*.¹⁹⁸ The *Evening Journal*’s extensive coverage of the last two games of the series was drawn mainly from the *Montreal Star*. It also included “WINNIPEG COMMENT” from the *Tribune*, the *Free Press*, and

¹⁹⁵ *Ottawa Citizen*, 11 March 1902, 6; 12 March 1902, 6; 13 March 1902, 6; 15 March 1902, 6.

¹⁹⁶ *Ottawa Citizen*, 14 March 1902, 6; 17 March 1902, 6; 18 March 1902, 6; 19 March 1902, 6; *Montreal Gazette*, 14 March 1902, 2; 17 March 1902, 5; 18 March 1902, 2; 19 March 1902, 2. For the third game, the *Ottawa Citizen*’s story was somewhat shorter than the *Montreal Gazette*’s report.

¹⁹⁷ *Ottawa Citizen*, 19 March 1902, 6; 20 March 1902, 6.

¹⁹⁸ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 14 March 1902, 9.

the *Telegram*.¹⁹⁹ In terms of local reaction, the *Evening Journal* stated, “Considerable interest was taken in the city in the result of the first game last night in Winnipeg for the Stanley cup between the Montrealers and the Victorias of Winnipeg. That the visiting team should have put up such a good game strengthened the belief that the Ottawa team if they had gone after the cup would have done so with a large prospect of success.”²⁰⁰

The *Halifax Herald* offered less coverage than in previous years, with very brief, one- and two-sentence stories that simply relayed the outcome and score of the games.²⁰¹ The *Toronto Star* and *Toronto Globe* furnished brief previews and other notes of interest prior to the series, drawing upon Winnipeg newspapers for some of this information.²⁰² The *Star* and the *Globe* supplied informative summaries of each match, and Stanley Cup stories received top billing on their

¹⁹⁹ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 17 March 1902, 9; 18 March, 1902, 9; *Montreal Star*, 17 March 1902, 2; 18 March 1902, 2.

²⁰⁰ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 14 March 1902, 9. See also 18 March 1902, 10; *Ottawa Citizen*, 17 March 1902, 6.

²⁰¹ *Halifax Herald*, 14 March 1902, 1-10; 15 March 1902, 13; 17 March 1902, 1-12; 18 March 1902, 1-10; 19 March 1902, 10.

²⁰² *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1902, 8, 9; 11 March 1902, 8; 12 March 1902, 8; *Toronto Globe*, 11 March 1902, 10; 12 March 1902, 9; 13 March 1902, 10. There was no advertising for telegraph bulletins in Toronto theatres. See, for example, *Toronto Globe*, 13 March 1902, 2; 17 March 1902, 2.

sports pages.²⁰³ The *Regina Leader* provided no game reports, but, instead, focused on local enthusiasm for the series:

Great interest was taken by all classes of people in Regina in the Stanley Cup hockey matches in Winnipeg and keen is the disappointment that the cup goes east again. Each night that a game was in progress a large crowd gathered in the rotunda of the Windsor hotel where a bulletin service was received. The scoring by the Vics of the only goal in the first game was the signal for a hearty round of applause, but on the two succeeding nights the spirits of the crowd were not made manifest by cheers.²⁰⁴

The *Vancouver World* gave considerable attention to the series, publishing previews, substantial game stories, and an analysis of each match.²⁰⁵ The *Vancouver Province* also provided thorough coverage.²⁰⁶ The *Victoria Colonist*

²⁰³ *Toronto Star*, 14 March 1902, 8; 15 March 1902, 9; 17 March 1902, 8; 18 March 1902, 8; 19 March 1902, 8; *Toronto Globe*, 14 March 1902, 10; 15 March 1902, 25; 17 March 1902, 10; 18 March 1902, 1, 12; 19 March 1902, 10. Again, very similar summaries were published in both papers, although the *Star* carried a more complete account than the *Globe*.

²⁰⁴ *Regina Leader*, 20 March 1902, 8.

²⁰⁵ *Vancouver World*, 12 March 1902, 7; 13 March 1902, 7; 14 March 1902, 7; 15 March 1902, 7; 17 March 1902, 7; 18 March 1902, 7.

²⁰⁶ *Vancouver Province*, 12 March 1902, 8; 13 March 1902, 8; 17 March 1902, 8; 18 March 1902, 8.

printed a fairly detailed game story following the first match, but only very brief summaries of subsequent games.²⁰⁷ A key feature of this west coast reporting was the way in which the *Vancouver World*, in particular, highlighted the local context in which Stanley Cup matches were experienced. “Again this evening a large crowd will no doubt be present at the C.P.R. telegraph office to receive the returns,” reported the *World* before the second game.²⁰⁸ After the series, the *World* noted, “The keen interest taken in Eastern sports by Vancouver was effectually demonstrated by the size of the crowd that assembled at the C.P.R. telegraph office last night for the bulletins of the great Winnipeg game.”²⁰⁹ In addition, the *World*’s comments at the conclusion of the challenge conveyed a sense of involvement in a wider “hockey world.” “WERE OVER-RATED. – Winnipeg Victorias Not As Good As They Were Proclaimed,” stated the headline in the *World*. The story continued, “The manner in which the Montreal hockey team defeated the crack Winnipeg Victorias proves that beyond a doubt the Prairie City seven were not nearly as strong as they were tooted to be by the Winnipeg papers.” The *World* also noted the apparent strength of the Ottawa

²⁰⁷ *Victoria Colonist*, 14 March 1902, 2; 16 March 1902, 2; 18 March 1902, 2; 19 March 1902, 2.

²⁰⁸ *Vancouver World*, 15 March 1902, 7.

²⁰⁹ *Vancouver World*, 18 March 1902, 7.

team.²¹⁰ Thus, the Vancouver newspaper demonstrated its connection to a “hockey world” that included Winnipeg, Montreal, and Ottawa.

The 1903 Stanley Cup series, held in Montreal, continued the main elements of newspaper coverage that had emerged during previous challenges. The *Ottawa Evening Journal* maintained its thorough treatment of Stanley Cup play-off games, using shorter versions of the *Montreal Gazette*’s game stories to anchor its reporting.²¹¹ The *Evening Journal* included observations from other newspapers, as well, such as the “COMMENT ON FIRST GAME” from the *Montreal Star* and *Montreal Herald*, and a report on “Anxiety in Winnipeg.”²¹² “The Stanley cup game in Montreal on Thursday night which resulted in an apparently easy win for Montreal has aroused considerable interest in Ottawa,” suggested the *Evening Journal*. “The hockey fans are now hoping that Montreal will win out so that their favorites for the eastern league championship, the Ottawas, may have a try for the cup without having to go away west for it.”²¹³ The *Ottawa Citizen* devoted about one column of its daily sports page to

²¹⁰ *Vancouver World*, 19 March 1902, 7.

²¹¹ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 27 January 1903, 10; 28 January 1903, 9; 29 January 1903, 10; 30 January 1903, 9; 2 February 1903, 9; 3 February 1903, 9; 4 February 1903, 9, 10; 5 February 1903, 9; *Montreal Gazette*, 30 January 1903, 2; 2 February 1903, 2; 3 February 1903, 2; 5 February 1903, 2.

²¹² *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 31 January 1903, 18, 19.

²¹³ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 31 January 1903, 18.

descriptions of each game, except for a more detailed, three-column story following the second match of the series.²¹⁴

The *Halifax Herald*'s reporting was more extensive than in the previous year, with several concise, front-page game reports that stressed the spectator appeal of the series.²¹⁵ The *Fredericton Gleaner* put much more emphasis on local games than Stanley Cup matches, as the paper seems to have carried just a single sentence on the series: "The hockey match at Montreal on Saturday night for the Stanley cup between Winnipeg and Montreal, resulted in a tie, 2-2."²¹⁶ The *Toronto Globe* covered the challenge in greater depth than the *Toronto Star*, although both papers provided brief previews, solid game stories, other notes and analysis, and reports from Winnipeg.²¹⁷ The weekly *Regina Leader* summarized the series in a paragraph that outlined the scores from each game and described

²¹⁴ *Ottawa Citizen*, 28 January 1903, 6; 29 January 1903, 6; 30 January 1903, 6; 2 February 1903, 6; 3 February 1903, 6; 5 February 1903, 6.

²¹⁵ *Halifax Herald*, 30 January 1903, 1; 31 January 1903, 10; 2 February 1903, 1; 3 February 1903, 1; 5 February 1903, 1.

²¹⁶ *Fredericton Gleaner*, 2 February 1903, 7. For examples of game stories involving local teams, see 29 January 1903, 3; 31 January 1903, 6; 3 February 1903, 5; 5 February 1903, 5.

²¹⁷ *Toronto Star*, 26 January 1903, 8; 27 January 1903, 4, 8; 28 January 1903, 8; 29 January 1903, 8; 30 January 1903, 8; 31 January 1903, 7; 2 February 1903, 8; 3 February 1903, 8; 4 February 1903, 8; 5 February 1903, 8; *Toronto Globe*, 27 January 1903, 10; 28 January 1903, 12; 29 January 1903, 12; 30 January 1903, 10; 2 February 1903, 10; 3 February 1903, 10; 4 February 1903, 10; 5 February 1903, 12.

briefly the quality of play during the challenge.²¹⁸ According to the *Manitoba Free Press*, interest in the playoff was high across the Canadian prairies.

“Returns of the hockey match will be bulletined to-night in nearly all the cities and towns from Port Arthur to Calgary,” reported the *Free Press*.²¹⁹ Farther west, the *Vancouver World* supplied its readers with previews of forthcoming matches, commentary throughout the series, and summaries after each game.²²⁰ Prior to the deciding match, the *World* stated, “The final game will be played tonight, and the result will be awaited with great interest by followers of the sport in this city.”²²¹ The *Vancouver World* also commented on a potential challenge from Ottawa, as well as opinions expressed by the *Winnipeg Tribune* and the *Montreal Gazette*.²²² Finally, the *Vancouver Province* and *Victoria Colonist* published very similar articles during the challenge, although their coverage was not as detailed as that of the *Vancouver World*. Reports from newspaper offices in Winnipeg appeared

²¹⁸ *Regina Leader*, 5 February 1903, 8.

²¹⁹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 2 February 1903, 7.

²²⁰ *Vancouver World*, 29 January 1903, 7; 30 January 1903, 7; 31 January 1903, 7; 2 February 1903, 7; 4 February 1903, 7; 5 February 1903, 7; 6 February 1903, 7.

²²¹ *Vancouver World*, 4 February 1903, 7.

²²² *Vancouver World*, 6 February 1903, 7.

alongside summaries of games played in Montreal, as the “hockey world” stretched across the continent.²²³

This chapter has analyzed media coverage of the 1899-1903 Winnipeg-Montreal Stanley Cup hockey challenges in relation to the development of national audiences for sport in Canada. Media experiences of Stanley Cup matches helped to create a Canadian “hockey world” that embraced fans and followers of the sport from across the country. While games were being played in Montreal or Winnipeg, interested observers in other cities gathered in front of newspaper and telegraph offices to keep track of the matches as they happened. At the same time, people throughout Canada read about Stanley Cup challenges in the pages of their local newspaper. Followers of hockey in different cities often had access to similar descriptions and discussions of Stanley Cup contests and their aftermath. Thus, through telegraph bulletins and newspaper articles, people in Winnipeg, Montreal, and other Canadian centres participated in a community of interest focused on championship hockey matches. In turn, these Stanley Cup series were important elements of a broader “world of sport” that was created by the mass media in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

²²³ *Vancouver Province*, 29 January 1903, 8; 30 January 1903, 6; 2 February 1903, 8; 3 February 1903, 8; 5 February 1903, 8; *Victoria Colonist*, 30 January 1903, 6; 1 February 1903, 6; 3 February 1903, 6; 5 February 1903, 7.

The telegraph played a particularly significant role in enabling fans to follow games taking place in other cities. As Kitchen writes, “Such was the intensity of public interest in the fortunes of the home team that for an important game on the road some newspapers would go to extraordinary lengths to keep readers abreast of the action in the timeliest way technology permitted.”²²⁴ In Winnipeg and Montreal, telegraph reconstructions attracted huge crowds, and a range of providers – from hotel owners to political organizations – soon recognized the power of Stanley Cup hockey to draw audiences. In addition, telegraph updates were sometimes available in cities that did not have teams competing directly for the Stanley Cup. As a result, the telegraph gave a common experience to far more fans than ever could assemble at a single hockey arena. Because results were now available to more people in a shorter period of time, telegraphy broadened considerably the power and scope of the sports information-system. In the words of the *Montreal Star*, through the telegraph, people “were kept continuously and immediately informed of almost every move of the match.”²²⁵ In this way, telegraph re-enactments undercut the importance of place in determining people’s experiences of sport. As James W. Carey points out, “the

²²⁴ Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 120.

²²⁵ *Montreal Star*, 14 March 1902, 2.

telegraph freed communication from the constraints of geography.”²²⁶ Canadians could now follow the same teams and events in the “hockey world,” despite living in different locations.

Newspaper coverage of Stanley Cup challenges also contributed significantly to the creation of a Canadian “hockey world.” As daily papers in Winnipeg and Montreal reported on teams from the other city, published detailed game stories, and analyzed the course of each Stanley Cup series, a shared understanding of hockey developed between the two cities. For instance, by providing coverage of the leading Montreal hockey clubs and commentary from Montreal newspapers, Winnipeg dailies gave their readers a sense of belonging to a “hockey world” – and a “world of sport” – that extended beyond local players and leagues. Stanley Cup competition drove this process, as fans in competing cities developed an interest in the teams faced by their home clubs. As a result, newspapers expanded their coverage of those teams throughout the hockey season. In addition, Canadian newspapers in places that were not directly involved in Stanley Cup competition consistently reported on these contests. While championship hockey games were being played, Winnipeg was not the only place where “[h]ockey was the universal topic of conversation.”²²⁷ In

²²⁶ Carey, “Technology and Ideology,” 204. See also Thompson, *The Media and Modernity*, 31-32, 231-232; Blondheim, *News over the Wires*, 189-191.

²²⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 19 March 1902, 9.

January 1901, for instance, the *Manitoba Free Press* claimed, “No sporting event in Canada attracts more interest each year than the annual battle between the eastern and western giants for the world’s hockey championship.”²²⁸ The 1899-1903 Winnipeg-Montreal Stanley Cup challenges received sufficient attention across Canada to demonstrate that a national “hockey world” was starting to emerge.²²⁹ Through newspaper stories and telegraph reconstructions, major events like Stanley Cup games were beginning to be experienced and remembered by national audiences.

Meyrowitz has called attention to the fact that the development of the mass media “has decreased the significance of physical presence in the experience of people and events.” He adds, “More and more, people are living in a national (or international) information-system rather than in a local town or city.”²³⁰ People in different parts of Canada may not have been able to watch the same Stanley Cup matches in person, but, through the media, they actively participated in a collective “world of hockey.” As people across the country gathered outside telegraph offices for updates of Stanley Cup contests and read accounts of

²²⁸ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 27.

²²⁹ Ibid., 35. However, hockey reporting lagged behind Canadian media coverage of sports like boxing and baseball in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See Metcalfe, *Canada Learns To Play*, 85; Lorenz, “A Lively Interest,” 202-205; Lorenz, “In the Field of Sport,” 154-155; Lorenz, “Bowing Down to Babe Ruth,” 22-39.

²³⁰ Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place*, vii, 146.

championship hockey games in the newspaper, they developed a feeling of having something in common as sports fans – and as Canadians. Gruneau and Whitson suggest that, in the 1920s, the mass press and radio “helped to push major-league sports to the forefront of a popular culture that was increasingly national in its orientation.”²³¹ By elevating Stanley Cup series to national prominence during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the telegraph and the daily newspaper initiated this process in Canadian hockey. Telegraph re-enactments and shared press coverage of Stanley Cup matches forged a wider “hockey world” between Winnipeg and Montreal. At the same time, Stanley Cup challenges were becoming more national in scope, as newspapers across Canada carried considerable information about these games. In conjunction with “live” telegraph reconstructions, national newspaper coverage of Winnipeg-Montreal hockey matches constructed a Canadian “hockey world” based on common media experiences of hockey in different parts of the country.

²³¹ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 96.

Chapter Four

Hockey, Violence, and Masculinity:

Newspaper Coverage of the Ottawa “Butchers,” 1903-1906

Violence has been a central part of the culture of hockey for more than a century. After investigating the historical roots of hockey violence, Lawrence Scanlan concluded, “My overwhelming impression from reading the literature, from hearing the testimony of players from the early to mid-1900s, and from poring over news clippings, is that early hockey was very much like war. The blood flowed freely.”¹ For example, after a particularly rough Stanley Cup game

¹ Lawrence Scanlan, *Grace Under Fire: The State of Our Sweet and Savage Game* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2002), 30. See also Stacy Lorenz, “On-ice violence has been a part of hockey for almost 100 years,” *Edmonton Journal*, 28 December 2004, A16; David Seglins, “‘Just Part Of The Game:’ Violence, Hockey and Masculinity in Central Canada, 1890-1910” (M.A. thesis, Queen’s University, 1995). For a useful analysis of key issues surrounding violence and masculinity in hockey, both historically and in the present, see Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport, Identities, and Cultural Politics* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1993), 175-196.

between the Ottawa Silver Seven and the Montreal Wanderers in March 1904, the *Ottawa Citizen* made the following comment on its editorial page: “The hockey match between the Ottawas and the Wanderers at Montreal was sufficiently sanguinary to rank among the war news. Thirty-six times men were ruled off for rough play, breaking all previous records in that connection. It did not exactly need an ambulance train to bring the Ottawas home, nor was it necessary to have ‘special trains with physicians’ rushed to the scene of the encounter, but the affair seems to have partaken more of the character of a free fight with hockey sticks as weapons than an exposition of sport.”² Similarly, following the contentious Ottawa-Rat Portage series of March 1905, the *Toronto Star* summarized the view of Ottawa hockey from outside the national capital: “Perhaps the spirit that prompts an Ottawa crowd to wild applause when an opponent of the home team is struck in the face with a hockey stick and knocked flat on his back, also dominates the players, who apparently use foul methods from force of habit.”³

Newspaper coverage of Ottawa’s championship hockey team in the early twentieth century frequently made reference to violent incidents and “rough tactics.”⁴ The Ottawa Hockey Club dominated Stanley Cup play for three years, defeating nine consecutive challengers between March 1903 and March 1906, and

² *Ottawa Citizen*, 4 March 1904, 4.

³ *Toronto Star*, 21 March 1905, 10.

⁴ *Montreal Gazette*, 10 March 1905, 2.

holding the trophy at the conclusion of the 1903, 1904, and 1905 seasons.⁵ In 23 Stanley Cup matches over this time period, the team won eighteen games, lost three, and tied two. They were generally known as simply the “Ottawas,” but they were sometimes called the “Senators” or the “Silver Seven.”⁶ In the words of Paul Kitchen, “Over their three-year reign as Stanley Cup champions, the Ottawas attracted a large following among sports-page readers from Halifax to Vancouver. While they rolled to twenty wins against two losses in league play, it was their Stanley Cup prowess that took them from being a team of regional

⁵ Competition for the Stanley Cup took several forms in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Stanley Cup was first awarded in 1893. During much of this period, the Stanley Cup was a “challenge” trophy, and the play-off format for each challenge was dependent on specific agreements reached between competing teams. In general, Stanley Cup champions maintained possession of the trophy until they either lost a league title to another club, or lost a special challenge game or series to a team from outside their league. Prior to 1912, challenges could be accepted at any time during the hockey season, and teams may have defended their claim to the Cup several times over the course of the year. In addition, possession of the Cup was at stake during several league championship games or series which were held to break first-place ties following regular season play. These league title matches are also considered as part of this study. For summaries and overviews of Stanley Cup competition, see Henry Roxborough, *The Stanley Cup Story* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1964); Brian McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever* (Toronto: Pagurian Press, 1978); Dan Diamond, ed., *The Official National Hockey League Stanley Cup Centennial Book* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992); D’Arcy Jenish, *The Stanley Cup: A Hundred Years of Hockey at Its Best* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992); Michael McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter: Hockey’s Rise from Sport to Spectacle* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2000); Andrew Podnieks, *Lord Stanley’s Cup* (Bolton, Ont.: Fenn, 2004).

⁶ Paul Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle: The Inside Story of the Old Ottawa Senators 1883-1935* (Manotick, ON: Penumbra Press, 2008), 117-120; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 35-38.

interest to one commanding attention across the country.” Similarly, D’Arcy Jenish writes, “These were the players whom the Canadian public filled arenas to watch, whom they bought newspapers to read about, whom they talked about and argued about.”⁷

When people read or talked about the Ottawas, the topic of discussion was often the team’s “bloody” and “dirty” style of play.⁸ For instance, in February 1904, a writer for the *Toronto Globe* claimed that, in Ottawa, “people consider it quite proper and legitimate for a team to endeavor to incapacitate their opponents, rather than to excel them in skill and speed.”⁹ After a series against Ottawa in March 1904, goaltender Doug Morrison, from the Brandon Hockey Club, stated, “We don’t mind getting our bumps in scrimmages and when playing the puck, but we can’t stand for these butchers who sneak up behind us and cut us down without provocation or any chance to defend ourselves.”¹⁰ During a March 1905 Stanley Cup challenge involving Ottawa and the Rat Portage Thistles, the *Montreal Star* reported, “ICE COVERED WITH GORE. – There was blood showing on various parts of the ice, particularly around [Rat Portage goaltender]

⁷ Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 119-120; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 38.

⁸ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 31 December 1903, 6. See also *Ottawa Citizen*, 31 December 1903, 6; *Montreal Star*, 31 December 1903, 2.

⁹ *Toronto Globe*, 24 February 1904, 10.

¹⁰ *Toronto Star*, 15 March 1904, 10. See also *Toronto Globe*, 16 March 1904, 10; Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 136.

Giroux, who also had his face cut.” A few days later, another game story noted that Ottawa’s Harvey Pulford “was sent to the fence for a cruel blow across Griffis’ mouth, which cut it open. The referee wiped the blood off and the game proceeded with Smith at cover point, where Pulford had been playing for some time.”¹¹ Finally, the injuries suffered by the Thistles led a *Toronto Star* writer to comment on the sports page, “Somebody kindly pass the axe to the Rat Portage team and let them chop out the rough work of the Ottawa stick slashers and jabbers.”¹²

This chapter examines media narratives of violent and physical play in hockey during the eleven Stanley Cup series played by the Ottawa Silver Seven between 1903 and 1906. It analyzes hockey violence in relation to gender, class, and spectatorship during this period. Stanley Cup matches involving the so-called Ottawa “butchers” serve as a useful case study for examining violence and masculinity in Canadian hockey prior to the First World War. Media reports of hockey violence from newspapers based in Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg form the basis of this case study. Ottawa was one of Canada’s most successful – and most notorious – hockey teams; games played by the Senators attracted a great deal of public attention. Through coverage of Stanley Cup matches, newspapers constructed a number of important narratives of hockey and

¹¹ *Montreal Star*, 10 March 1905, 10; 13 March 1905, 10. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 10 March 1905, 2; *Toronto Globe*, 10 March 1905, 10.

¹² *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1905, 10.

masculinity in response to the unusual and “ordinary” incidents of violence which occurred in these contests. As a result, Stanley Cup games played by the Ottawas prompted considerable public discussion of the place of violent and “strenuous” play in hockey.

This chapter draws upon ideas and methods utilized in other historical studies of sports media narratives. In recent years, a number of sport historians have used textual analysis of sports coverage to shed light on the cultural meanings of sport.¹³ Narratives of hockey in the Canadian press during the time period of this case study described violence in terms of both “brutal butchery” and “strenuous spectacle” – sometimes on the same page of the newspaper. For example, the *Montreal Gazette* stated in 1905 that despite Ottawa’s “Trickery and Rough Tactics,” the Senators’ game with the Rat Portage Thistles “was undoubtedly the hardest Stanley Cup contest seen in Ottawa, and it was stirring

¹³ See, in particular, Michael Oriard, *Reading Football: How the Popular Press Created an American Spectacle* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Michael Oriard, *King Football: Sport and Spectacle in the Golden Age of Radio and Newsreels, Movies and Magazines, the Weekly and the Daily Press* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Michael Oriard, “A Linguistic Turn into Sport History,” in *Deconstructing Sport History: A Postmodern Analysis*, ed. Murray G. Phillips (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 75-91; David B. Welky, “Viking Girls, Mermaids, and Little Brown Men: U.S. Journalism and the 1932 Olympics,” *Journal of Sport History* 24, no. 1 (1997): 24-49; David B. Welky, “Culture, Media and Sport: The *National Police Gazette* and the Creation of an American Working-Class World,” *Culture, Sport, Society* 1, no. 1 (1998): 78-100; Mark Dyreson, *Making the American Team: Sport, Culture, and the Olympic Experience* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998); Daniel A. Nathan, *Saying It’s So: A Cultural History of the Black Sox Scandal* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

from beginning to end. There was life and action at all times and not even in the dying minutes of the struggle, when it was obvious that Ottawa would win, did the struggle lag.”¹⁴ This chapter explores the meaning of these conflicting narratives of violent hockey.¹⁵ It considers hockey’s appeal to players and spectators in light of the complex relationship between “respectable” and “rough” masculine ideals. It also assesses hockey violence in the context of changing standards and perceptions of manhood in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hockey played a significant role in the social construction of masculinity in this period. By evaluating key issues surrounding violence, gender, and class in early hockey, this research addresses important gaps in the study of Canadian sport history and the analysis of hockey and Canadian popular culture. In particular, this study begins to answer the need for careful, focused case studies that examine hockey violence in a historical context.¹⁶ The Stanley

¹⁴ *Montreal Gazette*, 10 March 1905, 2. See also Stacy L. Lorenz and Geraint B. Osborne, “Brutal Butchery, Strenuous Spectacle: Hockey Violence, Manhood, and the 1907 Season,” in *Coast to Coast: Hockey in Canada to the Second World War*, ed. John Chi-Kit Wong (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 160-202.

¹⁵ Because of the inconsistencies, tensions, and contradictions evident in early twentieth-century meanings of “violent” and “rough” hockey, I do not attempt a precise definition of such terms here. One of the goals of this study is to grapple with the various meanings of “physical,” “hard,” “strenuous,” “clean,” and “dirty” hockey expressed in newspaper narratives in this time frame.

¹⁶ Surprisingly, there is very little published, scholarly work on the history of violence in hockey. Academic studies of hockey violence prior to the First World War include John Barnes, “Two Cases of Hockey Homicide: The Crisis of a Moral Ideal” (Paper presented to the North American Society for Sport History,

Cup matches of the Ottawa Silver Seven from 1903 to 1906 offer considerable insight into the cultural narratives surrounding hockey violence and manliness in turn-of-the-century Canada.¹⁷

With the development of industrial capitalism and the emergence of an entrepreneurial and professional middle class during the nineteenth century, men increasingly perceived their gender identity in relation to individual achievement and economic success in the marketplace.¹⁸ This hegemonic ideal of “self-made manhood” was championed by a rising middle class of merchants, bureaucrats,

Banff, Alberta, 1990); Seglins, “Just Part Of The Game”; Michael A. Robidoux, “Imagining a Canadian Identity through Sport: A Historical Interpretation of Lacrosse and Hockey,” *Journal of American Folklore* 115, no. 456 (2002): 209-225; Daniel S. Mason and Gregory H. Duquette, “Newspaper Coverage of Early Professional Ice Hockey: The Discourses of Class and Control,” *Media History* 10, no. 3 (2004): 157-173; Stacy L. Lorenz and Geraint B. Osborne, “‘Talk About Strenuous Hockey’: Violence, Manhood, and the 1907 Ottawa Silver Seven-Montreal Wanderer Rivalry,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 1 (2006): 125-156; Lorenz and Osborne, “Brutal Butchery, Strenuous Spectacle.”

¹⁷ There were certainly other narratives that brought notions of violent play and appropriate masculinity together in the years prior to the First World War. For example, this chapter does not assess how discourses of femininity, race, ethnicity, nationalism, amateurism, or professionalism may have shaped perceptions of violence during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition, because this research is based on English Canadian newspapers, we must be cautious about applying its conclusions to French Canada or to French Canadian narratives of hockey and manhood. As complements to this case study, examinations of such narratives would be welcome avenues for future research.

¹⁸ The following discussion of hockey, class, and manliness is drawn from Lorenz and Osborne, “Talk About Strenuous Hockey,” 129-132; Lorenz and Osborne, “Brutal Butchery, Strenuous Spectacle,” 162-165.

clerks, and business and professional men.¹⁹ Middle-class notions of manliness were also rooted in the idea of respectability. According to Christopher Anstead, “a respectable male individual had to be industrious, sober, religious, compassionate, morally upright and responsible for his own welfare and that of his family.”²⁰ While this version of manly respectability carried considerable cultural authority, working-class males, in particular, challenged middle-class

¹⁹ E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: BasicBooks, 1993); Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996); Kevin B. Wamsley, “The Public Importance of Men and the Importance of Public Men: Sport and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Canada,” in *Sport and Gender in Canada*, ed. Philip White and Kevin Young (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1999), 24-39. See also F.M.L. Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989); Andrew C. Holman, *A Sense of Their Duty: Middle-Class Formation in Victorian Ontario Towns* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000); Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2001); Nancy B. Bouchier, *For the Love of the Game: Amateur Sport in Small-Town Ontario, 1838-1895* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003); Patrick F. McDevitt, “*May the Best Man Win*”: *Sport, Masculinity, and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

²⁰ Anstead quoted in Bouchier, *For the Love of the Game*, 26. See also Elliott J. Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 140-141; Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 32-33; Steven A. Riess, “Sport and the Redefinition of Middle-Class Masculinity in Victorian America,” in *The New American Sport History: Recent Approaches and Perspectives*, ed. S.W. Pope (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 174.

standards of manhood. For example, labourers in industrializing cities frequently defined their masculine identity away from work, in the realm of leisure. As a result, a distinct working-class culture developed around such activities as drinking, gambling, fighting, and bloodsports; within groups like fire companies, street gangs, lodges, and political factions; and in such places as saloons, pool halls, theatres, and brothels.²¹ This culture valued masculine honour, toughness, and physical prowess; in Elliott J. Gorn’s words, the working class “inverted the bourgeois ethos with an antithetical assertion of rough male conviviality.”²²

Although there were clear differences between “respectable” and “rough” masculine ideals, distinctions between middle-class and working-class notions of manhood were neither simple nor rigid. Lynne Marks’s examination of gender and leisure in late-nineteenth-century small-town Ontario is especially insightful in this regard. According to Marks, many young men were involved in “less than respectable activities that were part of a certain masculine culture, predominantly a youth culture, which to some extent crossed class lines.” She argues that historians have underestimated the cross-class appeal of a “rough” masculinity

²¹ Gorn, *The Manly Art*, 133-135, 141-143. See also Peter DeLottinville, “Joe Beef of Montreal: Working-Class Culture and the Tavern, 1869-1889,” *Labour/Le Travailleur* 8/9 (1981/82): 9-40; Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, 81-91, 116-121, 212-213; Kevin B. Wamsley and Robert S. Kossuth, “Fighting It Out in Nineteenth-Century Upper Canada/Canada West: Masculinities and Physical Challenges in the Tavern,” *Journal of Sport History* 27, no. 3 (2000): 405-430.

²² Gorn, *The Manly Art*, 133. See also Wamsley and Kossuth, “Fighting It Out,” 409-411.

rooted in “physical strength, recourse to violence, danger, and a certain wildness among youth.”²³ The ideals of “responsible, respectable breadwinner” and “rowdy rough” coexisted in such groups as fraternal orders, fire brigades, militia companies, and sports clubs.²⁴ Although middle-class sports associations sought to shape the manly character of young men in accordance with respectable ideals, the members of amateur sports teams sometimes pushed the boundaries of upright behaviour. “Definitions of manly respectability were contested,” Marks writes, “and even the most middle-class sports clubs, like their counterparts among the fraternal orders, were part of a larger masculine leisure culture and as such accepted a certain level of manly roughness.”²⁵

Kevin B. Wamsley and David Whitson offer a similar perspective on gender and class identities in their analysis of the Arthur Pelkey-Luther McCarty boxing match, held in Calgary, Alberta, in 1913.²⁶ Manslaughter charges were brought against Pelkey following McCarty’s death during the fight – the first time a boxer was killed in the ring in Canada. The trial revealed that the kinds of

²³ Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, 90.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 108-125, 137-139, 211-213.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 123. See also Bouchier, *For the Love of the Game*, 27-28, 106-107, 125-130, 133, 136-137; Colin D. Howell, *Northern Sandlots: A Social History of Maritime Baseball* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 4-6, 14-15.

²⁶ Kevin B. Wamsley and David Whitson, “Celebrating Violent Masculinities: The Boxing Death of Luther McCarty,” *Journal of Sport History* 25, no. 3 (1998): 419-431.

masculinity demonstrated in rough sports like boxing, lacrosse, and hockey were widely respected among influential, middle-class men in the community. Though criticized by moralists and social reformers, boxing champions were respected, popular exemplars of a rough version of masculinity that embraced toughness, force, and violence. According to Wamsley and Whitson, boxing’s celebration of aggressive manhood appealed to middle-class businessmen and professionals, as well as working men.²⁷ The testimony given by witnesses at Pelkey’s trial “spoke explicitly to codes of masculinity, understood within the sporting community, that identified violent confrontations within sporting contests as legitimate and valuable social interactions between consenting men.”²⁸

The emergence of modern hockey was tied to conceptions of middle-class amateurism and “respectable” middle-class masculinity. Prior to the First World War, organized hockey in Canada was played, developed, and controlled mainly by the male, urban, English-speaking middle and upper-middle classes. Amateur sportsmen, social reformers, and muscular Christians regarded hockey as a “manly” sport that instilled moral virtue and developed valuable character traits.²⁹

²⁷ Ibid., 420-421, 426-429.

²⁸ Ibid., 427.

²⁹ Alan Metcalfe, *Canada Learns To Play: The Emergence of Organized Sport, 1807-1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), 10, 13, 61-73, 96-98; Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 31-56, 193-196; Seglins, “Just Part Of The Game,” 13-14, 18-31, 73-75; Mason and Duquette, “Newspaper Coverage of Early Professional Ice Hockey,” 158-159.

At the same time, however, some organizers, players, and fans embraced elements of “rough” masculinity within the game. Alan Metcalfe highlights this dilemma when he notes that “‘manliness’ was a concept that defied simplistic definition - one man’s manly behaviour became another man’s ‘roughness’ and ‘brutality.’ The line between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour was thin indeed, depending on the social and educational background of the individuals, local conditions, and the importance of a particular contest. Thus it was extremely difficult to determine when actions on the ice actually constituted ‘brutal’ as opposed to ‘manly’ behaviour.”³⁰

Hockey also came to occupy a prominent position in Canadian popular culture at a time of significant change in society’s notions of manliness and masculinity. During the late nineteenth century, a version of aggressive masculinity that E. Anthony Rotundo calls “passionate manhood” became the most influential masculine ideal in North America.³¹ Anchored in concepts of physicality, martial spirit, eugenics, and Social Darwinism, this passionate standard of masculinity exalted combativeness, competitiveness, and toughness, and placed a high value on bodily strength and athletic skill.³² In addition, the

³⁰ Metcalfe, *Canada Learns to Play*, 69.

³¹ Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 5-6.

³² Ibid., 222-283; Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 120, 181-188; Riess, “Sport and Middle-Class Masculinity,” 184-191; Varda Burstyn, *The Rites of Men: Manhood, Politics, and the Culture of Sport* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 45-75. See also Donald J. Mrozek, “The Habit of Victory:

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ascendancy of passionate manhood was connected to a revaluation of what Rotundo refers to as “primitive masculinity” - a growing tendency to look at men as creatures of impulse and instinct, even as “animals” or “savages,” and to regard this “brutish” side as a pure expression of manliness.³³ As frustrations with the new bureaucratic world of male white-collar work and concerns about cultural feminization and “overcivilization” spurred efforts to revitalize manhood in new ways, sport became one of the most important vehicles for countering effeminacy and conferring manliness.³⁴ Moreover, this reshaping of conceptions of manhood during the 1880s and 1890s helped make the roughness and violence of sports like

The American Military and the Cult of Manliness,” in *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, ed. J.A. Mangan and James Walvin (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), 220-241; J.A. Mangan, “Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England,” in *Manliness and Morality*, ed. Mangan and Walvin, 135-159; Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990); Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*; Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998); Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2001).

³³ Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 227-232.

³⁴ Gorn, *The Manly Art*, 187-189, 192-193; Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 239-240, 248-252, 257-262; Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 78-79, 100-101, 185-186; Howell, *Northern Sandlots*, 15, 97-119; Seglins, “Just Part Of The Game,” 24-31; Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 81-122, 137-141, 157-181; Riess, “Sport and Middle-Class Masculinity,” 184-185; Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 12, 34; Burstyn, *The Rites of Men*, 50-54, 62; Moss, *Manliness and Militarism*, 16-17, 28, 99-105, 125-130; Putney, *Muscular Christianity*, 3-6, 25-39; J.J. Wilson, “Skating to Armageddon: Canada, Hockey and the First World War,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 22, no. 3 (2005): 315-321.

hockey acceptable – even necessary – in the manufacturing of manly character. Rugged sports, in particular, effectively cultivated the characteristics of physical prowess and martial spirit that were at the core of passionate manhood.³⁵

Violence in hockey addressed a social need in helping Canadians to define and develop a meaningful masculinity. Although the persistence of physicality and aggression in hockey seemed to contradict the ideals of respectability at the heart of middle-class manliness, this affinity for violence is understandable in the context of both a developing model of masculinity rooted in “passionate manhood” and a “rough” masculine leisure culture that cut across class lines. The new standard of active, muscular manhood glorified physical struggle and violent action. “Primitive” elements in sports like hockey helped to offset the fear that overcivilization was making men weak and over-sophisticated. At the same time, the cross-class appeal of an aggressive masculinity based on force and danger helps to explain the popularity of “strenuous,” even “brutal,” hockey among middle-class players and spectators.³⁶ Like working-class men who favoured

³⁵ On the connections between violence and masculinity in boxing and football, see Gorn, *The Manly Art*; Oriard, *Reading Football*.

³⁶ Similarly, Gail Bederman notes that “middle-class white men simultaneously construct[ed] powerful manhood in terms of both ‘civilized manliness’ and ‘primitive masculinity’.” See Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 23.

more elemental touchstones of masculine prowess, many middle-class men were attracted to the excitement of a fiercely contested, hard-hitting hockey game.³⁷

Although Ottawa was already developing a reputation for roughness by the end of the 1902-03 hockey season, the opening game of the first Stanley Cup series won by the “butchers” in March 1903 actually featured a violent incident initiated by Ottawa’s opponent, the Montreal Victorias.³⁸ The Vics’ Bert Strachan broke the leg of Ottawa’s Harry Westwick with a slash from his stick, prompting outrage from newspapers in Ottawa. “Strachan, if he ever goes on a rink again to play as he did on Saturday night, deserves to be maimed for life,” stated the *Ottawa Evening Journal*. “He deliberately broke one of the smaller bones in Westwick’s right leg, laying that game little player out of the game for the rest of

³⁷ David Seglins, and Daniel S. Mason and Gregory H. Duquette, claim that divisions between working-class and middle-class views of violence, masculinity, and hockey were sharper than is suggested here. See, especially, Seglins, “Just Part Of The Game,” 49-54; Mason and Duquette, “Newspaper Coverage of Early Professional Ice Hockey,” 158-161, 167-170. While this study acknowledges that such class-based perceptions of hockey violence existed, it argues that there was considerable common ground between middle-class and working-class understandings of violence and physicality in hockey. In particular, I suggest that Seglins and Mason and Duquette underestimate the extent to which violent and physical play in hockey appealed to a cross-class masculine culture that valued “roughness” and toughness among men.

³⁸ Ottawa and the Montreal Victorias were tied for the Canadian Amateur Hockey League (C.A.H.L.) title, ahead of the Stanley Cup holders, the Montreal Amateur Athletic Association (M.A.A.A.). As a result, a two-game, total-goal series would determine both the league championship and possession of the Stanley Cup. See Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 113-114; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 40-41.

the season, and if his vile spirit had been satisfied he would have knocked [Art] Moore’s brains out. As it was, he broke his hockey stick clear in two over Moore’s legs, but he struck for Moore’s head.”³⁹ According to the *Ottawa Citizen*, “Westwick skated off the ice with the bone protruding through the skin.”⁴⁰ On the other hand, the *Montreal Gazette* downplayed the seriousness of Strachan’s actions, and expressed the opinion that the game featured an appropriate amount of physical and strenuous play: “It was a hard game on the players, and every man surely bears today several mementoes of the contest. The lively checking did not always land on the stick, but shins and ankles and arms were just as often tried for and found pretty often. It was rough on the players, but all of them played a give and take game, and there was little to choose from on either side.”⁴¹

The violence in the opening game intensified the rivalry between the two cities, and created spectator interest as the series moved to Ottawa. “The match will be an interesting one, as there is a strong feeling both between the teams and their supporters. This feeling has been aroused largely by the maiming of Westwick, who is a general favorite in Ottawa,” reported the *Ottawa Evening Journal*. “Every seat in the rink has been sold and hundreds have bought standing

³⁹ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 9 March 1903, 10.

⁴⁰ *Ottawa Citizen*, 9 March 1903, 6. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 9 March 1903, 2; *Toronto Star*, 9 March 1903, 8; *Toronto Globe*, 9 March 1903, 8.

⁴¹ *Montreal Gazette*, 9 March 1903, 2.

room only. The greatest enthusiasm prevails and tonight there will be a bumper house.”⁴² However, after a 1-1 tie in the first game, Ottawa defeated Montreal 8-0 in the second game to win the Stanley Cup. Why was the outcome so different? “The reason simply is that [in the opening match] Victoria held the Ottawas down by heavy checking and slugging on very heavy ice, and generally speaking played a more aggressive game than they played last night,” explained the *Ottawa Evening Journal*. “Ottawa did not play as stiff a game in Montreal as they did last night, but they knew what they had to deal with last night and were prepared to deal with it. The Vics knew that the Ottawas were ready for anything and were just a trifle afraid to risk any of the game that held Ottawa down in Montreal.” The Ottawa paper added, “It was not a parlor game by any means, for the Ottawas, besides playing a lot of hockey, returned a great many of the sore places the Vics gave them last Saturday.”⁴³

The main narrative constructed by newspaper coverage of the series was the “timid” play of the Vics in Ottawa.⁴⁴ There had been signs of this portrayal of the Montreal club in the first game, as the *Ottawa Evening Journal* reported that “the Vics took to their dressing room like rabbits to a burrow” when Ottawa stood

⁴² *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 10 March 1903, 10. See also *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 March 1903, 6.

⁴³ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 11 March 1903, 10.

⁴⁴ *Toronto Star*, 11 March 1903, 8.

up to the Montreal players during a skirmish at halftime.⁴⁵ Prior to the second game, the Ottawa paper questioned the courage of the Montreal team away from its home rink, speculating that while the Victorias would “likely bring the same team with them that played in Montreal,...it is safe to say that they will not play as rough as they did in Montreal.”⁴⁶ After the match, the *Evening Journal* stated,

The Vics played an away-from-home game. They were not aggressive; nothing like they were in Montreal. They seemed to feel that if they started any dirty work that their medicine was ready for them. B. Strachan, the bad centre man, who played so dirty in Montreal for the Vics, was as meek as a lamb all through the game. He did not try on any of his dirty work until near the last, and he came on the ice with his legs so well padded that he could hardly skate.⁴⁷

The *Toronto Star*’s assessment was even more blunt. In its “Comment on Current Sporting Topics,” the *Star* suggested that the Vics were thoroughly intimidated by the Ottawas:

Reading between the lines of the hockey despatches from Ottawa to-day one can plainly see the reason for the

⁴⁵ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 9 March 1903, 10.

⁴⁶ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 10 March 1903, 10.

⁴⁷ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 11 March 1903, 10. See also *Toronto Star*, 11 March 1903, 8; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 11 March 1903, 8.

decisive defeat of the Montreal Victorias last night....The Vics were actually afraid of their opponents, afraid of that ‘terrible Rugby’ defence, which hesitates at nothing. They shot from long range, not caring to get mixed up with [Art] Moore or [Harvey] Pulford, who are the champion pulverizers of a smashing team, speaking literally. One Victoria player actually dared to show some brilliancy, but, so the despatches say, when one of the Gilmour boys got after him the Montreal man’s light was extinguished like a match in a windstorm.⁴⁸

According to the *Ottawa Evening Journal*, another Montreal player “slowed up perceptably” whenever “he got anywhere near the Ottawa defence....Once he stopped dead in front of Pulford. In fact, his hair almost stood up.” This was not the type of manly “grit” expected from a hockey player.⁴⁹

Ottawa also defended the Stanley Cup for the first time in March 1903, defeating the Rat Portage Thistles 6-2 and 4-2 in a two-game, total-goal challenge series that was not regarded as particularly violent, but which boosted perceptions

⁴⁸ *Toronto Star*, 11 March 1903, 8. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 11 March 1903, 8.

⁴⁹ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 11 March 1903, 10.

of Ottawa as a physical, close-checking team.⁵⁰ Following the first game, the *Montreal Herald* suggested that Ottawa’s victory “will serve as another argument for the people who claim that brute force is gradually eliminating clean and scientific play from the game. Hard checking and needless body-checks have come to be considered so integral a part of the game that even Referee Percy Quinn looked upon it complacently last night.”⁵¹ Media reports also sustained one of the key narratives found in hockey coverage during this time period by stressing that the games were hard and physical, but clean.⁵² For example, the *Ottawa Citizen* pointed out that “both teams were out to win and worked desperately to achieve that end. The checking was close but there was little roughness. Legitimate bodychecks were given by the defence men on both teams with heartiness, but slashing was eliminated.”⁵³ Such reporting implied that

⁵⁰ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 38; Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 115-116. See, for example, *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 13 March 1903, 10; 16 March 1903, 10; *Montreal Gazette*, 13 March 1903, 2; *Montreal Star*, 13 March 1903, 2; 16 March 1903, 18; *Toronto Globe*, 13 March 1903, 12.

⁵¹ *Montreal Herald* quoted in *Toronto Globe*, 13 March 1903, 12.

⁵² See, for example, *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 March 1903, 6; 16 March 1903, 6; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 16 March 1903, 10; *Montreal Gazette*, 16 March 1903, 2, 6; *Toronto Star*, 16 March 1903, 8; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 16 March 1903, 8. For a more thorough discussion of this narrative, see Lorenz and Osborne, “Talk About Strenuous Hockey,” 143-149; Lorenz and Osborne, “Brutal Butchery, Strenuous Spectacle,” 175-182.

⁵³ *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 March 1903, 6. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 16 March 1903, 6; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 11 March 1903, 10.

competitiveness and “hearty” checking were highly valued, while rough play and malicious stick fouls were not acceptable.

When the Winnipeg Rowing Club came to Ottawa near the beginning of the 1903-04 season, the intensity and physicality of the games sparked much more discussion of violence in hockey. Even before the series began, newspapers speculated about whether or not the lighter, faster challengers could withstand the “hammering” and hard checking of the “strong and heavy” Ottawa defense.⁵⁴ As the series unfolded, a number of conflicting narratives of “rough” and “strenuous” hockey emerged out of the media coverage in various Canadian cities. Newspaper reports of the opening match of the series, in particular, expressed the competing narratives of “brutal butchery” and “strenuous spectacle” that were characteristic of coverage of hockey in this period.

Although views of hockey violence depended to some degree on support for a newspaper’s local team, media accounts in Winnipeg and Ottawa combined elements of both narratives in their coverage of the game. In Winnipeg, for example, the dominant theme of the reporting was expressed in the *Winnipeg Tribune*’s front-page headline, “ROUGHEST HOCKEY EVER.”⁵⁵ The

⁵⁴ *Toronto Globe*, 29 December 1903, 10; *Montreal Star*, 30 December 1903, 2. See also *Ottawa Citizen*, 29 December 1903, 6; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 43-45.

⁵⁵ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 31 December 1903, 1.

Tribune’s coverage emphasized the numerous injuries suffered by the Rowing Club and labelled the match “the most bloody ever seen on local ice.” For instance, the *Tribune*’s overview of the opening contest stated,

The game was more of the nature of a prize fight than of a hockey match. It was replete with body checking of the most severe kind. Players were battered and knocked around in indiscriminate fashion, until when they left the ice they were gory and patched-up aggregations. Players on both sevens were cut up, but in this respect the Winnipegs suffered most. [Clint] Bennest had his thumb broken by colliding viciously with the fence, and [Nick] Bawlf injured his back as the result of an ugly body check from Pulford. [Billy] Breen and Moore went off the ice with bandaged heads with gaping scalp wounds from a head-on collision. The Ottawas escaped more fortunately.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 31 December 1903, 6. See also 31 December 1903, 1; 4 January 1904, 1; *Toronto Star*, 31 December 1903, 10. For a more detailed “hospital list” drawn up by the *Manitoba Free Press*, see *Toronto Globe*, 5 January 1904, 10; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 6 January 1904, 2.

“All I can say is that it was about the dirtiest match in which I ever participated,” summarized Winnipeg captain Billy Breen following the game. “If it continues we will have to wire home for more men.”⁵⁷

At the same time, however, the *Winnipeg Tribune* acknowledged that the series was exciting and intense – a “strenuous spectacle” that was certainly worth watching. These conflicting narratives appeared on the same page of the newspaper, beginning with the *Tribune*’s description of the opening match of the series as “one of the most brilliant and roughest games that has ever been seen on the ice in” Ottawa.⁵⁸ On the one hand, the *Tribune* reported,

Ottawa’s rough house tactics were the undoing of the Winnipeg Oarsmen in the Stanley Cup match at Ottawa last night. From the despatches received it would appear that the easterners took a particular delight in laying out their opponents on every possible occasion. They body checked with a viciousness that was little short of prize-ring action and that their plans were successful is only too apparent. Bawlf is laid out with a strained back and [Joe] Hall is suffering from a badly cut head.

⁵⁷ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 31 December 1903, 6. See also *Ottawa Citizen*, 31 December 1903, 6; *Montreal Star*, 31 December 1903, 2.

⁵⁸ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 31 December 1903, 6.

But the summary went on to portray the match as a stirring example of highly competitive hockey. The *Tribune*’s correspondent stated,

From the commencement of the game until the finish, the sevens went at each other like bulldogs. Determined to hold the silverware, the Ottawas played mad and furious hockey, while the Oarsmen raced desperately at the puck in vain endeavor to lift the cup and sustain the reputation of the West. It was a pretty contest to watch, but would even have been more so if there had not been a number of unfortunate delays. As it was, the play was of such a nature to stir the most sluggish blood, and time after time the immense crowd rose as one man in enthusiastic ovation of the scintillating brilliancy of east or western play.⁵⁹

Ottawa newspapers also revealed an ambivalent and somewhat contradictory perspective on the match. First, in contrast to the spectacular level of violence described by the Winnipeg press, Ottawa media coverage generally portrayed the incidents and injuries that occurred in the first game of the series as ordinary and expected events. For example, both the *Ottawa Evening Journal* and the *Ottawa Citizen* downplayed the seriousness of the injuries suffered by Winnipeg players, and suggested that the challengers usually were hurt

⁵⁹ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 31 December 1903, 6.

accidentally, on routine plays. According to the *Evening Journal*, “Bawlf was playing a hard game, but in trying to check his cover he missed his man and landed against the side of the rink, straining his back.”⁶⁰ Similarly, the *Citizen* reported, “Bawlf had a bad fall and injured his back severely. About the same time Benest crashed into the fence and broke his right thumb....Hall and [Alf] Smith had a head-on collision a little earlier and Hall had to have five stitches placed in his scalp and Smith four. Several other minor injuries were recorded but the greater number of stops were for broken skates.”⁶¹

On the other hand, Ottawa newspapers criticized what they perceived to be excessive violence from “hometown” players. The *Ottawa Evening Journal* was especially critical of Alf Smith’s actions during the opening match. “A thoroughly dirty and cowardly thing was done by Smith of the Ottawas, which escaped the attention of the referee and of most of the audience, owing to its taking place a long way from the puck,” the *Evening Journal* reported.

Smith in a rush up the ice was body-checked by Hall and lost the puck. The puck travelled back to the Ottawa end. Smith and Hall were following in the rear of the play, when Smith turned and deliberately cracked Hall on the head with his stick, knocking him down and out. It was a foul

⁶⁰ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 31 December 1903, 2.

⁶¹ *Ottawa Citizen*, 31 December 1903, 6. See also *Toronto Globe*, 31 December 1903, 8; Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 137.

action which should have earned expulsion from the C.A.H.L., if such a penalty could be inflicted. Hockey won't stand that sort of thing and retain the patronage of decent people.⁶²

The *Ottawa Citizen* also expressed disapproval of the home team:

The rough work of some of the Ottawas came in for some criticism and Referee Trihey was censured for his leniency. It was one of the bloodiest battles ever fought on Ottawa ice and one or two more like it will just about kill hockey here. There is no necessity for players slashing each other over the head and a departure from good hockey will have its effect on the attendance. The Ottawas were worse offenders than the Oarsmen in this respect.⁶³

The *Citizen's* editorial page noted, “At the close of the Ottawa-Winnipeg hockey match the score stood 9 to 1 and the casualty list 2 to 7, both in favor of Ottawa.”⁶⁴ During the next game, Ottawa fans showed their frustration with the Senators’ “rough tactics,” as well.⁶⁵ According to the *Citizen*, the crowd’s

⁶² *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 31 December 1903, 2.

⁶³ *Ottawa Citizen*, 31 December 1903, 6.

⁶⁴ *Ottawa Citizen*, 1 January 1904, 4. See also 1 January 1904, 6.

⁶⁵ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 2 January 1904, 1.

“sympathy was all with the challengers and any dirty play on the part of the Ottawas was hissed and hooted.”⁶⁶ In this case, opinions about violence were not simply determined by local allegiances.

The strongest statement of the game as “strenuous spectacle” came not from the Ottawa media, but from the *Montreal Gazette*, which declared that the match “was thoroughly representative of the development of present style. It was a stirring example of the strenuousness that has been attained.” The reporter explained:

It was not the nicest of hockey, but for those who love to see strong forces clash, it was all that could be desired. The checking was heavy, both with the body and the stick, and it was quite apparent that there were men on both teams ready to take all sorts of chances. I saw men deliberately dive at their opponents, and in a couple of instances bring injury to themselves by missing the opponent and crashing into the fence or falling on the ice....Men met at full speed. Both would rise in the air and fall to the ice. Men would meet at the side, and smash into the fence with a crash that made it appear that the timbers were giving away. Then

⁶⁶ *Ottawa Citizen*, 2 January 1904, 6. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 2 January 1904, 6; *Toronto Globe*, 4 January 1904, 8; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 44.

there was hooking, tripping, and all the essentials that are needed for the strenuous.

The *Gazette* report added that “there were no really serious injuries,” and that “the contest was free from serious fouls.” In addition, there was no specific mention of Smith’s attack on Hall.⁶⁷ Overall, the Montreal newspaper was more sympathetic to the style of the Ottawas than papers in the team’s home city. To the *Gazette*, this was “strenuous hockey.”

Winnipeg rebounded from a 9-1 loss in the first game and evened the series with a surprising 6-2 victory in the second game. The challengers played much more aggressively than in the opening match, and “handed out to the chesty Ottawas a dose of the same medicine that was administered to them Wednesday night.”⁶⁸ Again, the *Montreal Gazette* was impressed with the physicality of the second game, as “the players went at each other in hammer and tongs style,” and “[t]he checking was decidedly serious.”⁶⁹ When Ottawa won the deciding game of the series 2-0, the most notable feature of the press coverage was the consensus that emerged around the quality of the match. Coverage of the game in newspapers based in Ottawa, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Montreal was remarkably

⁶⁷ *Montreal Gazette*, 31 December 1903, 2. For a more critical view of “strenuous” hockey, see *Montreal Gazette*, 11 March 1905, 2.

⁶⁸ *Ottawa Citizen*, 2 January 1904, 6. See also *Toronto Globe*, 4 January 1904, 8; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 2 January 1904, 12; *Montreal Star*, 2 January 1904, 18; *Ottawa Citizen*, 8 January 1904, 6.

⁶⁹ *Montreal Gazette*, 4 January 1904, 2.

similar in content and tone. On the whole, media reports in each of these cities constructed a narrative of “strenuous spectacle” around the contest. At the same time, such coverage demonstrates the appeal of rough, physical hockey to fans.

Media narratives of hockey violence spoke to different ways of experiencing and enjoying hockey, and to various tensions within public perceptions of the sport. Reporters, players, and team officials seemed to favour “strenuous” but “clean” hockey. They tried to distinguish between this preferred brand of “hard” and “fast” hockey, and an excessively violent version of the game they called “dirty” or, sometimes, “rough” hockey.⁷⁰ However, these distinctions were not easy to draw. The problem was that hard and strenuous hockey was marked by a great deal of physical, even violent, play. Body checking, collisions, slashing, intimidation, blood, and bruises were frequently applauded by hockey observers. The fact that “rough” hockey could sometimes be “clean” and at other times was considered “dirty” also demonstrates the ambivalence toward violence that was central to perceptions of the sport. As David Seglins notes,

Indeed, assaultive behaviour, tripping, checking and fighting did enjoy a high degree of legitimacy as expected parts of the game. For leagues and referees, there was a tenuous balance to be struck. On the one hand, the

⁷⁰ This discussion is based on Lorenz and Osborne, “Talk About Strenuous Hockey,” 143-144; Lorenz and Osborne, “Brutal Butchery, Strenuous Spectacle,” 176-177. See also Mason and Duquette, “Newspaper Coverage of Early Professional Ice Hockey,” 161-162.

spectacular, entertaining and exciting rougher aspects of play that boosted ticket sales had a high degree of legitimacy among the players and fans who expected strong, aggressive, masculine hockey. On the other hand, the leagues were concerned with prohibiting serious injuries to hockey players as well as ensuring the respectability and reputation of hockey teams and the sport in general.⁷¹

These strains and contradictions were evident in reporting on the final game of the 1903-04 Winnipeg-Ottawa series. The *Ottawa Evening Journal* described the game as “hard,” “strenuous,” and “very fast,” adding that, “the play began to get exciting at once, as it was seen it was going to be no game of ping-pong.”⁷² Likewise, the *Winnipeg Tribune* called the match “a brilliant struggle,” “a wonderful exposition of the game,” and “brilliant beyond all description.” The *Tribune* asserted, “Played with cyclonic speed, and a pace that at times was terrific, it afforded an exhibition such as has never been seen in Ottawa before.”⁷³ By combining speed and skill with hard hits and physical play, the match achieved the balance between strenuousness and roughness which was essential to

⁷¹ Seglins, “Just Part Of The Game,” 80.

⁷² *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 5 January 1904, 2.

⁷³ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 5 January 1904, 6.

the most exciting hockey. This precarious balance is evident in the *Ottawa Evening Journal*’s description of the play: “The game was not a rough one. There was some body-checking and some foul play in the way of cross-checking and tripping, but there were no disgraceful episodes and only one offer to fight, when Suddie Gilmour and Borland went off for a rest. There were several temporary knock-outs due to heavy checking and accidental falls, but none of the players were seriously hurt.”⁷⁴

The *Ottawa Citizen* offered a similar perspective: “It was a great game; one that was full of incident, but it was not a rough match and though injuries were recorded yet they were not serious. The men played with vim but there was comparatively little dirty work and what there was, was evenly divided.” The *Citizen* reported that the match included cross-checking penalties, tripping, “a little mixup” between players, a collision followed by more “mixing it up,” a player being hit in the face with a stick, a scrap, more tripping, a defender getting “hurt in the face in a general scrimmage at the Winnipeg nets,” and another “mixup” – all in just the first half of play. But, on the whole, “it was spectacular hockey; hockey that thrilled and that kept the crowd on its feet.”⁷⁵ The *Toronto Star* agreed, calling the game “a spectacular struggle...that was marked by almost

⁷⁴ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 5 January 1904, 2. See also *Montreal Star*, 5 January 1904, 2.

⁷⁵ *Ottawa Citizen*, 5 January 1904, 6. See also *Toronto Globe*, 5 January 1904, 10.

continuous scintillating plays.”⁷⁶ In addition, the *Toronto Star* emphasized the tough, physical element that was essential to entertaining hockey:

It was a hard, close contest, and the checking was businesslike. Both teams were in great fettle, and they played scientifically. The forwards covered each other closely, and the defences broke up the rushes not recklessly but carefully. The forwards had to use all their ingenuity to get in on the defences, and it followed that the attacks were hair-raising. All kinds of chances were taken, and it was marvelous that no players were seriously injured.⁷⁷

Finally, the *Montreal Gazette*’s description of the game suggested that a hard-fought, eventful game was attractive to spectators: “As a strenuous game it was all the way; it was give and take, with heavy body-checking. At the same time there was a great deal of really good hockey included in the first half, and exciting incidents galore.”⁷⁸ In sum, the game was “strenuous” and “full of incident,”

⁷⁶ *Toronto Star*, 5 January 1904, 10.

⁷⁷ *Toronto Star*, 5 January 1904, 10. For a similar account, see *Toronto Globe*, 5 January 1904, 10.

⁷⁸ *Montreal Gazette*, 5 January 1904, 2. Despite the *Gazette*’s usual enthusiasm for “strenuous hockey,” an editorial appeared in the paper at the conclusion of the Ottawa-Winnipeg series criticizing the rise of violent and physical play in the sport. At the same time, though, the newspaper acknowledged the appeal of “the win or die spirit” for fans. The editorial said that “the third game was the poorest of the lot, although it was by far the most exciting.” The writer then added, “True, the game was exciting, but it was

featuring “heavy” checking, players being hit in the face with sticks, several “mixups” and skirmishes, a few “knock-outs,” and at least one fight – but it was clean, “businesslike,” “spectacular” hockey, and definitely not “rough.”

One of the main narratives generated by newspapers in the early 1900s explored the differences between Ottawa and Toronto hockey – or, more broadly, between the brand of hockey played in the Ontario Hockey Association (O.H.A.) and leagues centred in Ottawa and Montreal. This narrative was most evident during the February 1904 Stanley Cup series between Ottawa and the Toronto Marlboros. Media reports from this series focused on the distinct styles of play favoured by the two clubs, particularly in regards to body checking and other “strenuous” methods. As newspapers in Toronto expressed anger and frustration with the tactics of the Silver Seven, the Ottawa press dismissed their complaints as unworthy “squealing.” For example, following the series, the *Toronto Star* declared that Ottawa was “the fastest and the dirtiest” team in Canada. The *Ottawa Citizen* responded that “Marlboro evidently came east after the penochle [sic] championship.”⁷⁹ A contest between hockey clubs therefore escalated into a

exciting only because it appealed to the animal passions rather than to the true spirit that delights in a contest between strong men carried out on fair lines.” See *Montreal Gazette*, 7 January 1904, 2.

⁷⁹ *Toronto Star*, 29 February 1904, 10; *Ottawa Citizen*, 1 March 1904, 6.

rivalry between the cities and leagues – and newspapers – those teams represented.

Media commentary during the 1903 Ottawa-Montreal Victorias series had offered a preview of how hockey in Toronto was perceived in comparison to hockey in Montreal and Ottawa. According to the *Toronto Star*, the style of the strongest Toronto club at the time – the Wellingtons – was “too clean entirely” to be successful in a match-up with the Ottawas. “They would have no chance against the rough, brutal tactics of the capital men,” wrote the *Star*. “However, in this enlightened part of the world we prefer to see a hockey match without the brutality that is considered an essential part of the game in the East.”⁸⁰ The *Ottawa Citizen*, in turn, conveyed this opinion of the calibre of hockey in Toronto: “The Wellingtons play nice hockey, but it is not fast enough for the C.A.H.L. They have a well-balanced team, that only needs about 20 years’ coaching to bring it up to the Stanley cup standard.”⁸¹ When the Toronto Marlboros challenged Ottawa in a best-of-three series in February 1904, these divergent perspectives were played out on the ice – and in the media. After observing a Toronto practice in Ottawa and the Marlboros’ play in the first game of the series, reporters concluded that “they were less strenuous in their tactics” than the

⁸⁰ *Toronto Star*, 11 March 1903, 8. See also 11 March 1903, 12.

⁸¹ *Ottawa Citizen*, 14 March 1903, 6. See also 22 March 1906, 8; 23 March 1906, 8.

champions.⁸² As for Ottawa, “They went at the Marlboros hard and their energetic methods took the steam completely out of the challengers,” reported the *Ottawa Evening Journal* following the Silver Seven’s 6-3 victory in the opening match. “It was not that the play was any rougher than is usual and expected in eastern hockey, but it was something new to the Marlboros, who alleged that they were never before treated in such an unladylike manner.”⁸³

Accounts of the game in the Toronto press conveyed a strong sense of indignation over the “rough, hard tactics” that Ottawa used to secure victory.⁸⁴

The *Toronto Star*’s headline communicated this narrative most clearly:

“SLUGGED AND BODIED INTO SUBMISSION – Marlboros Beaten by Ottawa, But Not at Hockey – Flail the O.H.A. Champions Over the Head and Cripple Arms and Legs.” Section headlines included “KILL THE MAN” and “THE CASUALTY LIST,” and a writer on the sports page commented, “A broadaxe brigade might possibly win the Stanley Cup from the Ottawa outfit.”

⁸² *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 24 February 1904, 2. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 23 February 1904, 2; *Montreal Star*, 23 February 1904, 2.

⁸³ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 24 February 1904, 2. See also 1 March 1904, 2; *Toronto Globe*, 24 February 1904, 10; 25 February 1904, 12; *Montreal Gazette*, 26 February 1904, 2; 29 February 1904, 2.

⁸⁴ *Toronto Globe*, 24 February 1904, 10. See also *Toronto Star*, 25 February 1904, 10; 27 February 1904, 8; *Montreal Gazette*, 24 February 1904, 2; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 46-47. Toronto newspapers were also very critical of the “rough-house work” of the “capital sluggers” in Ottawa’s 1904 series with Brandon. See, for example, *Toronto Star*, 12 March 1904, 8; 14 March 1904, 10; 15 March 1904, 10; 17 March 1904, 10; *Toronto Globe*, 16 March 1904, 10.

The *Star* stated, “Taken all round it was a poor exhibition of hockey, but an excellent exemplification of the rough-house sport that travels under the name in this section of the country.” The game story explained,

The Marlboros encountered a far different proposition to any they had met in their O.H.A. experience. They were unaccustomed to the style of game that permits downright brutality, cross checking in the face and neck, tripping, hacking, slashing over the head, and boarding an opponent with intent to do bodily injury. All went unpunished except in glaring instances, and, as a consequence, the light-weighted Marlboros were soon worn down, and the Ottawas were enabled to make a strong enough finish to win the game by a good margin. The fine points of hockey were not altogether overlooked, but the science and skill of the games were dwarfed by the continuous attempts to get the man instead of the puck.

The *Star* added,

There were delays in the first half owing to injuries to Charlton, who was rendered unconscious by Smith’s cross check against the boards, McLaren, who was practically out of the play in the same way by Pulford, and to Wright, who got a flying skate in the thigh and a stick in the nose. In the

second half Phillips retired for a while from a crack in the mouth. Later in the game Moore nearly broke McLaren’s back with a cross check over the fence, and McGee cracked Geroux several times on the top of the head with his stick, when attacks were being made on the Marlboro goal.⁸⁵

Likewise, the *Toronto Globe* claimed that the Marlboros would have won “a game which was strictly hockey.” But “the hammering and jamming” of the Ottawas eventually wore the challengers down:

Slashing, tripping, the severest kind of cross-checking and a systematic method of hammering the Marlboros on the hands and wrists are the most effective points in their style. In addition, they have a habit of hitting a man on the head when the referee is not looking and body-checking an opponent into the boards after he has passed the puck. The rubber is not the objective point at all, but the man must be stopped, and if he is put out altogether so much the better.⁸⁶

Follow-up reports on the aftermath of the game expanded on this narrative of “brutal butchery”:

⁸⁵ *Toronto Star*, 24 February 1904, 10.

⁸⁶ *Toronto Globe*, 24 February 1904, 10. See also *Ottawa Citizen*, 24 February 1904, 6; 1 March 1904, 6; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 25 February 1904, 2; 1 March 1904, 2.

The Marlboros were almost to a man battered up fearfully on Tuesday, Phillips and McLaren being the chief sufferers. The latter was hurled into the boards very heavily a couple of times, and almost put out of business. Phillips, like all the rest of the forwards, was the recipient of many solid cracks on the arms and legs, and after the game he was barely able to walk. Winchester, whose playing was a decided surprise, finished the last half of the contest with an arm so lame and sore that he could barely hold his stick.⁸⁷

Finally, the *Toronto Star* remarked on its editorial page: “It is perhaps fortunate that a sanguinary public can make up for the paucity of bloody details from the Far East by reading the accounts of the Marlboro-Ottawa hockey matches.”⁸⁸

Ottawa successfully defended the Stanley Cup with an 11-2 victory in the second game – a match that even the Toronto press acknowledged as “clean and genuine hockey.”⁸⁹ Although there was little controversy over this particular

⁸⁷ *Toronto Globe*, 25 February 1904, 12. See also *Toronto Star*, 24 February 1904, 10; 27 February 1904, 8; *Toronto Globe*, 27 February 1904, 24; *Montreal Gazette*, 29 February 1904, 2. The Toronto players did seem to recover from their injuries surprisingly quickly, as they were reportedly “in excellent shape, although still showing marks of the encounter,” by the next day. See *Toronto Star*, 25 February 1904, 10.

⁸⁸ *Toronto Star*, 26 February 1904, 6.

⁸⁹ *Toronto Globe*, 26 February 1904, 10. See also *Toronto Star*, 26 February 1904, 10; *Montreal Star*, 26 February 1904, 2; *Ottawa Citizen*, 26 February 1904, 6; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 26 February 1904, 2.

game, Ottawa newspapers continued to talk about “the squealing of the Toronto press” following the conclusion of the series.⁹⁰ After the opening game, “the squealers from Squealville-on-the-Don raised an awful howl against the alleged brutality of the holders of Lord Stanley’s silverware,” noted the *Ottawa Citizen*.⁹¹ A few days later, the *Ottawa Evening Journal* offered the following rebuttal to complaints about violence made by Toronto newspapers:

As a matter of fact the match was not rough. It was hockey, such as is played in the C.A.H.L., F.A.H.L. [Federal Amateur Hockey League] and M. and N.W.L. [Manitoba and Northwestern Hockey League], and it would excite no comment in any places where clubs belonging to the leagues mentioned play. As it happened, the challenging team was composed of inexperienced players, who were not used to fast and strenuous hockey. According to the rules, body checking is permissible, and in the last players are fast and wary enough to avoid collisions with heavy cover and point men. The Marlboros, through their inexperience and slowness, simply ran into body checks.

⁹⁰ *Ottawa Citizen*, 25 February 1904, 6.

⁹¹ *Ottawa Citizen*, 26 February 1904, 6. See also 11 March 1904, 8.

The *Evening Journal* commentator concluded, “It will be a glorious day when Toronto produces athletes that are game. The trouble is that in that city the players are so petted and pampered that they are robbed of common sense and of the knowledge that silence is more commendable than the bubblings of an effervescent brain.”⁹² Finally, a letter-to-the-editor from a hockey fan in Toronto, which appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen*, provided another perspective on public perceptions of hockey. The writer apologized to the Ottawas “for the utterly unprovoked attacks made on them by the Toronto press,” and assured readers that the Marlboro players were not complaining about their treatment. “It is only the ‘grocery store strategists,’ i.e., the press, especially the old woman’s sporting paper, the Globe, that are kicking,” stated the letter. “It is no disgrace to be beaten by a better team, besides hockey is not supposed to be an ‘after-you-my-dear-Alphonse’ game.”⁹³ According to media reports, then, Toronto players were soft and “pampered,” and the city’s sportswriters were unmanly “squealers.” Neither group measured up to hockey’s dominant standard of strenuous masculinity.

Soon after the Ottawa-Toronto series, the Montreal Wanderers, champions of the F.A.H.L., battled the Silver Seven in what was scheduled to be a two-game,

⁹² *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 3 March 1904, 2.

⁹³ *Ottawa Citizen*, 27 February 1904, 6. See also 1 March 1904, 6.

total-goal series. However, when the opening match ended in a 5-5 draw in Montreal, the Wanderers refused to come to Ottawa for two games after Stanley Cup trustee P.D. Ross rejected their request to have the opening contest declared “no game” and replayed in Montreal. Because club officials and the Stanley Cup trustees could not agree on how to complete the series, the Wanderers’ challenge was abandoned and no more games were played.⁹⁴ Media accounts in various cities agreed that the Ottawa-Wanderer match was an extremely violent game. For instance, the *Ottawa Evening Journal* summed up the action in the headline, “HARD, DIRTY GAME AT MONTREAL ARENA – Soft Ice and Referee’s Laxity Led to Slugging in Stanley Cup Match. Many Casualties Reported.”⁹⁵ The *Montreal Star* pointed out, “At one time five men decorated the fence, two men were on the ice with bandaged heads, one man was lying in the Montreal or rather the Wanderers’ dressing room groaning with pain, and big spots of crimson about centre bore vivid testimony to the friendliness of the spirit that had reigned throughout the match.”⁹⁶ Press reports were fairly even-handed in attributing responsibility for the violence to both clubs, although newspapers based in Ottawa

⁹⁴ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 47-48; Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 140.

⁹⁵ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 3 March 1904, 2. See also *Ottawa Citizen*, 3 March 1904, 6; *Montreal Gazette*, 3 March 1904, 2.

⁹⁶ *Montreal Star*, 3 March 1904, 2.

and Montreal tended to blame the other side more than their own team for the “dirty work.”⁹⁷

Another narrative focused on the Wanderers’ reluctance to resume the series in Ottawa after the tie in the opening match. First, Ottawa newspapers claimed that Montreal competed more aggressively in the first game because Ottawa’s regular hard-hitting defensemen were absent from the line-up. In the words of the *Ottawa Citizen*, “Ottawa took a crippled team to Montreal, there was no Pulford or Moore along to command respect, the Wanderers saw their opening to flail Ottawa and they made the most of it, succeeding in sending the champions home fit subjects for attention from an ambulance corps.”⁹⁸ The *Citizen* also insinuated that fear of reprisals for the Wanderers’ dirty play in the opening contest played an important part in their decision to stay away from Ottawa – particularly with Pulford and Moore ready to return for the second game. “It may have been a case of cold feet in anticipation of direful retribution for the pummelling Ottawa got in Montreal on Wednesday night but Wanderers couldn’t see their way clear to coming up for tonight’s game,” stated the *Citizen*.⁹⁹ An

⁹⁷ See, for example, *Toronto Star*, 3 March 1904, 10; *Toronto Globe*, 3 March 1904, 12; 5 March 1904, 24; 7 March 1904, 10; *Ottawa Citizen*, 3 March 1904, 6; 4 March 1904, 4; 5 March 1904, 4, 6; 8 March 1904, 8; 11 March 1904, 8; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 3 March 1904, 2; *Montreal Gazette*, 3 March 1904, 2; *Montreal Star*, 3 March 1904, 2; 4 March 1904, 2; 7 March 1904, 2.

⁹⁸ *Ottawa Citizen*, 5 March 1904, 6.

⁹⁹ *Ottawa Citizen*, 4 March 1904, 6.

Ottawa club official added, “I feel sorry for the health of the Wanderers, and I am sending the team a case of heart and nerve cure, as [they] seem to require that kind of stimulant in Montreal.”¹⁰⁰

Not only did Ottawa papers question the courage of the Montreal men, they also held up their home team as exemplars of the type of toughness and hardiness expected in top-flight hockey. Manly players were expected to react to rough play “like men.” This meant accepting a certain degree of violence, tolerating pain and injury, and persevering through difficulty and danger. This resilience and durability was demonstrated by the Ottawas in the rough game against the Wanderers. “The cupholders although badly used up in Wednesday night’s game were not squealing,” stated the *Ottawa Citizen*. The next day, the *Citizen* added that “the Ottawa team can take its medicine with the next; every man took his taps and said nothing.”¹⁰¹ The *Ottawa Evening Journal* bolstered this view of the Silver Seven, as well:

Outside cities have become so used to Ottawa’s athletes’ reticence as to the injuries they may sustain in matches or the roughness with which they may be treated, that they would simply gasp if the players from the capital were to raise a ‘holler’ now. The reason is that the Ottawa boys are

¹⁰⁰ *Montreal Star*, 5 March 1904, 18.

¹⁰¹ *Ottawa Citizen*, 4 March 1904, 6; 5 March 1904, 6. See also *Montreal Star*, 7 March 1904, 2.

game. It is only when a leg is broken, as in Westwick’s case last winter, that a protest is made. The Ottawas, if they know how to give punishment, know how to avoid it. They are a hardy, clever lot and they play without grouching.¹⁰²

A week later, Ottawa defeated the Brandon Wheat Kings by scores of 6-3 and 9-3 in the last Stanley Cup challenge of the 1904 season.¹⁰³ The *Ottawa Citizen* used its comments on the first game with Brandon to tie together a number of narratives from the previous series with the Montreal Wanderers. First, the *Citizen* argued that Ottawa’s opponents were the key contributor to violent hockey. “[T]here was no inclination to the sanguinary, win-at-any-cost style and the game will go far to refute the slanders cast at the Stanley cup-holders by the disgruntled press behind some of the teams which have been after the trophy this winter,” asserted the *Citizen*. “It showed that Ottawa can and will play a clean game if the opponent is after square hockey.”¹⁰⁴ The *Citizen* also reminded its

¹⁰² *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 3 March 1904, 2.

¹⁰³ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 48-49; Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 140.

¹⁰⁴ *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 March 1904, 8. See also 11 March 1904, 8. There was general agreement among the media that the game was played cleanly. See, for example, *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 10 March 1904, 2; *Montreal Gazette*, 10 March 1904, 2; *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1904, 10; *Toronto Globe*, 10 March 1904, 10.

readers that some degree of roughness could be expected in a highly competitive contest – and that a worthy adversary would not complain about poor treatment:

Everybody was pleased with the honest effort on the part of both teams to give good clean hockey. True, there were a few men ruled off, but this will occur in any game and the offences were not serious and committed in the heat of play, the best of feeling existing between the combatants throughout....There are no squealers with the Wheat City people and they played a plucky game every minute of the struggle. There is no ambulance train needed and no one will say so quicker than the Brandon players themselves.¹⁰⁵

Although two Brandon players were hospitalized for treatment of injuries suffered during the second game, Ottawa newspapers maintained that the “gashes on the head” inflicted by the Silver Seven were not severe.¹⁰⁶ Besides, “[w]hile both teams were to an extent to blame Brandon undoubtedly showed the worse effects but Ottawa was also badly hammered around the body and legs where it told as greatly but didn’t show so much.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ *Ottawa Citizen*, 11 March 1904, 8.

¹⁰⁶ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 12 March 1904, 1. See also *Ottawa Citizen*, 14 March 1904, 8; *Montreal Gazette*, 12 March 1904, 2; *Montreal Star*, 12 March 1904, 20; *Toronto Globe*, 12 March 1904, 24.

¹⁰⁷ *Ottawa Citizen*, 12 March 1904, 8.

Although the dramatic cross-country journey of the challengers from Dawson City, Yukon, attracted considerable interest, the visitors were completely overmatched in their January 1905 series with Ottawa, losing by scores of 9-2 and 23-2.¹⁰⁸ The Dawson City squad had actually impressed a number of observers in practice sessions before the series began. “They average about 160 pounds in weight, and are a rugged looking lot, apparently fit to rough it up to any degree if necessary,” reported the *Montreal Gazette*.¹⁰⁹ The next day, the *Gazette* was even more optimistic: “The team had a work-out this morning, and before a large crowd of railbirds made probably the most favourable impression of any team yet seen here in search of the trophy. They are one and all fine big fellows, able to rough it up with the best of them, fast skaters and good stick handlers.”¹¹⁰ The *Toronto Star* had a similar impression of what the newspaper called “the \$10,000 tourists from the Klondike”: “They are big and strong, and should be adept in the rough-house style of hockey peculiar to this end of the country.”¹¹¹ However, while there were a few minor incidents involving “rough work” during the series,

¹⁰⁸ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 50-52; McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter*, 45-53; Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 141-143.

¹⁰⁹ *Montreal Gazette*, 12 January 1905, 2.

¹¹⁰ *Montreal Gazette*, 13 January 1905, 2. See also *Toronto Globe*, 13 January 1905, 10.

¹¹¹ *Toronto Star*, 13 January 1905, 5.

the games simply were not competitive enough to incite any degree of controversy.¹¹² The *Toronto Globe*’s comment on the second game illustrates this lack of intensity: “Ottawa simply skated away from them at the whistle, and continued to pile up the goals with a merciless monotonous regularity which was farcical in the extreme.”¹¹³

The March 1905 series between Ottawa and the Rat Portage Thistles illustrates a number of themes that are central to this chapter. Since their first Stanley Cup challenge in March 1903, the Thistles had established themselves as one of the strongest teams in Canada.¹¹⁴ The opening game of the series was a 9-3 victory for Rat Portage. Media coverage showed a strong consensus in attributing the win primarily to the impressive speed of the Thistles’ forwards.¹¹⁵ Rat Portage’s skating ability was especially important against a physical team like Ottawa. A *Toronto Star* headline, for example, described the Thistles as “TOO

¹¹² *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 14 January 1905, 3. See also 17 January 1905, 2; *Montreal Gazette*, 14 January 1905, 4; 16 January 1905, 2; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 14 January 1905, 8; 16 January 1905, 6.

¹¹³ *Toronto Globe*, 17 January 1905, 12.

¹¹⁴ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 53-56; Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 143-145.

¹¹⁵ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 8 March 1905, 2; *Ottawa Citizen*, 8 March 1905, 8; *Montreal Gazette*, 8 March 1905, 2; *Montreal Star*, 8 March 1905, 10; *Toronto Star*, 8 March 1905, 10; 9 March 1905, 10; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 March 1905, 1, 6; 9 March 1905, 6.

FAST FOR ROUGH-HOUSE,” and the writer explained that the Ottawa defenders “found the Thistles too fast and too artful dodgers for them to body effectively.”¹¹⁶ The other widely reported feature of the match was the clubs’ “clean” methods. First, the Rat Portage team apparently utilized a checking style that relied more on the skilful use of the stick – rather than the body – to separate opposing players from the puck.¹¹⁷ This led to “clean and gentlemanly” hockey.¹¹⁸ Most media observers also argued that the two-referee system – which was used for the first time in Ottawa during the opening game of the series – “had a wholesome effect” by helping to reduce the frequency of rough play.¹¹⁹ For instance, the *Toronto Star* claimed that “the moral influence of the extra official was probably responsible for the clean tactics of the locals.”¹²⁰ According to the

¹¹⁶ *Toronto Star*, 8 March 1905, 10.

¹¹⁷ *Montreal Star*, 8 March 1905, 10; *Montreal Gazette*, 8 March 1905, 2.

¹¹⁸ *Montreal Star*, 8 March 1905, 10.

¹¹⁹ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 8 March 1905, 2. As Jenish explains, “Hockey rules in the West stipulated two referees, the second a judge of play, whose main responsibility was to look for dirty work and mete out penalties. The western rule was in effect for game one and the eastern for the second.” See Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 144. See also *Ottawa Citizen*, 7 March 1905, 8; 8 March 1905, 8; 9 March 1905, 8; 10 March 1905, 8; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 7 March 1905, 1, 6; *Montreal Gazette*, 8 March 1905, 2; 9 March 1905, 2; *Montreal Star*, 7 March 1905, 2; 8 March 1905, 11; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 15 March 1905, 2.

¹²⁰ *Toronto Star*, 8 March 1905, 10. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 March 1905, 6; 9 March 1905, 1, 6; 10 March 1905, 6.

Montreal Gazette, “It was said everywhere that the contest was the cleanest played in Ottawa.”¹²¹

In contrast, the second game of the series was characterized as being extremely rough, and it was widely speculated that the Ottawa club had flooded the ice just prior to the beginning of the match in order to slow down the challengers.¹²² The *Toronto Star* summarized this narrative in the headline, “OTTAWA’S SHABBY TRICK, FLOODED THE SOFT ICE – Rat Portage Thistles Defeated in the Heavy Going by the Rough-house Methods of their Opponents – Visitors Cut About the Head and Body.” The game report stated, “The ice was covered with water, and the marvelous speed of the Thistles was not given chance to assert itself. Ottawa played one of the do-or-die games for which the Capital is justly famous, and after wearing down the fast Western aggregation, won out by a score of 4 goals to 2.”¹²³ The *Toronto* paper continued, “Ottawa was out to win. There was no mistaking that from the time the teams started to play. The home team checked fiercely and roughly all the time....The Thistles

¹²¹ *Montreal Gazette*, 9 March 1905, 2. See also *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 8 March 1905, 4; *Ottawa Citizen*, 8 March 1905, 8; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 March 1905, 9; *Toronto Globe*, 10 March 1905, 10.

¹²² *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 10 March 1905, 1, 2; 11 March 1905, 19; *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 March 1905, 8; 11 March 1905, 8; 13 March 1905, 8; *Montreal Star*, 10 March 1905, 10; *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1905, 10; 11 March 1905, 9; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 10 March 1905, 1, 6.

¹²³ *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1905, 10. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 10 March 1905, 2.

were unable to dodge in their customary manner, and Pulford and Moore laid into them with all the force of their excess avoirdupois. Griffis, McGimsie, Phillips, and Hooper were jolted early and often, and they soon lost what little speed they were able to show on the ice.”¹²⁴ In the opinion of a writer on the *Star*’s sports page, “Evidently one game of clean hockey was too much of a novelty for Ottawa. The cup trustees might take a hand in and regulate the woodchoppers.”¹²⁵

A number of observers cited the shortcomings of referee Mike Grant as a contributor to the violence, as well. “Grant had been recommended as a strict official, but he failed to show any of it,” asserted the *Toronto Star*. “He let pretty nearly everything go, and, although he ruled off seven players, the penalties he handed out were of only a couple of minutes each, and had not the slightest effect in stopping the rough work.”¹²⁶ However, most of the blame went to the Ottawa team. The *Toronto Star* commented,

Evidently the Ottawa motto is to win by hook or crook, by fair means or foul. By flooding the ice last night an hour before the match, when there was no possibility of the water freezing, it was plainly evident that the Ottawas were

¹²⁴ *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1905, 10. See also *Toronto Globe*, 10 March 1905, 10.

¹²⁵ *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1905, 10.

¹²⁶ *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1905, 10. See also *Toronto Globe*, 10 March 1905, 10; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 10 March 1905, 6.

taking an unfair advantage of their opponents, who depend almost entirely upon their great speed for a victory. Besides, the slow, heavy going enabled the Ottawa team to resort to their notorious rough-house tactics, and by all accounts they certainly lived up to their reputations.¹²⁷

According to the *Toronto Star*'s game story, “the Ottawa forward line...chopped the Thistles about the face and head incessantly....and the Ottawa public seemed to think it was the proper sort of thing to do under the circumstances. They cheered them repeatedly, and when Referee Mike Grant of Montreal did call them to time for their ‘rough-house’ tactics, they hooted the official and called him ‘robber.’” The *Toronto Star* added, “Nearly every player on the Thistle team received nasty cuts during the game. Brown was the only one to escape. Even Goal-keeper Giroux was chopped over the face by McGee, while all the others got theirs at different stages of the game....McGimsie was forced to quit in the second half with a painful crack over the knee which Alf Smith very kindly handed him during a melee.”¹²⁸ Likewise, the *Montreal Star* reported, “Every man in the Rat Portage team is marked about the face, and many times the game had to be stopped. The rough work did not consist in body checking, but in

¹²⁷ *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1905, 10.

¹²⁸ *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1905, 10. See also *Toronto Globe*, 10 March 1905, 10.

cross checking and jabbing in the face.”¹²⁹ Following the game, the *Toronto Star* listed the injured Rat Portage players, and pointed out that,

Griffis is probably the most damaged of the lot. He has a bad knee, damaged toe, broken nose, and badly cracked up arms, but he is prepared to go the limit to-night. Hooper has a sore hip, where he was hit by Gilmour, while Phillips’ arms are all black and blue, and muscles are very stiff. McGimsie was not feeling overly well all day, but he will be back in the game again. His knee is sore and his arms bruised, but he says he will forget it all when he goes on the ice.¹³⁰

The *Toronto Globe* portrayed the match in similar terms, reporting that “every little art and device known to the Capitals’ accomplished ‘rough-house’ artists was utilized to destroy the usefulness of the opposition. The Thistles’ wonderful speed was discounted on the watery surface and by jabbing, jollying, cross-checking methods of the Ottawas.” According to the *Globe*, “Pulford was in his glory, and so was Moore. They waded into the Thistles in butcher fashion, and every forward who got near them was jolted good and plenty....McGee was dirty. He hooked and jolted with his stick, and several times deliberately hit

¹²⁹ *Montreal Star*, 10 March 1905, 10.

¹³⁰ *Toronto Star*, 11 March 1905, 9.

Thistle players over the head. Gilmour used his stick just as freely as McGee, and between them they cut the Thistles up badly.”¹³¹ However, the *Montreal Star* had a slightly different view of the match. According to the *Star*’s correspondent, Pulford, in particular, “gave a great exhibition of first class hockey. It was also pleasant to note his clean style....He was vigorous, it is true, and his weight invariably was brought to bear, but it was legitimate and there were many rousing cheers as he stopped the dangerous flight of Phillips and Griffis.”¹³² The *Ottawa Evening Journal* also offered an alternate perspective which accused Rat Portage of violent tactics: “[W]hen it came to retaliation they were equally guilty with the home team, and what counted more, they were slicker at the tricks. Griffis, the big rover, has the art of using his body, knees and elbows down to a science. In proof of this Billy Gilmour’s body is a writhing testament. Pulford, too, had to stand the brunt of many violent shocks, which perhaps no other player in the game to-day could receive without going under.”¹³³

¹³¹ *Toronto Globe*, 10 March 1905, 10. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 10 March 1905, 2.

¹³² *Montreal Star*, 10 March 1905, 10. For more comments on the effectiveness of body checking, see *Montreal Gazette*, 11 March 1903, 2; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 2 January 1904, 12; *Montreal Star*, 2 January 1904, 18; *Toronto Globe*, 5 January 1904, 10; *Toronto Star*, 24 February 1904, 10; 10 March 1905, 10; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 10 March 1905, 2; *Toronto Globe*, 13 March 1905, 10.

¹³³ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 10 March 1905, 2.

The *Winnipeg Tribune* covered the western challengers from Rat Portage almost as if they were representatives of Winnipeg. The *Tribune* provided extensive coverage, and, during games, large crowds followed “live” telegraph reports at various locations in Winnipeg. “It is possible that greater interest could not have been felt if a Winnipeg team had gone east to wrest the cup,” claimed the newspaper.¹³⁴ Like the *Toronto Star* and the *Toronto Globe*, the *Winnipeg Tribune* attributed the Thistles’ loss in the second game to Ottawa’s “tricky and rough play.” According to the *Tribune*, “If any team is desirous of getting wise to tactics which any club would disdain to use and put on a pretence of playing clean hockey, they should just take a trip to the capital.” The report described how the home team manipulated the ice conditions to slow down the faster challengers, enabling the Senators’ “ponderous defence to better carry out their prearranged plan of disabling the visiting line.” The *Tribune* also suggested that Ottawa opposed the use of a second referee in this match in order to get away with rough play: “They had practically full swing last night and butchered and pounded the Rats to their hearts’ content.”¹³⁵ In addition to “the heavy jolts handed out so numerous and viciously by the cupholders’ bulky back division,” the Thistles faced more questionable tactics, as “the Ottawa forward line gave their attention to the visitors by chopping and cutting them with their sticks whenever they got a

¹³⁴ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 March 1905, 6. See also 8 March 1905, 1, 9; 9 March 1905, 1, 6; 10 March 1905, 1, 6, 8; 13 March 1905, 1, 6, 10.

¹³⁵ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 10 March 1905, 6. See also 10 March 1905, 8.

chance. McGee and Gilmour, who came out at the last minute, were among the leaders in this respect, and as a result, Brown was the only Rat Portage player who escaped without some cut or gash as a remembrance of the match.”¹³⁶

When the Thistles lost the third – and deciding – game of the series by a 5-4 margin, the *Winnipeg Tribune* viewed the outcome as a logical continuation of the second match. “The usefulness of the Thistles was so greatly affected [by the roughness of the second game] that when they went into the battle on Saturday night they could not stand the terrible pace of the struggle, which resolved itself down to one in which human endurance was the swaying power,” the author argued. Putting the match into a broader context and history, the *Tribune* stated, “To those who have a knowledge of the tactics employed by the Ottawas, there was cause for little surprise at the result of Saturday night’s game. The policy of the cup-holders since they have come into possession of the mug has been to retain it at any cost and by any manner, just so long as they can defeat the challenging team.”¹³⁷ The newspaper’s game story provided a more detailed explanation for the loss:

All the challengers were again badly used up. Griffis and McGimsie, when they went on the ice, were weak still from Thursday night’s contest, and they bore further marks of

¹³⁶ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 10 March 1905, 6.

¹³⁷ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 13 March 1905, 1.

the gruelling match when the game finished. Griffis had a swollen nose and cut lips and a slashed forehead, while McGimsie was black and blue on all his limbs from the cracks of the Ottawa sticks. Tommy Phillips had his face cut in three places and one of his eyes closed, while Hooper received a bad knee from Pulford, who charged him from the rear in the first half, sending him almost over the fence into the crowd.

During the first half, the double referee system “had an effect in keeping the match comparatively free from rough work,” the *Tribune* conceded. “In the second half, however, the Ottawas cut loose in their well-known style, and the game resolved itself into more of a prize fight than a hockey match. They slashed and cut the challengers at every chance for which few penalties were inflicted, while rigorous penalties were handed out to the Thistles for minor offences, such as tripping.”¹³⁸

Toronto newspapers expressed an even more powerful narrative of “brutal butchery” at the conclusion of the third game. Both the *Toronto Star* and the *Toronto Globe* were harsh critics of the Ottawa hockey team, and their observations on the Rat Portage series echoed comments they had made previously about the Ottawas’ propensity for violence. For instance, even though

¹³⁸ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 13 March 1905, 6. See also *Montreal Star*, 13 March 1905, 10.

the opening match of the series seemed to be relatively free of rough play, the following comment appeared on the *Toronto Star* editorial page after the first game: “If something isn’t soon done, the dictionary-makers will hardly know whether to classify hockey as a sport or a crime.”¹³⁹ On the same day, the *Toronto Globe* made it clear that the paper was no supporter of Ottawa: “The defeat of Ottawa in the present Stanley Cup series would be the best thing that could happen to the game of hockey throughout Canada.”¹⁴⁰ As a result, it is not surprising that the *Toronto Star*’s headline after the third game of the series read, “RAT PORTAGE TEAM HACKED AND CUT SO OTTAWAS HOLD THE STANLEY CUP – Deciding Game of the Series at Ottawa Won by the Home Team by 5 Goals to 4 After a Rough Contest – Visitors’ Fast Forward Line Chopped and Jabbed to Ribbons by Cup Defenders.” The game report stated, “The visitors were ahead at half-time by 2 to 1, and with fair treatment would undoubtedly have won the match. The Ottawas resorted to their notorious rough-house tactics and fairly chopped the speedy forward line of the Thistles to pieces. The attacking quartet of the Westerners were a sight to behold as they dashed up and down the ice with blood streaming from the deep gashes in their faces caused by the foul play of the Ottawa team.”¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ *Toronto Star*, 9 March 1905, 6.

¹⁴⁰ *Toronto Globe*, 9 March 1905, 10.

¹⁴¹ *Toronto Star*, 13 March 1905, 10.

The *Toronto Star* story continued, “Playing straight, legitimate hockey, where speed, skill, and endurance were the prime factors, Rat Portage could beat Ottawa every night in the week, but the dirty tactics in which they are past masters again pulled them out of the hole, and they thus disposed of the most dangerous opponents they have met in many a long day.”¹⁴² Like the *Winnipeg Tribune*, the *Toronto Globe* argued that several of the Thistles “were still rather weak from the fearful gruelling which they took in the previous game.”¹⁴³ In addition, both Toronto newspapers downplayed the severity of the Thistles’ penalties in the final contest, while describing in greater detail the infractions committed – and damages inflicted – by Ottawa. For example, the *Toronto Star* reported, “Phillips got three or four nasty cracks. On one occasion Pulford and Smith sandwiched him and McGee struck him in the face with his stick. Later Moore laid him out with a slash across the mouth and nose.”¹⁴⁴ Finally, the *Star*’s description of the Rat Portage players’ appearance following the match also bolstered its narrative of “brutal butchery”:

Tom Phillips had his face cut open in three places and his eye closed, and he looked as though he had been in a

¹⁴² *Toronto Star*, 13 March 1905, 10.

¹⁴³ *Toronto Globe*, 13 March 1905, 10.

¹⁴⁴ *Toronto Star*, 13 March 1905, 10. See also *Toronto Globe*, 13 March 1905, 10. For a similar perspective from Montreal, see *Montreal Star*, 13 March 1905, 10.

railroad wreck. Griffis had a beautiful countenance, decorated by a swollen nose, split lips, and a gash on his forehead. McGimsie and Hooper’s faces were like unto raw beefsteak, and Bellefeuille and Giroux had cuts on their heads. The Thistles took defeat gamely, though, and never kicked.¹⁴⁵

A counter-narrative to the Winnipeg and Toronto perspective was put forward by Ottawa newspapers, which generally defended the conduct of the Stanley Cup holders. The *Ottawa Citizen* described the deciding game of the series as a “MODEL OF CLEAN HOCKEY,” and declared the contest to be “a fair and manly battle free from the taint of foulness.” The *Citizen* explained, “The match can be pointed to as an example of cleanliness and a proof of the fact that clean hockey can be played in the fastest and most important of games. Fifteen penalties were imposed by Referee Grant, 8 on Rat Portage and 7 on Ottawa men, but they were for tripping and venial offences. There was no ill-feeling apparent at any stage of the game and even the defeated admitted that they had no kick coming on this account.”¹⁴⁶ The *Ottawa Evening Journal* also eagerly pointed out that the Thistles were “more frequently and more severely penalized” than the

¹⁴⁵ *Toronto Star*, 13 March 1905, 10. See also *Toronto Globe*, 13 March 1905, 10.

¹⁴⁶ *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 March 1905, 8.

Ottawas, “which, if anything, should show which team is the greater offender.”¹⁴⁷

The *Evening Journal* reporter added that penalties were “due as much to the exceeding strictness of the officials as to the hard work of the players, for, in view of the enormity of the stake, the amateur championship of the world in hockey, represented by the much inscribed Stanley cup, the play was tolerably clean.”¹⁴⁸

The clearest statement of the game’s quality was made on the editorial page of the *Ottawa Citizen*:

The final on Saturday night was one of the most brilliant exhibitions of hockey ever seen in Canada....The most satisfactory feature of the contest from the standpoint of the public was the absence of intentional rough play and scrapping. When two such strong teams meet it is unavoidable that owing to the swiftness of the game and the tenseness of the strain upon the players there should be some unimportant accidents, but the games on the whole were examples of good, clean sport and demonstrated that under the most exciting conditions well-disciplined teams

¹⁴⁷ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 13 March 1905, 2. See also *Toronto Star*, 13 March 1905, 10.

¹⁴⁸ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 13 March 1905, 2.

have no excuse to resort to roughness and the intentional injury of opponents.¹⁴⁹

Not only did the *Citizen*’s analysis of the game differ significantly from the narratives constructed by Winnipeg and Toronto newspapers, it also demonstrated a high degree of tolerance for the roughness reported in the *Citizen*’s own game story. For instance, just two pages after the editorial comment, a reporter’s account of the game stated, ““Play is vicious and checking heavy.” More specifically, a player was “almost sent over the fence” as a result of a body check; there were several slashing penalties handed out; men were injured in collisions; and two players were checked into the boards head-first.¹⁵⁰ The “good, clean sport” described by Ottawa newspapers is also difficult to reconcile with the *Ottawa Evening Journal*’s report that, “Phillips’ face was terribly marked up after the game, his left eye almost closed and his cheeks bearing half a dozen cuts as a result of collisions with flying sticks.”¹⁵¹ Thus, in putting forward a narrative of “tolerably clean” hockey, the *Citizen* and the *Evening Journal* either had to overlook or accept the “vicious” elements that were also part of the game.

¹⁴⁹ *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 March 1905, 6. See also 17 March 1905, 8.

¹⁵⁰ *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 March 1905, 8.

¹⁵¹ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 13 March 1905, 2.

Another key narrative described the toughness and persistence of the Thistles in the face of rough and physical play.¹⁵² For instance, the *Montreal Gazette* attributed the Rat Portage victory in the opening match to the challengers’ “nerve and stamina,” while the *Winnipeg Tribune* emphasized that the club’s forward line “can stand a good deal of roughing it.”¹⁵³ Team captain Tom Phillips stated after the second game, “We were beaten, and we are willing to take it.... We are not squealing about roughness or anything of the kind. They had us tonight where they wanted us, but give us keen ice, and they can try all the roughness they want.”¹⁵⁴ Similarly, the *Toronto Globe* noted, “Phillips, Griffis and Hooper were roughly used all through, but they took their medicine, and at the end were plugging away just as gamely as ever.”¹⁵⁵ The *Montreal Gazette* also expressed admiration for the Thistles’ efforts in the second game: “The wonder of it is that so few players were injured, though a nasty splash of red opposite one goal told

¹⁵² Media accounts of the March 1903 series between Rat Portage and Ottawa also made frequent reference to the “pluck” of the challengers. See *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 March 1903, 6; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 13 March 1903, 10; *Montreal Gazette*, 13 March 1903, 2; *Montreal Star*, 13 March 1903, 2; 16 March 1903, 18; *Toronto Globe*, 13 March 1903, 12; *Toronto Star*, 16 March 1903, 8; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 13 March 1903, 8; 16 March 1903, 8.

¹⁵³ *Montreal Gazette*, 8 March 1905, 2; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 9 March 1905, 6.

¹⁵⁴ *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1905, 10. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 10 March 1905, 6.

¹⁵⁵ *Toronto Globe*, 10 March 1905, 10. See also *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 13 March 1905, 2.

an unpleasant story. It spoke well for the physical condition of the players and it is evident that they must possess marvellous stamina to have held out in such a game.”¹⁵⁶ Another *Gazette* report added, “The western boys manfully stuck to their uphill fight and played clean hockey in the face of most adverse circumstances. The heavy checking was enough to deter less hardy players, but the young men from the west were game to the finish, and, better still, they played as clean a style of play in the end as in the beginning.”¹⁵⁷ At the conclusion of the series, Ottawa manager R.T. Shillington reportedly stated about the Thistles, “These young fellows are splendid sports. They are not squealers, and I want you to know that they have never made a complaint to us of any sort since they arrived in Ottawa.”¹⁵⁸ Finally, the *Ottawa Citizen* praised Rat Portage, while directing criticism at the Toronto press: “The visitors took their defeat in the proper spirit. They’re not squealers. Toronto papers please note.”¹⁵⁹

Debates between newspapers based in Ottawa and Toronto, in particular, continued for several days after the conclusion of the series, as reporters and other observers expressed opinions and recollections about the degree of violence in the

¹⁵⁶ *Montreal Gazette*, 10 March 1905, 2.

¹⁵⁷ *Montreal Gazette*, 11 March 1905, 2.

¹⁵⁸ *Montreal Star*, 13 March 1905, 10.

¹⁵⁹ *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 March 1905, 8.

Ottawa-Rat Portage series.¹⁶⁰ For instance, in a front-page headline and story, the *Ottawa Evening Journal* brought its readers the *Toronto Star*’s perspective: “HOW THEY LOVE THE OTTAWAS – A Toronto Report of the Cup Match. – A WESTERN VIEW OF A STRENUOUS GAME. – Toronto Star Publishes a Blood Curdling Account of Saturday’s Match.”¹⁶¹ The *Toronto Star* responded with its own rebuttal of Ottawa opinion on the series:

Ottawa hockey critics let the home team down by stating that the final game was not any rougher than Stanley Cup contests demanded. The excuse was certainly unique. We’d like to know what difference there is between Stanley Cup hockey and any other kind of hockey, and why should slashing and jabbing opponents’ faces to ribbons be condoned and described as ‘strenuous methods?’ It’s downright brutality and would not be tolerated any place outside of Ottawa.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ See, for example, *Ottawa Citizen*, 14 March 1905, 8; 17 March 1905, 8; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 15 March 1905, 2; *Toronto Star*, 16 March 1905, 10; 21 March 1905, 10; *Toronto Globe*, 17 March 1905, 8.

¹⁶¹ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 13 March 1905, 1. See also *Toronto Star*, 13 March 1905, 10.

¹⁶² *Toronto Star*, 15 March 1905, 10. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 17 March 1905, 2.

A poem on the *Toronto Star* editorial page, titled, “The Future,” included a question about hockey – likely inspired by the recent Stanley Cup series:

Will they play hockey in those days,
and will they maim and slay,
Or will they change to other games, less
deadly forms of play?¹⁶³

Similarly, when a final series between Ottawa and the Montreal Victorias could not be arranged, the *Toronto Star* commented, “Evidently the Montreal Vics consider that discretion is the better part of valor and will remain away from Ottawa while the chopping-block and the choppers remain in the game.”¹⁶⁴

Despite these polarized positions, a narrative of engaging and hard-fought – but clean – hockey also emerged from media coverage of the series. Referee Mike Grant, of the Montreal Victorias, expressed this viewpoint in his comments after the second game: “The game was a rough one, as a contest for such an important stake would naturally be, but it was hard rather than unduly dirty. Both teams played hard and checked hard.”¹⁶⁵ Grant told the *Ottawa Citizen*, “It was certainly strenuous hockey, and a very good game considering the condition of the

¹⁶³ *Toronto Star*, 16 March 1905, 6. Other topics addressed in the poem included political predictions, chorus girls, and the price of eggs, coal, and rent.

¹⁶⁴ *Toronto Star*, 15 March 1905, 10. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 17 March 1905, 2.

¹⁶⁵ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 10 March 1905, 2. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 10 March 1905, 2.

ice. It was very, very hard hockey on the part of both teams, and very fast, as anyone could see. A wonderful game.”¹⁶⁶ The *Ottawa Citizen* drew a similar distinction, noting, “While the checking was necessarily hard and close, it was for the most part fair.”¹⁶⁷ Another observer told the *Montreal Star* that rough hockey could still be clean hockey: “While the play was rough and hard, he considered that it was particularly clean. Nearly every bit of rough play was legitimate, and the players of both sides used their bodies to effect.”¹⁶⁸ Even the *Toronto Globe* – a frequent critic of Ottawa’s violent tactics – carried a somewhat surprising sports commentary that attacked “[t]he snivelling concern that is manifested just now over ‘the death of the game of hockey from rough play.’” The *Globe* writer ridiculed “the ill-informed, academic declarations that the great winter sport is ‘near its demise,’” and tried to clarify the difference between “rough” and “foul” acts:

There is rough play in the game, and there always will be.
It is rough, in football, to grab a man and throw him down;
it is rough, in boxing, to punch a man in the jaw. But these
things are part of the game, and a competitor knows what to
expect. If a boxer hits below the belt that is foul, and it is

¹⁶⁶ *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 March 1905, 8. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 10 March 1905, 6; *Montreal Star*, 10 March 1905, 10.

¹⁶⁷ *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 March 1905, 8.

¹⁶⁸ *Montreal Star*, 10 March 1905, 10.

only against foul work that there can be any complaint in hockey. Many forms of tactics are prohibited in the rules, and it is foul play, not rough play, that is reprehensible. The distinction is a very important one, even if the issue is so frequently confused.¹⁶⁹

The formula for exciting and high-quality hockey was perhaps most clearly expressed by the *Montreal Gazette* after the deciding game. “[F]rom the first play until the last second of the final period had ticked away, there were sixty minutes of the most exciting article of hockey ever served up in Ottawa,” stated the *Gazette*. “It was fast, it was stirring, it was hard, sometimes it was rough, there were great bursts of combination, brilliant rushes by individuals, there were impacts when strong men met, [and] there were shudders of anxiety when some unfortunate victim of a collision was helped to his feet...”¹⁷⁰ Similarly, a story in the *Ottawa Free Press* captured the intensity and physicality of such “furiously fought contests”: “Defending goal-keepers and defense men in front of them, fairly threw themselves on an individual player or combination, striving to penetrate their lines. Head and body were exposed to untold dangers to protect their trenches. A sweeping rush would be met with a thunderous crash, and when

¹⁶⁹ *Toronto Globe*, 20 March 1905, 10.

¹⁷⁰ *Montreal Gazette*, 13 March 1905, 2.

the puck got clear again, one man was always stretched helpless on the ice.”¹⁷¹

On the other hand, such games could also be interpreted as “brutal butchery.”

The *Montreal Star*, for example, saw the same game in a less favourable light, and argued that spectators had become too accepting of violence. “It was a rough game, unquestionably so,” stated the *Star*. “True, it was not so rough as most Stanley Cup games, but precedent is no reason why brutality should be tolerated. The public, unfortunately, is used to it, and thinks there is nothing out of the way in seeing a man stretched out in agony, or a referee wiping the blood from a wound in a player’s face. It is safe to say that the prize ring is better conducted than are many of the Stanley Cup games.”¹⁷²

In late February and early March 1906, Ottawa faced challenges from Queen’s University, winners of the intercollegiate title, and Smiths Falls, champions of the F.A.H.L. Queen’s University “proved to be more a distraction than a legitimate challenge to Ottawa,” as the Silver Seven swept the series by scores of 16-7 and 12-7.¹⁷³ While Smiths Falls lost a narrow 5-4 decision in the first game, Ottawa prevailed 8-2 in the second game to defend their title

¹⁷¹ *Ottawa Free Press* quoted in *Winnipeg Tribune*, 13 March 1905, 1. See also *Montreal Star*, 13 March 1905, 11.

¹⁷² *Montreal Star*, 13 March 1905, 10.

¹⁷³ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 57. See also Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 146.

successfully.¹⁷⁴ Like the games between Ottawa and Dawson City, neither series was sufficiently competitive to be considered “overly rough.”¹⁷⁵ The *Winnipeg Tribune* described the opening game with Queen’s as “a one-sided featureless exhibition,” and the series appeared to be “clean throughout.”¹⁷⁶ The *Toronto Star* suggested that Ottawa “played parlor hockey against Queen’s because they could beat them without roughing it up.”¹⁷⁷ The match-up with Smiths Falls was more “strenuous,” although, according to the *Ottawa Citizen*, the Silver Seven “played a clean, manly game.”¹⁷⁸

Ottawa’s reign as Stanley Cup holder came to a close in March 1906 when the Montreal Wanderers defeated the Silver Seven 12-10 in a two-game, total-goal series. The two teams had tied for first place in the Eastern Canada Amateur

¹⁷⁴ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 57; Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 146.

¹⁷⁵ *Ottawa Citizen*, 2 March 1906, 8.

¹⁷⁶ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 28 February 1906, 6; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 28 February 1906, 2. See also *Ottawa Citizen*, 28 February 1906, 8; *Toronto Star*, 28 February 1906, 12; 1 March 1906, 12; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 1 March 1906, 2.

¹⁷⁷ *Toronto Star*, 5 March 1906, 8. On the other hand, the *Montreal Star* thought the second game still featured “that cruel jabbing and cutting for which one or two of the champions are noted.” See *Montreal Star*, 1 March 1906, 2.

¹⁷⁸ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 9 March 1906, 8; *Ottawa Citizen*, 7 March 1906, 8. See also *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 7 March 1906, 2; 9 March 1906, 2; *Ottawa Citizen*, 9 March 1906, 8; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 7 March 1906, 8; *Toronto Star*, 7 March 1906, 8; *Toronto Globe*, 7 March 1906, 12; *Montreal Star*, 9 March 1906, 2; *Montreal Gazette*, 9 March 1906, 2.

Hockey Association (E.C.A.H.A.) regular season standings with 9-1 records, so the play-off series would determine both the league and Stanley Cup champion. The Wanderers won the first game 9-1 in Montreal, but the Ottawas stormed back at home in the second game, taking a 9-1 lead of their own to tie the series at ten goals each. However, the Wanderers’ Lester Patrick scored twice in the final two minutes of the second game to clinch the series for Montreal.¹⁷⁹

The *Montreal Gazette* established the tone for the series in an article about the selection of a referee. “There are big issues at stake and neither side is likely to use parlor methods,” wrote the *Gazette*. “It is not being hinted at that the contests are likely to prove unduly strenuous, but neither is it being pretended that these matches will prove white glove functions.”¹⁸⁰ The *Montreal Star* printed a cartoon of a hockey player encased in metal from head to toe, accompanied by the following message: “It is now up to the Wanderers to secure armored steel plate suits. They are tied with the abbatoirs of Ottawa.”¹⁸¹ Surprisingly, though, the opening game of the series proved to be “remarkably clean,” with no major incidents of violence reported in the newspapers covering the event.¹⁸² However,

¹⁷⁹ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 57-60; Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 146-148.

¹⁸⁰ *Montreal Gazette*, 13 March 1906, 2.

¹⁸¹ *Montreal Star*, 12 March 1906, 2.

¹⁸² *Ottawa Citizen*, 15 March 1906, 8; *Montreal Star*, 15 March 1906, 12. See also *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 15 March 1906, 2; 16 March 1906, 2; *Montreal Gazette*, 15 March 1906, 2.

the second game “was fast and hard, hard to the limit,” even if it did not quite live up to the *Toronto Star*’s prediction that, “There’ll be blood on the moon – and on the ice – at Ottawa to-night.”¹⁸³

The final match of the 1906 season effectively demonstrates the high degree of tolerance for violence in hockey that has been evident throughout the press reports examined in this study. According to the *Ottawa Evening Journal*, “The referee was exceedingly strict and let nothing go....The offences were very slight, but the officials were evidently determined to take no chances. So far, and indeed right through, it was a clean game.”¹⁸⁴ The *Toronto Star* agreed with this assessment, while acknowledging that the game was still very physical: “All the Wanderers got their bumps, but they took them in good part and went back after more. Though the game wasn’t rough, yet the checking was hard on both sides, and body-checking was sincere and honest.”¹⁸⁵ The one incident that the press seemed to consider violent was a slash delivered by Montreal’s Billy Strachan to either the face or the leg of Ottawa star Frank McGee.¹⁸⁶ For example, the

¹⁸³ *Montreal Gazette*, 19 March 1906, 11; *Toronto Star*, 17 March 1906, 12. See also *Toronto Star*, 15 March 1906, 10; *Montreal Gazette*, 17 March 1906, 2.

¹⁸⁴ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 19 March 1906, 2.

¹⁸⁵ *Toronto Star*, 19 March 1906, 11.

¹⁸⁶ See, for example, *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 19 March 1906, 2; *Montreal Star*, 19 March 1906, 2; *Ottawa Citizen*, 19 March 1906, 8; 20 March 1906, 8; 23 March 1906, 8; *Montreal Gazette*, 21 March 1906, 2.

Toronto Globe reported, “The game was hard, but it was clean, despite stories published in outside Sunday papers to the contrary. The only deliberate piece of dirty work was when Strachan struck McGee. Both teams were more or less used up, but that was to be expected, considering the fierceness of the struggle.”¹⁸⁷ Similarly, the *Ottawa Evening Journal* maintained, “The game continued very clean and except for the hurt to McGee there was no rough work.”¹⁸⁸

However, for such a “clean” game, the match certainly seemed to include many examples of rough, physical – even dirty – play. For instance, the *Ottawa Evening Journal* acknowledged that Pulford was penalized twice for “heavy checking,” while the *Toronto Star* stated that Johnson “was hit in the face late in the game by Westwick and lost several teeth, and that seemed to put ginger into him.”¹⁸⁹ According to the *Ottawa Citizen*, the Wanderer defence “huddled together and swiped in all directions at the flying Ottawas or the rubber. The slashing resulted in some serious gashes, both teams suffering equally in this regard, but nothing that called for a stoppage or punishment with the exception of Strachan’s attack on McGee, which laid the Ottawa player out.”¹⁹⁰ The *Montreal*

¹⁸⁷ *Toronto Globe*, 19 March 1906, 10.

¹⁸⁸ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 19 March 1906, 2. See also *Montreal Star*, 19 March 1906, 2.

¹⁸⁹ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 19 March 1906, 2; *Toronto Star*, 19 March 1906, 11.

¹⁹⁰ *Ottawa Citizen*, 19 March 1906, 8.

Gazette’s game story provided a more detailed account of these events: “Pulford moved into the limelight quite early by flooring Johnson, and Harvey was the first man to be benched. Then Kennedy took a place with the timber because he ‘playfully’ sent Alf Smith to the ice, and Harry Smith joined him, being caught making a swipe with the stick which nailed Kennedy. Pulford caught Johnson again, but this time escaped detection.” Under the headline, “PULFORD DRAWS BLOOD,” the *Gazette* reported, “The next incident was a clash between Russell and Pulford, the latter jabbing the Wanderer man in the mouth and drawing claret. Just afterward Pulford cross-checked Johnson, driving the Wanderer man off his feet.” Then, there was “ANOTHER MELEE” involving several players: “Just afterward Johnson stopped a stick with his face, and left a couple of teeth on the ice. Just after the face there was a melee behind the Wanderer goal, and Billy Strachan struck McGee, for which offence William was banished for six minutes.”¹⁹¹ Thus, even “clean” contests included a significant amount of stickwork and physical play, and only the most violent acts seemed to constitute “dirty” hockey.

The *Montreal Gazette*’s observations after the game also raised questions about the level of roughness in the contest. “A hard match it certainly was and evidences of it can be found in Wanderer men’s faces,” affirmed the *Gazette* writer. “High checking seemed to have been the subject of a general order issued

¹⁹¹ *Montreal Gazette*, 19 March 1906, 11.

in the Ottawa camp, and Russell, Kennedy, Johnson and Strachan carried away souvenirs as represented by dints in their countenances. Johnson left a couple of teeth behind him to commemorate the occasion, while Kennedy’s lower lip was forced against his teeth and cut in this manner.” At the same time, however, the *Gazette* stopped short of accusing the Ottawas of committing their usual “butchery.” Instead, the writer stated, “The Ottawa forward line played like very demons. There was no fear of mistaking Ottawa’s style of play for anything but what it really was, rough, persistent, and determined hockey.” Finally, the *Gazette* allowed for the possibility that the Wanderers “did not appear to hurt men” because the Silver Seven were simply more durable. “It seems, too, that the Ottawa men are of tougher fibre than the locals, or cast in rougher mould, and the ravages of battle were far more evident on the Wanderer men,” concluded the *Gazette*.¹⁹²

This chapter has analyzed media narratives of rough and aggressive hockey in relation to gender and class identities in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Canada. It has examined hockey violence in the context of media and spectator interest, and considered the meanings of hockey within the wider history of manhood and masculinity in North America. While covering the Ottawa Silver Seven from 1903 to 1906, Canadian newspapers created hockey

¹⁹² *Montreal Gazette*, 19 March 1906, 11. See also *Ottawa Citizen*, 23 March 1906, 8; 24 March 1906, 8.

narratives that combined elements of “brutal butchery” and “strenuous spectacle.” Hockey as “brutal butchery” expressed outrage and concern, while revealing a degree of popular fascination with the game’s violent possibilities. On the other hand, hockey as “strenuous spectacle” represented the sport as a stirring public display of masculine force and aggression. The Stanley Cup matches of the Ottawa “butchers” provided a particularly vivid forum for the expression of these competing narratives.

While repeatedly defending its status as the strongest hockey team in Canada, the Ottawa Hockey Club was widely criticized – and sometimes praised – for its rough tactics. The ways in which newspapers in different cities described the games played by the Ottawas in defence of the Stanley Cup demonstrate the range of concerns and perceptions related to roughness in hockey that were evident in hockey reporting during this period. For example, a particular newspaper often viewed each game of the series differently, and journalists from rival cities frequently saw the same match from opposing points of view. At times, a single writer also offered diverse perspectives on a particular game. This chapter has shown that sports coverage included multiple narratives of the same events and incidents. A *Toronto Star* reporter, for instance, noted how media coverage of the 1905 Ottawa-Rat Portage series articulated divergent views and opinions: “While it may have been great hockey according to the Ottawa standpoint, and Montreal newspaper men in the press stand during the game

admitted it was not according to their standards, it was a poor exhibition of the game in the eyes of the Western contingent.”¹⁹³

Ideals of respectable, middle-class masculinity and rough, working-class masculinity coexisted within accounts of fast, skilled, rugged, hard-hitting hockey.¹⁹⁴ Excitement and entertainment were equated with both speed and violence; admiration for precise and diligent work was expressed alongside approval of the “furious” checking, jarring collisions, and “hair-raising” attacks that stirred even “the most sluggish blood.” “Manly” hockey was expected to be fast and clean, with no “foul” or “dirty” tactics. Yet, “rough play” could be seen as a “legitimate” part of the game, “energetic” body checks were applauded, and some degree of bloodshed was expected under the strain of a “decidedly serious” contest. “Parlor hockey” did not meet these requirements. Some of the tensions surrounding hockey violence are evident in this 1904 description of a match between Ottawa and Toronto: “The checking on both sides was heavy, but, while there were a few knockouts and the men carried numerous evidences of the

¹⁹³ *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1905, 10.

¹⁹⁴ Warren Goldstein makes a similar observation in relation to baseball during the 1860s. According to Goldstein, “The potential for disorder and violence was said to attract ‘roughs,’ while the promise of manly displays of nerve and skill spoke to the ‘respectable’ patrons. This analysis was correct but it was incomplete. These differential appeals also spoke to conflicting tendencies within every member of the baseball fraternity, no matter how ‘respectable,’ no matter how ‘low.’” See Warren Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps: A History of Early Baseball* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 80.

strenuousness of the struggle off the ice with them, there was little if any hard feeling developed.”¹⁹⁵

At the same time, the danger, physicality, and competitiveness of “very, very hard hockey” cultivated and reinforced standards of passionate manhood and primitive masculinity. In the culture of hockey, “hard, close contests” were welcomed, and the ability to absorb pain and punishment without complaint was widely respected. As a result, both middle-class and working-class fans expected players to “take their medicine” and to refrain from unmanly “squealing” or “grouching.” In addition, the seriousness of injuries that resulted from slashing or “jabbing” was downplayed, while the cuts and “gashes” caused by stick fouls were often characterized as mere “accidents.” A 1906 newspaper headline neatly captured these key elements of manly hockey: “Checking was Hard and Close but the Contestants Took All and Said Nothing.”¹⁹⁶

Finally, by enhancing our awareness of the kinds of violence accepted in hockey’s formative era, this analysis of media narratives of violent and physical play between 1903 and 1906 helps us to understand more clearly the long history of accepted brutality within the sport. This historical case study suggests that contemporary hockey violence is not unique. Violence has been central to “manly battles” since the game’s earliest days and has always garnered the attention of the

¹⁹⁵ *Ottawa Citizen*, 24 February 1904, 6.

¹⁹⁶ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 7 March 1906, 2.

media and most fans, regardless of their class origins. A thorough understanding of contemporary debates and issues related to violence and fighting in hockey requires not only an appreciation for the current state of violence in the sport, but also an acknowledgement of its deep historical roots. After all, the justifications for violence that were articulated in the context of the success of the Ottawa Silver Seven continue to be voiced in contemporary discussions of hockey violence. Similarly, the admiration of robust, rugged hockey expressed in early twentieth-century newspaper accounts is still prominent in the culture of hockey today. Perhaps the meanings and attractions of “strenuous hockey” – even when played by “butchers” and “woodchoppers” – really have not changed very much in the past hundred years.

Chapter Five

“The Product of the Town Itself”: Community Representation and the Stanley Cup Hockey Challenges of the Kenora Thistles, 1903-1907

First presented in 1893, the Stanley Cup symbolized the national hockey championship of Canada. Known formally as the Dominion Hockey Challenge Cup, the trophy was donated by Sir Frederick Arthur Stanley, a British aristocrat who became Governor General of Canada in 1888. Over the next few years, Lord Stanley developed a keen interest in the winter sport of hockey, first sponsoring a local Ottawa team and then purchasing a silver cup that was intended to “be held from year to year by the leading hockey club in Canada.”¹ In the fall of 1893, the

¹ D’Arcy Jenish, *The Stanley Cup: A Hundred Years of Hockey at Its Best* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), 12. See also Brian McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever* (Toronto: Pagurian Press, 1978), 16-19; John Chi-Kit Wong, *Lords of the Rinks: The Emergence of the National Hockey League, 1875-1936* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 16-17; Paul Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle: The Inside Story of the Old Ottawa Senators 1883-1935* (Manotick, ON:

Stanley Cup was awarded to the Montreal Amateur Athletic Association (M.A.A.A.), since the club “had finished first the previous winter in the Amateur Hockey Association of Canada, which was regarded as the country’s premier league at the time.”² The Stanley Cup then became a “challenge” trophy, and the play-off format for each challenge was dependent on specific agreements reached between competing teams and the Cup trustees. In general, Stanley Cup champions maintained possession of the trophy until they either lost a league title to another club, or lost a special challenge game or series to a team from outside their league.³

Hockey clubs from Montreal, Winnipeg, and Ottawa dominated the first two decades of Stanley Cup play. Prior to 1912, the Kenora Thistles were the only team from outside these three cities to hold the championship trophy. After unsuccessful challenges against the Ottawa Hockey Club in March 1903 and

Penumbra Press, 2008), 90-91; Kevin Shea and John Jason Wilson, *Lord Stanley: The Man Behind the Cup* (Bolton, ON: Fenn, 2006).

² Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 12. See also McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever*, 21-23; Andrew Podnieks, *Lord Stanley’s Cup* (Bolton, Ont.: Fenn, 2004), 4.

³ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 14-15; Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 91-92. Before 1912, challenges could be accepted at any time during the hockey season, and teams may have defended their claim to the Cup several times over the course of the year. For summaries and overviews of early Stanley Cup games, see Henry Roxborough, *The Stanley Cup Story* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1964); McFarlane, *Stanley Cup Fever*; Dan Diamond, ed., *The Official National Hockey League Stanley Cup Centennial Book* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992); Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*; Michael McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter: Hockey’s Rise from Sport to Spectacle* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2000); Podnieks, *Lord Stanley’s Cup*; Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*.

March 1905, the Thistles defeated the Montreal Wanderers in January 1907.

Kenora held the Stanley Cup for only two months, however, as the Wanderers recaptured the trophy in March 1907.⁴ Initially a fur trading post known by the name of Rat Portage, Kenora in the early twentieth century was “a small but booming logging, mining, and flour-milling town” situated on Lake of the Woods, near the Ontario-Manitoba border.⁵ According to John Wong,

Rat Portage served as a transportation link for early British North America’s fur trade. Early Ojibways called the area linking the Winnipeg River with the Lake of the Woods ‘Waszush Onigum,’ which literally means ‘the road to the country of the muskrat.’ The Hudson’s Bay Company, which established a trading post in 1836 to the north of the present town site, translated the Ojibway name to Rat Portage.⁶

⁴ R.S. Lappage, “The Kenora Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 19, no. 2 (1988): 79-100; John Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora: The Death of a (Big-Time) Hockey Dream,” *Journal of Sport History* 33, no. 2 (2006): 175-191. Lappage provides a solid historical overview of the Thistles team from 1894 to 1908, while Wong focuses on the financial and business organization of the club as it moved from an amateur model of operation to a more capitalist, professional system.

⁵ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 41. Rat Portage was first incorporated as part of Manitoba in 1882, but it was located in a disputed region that was awarded to Ontario two years later. See Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 177.

⁶ Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 176-177. See also Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 95.

However, Rat Portage changed its name to Kenora on 11 May 1905, after the Maple Leaf Milling Company expressed interest in building a flour mill in the town. As Wong notes, “The capitalists thought the town’s name would not be conducive to the sale of flour.”⁷ The lumber industry was also a major local employer, and Kenora continued to be a key transportation centre due to its location on the trans-Canada railway.⁸

This chapter examines newspaper coverage of the four Stanley Cup hockey challenges involving the Kenora Thistles from March 1903 to March 1907. It analyzes media accounts of the Thistles hockey team in relation to such issues as civic identity, the “representative” nature of sports teams, and the movement from amateur to professional hockey in the early twentieth century. Stanley Cup matches involving the Kenora Thistles serve as a useful case study for exploring some of the meanings of hockey to Canadian communities in this period. Reporting on the Thistles from newspapers published in Winnipeg, Kenora, Ottawa, Montreal, and Toronto form the basis of this study. Between 1903 and 1913, “a remarkable number of small towns and budding Canadian cities attempted to win the coveted Cup,” writes D’Arcy Jenish. “The challengers came from New Glasgow, Sydney, and Moncton in the Maritimes, from Galt,

⁷ Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 190. See also Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 95. I mainly refer to the town as “Kenora” in this chapter, although I also use “Rat Portage” when discussing the 1903 and 1905 Stanley Cup challenges.

⁸ Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 177.

Berlin, and Port Arthur in Ontario, and Edmonton in the West.”⁹ However, the Thistles were “the only team from a small town” to capture the Stanley Cup. Jenish adds, “The rest of the challengers from small-town Canada proved to be woefully weak and provided no competition at all for the powerful clubs like the Ottawa Senators and Montreal Wanderers.”¹⁰

The first decade of the twentieth century was a time of significant change in North American hockey, as an emphasis on amateur play gave way to open professionalism at the highest levels of the sport.¹¹ In 1903-04, the Portage Lakes Hockey Club, based in Houghton, Michigan, was openly paying players. The International Hockey League (I.H.L.), with five professional teams, began play during the 1904-05 season.¹² At this time, some teams in commercialized, elite-

⁹ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 65. See also Ibid., 62-82.

¹⁰ Ibid., 41, 65. The population of Kenora was 5202 in 1901, 4248 in 1905, and 6257 in 1908. In comparison, Winnipeg’s population in 1901 had reached 42 340, and Montreal’s population was 267 730. See Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 178; Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 79.

¹¹ Alan Metcalfe, *Canada Learns To Play: The Emergence of Organized Sport, 1807-1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), 168-172; Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport, Identities, and Cultural Politics* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1993), 72-77; McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter*, 54-88; Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*, 28-57.

¹² Supported mainly by mining profits in northern Michigan, I.H.L. clubs were based in Houghton, Calumet, and Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan; Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario; and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. See Daniel Mason and Barbara Schrodtt, “Hockey’s First Professional Team: The Portage Lakes Hockey Club of Houghton, Michigan,” *Sport History Review* 27, no. 1 (1996): 49-71; Daniel S. Mason, “The International Hockey League and the Professionalization of Ice

level Canadian amateur hockey were likely compensating players, as well. As Wong points out, “Even though forbidden by the amateur code, some top senior clubs were not beyond promising jobs and/or money to induce players from other clubs to switch allegiance.”¹³ To stop the flow of talent to the I.H.L., Canadian teams started to offer salaries to their strongest players. Daniel S. Mason writes, “The elite Canadian leagues professionalized because the only way to keep players from migrating to the I.H.L. was to pay them comparable wages.”¹⁴ For example, Canada’s most prestigious league in this period was the Eastern Canada Amateur Hockey Association (E.C.A.H.A.). The E.C.A.H.A. took a significant step toward professionalism in 1906-07 when it permitted “declared” professionals to play alongside amateurs.¹⁵ The Kenora Thistles were members of the Manitoba Hockey League (M.H.L.), which also allowed paid players to participate during the 1906-07 season.¹⁶ As one of Canada’s leading hockey

Hockey, 1904-1907,” *Journal of Sport History* 25, no. 1 (1998): 1-17; Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*, 37-38.

¹³ Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 182. See also Mason and Schrod, “Hockey’s First Professional Team,” 50-52.

¹⁴ Mason, “The International Hockey League,” 1-2.

¹⁵ Metcalfe, *Canada Learns To Play*, 170; Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*, 42-44; Mason, “The International Hockey League,” 9.

¹⁶ Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 183. In hockey, Kenora’s strongest links were with Manitoba teams and leagues, particularly Winnipeg. Kenora was located approximately 130 miles from Winnipeg. On the other hand, Port Arthur, the closest major Ontario town, was more than 300 miles away. See *Ibid.*, 177.

clubs, Kenora faced the pressures and problems associated with the rise of professional hockey. Bruce Kidd categorizes the Thistles as a “not-for-profit” or “community” team, rather than a “full market” or “capitalist” organization.¹⁷ Although Kenora was usually represented by “hometown” players, the hockey club also brought in “ringers” from other teams to represent the town in Stanley Cup competition. As a result, the Thistles offer a unique opportunity to consider the connections between sport and community identity during an important period of transition in high-level hockey.

This study assesses the narratives of civic representation that emerged in relation to the Kenora Thistles as this small-town team challenged big-city clubs from Ottawa and Montreal for the Stanley Cup. David Whitson notes that “the tradition that teams represent their communities is central to the imagery and the mobilizing power of sport in popular culture.”¹⁸ In the growing urban centres of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, high-level amateur and professional sports teams came to be viewed as “popular signifiers of civic identity,” while sports events “became a form of popular civic ritual.”¹⁹ As

¹⁷ Bruce Kidd, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 190-196. Kidd explains that commercialized, professional sports teams in this period often placed a higher value on representing their communities than making money.

¹⁸ David Whitson, “Sport and Civic Identity in the Modern Canadian City,” *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 22, no. 1 (1995): 128.

¹⁹ Dave Whitson, “Hockey and Canadian Popular Culture: The Making and Remaking of Identities,” in *Method and Methodology in Sport and Cultural*
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Morris Mott explains, hockey fans “genuinely believed that one group of players on the ice represented them, and that through their performance they were saying something significant about their supporters. The fans assumed, in other words, that entire communities of people were incarnate in the competing teams.”²⁰

Despite class and ethnic divisions within cities, sport lent “itself well to broader forms of civic identification, to a shared sense of belonging to a particular town or city as a whole.”²¹ At first, these teams were made up exclusively of local athletes. Players often grew up in the place that they represented, or they moved to that location alongside other migrants. As a result, they had a similar background to the spectators. Athletes and fans were *members* of the same, face-to-face community. Whitson describes this link between teams and their followers:

Cheering the home team has seemed ‘natural’ from the earliest days of inter-communal competition. However this was because in the early days of amateur and even semi-professional competition, it meant cheering for teams

History, ed. K.B. Wamsley (Dubuque: A Times Mirror Higher Education Group, 1995), 189.

²⁰ Morris Mott, “Flawed Games, Splendid Ceremonies: The Hockey Matches of the Winnipeg Vics, 1890-1903,” *Prairie Forum* 10, no. 1 (1985): 180.

²¹ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 68. See also Whitson, “Sport and Civic Identity,” 129-130; Whitson, “Hockey and Canadian Popular Culture,” 191; Stephen Hardy, *How Boston Played: Sport, Recreation, and Community, 1865-1915* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1982), 168-194.

largely made up of local people, with whom one had other (sometimes multiple) kinds of common bonds. Players were friends, family, members of the same church, club, or neighbourhood.

As a result, team members were “widely and quite legitimately seen as local products, their success saying something about the character of the community that produced them.”²²

However, with the beginnings of professionalism, the direct connection of the “member” relationship was transformed. Because teams were focal points of community pride, civic and business leaders began to import players – and give them jobs and money – in order to ensure success on the field or ice. Clubs no longer consisted of local athletes, but, rather, a town put together the best team that local money could buy. As a result, there was a shift from the “member” connection “to something more like a merchant-customer relationship in which the local operator undertook to hire good ‘agents’ to represent the city.”²³

²² Whitson, “Hockey and Canadian Popular Culture,” 191, 192. See also Whitson, “Sport and Civic Identity,” 129; Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 67; John Clarke and Chas Critcher, *The Devil Makes Work: Leisure in Capitalist Britain* (Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 1985), 95-96.

²³ Whitson, “Hockey and Canadian Popular Culture,” 192. See also Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 67-72, 220; Whitson, “Sport and Civic Identity,” 129. For a thorough analysis of the relationship between professional sport and community, see Alan G. Ingham, Jeremy W. Howell, and Todd S. Schilperoort, “Professional Sports and Community: A Review and Exegesis,” *Exercise and Sport Science Reviews* 15 (1988): 427-465.

Although the rise of professional sport altered the character of the relationship between athletes and communities, the bond between teams and local fans remained strong. “Specialists were allowed to represent the city,” writes Carl Betke. “It mattered not that those specialists knew nothing of the community they were representing; what mattered was that they be successful and that the whole city be allowed to identify with that success.”²⁴ For example, from 1909 to 1911, the Renfrew Creamery Kings hockey team tried to hire players that could win a championship. “We want the very best team money can buy, the best team in the world, in fact,” stated George Martel, a member of Renfrew’s executive committee. “And we don’t care where the players come from.”²⁵ Thus, sporting contests mobilized city-wide support for athletic representatives – even when those “representatives” were professional players recruited from outside the community. In the process, the fan’s role was transformed into that of loyal *customer*. As the Kenora Thistles ascended to the highest ranks of Canadian hockey, a number of competing narratives of community representation were constructed through media coverage of the team. This chapter investigates the movement from a “member” relationship to a “customer” relationship as Kenora pursued the Stanley Cup.

²⁴ Carl Betke, “Sports Promotion in the Western Canadian City: The Example of Early Edmonton,” *Urban History Review* 12, no. 2 (1983): 54.

²⁵ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 63. See also Ibid., 64-66. Despite spending so much money that the team became known as the “Millionaires,” the club was not successful in its attempt to capture a Stanley Cup.

Perhaps the most notable feature of press coverage of the Kenora Thistles was the emphasis on the team's roots in its local community. Most of the club's players developed their hockey skills in Kenora, and, as R.S. Lappage demonstrates in his study of the Thistles, "their rise to hockey dominance was accomplished with predominantly home grown talent."²⁶ Recent arrivals from Winnipeg and Toronto – particularly the Hardisty brothers – played a key role in establishing hockey in Rat Portage. Informal hockey games were first organized in the town in the early 1890s, and the senior Thistles Hockey Club was founded in 1894.²⁷ Club officials held a contest to find a name for the new team. According to Lappage, "The winning entry, the 'Thistles,' was submitted by Bill Dunsmore, a local Scottish carpenter."²⁸ Although inexperienced local participants were described initially as "the green players," the nucleus of the town's future championship squad soon emerged from a promising collection of young players within the community. In January 1896, "the junior Rat Portage

²⁶ Lappage, "The Thistles' Stanley Cup Trail," 79. See also Ibid., 82; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 42.

²⁷ Lappage, "The Thistles' Stanley Cup Trail," 79-80; Wong, "From Rat Portage to Kenora," 177-178.

²⁸ Lappage, "The Thistles' Stanley Cup Trail," 80. Canadian curling clubs and hockey teams with Scottish connections frequently used the "Thistles" name, along with the "Caledonians" and the "Granites." However, the Kenora Thistles do not seem to have embraced or acquired a strong Scottish identity. See Gerald Redmond, *The Sporting Scots of Nineteenth-Century Canada* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1982), 114-117, 133, 268-271.

team, comprised entirely of local teenagers, soundly defeated the senior team that, by that time, had established quite a reputation at the intermediate level within Manitoba hockey circles,” reports Wong. “More importantly, the core of this junior team formed the aggregation that successfully challenged for the Stanley Cup in 1907.”²⁹ Five of the junior players involved in this 1896 game – Tom Hooper, Silas Griffis, Billy McGimsie, Tom Phillips, and Roxy Beaudro – were members of the Cup-winning Thistles club of January 1907.³⁰ With this core group of players from the 1896 junior team, the senior Thistles moved up through the ranks of the Manitoba and North-West Amateur Hockey Association (M.N.A.H.A.), first achieving success at the intermediate level before graduating to the senior division in 1902-03. After capturing the league’s senior title in their first season, the Thistles issued a challenge for the Stanley Cup.³¹

In March 1903, the Rat Portage Thistles travelled to Ottawa for a two-game, total-goal Stanley Cup series against the Ottawa Hockey Club, champion of the Canadian Amateur Hockey League (C.A.H.L.). Rat Portage lost both games, by scores of 6-2 and 4-2, giving Ottawa an overall victory of 10-4 in the series. Although the composition and background of the Thistles received little attention

²⁹ Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 178. See also Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 79-80.

³⁰ Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 187; Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 80.

³¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 11 January 1902, 5; Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 80-81; Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 179-180.

in coverage of this particular challenge, a narrative of hometown and, more broadly, western Canadian support began to appear in media accounts of the team. For instance, when the Thistles' train departed for the 1903 series, the *Rat Portage Miner and News* declared that the club was sent off by "a greater crowd than was present to see the volunteers embark for [the Boer War in] South Africa, and the cheers as the train pulled out were louder and more prolonged than on that occasion."³² Similarly, the *Manitoba Free Press* reported that the team left Rat Portage "with the good wishes of the whole community," as a "tremendous crowd was at the station to bid the boys good-bye." The *Free Press* also noted that the Thistles had significant backing beyond their home community: "All the west wishes success to the plucky Rat Portage team now speeding eastward in search of the Stanley cup."³³ Such reporting on local and regional support for the Thistles expanded during subsequent challenges.

Newspapers covering the series also highlighted the apparent strength and confidence of the visitors, in part as a means of promoting interest among readers and potential spectators. "The team is in first-class condition, and are confident they can bring the trophy back to the west," stated the *Manitoba Free Press*. After watching Ottawa clinch the C.A.H.L. title in a match against the Montreal Victorias, Thistles manager Dr. Nelson Schnarr observed, "The Ottawas are

³² *Rat Portage Miner and News*, 10 March 1903, 1; Wong, "From Rat Portage to Kenora," 179.

³³ *Manitoba Free Press*, 9 March 1903, 5; 10 March 1903, 5.

strong. We saw to-night's game and we think that we are just as strong or even a little stronger."³⁴ Rat Portage also "made a favorable impression" at a practice in Ottawa. The *Ottawa Citizen* wrote, "While not rough, the Thistles are aggressive and not a bit afraid to mix it up. They are fast skaters, hard checkers and good stick-handlers, judging from their showing yesterday and will keep the Ottawas working all the time. They are in good shape physically and look fit to stand an hour's strenuous exertions on soft ice."³⁵

However, despite this optimism in advance of the series, the small-town team was not ready for high-level, big-city competition. The *Ottawa Citizen* attributed the opening game loss to "stage fright...for in the first half the visitors were badly rattled, and the Ottawas scored 6 goals."³⁶ Schnarr suggested, "The soft ice was against us, but still we made a creditable showing after we settled down. That stage fright at first was disastrous."³⁷ The *Rat Portage Miner and News* acknowledged that the team "seemed to be a little dazed" early in the opening contest, while the *Ottawa Citizen* noted considerable improvement in the second game: "The Thistles did not display nervousness as in the previous match,

³⁴ *Manitoba Free Press*, 6 March 1903, 5; 11 March 1903, 5. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 11 March 1903, 2; *Ottawa Citizen*, 11 March 1903, 6.

³⁵ *Ottawa Citizen*, 12 March 1903, 6.

³⁶ *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 March 1903, 6. See also *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 March 1903, 5; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 42.

³⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 March 1903, 5.

but went at the Ottawas as if they meant business.”³⁸ Jenish summarizes this view, stating, “But when they skated on to the ice at Dey’s Arena in Ottawa, a long way from home, from their supportive fans and their familiar opponents, a nervous group of Thistles stumbled and embarrassed themselves.”³⁹

On the whole, Ottawa and Montreal newspapers portrayed the Thistles as a talented and hard-working group that lacked Ottawa’s experience, understanding of team play, and knowledge of “the finer points of the game.”⁴⁰ “The Thistles were a speedy lot and had far more staying powers than the Ottawas,” observed the *Ottawa Citizen*. “They are not the expert stick handlers that the Ottawas are nor are they as skilled in combination play, but they are good workers.”⁴¹ The *Montreal Gazette* remarked, “The players are all aggressive, and are not lacking in grit, but they are not up to the standard of Stanley Cup

³⁸ *Rat Portage Miner and News*, 13 March 1903, 1; *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 March 1903, 6. See also *Manitoba Free Press*, 16 March 1903, 5; *Montreal Gazette*, 16 March 1903, 2; *Rat Portage Miner and News*, 17 March 1903, 1.

³⁹ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 42. See also Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 81-82.

⁴⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, 16 March 1903, 5. See also *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 March 1903, 6; *Montreal Gazette*, 16 March 1903, 2; *Rat Portage Miner and News*, 17 March 1903, 1.

⁴¹ *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 March 1903, 6. See also *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 March 1903, 5; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 13 March 1903, 8; *Toronto Globe*, 13 March 1903, 12; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 43.

challengers.”⁴² A *Montreal Star* headline called the Thistles, “CRUDE STICKHANDLERS,” and the newspaper’s game story labelled them “a distinct disappointment.”⁴³ After the second match, the *Montreal Star* wrote, “That they were speedy and full of pluck there is no denying, probably as fast as any of the eastern teams and undaunted by the heavy Ottawa defence, but they absolutely lacked combination. In the hands of an Eastern trainer and coach they might become a lively proposition for Stanley Cup honours.”⁴⁴ Finally, the *Ottawa Evening Journal* concluded, “Of the relative merits of the teams, about the only thing that can be said was that the Thistles were good live juniors. They are not in the same class with the Ottawas.”⁴⁵

The perceived lack of competitiveness of the Thistles hockey team likely contributed to the relatively low attendance for the series. Paul Kitchen reports that “fewer than half the number who had been on hand for the triumph over the Vics bothered to show up for the first game.”⁴⁶ While a “record crowd” of 3000 watched Ottawa’s victory over the Montreal Victorias just a few days before,

⁴² *Montreal Gazette*, 13 March 1903, 2. See also *Manitoba Free Press*, 16 March 1903, 5.

⁴³ *Montreal Star*, 13 March 1903, 2.

⁴⁴ *Montreal Star*, 16 March 1903, 2. See also *Toronto Globe*, 16 March 1903, 10.

⁴⁵ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 16 March 1903, 10. See also 13 March 1903, 10.

⁴⁶ Kitchen, *Win, Tie, or Wrangle*, 116.

attendance for the Rat Portage challenge was about 1500 for the opening match and 1000 for the final game. As a result, the Thistles lost about \$800 on the trip, and returned home “financially embarrassed.”⁴⁷ The *Ottawa Evening Journal* reported, “The gates at the Stanley Cup games were a failure, from a point of revenue....The only reason that seems apparent for the slack attendance was that the season was practically over before the Stanley Cup come on, and also, that the people felt that the game was going to be too one-sided to afford much sport.”⁴⁸

In spite of these “competitive and financial failures,” Wong calls the Thistles’ 1903 challenge “a watershed event for the club,” as the team’s exposure “to the established hockey culture in the East increased the stakes and expectations for the town and for the Thistles.” He also writes, “The Thistles’ first Stanley Cup appearance elevated the club’s status both within and outside the eastern Manitoba-western Ontario region. Even though the Thistles did not emerge victorious in their first challenge, the club’s performance in Ottawa enhanced its reputation as a highly competitive squad and received acknowledgement by opponents in addition to approval by fans at home.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *Ottawa Citizen*, 11 March 1903, 6; *Rat Portage Miner and News*, 24 March 1903, 1. See also *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 11 March 1903, 10; 13 March 1903, 10; *Manitoba Free Press*, 16 March 1903, 5; *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 March 1903, 6; 16 March 1903, 6; *Rat Portage Miner and News*, 17 March 1903, 1; Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 82.

⁴⁸ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 16 March 1903, 10. See also *Toronto Globe*, 16 March 1903, 10; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 43.

⁴⁹ Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 185, 179-180.

Comments from Thistles officials and players contributed to this view of the club's initial Stanley Cup challenge. Schnarr, the team manager, told reporters in Ottawa that "we have learned a great deal and when we come east again, as we certainly will, if we win our league championship next year, we hope to be able to give you a closer run." Likewise, Thistles captain Tom Hooper stated, "Then, too, we were comparatively inexperienced, and were consequently a little nervous. We were fairly b[e]aten but are not in the least discouraged. We have sized the Ottawas up now and shall be better qualified to play them when we come after the puck next year."⁵⁰ After the series, the *Ottawa Evening Journal's* sports editor observed, "Rat Portage hockey people know more about hockey now than they did when they left home." Similarly, the *Ottawa Citizen* suggested that "the Thistles have learned new and winning tactics and should prove formidable competitors when they come east again, as they promise to do."⁵¹ Another key media narrative described the toughness and persistence of the Rat Portage players in the face of rough and physical play by the Ottawas, as newspapers made frequent reference to the admirable "pluck" of the challengers.⁵² The

⁵⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, 16 March 1903, 5. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 16 March 1903, 2; *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 March 1903, 6.

⁵¹ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 16 March 1903, 10; *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 March 1903, 6. See also 14 March 1903, 6; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 43.

⁵² See, for example, *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 March 1903, 6; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 13 March 1903, 10; *Montreal Gazette*, 13 March 1903, 2; *Montreal Star*, 13 March 1903, 2; 16 March 1903, 18; *Toronto Globe*, 13 March 1903, 12;

Ottawa Citizen also noted, “The Thistles established themselves as favorites with Ottawa spectators.”⁵³ When the Thistles returned to Ottawa for another challenge two years later, they added considerably to the reputation they started to build in 1903.

In March 1905, Rat Portage and Ottawa played a best-of-three series for the Stanley Cup. This time, the Thistles earned an impressive 9-3 victory in the opening match, but Ottawa rallied to win the next two games by scores of 4-2 and 5-4 to maintain possession of the championship trophy. Prior to the challenge, media coverage of the Thistles stressed the close connection between the team and the town it represented. Players were portrayed as “members” of the Rat Portage community. Goaltender Eddie Giroux had played with the Toronto Marlboros during the previous season, and, as the *Ottawa Evening Journal* reported, “He is the only man on the team who has not resided for some years in the town.”⁵⁴ The *Toronto Globe* expressed this narrative clearly: “Excepting Goalkeeper Eddie Giroux, every man on the Rat Portage Thistles was born and bred in the town on the Lake of the Woods.” The next day, the *Globe* clarified,

Toronto Star, 16 March 1903, 8; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 13 March 1903, 8; 16 March 1903, 8.

⁵³ *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 March 1903, 6. See also *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 13 March 1903, 10.

⁵⁴ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 6 March 1905, 2. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 7 March 1905, 2; Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 83.

“Giroux is not the only Rat Portage player who is not a native of the town. Matt Brown, the point player, was born in St. Catharines, but he has lived in Rat Portage since he was a child. Si Griffis, rover, was also born in St. Catharines, and went to Rat Portage twelve years ago.” The *Globe* report continued, “Since they were old enough to hold a hockey stick the Thistles have played in each other’s company, first as a junior club, then representing the Rat Portage High School, and later representing the seniors. They form the first and only senior hockey team which has even been in Rat Portage.”⁵⁵ A Thistles team official relayed a similar story to the *Ottawa Citizen*, stating, “Every member of the Rat Portage team, with the exception of Giroux, was born in the town he represents and most of them have grown up in the game together.”⁵⁶

Detailed newspaper profiles of the challengers also depicted the Thistles as true “members” of the town of Rat Portage. Richard Gruneau and David Whitson contend that, “Cheering for the home team in the early years of organized baseball, hockey, or lacrosse meant cheering for teams that were likely to be composed of family, friends, or at least acquaintances.” At this time, the connections between teams and their supporters “were grounded in the close personal identifications that many community members maintained with the

⁵⁵ *Toronto Globe*, 6 March, 1905, 10; 7 March 1905, 9.

⁵⁶ *Ottawa Citizen*, 7 March 1905, 8.

players.”⁵⁷ Media descriptions of the Thistles linked them closely to their town in this way. For example, according to accounts of each player’s background in the pages of the *Ottawa Evening Journal* and the *Montreal Gazette*, six of the club’s seven players – all but Giroux – “learned the game” of hockey in Rat Portage.⁵⁸ The *Ottawa Evening Journal* also highlighted how team members’ regular employment integrated them into the community. For instance, the *Evening Journal* noted that Matt Brown “works on his father’s ranch during the summer and resides in the town during the winter months,” while Theophile Bellefeuille “is employed as an engineer on the boats in the summer.” Willie McGimsie works “as a jeweller with D.T. Ferguson,” and Si Griffis “is employed with the Rat Portage Lumber Company.” Likewise, Tom Phillips “is in the lumber business, being employed with the Rat Portage Company.”⁵⁹

After the Thistles’ triumph in the first game, the *Manitoba Free Press* declared, “It must be a blow to Ottawa to have a team from the little town of Rat Portage trim their pets, and the players all home-brewed, too.”⁶⁰ At the conclusion of the series, the Thistles continued to be viewed as exemplars of their home community. Schnarr stated, “I’m proud of the Rat Portage boys, as proud

⁵⁷ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 67.

⁵⁸ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 6 March 1905, 2; *Montreal Gazette*, 7 March 1905, 2.

⁵⁹ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 6 March 1905, 2.

⁶⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, 8 March 1905, 5.

of them in defeat as in victory. Where will you find another town of the size in Canada that can turn out such a team, all with one exception, home brews.”⁶¹ The manager added, “I feel somehow that we still have the best team in Canada. On neutral ice I would pick my team to win even from the full team of the Ottawas. Rat Portage is the only town of its size...that can turn out a team like that, all of them with one exception, home bred.”⁶² Another component of this “member” narrative was the Rat Portage players’ resistance to the professional, “customer” model. Following the challenge, the *Toronto Star* noted, “Early in the winter the professional hockey clubs tried to secure several of the Rat Portage Thistles. Tom Phillips was offered as much as \$800 for the season, or \$80 a week, if he would join one of the professional clubs, but refused point-blank to play for money. Flattering offers were made to every member of the team, but they were turned down cold.”⁶³ The Thistles’ loyalty to both amateur ideals and their home community was a key element of their image at this time.

By 1905, the Thistles were also a much more respected team in central Canada. They “dominated the Manitoba league once more and the eastern papers kept their readers informed of the team’s accomplishments,” writes Jenish. “Moreover, Rat Portage centre Tom Phillips was widely regarded as one of the

⁶¹ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 13 March 1905, 6. See also *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 March 1905, 5; *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 March 1905, 8.

⁶² *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 13 March 1905, 2.

⁶³ *Toronto Star*, 20 March 1905, 10.

top two players in Canada at the time,” alongside Ottawa’s Frank McGee.⁶⁴

Before the series, the *Montreal Gazette* summarized the prevailing view of the Thistles: “There is little doubt in the minds of the critics that of the many champion teams which have visited the capital in quest of the cup since the day it came into possession of the Ottawa Hockey Club, the Rat Portagers are the most formidable looking lot, and from present indications...Ottawa will have a lot of trouble in successfully defending their laurels.”⁶⁵ Similarly, the *Ottawa Citizen* wrote,

Rat Portage comes east with a record which entitles the team to every respect from the champions. The challengers have outclassed practically every team in the Western Canada league and unless hockey out around Manitoba and the far end of Ontario has deteriorated to an alarming extent such a showing proves them to be about the fastest team which has so far been sent out of the west – and anyone

⁶⁴ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 53.

⁶⁵ *Montreal Gazette*, 6 March 1905, 2. See also 9 March 1905, 2; *Ottawa Citizen*, 6 March 1905, 8; *Toronto Star*, 6 March 1905, 10; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 7 March 1905, 6.

who has followed hockey for a few seasons back knows
full well what that means.⁶⁶

The Thistles were now recognized as “serious contenders for the Cup,” and Winnipeg newspapers expressed the idea that “it will not be the cause of so much surprise if the silverware should go westward.”⁶⁷ Newspaper headlines proclaimed, “THISTLES STRIKE TERROR AT OTTAWA,” and, “RAT PORTAGE IS FEARED BY EVEN ARDENT OTTAWA SUPPORTERS.”⁶⁸ On the other hand, the *Winnipeg Tribune* printed a cartoon that offered a different perspective on the series. Titled, “Modern ‘Jack the Giant Killer,’” the cartoon suggested that the Ottawa hockey team – and perhaps its fans – still did not consider the small-town challengers from Rat Portage to be a legitimate rival. Above the caption, “As Ottawa Sizes up the Situation,” the sketch depicted Ottawa as a grown man, laughing in amusement at Rat Portage, in the form of an

⁶⁶ *Ottawa Citizen*, 7 March 1905, 8. See also 8 March 1905, 8; 9 March 1905, 8; 13 March 1905, 8; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 March 1905, 1; 13 March 1905, 1.

⁶⁷ Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 83; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 6 March 1905, 6. See also *Manitoba Free Press*, 1 March 1905, 5; 2 March 1905, 5; 4 March 1905, 5; 8 March 1905, 5; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 7 March 1905, 1, 6.

⁶⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, 6 March 1905, 5; *Montreal Star*, 7 March 1905, 2. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 6 March 1905, 2; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 7 March 1905, 1; *Manitoba Free Press*, 7 March 1905, 5. After the Thistles won the opening game, the *Winnipeg Tribune* announced, “STANLEY CUP COMING WEST,” and the *Manitoba Free Press* claimed, “OTTAWA EXPECTS TO LOSE THE CUP.” See *Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 March 1905, 6; *Manitoba Free Press*, 9 March 1905, 1. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 March 1905, 1; 9 March 1905, 6; *Manitoba Free Press*, 8 March 1905, 1; 9 March 1905, 5.

upstart young boy. “Well, just cast your peepers on what wants people to take him seriously,” chuckled the Ottawa man, pointing at the boy, who replied, “Come on, and get busy!”⁶⁹

Throughout the series, the *Ottawa Evening Journal*, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Montreal Star*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Toronto Globe*, *Toronto Star*, and *Toronto World* offered extensive praise to the Thistles. The speed of the Rat Portage forwards was especially impressive.⁷⁰ For example, the *Montreal Star* stated, “Apparently the Rat Portage team is not only the fastest that has ever come from the West in search of the cup, but the fastest that has ever been seen anywhere on ice.” In addition, the challengers were commended for their innovative, “modern methods of play.”⁷¹ The *Montreal Gazette* asserted, “The Thistles had more novelties than have been seen since the days of the old Victoria and Shamrock teams and it looked as if some one in the West had added brains to the game as

⁶⁹ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 7 March 1905, 1. See also *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 13 March 1905, 2.

⁷⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, 8 March 1905, 1, 5; 9 March 1905, 5; 13 March 1905, 1, 5; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 8 March 1905, 2, 4; *Ottawa Citizen*, 8 March 1905, 8; 9 March 1905, 8; 13 March 1905, 8; *Montreal Star*, 8 March 1905, 10-11; 10 March 1905, 10; 13 March 1905, 10; *Montreal Gazette*, 8 March 1905, 2; 13 March 1905, 2; *Toronto Star*, 8 March 1905, 10, 12; 9 March 1905, 10; 13 March 1905, 10; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 March 1905, 1, 5; 9 March 1905, 5; 13 March 1905, 1, 5.

⁷¹ *Montreal Star*, 8 March 1905, 10. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 9 March 1905, 6.

well as strong bodies and speedy skaters.”⁷² Lappage points out, “The style that most teams played at that time was to lift or drive the puck into the opposing team’s end of the ice, and to rush down at top speed to try and catch the opposition before they could organize their attack.” However, the Thistles used “a sustained attack, controlling the puck with short fast passes”; their smaller, quicker defensemen “carried the puck in devastating rushes down the ice, rarely ever resorting to ‘lifting.’” Furthermore, rather than standing in the traditional formation with one player in front of the other, the Rat Portage point and cover point “lined up side by side as they do today.”⁷³ According to the *Ottawa Free Press*, the Stanley Cup holders were “bewildered by a style of play never before seen in Ottawa.”⁷⁴

Another indication of the growing respect for the Thistles was the effort that major Canadian newspapers made to cover the series. “In the press stand at the game were sporting editors from all the leading Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa and Winnipeg papers,” reported the *Manitoba Free Press* following the closing match. “Probably no sporting event has ever attracted such a gathering of

⁷² *Montreal Gazette*, 8 March 1905, 2. See also *Manitoba Free Press*, 9 March 1905, 5.

⁷³ Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 83. See also Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 56; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 7 March 1905, 1; 8 March 1905, 6; 9 March 1905, 6; *Montreal Star*, 8 March 1905, 10; *Montreal Gazette*, 9 March 1905, 2; 15 March 1905, 2; *Toronto Star*, 13 March 1905, 10.

⁷⁴ *Ottawa Free Press* quoted in *Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 March 1905, 9.

newspaper men in Canada as did this game.”⁷⁵ The *Manitoba Free Press* also described public reaction to the outcome of the challenge in Ottawa:

No such demonstration has been seen here for years.

Cheering crowds walked the streets until early morning.

The Russell house was the Mecca for prominent sporting men from all over Canada. “Never saw anything like it!

Greatest game on record!” was the tenor of the remarks.

The Thistles came in for just as much credit as the

Ottawa’s. The team has become very popular here, and

were the recipients of many compliments after it was all over.⁷⁶

The *Montreal Gazette* made the “broad, bold assertion” that the series established “a new standard in the hockey world,” and the *Ottawa Citizen* called the final game, “THE MOST SENSATIONAL MATCH IN HISTORY.”⁷⁷ The *Citizen* also observed, “Rat Portage must return to the west minus the prize for which they came east – the Stanley cup. But they take back with them the respect of the east

⁷⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 March 1905, 5. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 13 March 1905, 6.

⁷⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 March 1905, 5.

⁷⁷ *Montreal Gazette*, 13 March 1905, 2; *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 March 1905, 8. See also *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 13 March 1905, 2; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 13 March 1905, 1, 6.

as being the greatest foe the champion Ottawas have ever met.”⁷⁸ Finally, the *Montreal Star* summarized the progress the Thistles had made since 1903, and speculated about the team’s future: “As individuals Rat Portage are better than Ottawa, but the combined play of the Cupholders counteracted this superiority. They are a team of youngsters, however, which has vastly improved since it came here a couple of years ago, and the chances are that if they come again next year they will have improved in this respect.”⁷⁹

Attendance for the series also reflected the higher regard for the Thistles in Ottawa. While the 1903 challenge attracted between 1000 and 1500 spectators for each game, the 1905 series reportedly drew crowds of 3500 to 4000 people.⁸⁰ According to the *Montreal Gazette*, Dey’s Arena was filled to capacity for the first match. During the second game, “Every bit of space in Dey’s rink was taken up and every space that a man, woman or child could squeeze into was in use,”

⁷⁸ *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 March 1905, 8. See also *Manitoba Free Press*, 14 March 1905, 5.

⁷⁹ *Montreal Star*, 13 March 1905, 10.

⁸⁰ Estimates of attendance varied, as Ottawa and Montreal newspapers reported 3500 fans for the first and second games, and 4000 for the third game. On the other hand, the *Toronto Globe*, *Toronto Star*, and *Manitoba Free Press* used figures of 2383, 3119, and 2698 for the three matches. However, even these more conservative numbers are substantially higher than the attendance recorded for the 1903 series. In addition, revenue estimates varied from \$5200 to \$7800. See Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 53; Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 182; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 8 March 1905, 2; 10 March 1905, 2; 11 March 1905, 19; *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 March 1905, 8; 13 March 1905, 8; *Montreal Gazette*, 13 March 1905, 2; *Toronto Globe*, 14 March 1905, 10; *Toronto Star*, 14 March 1905, 10; *Manitoba Free Press*, 17 March 1905, 5.

while a crowd of 700 to 1000 waited outside.⁸¹ After the deciding contest, the *Ottawa Citizen* declared that the “Game Was Played Before Largest Audience Ever at Hockey Match in Ottawa.”⁸² Meanwhile, an estimated crowd of 4000 people assembled at the office of the *Montreal Star* in downtown Montreal for telegraph bulletins during the final game.⁸³ Interest in the Thistles remained high after the series, as a large crowd gathered in Montreal for an exhibition game between Rat Portage and Ottawa’s main rival, the Montreal Wanderers: “The Thistles were given a great reception when they first stepped on the ice and as the game proceeded the crowd cheered them more and more until at the last the splendid gathering of 5,000 people were simply Rat Portage-mad and not even at home could the Thistles have been given a greater reception. They are now the idols of the enthusiastic Montreal public.”⁸⁴ Arrangements for another match in Montreal against the Victorias were not completed, although the *Montreal Gazette* suggested that “it is safe to say that the Arena would have been filled as few

⁸¹ *Montreal Gazette*, 8 March 1905, 2; 10 March 1905, 2. See also *Toronto Globe*, 10 March 1905, 10; 13 March 1905, 10.

⁸² *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 March 1905, 8. See also *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1905, 10.

⁸³ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 54.

⁸⁴ *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 March 1905, 5. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 6 March 1905, 6; *Montreal Star*, 8 March 1905, 10; *Montreal Gazette*, 15 March 1905, 2; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 15 March 1905, 2; *Toronto Globe*, 15 March 1905, 10; *Toronto Star*, 15 March 1905, 10.

Stanley Cup games have filled it, to see such a contest.”⁸⁵ Finally, in Toronto, the Thistles drew “the largest crowd of the season” for an exhibition contest against the Toronto Marlboros.⁸⁶

While the Thistles captured the attention of people in Ottawa and Montreal, they also maintained strong support at home in Rat Portage. “A monster gathering of citizens assembled in the skating rink tonight to listen to the reports of the first game for the Stanley cup,” reported the *Winnipeg Tribune*. “To say that the audience went wild over the result is putting it mild....A special wire had been put into the rink and the messages were announced to the audience.”⁸⁷ After the series, the *Rat Portage Miner and News* reflected, “Rat Portage’s popular hockey team failed to land the cup on Saturday night, but their record is one of which the citizens may well be proud of. We would sooner be represented by a team that can play legitimate hockey – an article which demonstrates the real science of the game – and lose the cup than to win the trophy and bear the odium

⁸⁵ *Montreal Gazette*, 16 March 1905, 2.

⁸⁶ *Toronto Star*, 17 March 1905, 10. See also 11 March 1905, 9; 15 March 1905, 10; 16 March 1905, 10; *Manitoba Free Press*, 17 March 1905, 5; *Toronto Globe*, 17 March 1905, 8.

⁸⁷ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 March 1905, 6. See also 10 March 1905, 8; *Rat Portage Miner and News*, 3 March 1905, 1; 7 March 1905, 4; *Manitoba Free Press*, 8 March 1905, 5. For examples from January 1907, see *Kenora Miner and News*, 16 January 1907, 4; 23 January 1907, 1; *Manitoba Free Press*, 18 January 1907, 7; 23 January 1907, 6.

which attaches to the Ottawa team.”⁸⁸ This “odium” was a result of the Ottawas using “their well-known rough tactics” to secure victory. “They are not the accomplished hockey players that our local boys are, but they are masters of tripping and stick-punching,” charged the *Rat Portage Miner and News*. “Our fellows have not found it necessary to practice these despicable tricks, for they rely solely on their science of hockey.”⁸⁹

People in the city of Winnipeg also backed the Thistles extensively during the 1905 series. The *Winnipeg Tribune*, for example, treated the challengers from Rat Portage almost as if they were representatives of Winnipeg. “It is possible that greater interest could not have been felt if a Winnipeg team had gone east to wrest the cup,” claimed the *Tribune*.⁹⁰ The *Tribune*’s coverage included front-page stories and cartoons, excerpts from Ottawa newspapers, detailed game stories, full transcripts of telegraph bulletins, and descriptions of how the matches were followed in Winnipeg and Rat Portage.⁹¹ Perhaps the most notable aspect of

⁸⁸ *Rat Portage Miner and News*, 14 March 1905, 1.

⁸⁹ *Rat Portage Miner and News*, 10 March 1905, 1. See also 17 March 1905, 3; 21 March 1905, 3. On Ottawa’s violent play during the 1905 challenge, see Ch. 4, “Hockey, Violence, and Masculinity: Newspaper Coverage of the Ottawa ‘Butchers,’ 1903-1906,” 212-232.

⁹⁰ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 March 1905, 6. See also 10 March 1905, 8; *Montreal Star*, 8 March 1905, 10; *Ottawa Citizen*, 9 March 1905, 8; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 9 March 1905, 2.

⁹¹ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 7 March 1905, 6; 8 March 1905, 1, 6, 9; 9 March 1905, 1, 6; 10 March 1905, 1, 6, 8; 13 March 1905, 1, 6, 10.

this Winnipeg support was the size of the crowds that gathered to follow “live” telegraph reports at various locations in the city. The *Manitoba Free Press* reported that “special wires right from the rink at Ottawa were run, not only into the newspaper offices, but into many of the principal hotels and amusement resorts of the city, and crowds assembled everywhere to hear the result.” A throng of cheering fans blocked the street outside the *Free Press* office, “the interest manifested being second only to that in the federal elections.” Following the first game, the newspaper stated, “Large crowds also assembled at the Auditorium and Manitoba rinks, the grain exchange, Empire, Clarendon, Leland, Woodbine, Mariaggi and Criterion hotels, the barracks, the Sultana parlors, Granite curling rink, Union bank and King Edward cigar store, and several other places, at all of which special wires were run from the C.P.R., and a really excellent service rendered by the company.”⁹² Similar groups congregated in Winnipeg during the second and third games.⁹³ After the completion of the series, the *Manitoba Free Press* concluded, “Throughout Winnipeg interest in the [final] game was at fever height indeed had it been a city team which was competing for the coveted mug instead of the Thistles, the excitement and the sympathies of the

⁹² *Manitoba Free Press*, 8 March 1905, 5. See also 7 March 1905, 1, 5; *Ottawa Citizen*, 9 March 1905, 8.

⁹³ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 9 March 1905, 6; 10 March 1905, 8; 11 March 1905, 1; 13 March 1905, 1; *Manitoba Free Press*, 10 March 1905, 6; 13 March 1905, 5. For examples of telegraph bulletins in January 1907, see *Winnipeg Tribune*, 17 January 1907, 6; 18 January 1907, 6; 22 January 1907, 5; *Manitoba Free Press*, 17 January 1907, 6; 18 January 1907, 7.

crowd could not have been more aroused or more manifest. It is safe to say that no sporting event in recent years has aroused more interest.”⁹⁴

Support in Winnipeg was also linked to a wider, Western Canadian affinity for the Thistles. Winnipeg newspapers often merged the interests of Rat Portage, Winnipeg, and the Prairie West together when they discussed the Thistles’ bid for the Stanley Cup. For example, the *Manitoba Free Press* noted that people at an exhibition game in Winnipeg prior to the challenge “were satisfied that in the Rat Portage boys the west has worthy representatives in the Stanley cup series soon to be decided, and when the Thistles line up at Ottawa it is with the assurance that they have the support of not only their home town, but of the entire west as well, and particularly that of the sport-loving public in Winnipeg.”⁹⁵ The *Free Press* also wrote, “It is expected that quite a number from Winnipeg will go to Ottawa to see the Stanley cup games. The Rats will be accompanied from their home town by a warm bunch of rooters, so they will not be without plenty of local support when they line up against the Senators. There also promises to be a good deal of western money to back the chances of the

⁹⁴ *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 March 1905, 5. See also *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 9 March 1905, 2. Similarly, in January 1907, the *Manitoba Free Press* wrote, “If a Winnipeg team had been competing for the cup there could scarcely have been more interest in the outcome of the game.” See *Manitoba Free Press*, 18 January 1907, 7. See also *Kenora Miner and News*, 26 January 1907, 2; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 67-68.

⁹⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 1 March 1905, 5. See also *Rat Portage Miner and News*, 3 March 1905, 4.

speedy Manitoba league champions.”⁹⁶ Similarly, the *Winnipeg Tribune* declared that the Thistles left Rat Portage with “the best wishes of western hockeyists.”⁹⁷

These narratives of broader western backing drew upon perceptions of regional cultural difference in Canada during this period, as well as growing economic and political tension between Eastern and Western Canada. In the words of Doug Owram, prairie settlers in the late nineteenth century “felt that the development of the West was being deliberately hindered by easterners who, in their short-sighted selfishness, failed to understand either the value of the West or the aspirations of the people.”⁹⁸ Media reports cast the 1905 Rat Portage Thistles as the bold exemplars of a maturing Prairie West – a team that embodied the entire region’s readiness to challenge a tired and over-civilized Eastern Canada.⁹⁹ For instance, the *Winnipeg Tribune* viewed the Thistles as representatives of a rising Western Canadian hockey community, fighting for recognition in the eyes

⁹⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, 2 March 1905, 5. See also 8 March 1905, 5; *Ottawa Citizen*, 9 March 1905, 8.

⁹⁷ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 4 March 1905, 8.

⁹⁸ Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 173. See also Gerald Friesen, “The Prairies as Region: The Contemporary Meaning of an Old Idea,” in *River Road: Essays on Manitoba and Prairie History* (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1996), 165-182; R. Douglas Francis, *Images of the West: Changing Perceptions of the Prairies, 1690-1960* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989).

⁹⁹ See Friesen, “The Prairies as Region,” 168-169, 180-181.

of the “skeptical east.”¹⁰⁰ Likewise, following Rat Portage’s victory in the opening match of the series, the *Manitoba Free Press* claimed, “It was another case of a western cyclone sweeping down on the effete east and upsetting all the calculations of the astute sporting fraternity. The challengers were in magnificent form and upheld the confidence felt in them by their supporters and vindicated the reputation of the western men as finished hockey players.” The *Free Press* added, “It was with unalloyed joy that the Winnipeg people heard the result of the game last night, for the victory of the Rat Portagers, the champions of the Manitoba league, was a very popular one here, as it was throughout the west in general.”¹⁰¹

When the Kenora Thistles captured the M.H.L. championship in 1905-06, it was too late in the season to challenge the E.C.A.H.A. winners, the Montreal Wanderers. As a result, a two-game, total-goal series between the Thistles and the Wanderers was set for January 1907. Amateurs and professionals were allowed to play together in the E.C.A.H.A. in 1906-07, and the M.H.L. also decided to follow this example. Wong writes, “Now that the leading hockey organization allowed the intermingling of amateurs and professionals, many top clubs in other parts of the country lost all pretension of maintaining the amateur

¹⁰⁰ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 9 March 1905, 6.

¹⁰¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 8 March 1905, 1, 5. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 March 1905, 6; *Toronto Star*, 7 March 1905, 10; *Toronto Globe*, 8 March 1905, 11; *Manitoba Free Press*, 22 January 1907, 6.

code.” The 1907 series with the Wanderers therefore “represented a clear movement toward a very different model of operation.”¹⁰² The Montreal club declared four players on its roster to be professionals, while four others remained amateurs.¹⁰³ Most notably, the Wanderers’ offer of “sound financial inducements” had likely made Hod Stuart the highest-paid player in hockey. The *Montreal Gazette* welcomed the Wanderers’ “imported material” with the headline, “HOD STUART IS HERE – Redoubtable Pittsburg Player Has Finally Joined the Wanderer Forces.”¹⁰⁴ Even in the middle of the Stanley Cup series against the Thistles, the Wanderers tried to bolster their line-up with a paid import. After the first game of the challenge, the *Montreal Gazette* reported that the Wanderers had attempted to recruit Montreal Victorias captain Russell Bowie to join the team for the next match against Kenora, in order to help “save the cup for the league.” But Victoria officials “decided that the arrangement did not suit their purposes,” so the attempt to add Bowie was dropped.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*, 44; Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 183.

¹⁰³ *Montreal Gazette*, 21 January 1907, 2; *Montreal Star*, 19 January 1907, 22. See also Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*, 44.

¹⁰⁴ *Montreal Gazette*, 1 January 1907, 2.

¹⁰⁵ *Montreal Gazette*, 21 January 1907, 2. See also *Toronto Globe*, 19 January 1907, 22; *Toronto Star*, 19 January 1907; *Montreal Star*, 22 January 1907, 10, 13; 23 January 1907, 3; *Montreal Gazette*, 22 January 1907, 4; *Ottawa Citizen*, 22 January 1907, 8; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 22 January 1907, 2; *Kenora Miner and News*, 23 January 1907, 1. Strangely, Bowie had served as judge of

The Thistles club that travelled to Montreal in January 1907 was the first Kenora team acknowledged as a professional aggregation.¹⁰⁶ However, despite beginning this transition to professionalism, the Thistles were still seen as “members” of their community. For example, following an early season exhibition game, the *Manitoba Free Press* reflected on how the match “marked the farewell appearance of the Thistles in amateur hockey, a sport which they have honored by their connection.” Even though the team was starting to adopt the professional model, the *Free Press* continued to view the Thistles through the lens of amateurism. In particular, the newspaper highlighted the players’ roots in their home town:

Winnipeg people have come to look upon the Kenora boys with almost as much pride and affection as they did the old-time champion [Winnipeg] Victorias. First as intermediates, later as seniors and Stanley cup challengers, Phillips, Hooper, Griffis, McGimsie, Beaudro and Bellefeuille have been playing up here several times in a season for the last seven or eight years. With the exception

play – basically, a second referee – in the first game of the series. See *Toronto Globe*, 19 January 1907, 22; *Montreal Gazette*, 19 January 1907, 2.

¹⁰⁶ Lappage suggests that the Thistles were generating sufficient revenue to provide financial compensation for at least some players during the 1905-06 season. However, the M.H.L. remained an amateur league, and it is not clear if the club was actually paying players prior to 1906-07. See Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 86; Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 182-183.

of Geroux, the goalkeeper, all were raised at Rat Portage, played together as kids and have stuck together since. Now the boys are embracing professionalism, making the plunge to-night when they go up against the Strathconas, but so far as real amateurism goes, a team of home-brews like the Thistles looks the genuine article. It is at least within the spirit of the law, if not within the strict letter.¹⁰⁷

This romantic narrative of the Thistles was similar to the image of the team constructed by newspapers during the 1905 challenge against Ottawa. For the *Manitoba Free Press*, paid professionals retained an aura of amateurism when they still competed for their home community. However, if “real amateurism” demanded a close connection between town and team, what would happen when players were recruited from other communities to assist the “home” club’s pursuit of victory?

A significant move away from the “member” relationship occurred when the Thistles added two players from Brandon to the group that would represent Kenora in the January 1907 Stanley Cup challenge. Cover point Art Ross and forward Joe Hall temporarily left the Brandon Wheat Kings in order to travel to Montreal with the Thistles for the championship matches against the

¹⁰⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 19 December 1906, 5.

Wanderers.¹⁰⁸ As Wong writes, “For the first time in the club’s history, the Thistles actively sought out and brought in two ringers – experts for hire Art Ross and Joe Hall, specifically for the Stanley Cup series.”¹⁰⁹ On 3 January 1907, the *Manitoba Free Press* suggested, “It would not be at all surprising to see a shake-up on the Thistles before long. A new point man, a well known eastern player, is figured on to join the team shortly.”¹¹⁰ Six days later, the *Free Press* confirmed, “ROSS AND HALL JOIN THISTLES – Brandon Players Will Go East to Play in Cup Matches.”¹¹¹ Even without Ross and Hall, Kenora was viewed as a strong threat to capture the Cup. In early January, for example, an Ottawa player predicted a Kenora victory over the Wanderers.¹¹² However, the addition of the two Brandon players appeared to make success even more likely. According to the *Toronto Star*, “The team which will represent the Thistles in this, their third attempt to lift the much-sought trophy, is the strongest that ever represented Kenora, and one of the strongest, if not actually the strongest, team that ever went

¹⁰⁸ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 67; Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 88.

¹⁰⁹ Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 183.

¹¹⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, 3 January 1907, 6. Ross played hockey in Montreal from 1902 to 1905, before joining Brandon for the 1905-06 season.

¹¹¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 9 January 1907, 6. See also 12 January 1907, 6; 14 January 1907, 6; *Kenora Miner and News*, 12 January 1907, 1; *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 January 1907, 8; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 16 January 1907, 2; *Toronto Globe*, 21 January 1907, 9.

¹¹² *Manitoba Free Press*, 3 January 1907, 6.

out of the west. The regular team has been strengthened by the addition of Art Ross, the crack cover-point of the Brandon team, and the best player in the position in the Manitoba League, while Joe Hall, the pugnacious and hard-checking forward of the same team, will act as spare man.”¹¹³ Montreal newspapers agreed with this assessment. For instance, both the *Montreal Gazette* and the *Montreal Star* saw Kenora as a legitimate challenger, likely a more powerful team than on the club’s previous trips to the east.¹¹⁴

The augmentation of the Thistles’ roster with Ross and Hall also marked a shift toward the “customer” model of community identity. Gruneau and Whitson explain that, with the expansion of professional sport, the connection “between fans and teams began to change from a sense of direct membership in a community to which players and club management also belonged, to a relationship more like that of a loyal customer, with the mutual obligations between merchant and customer that this relationship once implied.”¹¹⁵ A key aspect of this “customer” link was a stronger commitment to winning. The *Winnipeg Tribune*, for example, applauded the Thistles’ decision to bolster their

¹¹³ *Toronto Star*, 12 January 1907, 9. See also 15 January 1907, 12.

¹¹⁴ See, for example, *Montreal Gazette*, 16 January 1907, 4; 17 January 1907, 2; 18 January 1907, 4; *Montreal Star*, 16 January 1907, 3; 17 January 1907, 3.

¹¹⁵ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 71.

line-up with players from Brandon. According to the *Tribune*, bringing in outside players was essential to maintaining a competitive hockey club:

Western hockeyists cannot but be pleased with the announcement that Kenora will go after the Montreal Wanderers with a strengthened team. While the cupholders have spared neither expense nor trouble in securing the best material on the market, it must be confessed that it was a little exasperating to see the Thistles stand idly by, fortified behind a bulwark of self-confidence. But self-confidence does not win hockey matches and least of all Stanley cups and that the Thistles have finally tumbled to the fact that the best team must ever be on the lookout for new timber should cause a return of shaken confidence.

While the *Manitoba Free Press* had downplayed the Thistles' turn to professionalism at the start of the 1906-07 season, continuing to portray the team as a collection of "home brews," the *Winnipeg Tribune* now encouraged the club's effort to assemble a stronger squad by acquiring players from outside Kenora. "With their regular team the Thistles might lift the Stanley cup and then they might not with the chances greatly in favor of the mug remaining in the east," the *Tribune* continued. "Their form in the games in Winnipeg has not aroused the confidence in their prowess that former occasions have....Arthur Ross and Joe Hall of Brandon are the recruits expected to help the Thistles carry back the mug

to the west.”¹¹⁶ A few days later, the newspaper emphasized, “The addition of Arthur Ross and Joe Hall will strengthen the Thistles immeasurably.”¹¹⁷

The *Manitoba Free Press* reported “intense interest” in the series, and stated, “The general impression is that they will give the Wanderers a hard battle, and may take the cup west.”¹¹⁸ Sportswriters were present from across Canada, as well as Pittsburgh and Buffalo, and more than 6000 people attended each game of the series.¹¹⁹ Following the opening match, the *Montreal Gazette* noted, “There were many visitors in town from Toronto and Ottawa to see the game.”¹²⁰ The teams also earned a substantial profit. The *Montreal Gazette* and the *Montreal Star* estimated that the clubs divided \$3600 between them after the series.¹²¹ The *Kenora Miner and News* observed, “The immense crowd in attendance is a magnificent tribute to the drawing qualities of the Thistles. There is probably no

¹¹⁶ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 9 January 1907, 6. See also *Kenora Miner and News*, 12 January 1907, 1.

¹¹⁷ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 12 January 1907, 6.

¹¹⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, 17 January 1907, 6.

¹¹⁹ Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail, 88; *Montreal Gazette*, 18 January 1907, 4; 22 January 1907, 4; *Toronto Star*, 22 January 1907, 12.

¹²⁰ *Montreal Gazette*, 18 January 1907, 4.

¹²¹ *Montreal Gazette*, 23 January 1907, 4; *Montreal Star*, 23 January 1907, 3. This revenue estimate was based on a total attendance figure of 10 400 for the two-game series, a lower number than earlier reports.

other team in Canada, with the possible exception of Ottawa, which would have attracted such a crowd to the big Arena rink.” The paper added:

The interest in the game is not by any means confined to the [sic] Montreal and Kenora. All over Canada the struggle for the coveted cup is being watched with the keenest interest. From Nova Scotia to British Columbia the newspapers bulletin boards recorded the progress of last night’s game. Through our hockey team Kenora is being placed in an outstanding position among the cities and towns of Canada. Should the boys win the cup they will be worthy of the best the town can provide. But win or not, they are setting a place in hockey which but very few clubs in the Dominion can ever hope to emulate.¹²²

Telegraph reports were available in Ottawa, for instance, where the Thistles were “prime favorites” over the “unpopular” Wanderers.¹²³ Finally, Kenora drew 4000 spectators to an exhibition contest in Ottawa following the challenge.¹²⁴

¹²² *Kenora Miner and News*, 19 January 1907, 1; Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 88.

¹²³ *Manitoba Free Press*, 22 January 1907, 7. See also 24 January 1907, 6; *Ottawa Citizen*, 22 January 1907, 8.

¹²⁴ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 22 January 1907, 8; 24 January 1907, 2; *Ottawa Citizen*, 24 January 1907, 8; *Montreal Gazette*, 24 January 1907, 2; *Toronto Globe*, 24 January 1907, 11; *Toronto Star*, 24 January 1907, 13.

Tom Phillips scored all four goals in a 4-2 Kenora victory in the first game, played on 17 January 1907. Four days later, the Thistles won the second match by a margin of 8-6 to take possession of the Stanley Cup from the Montreal Wanderers. Despite Kenora's movement toward professionalism, most newspaper coverage of the Thistles' victory still emphasized the "member" narrative of community representation. "PHILLIPS. GRIFFIS. MCGIMSIE. BEAUDRO. HOOPER. ROSS. GEROUX. Those are names to conjure with, and when hockey history is written, will loom large on several pages," stated the *Kenora Miner and News*. "A better seven might be picked by searching the continent over, but no town in the Dominion could put forward five out of seven, raised in their own town."¹²⁵ Similarly, the *Winnipeg Tribune* continued to highlight the club's roots in Kenora: "The team also holds the distinction of being composed almost entirely of home brews, Tommy Phillips, Tommy Hooper, Billy McGimsie, Roxy Beaudro, and Silas Griffis, all being natives of the Ontario town, where they played together for years, first on the High School team of that place, and then on the champion team."¹²⁶ At the conclusion of the series, the *Fort William Times-Journal* expressed in considerable detail the narrative of small-town amateur purity that had become synonymous with the Thistles:

¹²⁵ *Kenora Miner and News*, 23 January 1907, 1.

¹²⁶ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 22 January 1907, 5.

The town of Kenora has a special right to be proud of her hockey team. They have not been gathered together at great expense from outside and kept for hockey purposes. They are a home-grown bunch; and the same gang who have lifted the Stanley cup used to play shinny together on the streets of old Rat Portage when they all went to the public school in kneepants. They grew up into sportsmen and gentlemen, and no one has ever accused the whirlwind Kenora team of dirty or unfair play. They win or lose as gentlemen. Kenora may also be proud of their loyalty. Time and again, Phillips, Hooper, and Griffis and the rest of the bunch could have yielded to the temptation of a princely salary to leave their home town, but they would never quit. They had a mission to perform, and, like Knights of the Round Table, had sworn to bring the cup to Kenora. Having accomplished this they will doubtless stay to defend it.¹²⁷

The *Manitoba Free Press* echoed this perspective: “All honor to the plucky boys from the Lake of the Woods town. Starting to play together as lads at school, the Thistles have stuck together, and in spite of various handicaps,

¹²⁷ *Fort William Times-Journal* quoted in *Kenora Miner and News*, 26 January 1907, 3. See also Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 89, 94.

including reverses on two previous attempts to lift the trophy, they have finally risen to the highest pinnacle in the hockey world.” The *Free Press* also responded to criticism of the Thistles’ recruitment of Art Ross by citing the Wanderers’ parallel importation of one of their star players. “While some cranks may comment on the fact that Kenora had to get Arthur Ross from Brandon to help them out, it must not be forgotten that the defenders sent all the way to Pittsburg to get the mighty Hod Stuart,” noted the *Free Press*. In addition, the Winnipeg paper stressed that, despite Ross’s presence, the majority of the squad remained “Rat Portage born and bred.”¹²⁸ The *Winnipeg Tribune*, in an article reprinted by the *Kenora Miner and News*, went a step further and suggested that such “member” connections fostered a unique, emotional bond between club and community:

No town the size of Kenora would have stuck to their team in the manner they have unless they were actuated by feelings deeper than a mere commercial spirit. The fact that the team was composed of players, the majority of whom have known no other home than Kenora, has had its rewards. Sentiment made it possible for the Thistles to go east after the Stanley cup on three occasions and to ultimately lift the mug. Had Kenora been called upon to

¹²⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, 22 January 1907, 6. See also Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 89.

support a team of paid professionals that town would be as little known in the hockey world as curling is known in the West Indies.¹²⁹

From this perspective, the Montreal Wanderers, on the other hand, were sustained simply by financial obligations – and, as a result, they could not capture the same type of support as the Thistles. “There is a deal of hard feeling between the different Montreal clubs and the partisans of the other local teams were quite satisfied to see the Wanderers beaten,” reported the *Toronto Globe*. “The cup-holders represent the out-and-out professional idea here and are none too popular.”¹³⁰

Media coverage of Kenora’s Stanley Cup championship also expressed a narrative of civic boosterism – the effort on the part of local politicians and business leaders to encourage economic and population growth by developing a dynamic image for their town or city in comparison with its competitors. “It is important to remember, here, that the popular links that were established between representative sport and community pride were from the outset bound up with establishing the status of a city,” states Whitson. “Growing cities were competing, in the early part of the twentieth century, to establish themselves as regional and national centres, and civic boosters soon found that successful sports

¹²⁹ *Kenora Miner and News*, 26 January 1907, 2.

¹³⁰ *Toronto Globe*, 18 January 1907, 9.

teams were among the best ways of putting their cities ‘on the map’.”¹³¹ Boosters believed that a winning hockey team generated favourable publicity and demonstrated the vitality of the community it represented. As early as 1894, when Rat Portage first entered the M.N.A.H.A. as an intermediate club, a local reporter claimed that a “first class hockey team” was more important in promoting a town than “a live, active board-of-trade.”¹³² Rat Portage was similar to other boom towns experiencing prosperity and expansion in this period, such as the communities that formed the basis of the I.H.L in the early 1900s.¹³³ Lappage adds that, as “a popular tourist resort on Lake of the Woods,” Kenora “certainly stood to benefit economically from the publicity that its hockey team was generating.”¹³⁴ Following the 1907 triumph, the *Kenora Miner and News* discussed the value of the community’s hockey club in terms of town promotion:

¹³¹ Whitson, “Hockey and Canadian Popular Culture,” 193. See also David Whitson and Donald Macintosh, “Becoming a World-Class City: Hallmark Events and Sport Franchises in the Growth Strategies of Western Canadian Cities,” *Sociology of Sport Journal* 10, no. 3 (1993): 223-224; Alan F.J. Artibise, “Boosterism and the Development of Prairie Cities, 1871-1913,” in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, ed. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, 2nd ed. (Edmonton: Pica Press, 1992), 515-543; Paul Voisey, “Boosting the Small Prairie Town, 1904-1931: An Example from Southern Alberta,” in *Town and City: Aspects of Western Canadian Urban Development*, ed. Alan F.J. Artibise (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre and the University of Regina, 1981), 147-176.

¹³² Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 179.

¹³³ See Mason and Schrodt, “Hockey’s First Professional Team”; Mason, “The International Hockey League”.

¹³⁴ Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 88.

It is hard to estimate the amount of advertising this town has received through the Stanley cup games. The eastern Canadian papers have devoted columns of space to the games, in which the Thistles participated. People who had never heard of Kenora before, were led to enquire about the place where these wonderful hockey players came from, who could down the Wanderers – the pride of Montreal.¹³⁵

Through hockey, “young and growing communities” like Kenora “could achieve instant renown from one end of the Dominion to the other.”¹³⁶ Wong points out that Kenora “was generally considered as a David, in terms of population size, against the many Goliaths in Stanley Cup competitions.”¹³⁷ By confronting – and, eventually, defeating – these larger centres, the Thistles put Kenora “on the map” alongside some of Canada’s major cities. As the *Manitoba Free Press* stated, “Since the Stanley cup was first donated by his lordship of that

¹³⁵ *Kenora Miner and News*, 30 January 1907, 2.

¹³⁶ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 65.

¹³⁷ Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 187. Nevertheless, Wong suggests, “Despite the general prosperity experienced by the town and its surrounding region during the last decade of the nineteenth century, no evidence was found that local businesses funded the team.” Rather than being supported by a wealthy owner or financial backer, the Thistles were operated by club members who were part of “the town’s petite bourgeoisie – local merchants and professionals who could afford the time and money to pursue competitive hockey at a high level.” See Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 181. The problem of local financial support was resolved by increasing revenue from gate receipts. See Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 182-184.

name to represent the highest honors in the hockey world, it has been held in three cities, Montreal, Winnipeg and Ottawa, all recognized sport centres, and so all the more honor is coming to a comparatively small place like Kenora for turning out a team capable of beating the best the east could produce.”¹³⁸ The *Montreal Gazette* referred to Kenora as “that red hot hockey town by the Lake of the Woods,” and the *Kenora Miner and News* lauded the “Champion Thistles” for “the way way in which they have upheld the honor of the town in Canada’s metropolis.”¹³⁹ Finally, the *Manitoba Free Press* reported that the excitement produced by the Stanley Cup victory inspired plans for a new arena worthy of Kenora’s new status – “a mammoth rink that will be second to none in the west, and will have a seating capacity of 4,000.”¹⁴⁰ “The team’s triumph inspired some grandiose civic dreams,” concludes Jenish. “The town fathers declared that they would build the biggest arena in the West, a 4,000-seat masterpiece, to replace the decrepit Victoria rink that was known for its small playing surface and gloomy lighting.”¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, 22 January 1907, 6.

¹³⁹ *Montreal Gazette*, 22 January 1907, 4; *Kenora Miner and News*, 30 January 1907, 1.

¹⁴⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, 24 January 1907, 6. See also 23 January 1907, 6; *Kenora Miner and News*, 23 January 1907, 4; *Montreal Gazette*, 23 January 1907, 4.

¹⁴¹ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 69. See also Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 89; Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 183. Maximum capacity of the Thistles’ current arena, the Victoria Rink, was 2000 spectators, less than

As holders of the Stanley Cup, Kenora had earned the right to host the next competition for the trophy. The Montreal Wanderers finished the 1906-07 E.C.A. H.A. schedule with a 10-0 record, and immediately issued a challenge to regain the Stanley Cup. During the period leading up to the Thistles-Wanderers rematch in March 1907, disputes emerged around such issues as player eligibility, professionalism, and the site for the series. In particular, the contentious debate surrounding the March 1907 challenge generated a great deal of discussion about the connections between players, towns, and teams. For instance, Wong writes that “accusations, protests, and bickering about the eligibility of players on both sides filled the newspapers’ sports columns.”¹⁴² Jenish describes high-level hockey between 1907 and 1917 as “a chaotic, free market” in which

there were almost no rules or conventions to govern the signing of players or to restrict their movements. One team could raid another’s roster, and the players were free to sell their services to the highest bidder. Star players could

half of what Winnipeg’s newest facility provided. However, the new arena was not built as planned.

¹⁴² Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 183. See also Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 70.

move from team to team, from city to city, from league to league, sometimes in a single season.¹⁴³

The Kenora Thistles' preparation for their Stanley Cup defence fits Jenish's portrayal of hockey in this period. First, questions continued to surround the Thistles' employment of Art Ross, who had temporarily joined the Kenora team for the January 1907 challenge before returning to play with Brandon. "The Kenora Thistles will not be able to play any men who are not actual members of the team against the Wanderers when the Eastern league champions go up against them," reported the *Winnipeg Tribune*. "It was stated last night that the cup trustees had decided that any player who figured on another team in the same league would be ineligible to play in defence of the cup. This means that the Kenoras will be shy the services of Arthur Ross, who is a member of the Brandon team."¹⁴⁴ More importantly, a storm of controversy developed over Kenora's signing of Ottawa's Alf Smith and Harry Westwick at the conclusion of the E.C.A.H.A. season. "WESTWICK AND SMITH AT KENORA – Famous Ottawa Players Will Play With the Cup Defenders," declared the *Manitoba Free Press*. "Alf. Smith, the famous right wing, and Harry Westwick, rover of the Ottawa hockey team, have gone west to help Kenora win the Manitoba league

¹⁴³ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 63. See also Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*, 45.

¹⁴⁴ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 March 1907, 6. Later, there was more talk of playing Ross, if one of the Thistles' regular players was unavailable due to injury. See *Manitoba Free Press*, 19 March 1907, 6.

championship and retain the Stanley cup. Kenora wired an alluring offer, Smith and Westwick accepted and left Ottawa at 12.45 Saturday. They expect to reach their destination on Monday.”¹⁴⁵ Smith and Westwick had played the entire 1906-07 schedule with Ottawa, but they travelled west in mid-March to join the Thistles for their final league game against Portage la Prairie and both matches of the league championship series against Brandon – and, perhaps, to help Kenora keep the Stanley Cup.¹⁴⁶

Not surprisingly, Kenora’s plan to play Smith and Westwick against the Wanderers sparked significant opposition from the Montreal hockey club. According to the *Montreal Star*, the Wanderers “say that while they do not think the presence of Smith and Westwick has strengthened the team, they object to the principle of having to play a team selected from all over the Dominion.”¹⁴⁷ As a result, the Wanderers asked Stanley Cup trustee William Foran to bar the two

¹⁴⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 11 March 1907, 6. See also 12 March 1907, 6; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 11 March 1907, 6, 10; 12 March 1907, 6; *Montreal Gazette*, 11 March 1907, 4; *Montreal Star*, 11 March 1907, 3; *Ottawa Citizen*, 11 March 1907, 8.

¹⁴⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 March 1907, 6; 18 March 1907, 6; 19 March 1907, 6; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 13 March 1907, 6; 15 March 1907, 6; 20 March 1907, 1, 11; *Toronto Globe*, 18 March 1907, 6; *Toronto Star*, 19 March 1907, 10; *Ottawa Citizen*, 19 March 1907, 8. Kenora also talked about bringing in players from Winnipeg and Sault Ste. Marie for the Portage la Prairie game, but this did not happen. See *Manitoba Free Press*, 12 March 1907, 6; 13 March 1907, 6.

¹⁴⁷ *Montreal Star*, 23 March 1907, 14.

former Ottawa players from competing in the challenge.¹⁴⁸ “The Thistles claim that they were perfectly justified in playing Smith and Westwick both in the league and in the cup series, which has caused a strong protest from the Wanderer club,” summarized the *Winnipeg Tribune*. “Acting Cup Trustee Foran took the same view of the matter as the Wanderers, and ruled that Smith and Westwick were not eligible to play in the cup games, though there have been many precedents by clubs in the east, and there is the trouble.”¹⁴⁹ Before the Thistles signed Smith and Westwick, Foran had already declared “that Kenora must defend the trophy with their league team and not use outsiders, as when they came last with Ross and Hall, of the Brandon Club.”¹⁵⁰ Following the addition of Smith and Westwick, the Wanderers “made strenuous objection to Kenora being allowed to play its recent imports.” Foran agreed: “It is an infringement on the first principles of sport, and I will not permit it. I am irreconcilably opposed to such measures.”¹⁵¹ According to the *Manitoba Free Press*, if the Thistles used Smith and Westwick, they would be required to “relinquish the trophy,” and “the

¹⁴⁸ Foran was filling in for trustee P.D. Ross, who was in England at the time. See *Montreal Gazette*, 14 March 1907, 2; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 14 March 1907, 1; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 69; Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 89-91.

¹⁴⁹ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 20 March 1907, 11. See also 23 March 1907, 1.

¹⁵⁰ *Montreal Gazette*, 5 March 1907, 2. See also 11 March 1907, 4.

¹⁵¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 March 1907, 6. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 14 March 1907, 2; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 12 March 1907, 1.

trustees would sidetrack Kenora and give the next best team in the league the option of defending the cup against the Wanderers.”¹⁵²

In making a case against the Thistles’ acquisition of Smith and Westwick, Foran asserted, “[T]he very fact that those men have already gone through a schedule in the same league with Wanderers, on a team which failed to defeat the eastern champions, is sufficient argument for me that they are ineligible for a Stanley Cup series between Wanderers and Kenora.”¹⁵³ Foran dismissed the idea that “the Ottawa men have become eligible through playing in Manitoba league games,” although he acknowledged that, under this standard, some of the players who had participated in earlier Stanley Cup contests also should have been declared ineligible. However, no team had brought forward a protest in those cases. Foran added, “While possibly too lenient in the past, it is the trustees’ intention that certain abuses in connection with the Stanley cup must cease.”¹⁵⁴ The Thistles countered by claiming that Hod Stuart and Riley Hern should not be permitted to play with the Wanderers. Both men had participated in the I.H.L. during the 1905-06 season, and, according to the Kenora protest, “were lured and

¹⁵² *Manitoba Free Press*, 14 March 1907, 6. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 14 March 1907, 6.

¹⁵³ *Montreal Gazette*, 15 March 1907, 2. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 15 March 1907, 6.

¹⁵⁴ *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 March 1907, 6. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 15 March 1907, 6; *Montreal Gazette*, 15 March 1907, 2; *Ottawa Citizen*, 15 March 1907, 8; *Toronto Globe*, 18 March 1907, 6; *Kenora Miner and News*, 20 March 1907, 3.

brought to this country for the same purpose that induced the Ottawa men to go west.”¹⁵⁵ However, Stuart and Hern had played the whole 1906-07 schedule with Montreal, making it difficult to argue that the situation was comparable to Kenora’s recruitment of the two Ottawa players late in the season.¹⁵⁶ While Foran rejected the Thistles’ claim, he also “stated that had a protest been laid against Stuart and Hern playing with the Wanderers in defence of the Stanley cup at the first of the season it would have been sustained, these two players not then being eligible. Since that, however, they have played with the Wanderers in all the league games this season, and now must be considered bona fide members of the club.”¹⁵⁷

Foran’s assessment of the recruitment of Smith and Westwick was complicated by earlier cases in which similar additions to team rosters had been permitted by Stanley Cup officials. “The principle is right, but, unfortunately, that principle has not been lived up to,” observed Bob Shillington, president of the

¹⁵⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 16 March 1907, 1. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 16 March 1907, 6; *Montreal Gazette*, 16 March 1907, 2; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 16 March 1907, 7; *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 March 1907, 8.

¹⁵⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, 26 March 1907, 6. Shortly after Kenora’s Stanley Cup victory in January 1907, the club signed cover point Fred Whitcroft from Peterborough for the balance of the season. However, the Thistles’ employment of Whitcroft does not appear to have drawn any criticism. See Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 89-90.

¹⁵⁷ *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 March 1907, 1. See also *Manitoba Free Press*, 18 March 1907, 6; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 18 March 1907, 8; *Montreal Gazette*, 18 March 1907, 2; *Montreal Star*, 18 March 1907, 3.

Canadian Rugby Football Union. “Ross, of Brandon, was allowed to play with Kenora when the Thistles met Wanderers for the cup, and the Wanderers were allowed to bring Riley Hern from the Soo and Hod Stuart from Pittsburg to help retain the trophy. There has, in fact, been an interchange of players all round, and it is too late to stop it now.”¹⁵⁸ The *Toronto Globe* noted that “if Mr. Foran is going to set a higher standard he has to face the fact that in all the Stanley cup games this winter outside players participated, who were not members of the teams for which they played, but were engaged especially for the cup competition.”¹⁵⁹ The *Manitoba Free Press* discussed in more detail other situations that were comparable to the Thistles’ importation of Smith and Westwick:

If precedents are required there are many of them, and incidents more glaring by far than the present. Mr. Foran has admitted that Hod Stuart was not eligible to play with the Wanderers, nor Ross with Kenora in the recent series. To recall a few other instances, it may be mentioned that “Reddy” McMillan, of Cornwall, and another Ontario player helped New Glasgow against the Wanderers in the cup series early this year. Lorne Hannay, of Brandon, and

¹⁵⁸ *Montreal Gazette*, 14 March 1907, 2. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 18 March 1907, 8.

¹⁵⁹ *Toronto Globe* quoted in *Winnipeg Tribune*, 16 March 1907, 6.

other ineligible players were with that famous Klondike seven, and to bring the matter nearer home, how about Percy Leseur being brought down from Smith's Falls to help Ottawa out against the Wanderers a year ago? These were all cases where men were rung in expressly for Stanley cup games. Without contending that Smith and Westwick have made a bona-fide change of residence, they at least have become members of the Thistles by helping that team in its league games.¹⁶⁰

In January 1902, the Toronto Wellingtons had also added a number of players to their regular line-up in order to compete with the Winnipeg Vics in a Stanley Cup challenge. The *Montreal Herald* stated at the time, "This match is not the Wellingtons versus the Winnipeg Victorias. It is Ontario versus the Vics."¹⁶¹

Foran's decision was not popular with the Thistles and their supporters. "Kenora...is up in arms, and members of the Thistle club and residents of the town are wild at the stand taken by Mr. Foran," reported the *Montreal Star*.¹⁶² The *Kenora Miner and News* wrote, "Foran was likened unto a judge who heard

¹⁶⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 March 1907, 6. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 18 March 1907, 8; *Kenora Miner and News*, 20 March 1907, 3; *Montreal Gazette*, 21 January 1907, 2.

¹⁶¹ Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 29.

¹⁶² *Montreal Star*, 22 March 1907, 3.

one side of a case, and that settled it....Not having requested the Thistles to put in any evidence in rebuttal, but arbitrarily handing out a decision, as per the request of the Wanderers, the matter seems incomprehensible to the clarified mind of a westerner.” The *Miner and News* called Stanley Cup eligibility rules “a matter of imagination,” and added, “It is absolutely unfair to make a sudden change in what may be considered an established precedent. At the present time the rules of none of the leagues, either eastern or western, contain residence clauses, nor the prohibition of the transfer of members of one club to another, or from one league to another.” Finally, the Kenora paper pointed out that, “Smith and Westwick have played in practically one half the league games with the Thistles and are therefore a part of the team winning the league championship. It has always been held that the winning team in the league is the only one entitled to defend the trophy, and...these two men have qualified.”¹⁶³

Beyond Kenora, there was also considerable opposition to Foran’s ruling. “The surprising stand taken by Foran is the leading topic in all the hockey centres of the west,” stated the *Manitoba Free Press*. A *Free Press* headline read, “UNKIND REMARKS ABOUT MR. FORAN – Western Sentiment is Strong Against Acting Trustee’s Decision.” The Winnipeg newspaper insisted that the Thistles would play Smith and Westwick if they earned the league title, and made

¹⁶³ *Kenora Miner and News*, 20 March 1907, 1.

reference to “Foran’s buttinisky attitude.”¹⁶⁴ A letter to the sporting editor of the *Manitoba Free Press* suggested a pro-eastern bias behind Foran’s decision. The writer proposed a creation of a new trophy to replace the Stanley Cup – and a new group of trustees to administer championship hockey matches: “It seems that the cup control has resolved itself into one man management, and he being decidedly eastern in sentiment, it would be hardly expected that his decision would be otherwise.”¹⁶⁵ Similarly, the *Winnipeg Tribune*’s sports column, “Seen From the Press Stand,” declared that Foran’s ruling “looks more like the filling of a rush order on the part of the assuming acting trustee to pacify the whinings of a whimpering eastern bunch.”¹⁶⁶ In addition, the M.H.L. had no problem with Smith and Westwick playing for Kenora at the conclusion of the regular season and in the playoffs. The league actually passed a series of resolutions criticizing Foran’s decisions, and supporting Kenora’s right to use the two Ottawa players in defence of the Stanley Cup.¹⁶⁷ On the other hand, the *Toronto Telegram* labelled the Cup challenge “a huge joke,” and criticized the Thistles’ efforts “to grab

¹⁶⁴ *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 March 1907, 6.

¹⁶⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 18 March 1907, 6. See also *Toronto Star*, 21 March 1907, 12.

¹⁶⁶ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 15 March 1907, 6. See also 18 March 1907, 8.

¹⁶⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 March 1907, 6; 19 March 1907, 6; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 19 March 1907, 6; *Montreal Star*, 19 March 1907, 3; *Ottawa Citizen*, 19 March 1907, 8; *Toronto Star*, 19 March 1907, 10; *Kenora Miner and News*, 20 March 1907, 1, 3.

players from anywhere.” The *Telegram* observed, “Here’s Kenora not satisfied even to gather together the west to play against the east, but sending to Ottawa for Alf Smith and Harry Westwick to help them hold their silverware.”¹⁶⁸ Likewise, a *Toronto Globe* writer later called Foran’s position “a merited rebuke to the carpet-baggers and gate-money hunters who go unchecked” in high-level hockey.¹⁶⁹

During this debate over imported players, the *Kenora Miner and News* expressed support for the Thistles by drawing upon the club’s history as a team of “home brews.” In comparison to Montreal and Ottawa teams, in particular, Kenora’s representatives had been “members” of the community:

No team is more deserving of a square deal from the trustee than the Thistles, and they no doubt, will get it. Three times they journeyed to the east after the silverware, and each time they had local and amateur players. The only exception being the last trip, when they had Ross to help out. It is doubtful if any team in the east can present such a record. Certainly neither Montreal nor Ottawa can approach within a reasonable semblance of it. On every occasion in which they defended the cup they had players

¹⁶⁸ *Toronto Telegram* quoted in *Winnipeg Tribune*, 16 March 1907, 6.

¹⁶⁹ *Toronto Globe*, 25 March 1907, 9. See also *Montreal Star*, 25 March 1907, 12.

from outside their own club. Smith and Westwick will have played three games and perhaps four in the league series before a Stanley cup challenge is met. They are certainly as much entitled to play with Kenora as the majority of the men the Wanderers are bringing up to play with that team.

The *Miner and News* continued, “No team in Canada ever kept closer to amateur ideals than the Thistles, and it was practically an amateur team that landed the cup in January.”¹⁷⁰ A few days later, the local newspaper elaborated on this perspective:

Imported players have been a factor in hockey for a number of years, and the eastern clubs have been the most familiar with it. This is the first season that the Thistles have ever looked abroad for assistance or offered inducements. The team had always been the product of the town itself, and no change would have been made in this program, had it not been rendered necessary in self defence by the actions of eastern teams. It cannot be denied that the Wanderers have

¹⁷⁰ *Kenora Miner and News*, 16 March 1907, 3. See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, 18 March 1907, 8.

secured players from various sources, and Trustee Foran is surely conversant as to when and where.¹⁷¹

According to this view, Kenora reluctantly embraced a moderate version of professionalism in order to remain competitive with their eastern rivals.

Meanwhile, in the middle of this controversy, a group of sporting club officials met in Winnipeg for the purpose of discussing the broader amateur-professional controversy. Delegates gathered to consider forming a provincial chapter of the Canadian Amateur Athletic Union (C.A.A.U.). The opinions put forward at this meeting expressed competing narratives of professionalism. The *Manitoba Free Press* reported, “Realizing that the professional element is gaining ground in Manitoba, as well as all over Canada, the meeting was called by men particularly interested in retaining sports of all kinds unstained.” For example, J.D. Pratt, representing the Winnipeg Rowing Club,

advocated absolute amateurism. As an instance of professionalism he referred to the fact of the Kenora team bringing out Ottawa players as discouraging and disgraceful. It was unfair to the public, and he could not see how the public could support games conducted on such principles. It lowered and degraded the sport, and he could

¹⁷¹ *Kenora Miner and News*, 20 March 1907, 1; Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 92. See also Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 184.

not see how any decent minded sportsman could go to the
hockey match.

On the other hand, J.H. Treleaven, secretary of the Western Canada Lacrosse Association, recognized more complexity around the issue: “He believed the general public wanted professionalism. They pay their money to see the games, and want the best.”¹⁷² Mott calls attention to these conflicting perceptions of professional sport when he notes, “Professional athletes were mercenaries whose performances could be vicious or corrupt, but they were also experts whose skills were superior.” Mott further explains that supporters of amateurism “assumed a young man became a professional athlete because he possessed a flawed character and was led into temptation. Perhaps it was more accurate to say that he became a professional because, just like an opera singer or an actor, he had developed his skills to the point where large audiences were willing to pay to watch him display them.”¹⁷³

One of the keys to the growing respectability of professional hockey was a change in the public’s perception of the professional athlete. In Mason’s words, “being a hockey professional became equated with skill level, rather than simply

¹⁷² *Manitoba Free Press*, 16 March 1907, 6. See also 22 March 1907, 2; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 16 March 1907, 6; *Toronto Globe*, 23 March 1907, 24.

¹⁷³ Morris Mott, “The Problems of Professionalism: The Manitoba Amateur Athletic Association and the Fight Against Pro Hockey, 1904-1911,” in *Winter Sports in the West*, ed. E.A. Corbet and A.W. Rasporich (Calgary: The Historical Society of Alberta, 1990), 139.

social class or remunerative practices....In effect, the professional player was now considered an expert, rather than someone who cheated amateur principles.”¹⁷⁴

Or, as a writer in the *Winnipeg Saturday Post* put it, an athlete becomes a professional “because he is good,” while he remains an amateur only if he “can’t play well enough to get money.”¹⁷⁵ Pro sport attracted fan attention because it offered displays of superior skills and a greater premium on victory.

“Amateurism was fine so long as the games could generate enough interest to sustain the ideology financially,” explains Wong. “When professional hockey entered the marketplace, it already had a following based not on sports ideology but on success and achievement.”¹⁷⁶ With a higher value assigned to technical expertise and “scientific play,” Gruneau and Whitson conclude that “[i]t followed inevitably that the best technique, and the best performances, would be demonstrated by specialists. Professional athletes could then be represented as rational experts rather than amoral cheaters or prostitutes.”¹⁷⁷ Mott describes a similar understanding of professionalism in baseball in Manitoba as paid players

¹⁷⁴ Mason, “The International Hockey League,” 10. On the development of amateur ideology and organizations in Canada, see Metcalfe, *Canada Learns to Play*, 99-132; Don Morrow, “A Case Study in Amateur Conflict: The Athletic War in Canada, 1906-1908,” *British Journal of Sports History* 3, no. 2 (1986): 173-190.

¹⁷⁵ Mott, “The Problems of Professionalism,” 139.

¹⁷⁶ Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*, 56.

¹⁷⁷ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 72.

“furnished superb athletic performances of the kind that prairie people wanted to observe and with which they wanted to be connected.”¹⁷⁸

The other main area of dispute related to the March 1907 challenge was the location and dates of the Stanley Cup matches. The Wanderers “objected to playing in Kenora, ow[i]ng to the alleged smallness of the ice sheet there, and requested that the games be ordered to be played in Winnipeg instead, but in this they were not so successful, for Mr. Foran was quite as emphatic in turning the project down.” Foran ruled that the Thistles should host the games in front of their home fans:

The people of Kenora have backed their team loyally for years, and several times assisted in defraying the heavy expenses of sending them east after the Stanley cup. In view of this fact alone I think it would be a very unsportsmanlike thing to compel Kenora, if they be the cup defenders, to defend it on neutral ice, and unless [W]anderers can prove conclusively to me that the ice is altogether too small for a Sta[n]ley cup series, I shall have

¹⁷⁸ Morris Mott, “The First Pro Sports League on the Prairies: The Manitoba Baseball League of 1886,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 15, no. 2 (1984): 66.

no hesitation in refusing to interfere with the arrangements
of the Kenora club.¹⁷⁹

However, once Kenora was confirmed as the M.H.L. champion, Foran had difficulties getting the Thistles to take part in games on his suggested schedule. Foran ordered the first Stanley Cup contest to be played in Kenora on Wednesday, 20 March, but the Thistles refused, because their series with Brandon had just ended on Monday, 18 March. Instead, Kenora suggested games on Friday, 22 March, and Monday, 25 March. With the schedule so uncertain, it looked like the Cup would be forfeited to the Montreal Wanderers.¹⁸⁰ A front-page headline in the *Manitoba Free Press* on 21 March even declared, “STANLEY CUP GAMES ARE OFF.”¹⁸¹ The Wanderers had travelled to Kenora from their western base in Winnipeg for the scheduled series opener on 20 March, but they found no fans, no officials, and no opponent prepared to take to the ice. The Thistles did not want

¹⁷⁹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 March 1907, 6. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 13 March 1907, 2; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 14 March 1907, 6; 15 March 1907, 6; 16 March 1907, 1; *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 March 1907, 8; *Kenora Miner and News*, 6 March 1907, 3.

¹⁸⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, 19 March 1907, 6; 20 March 1907, 6; 21 March 1907, 1, 6; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 19 March 1907, 15; 20 March 1907, 1, 8, 11; 21 March 1907, 1, 6; *Montreal Gazette*, 21 March 1907, 2; 22 March 1907, 2; *Montreal Star*, 19 March 1907, 1, 3; 20 March 1907, 1; 21 March 1907, 1, 3; 22 March 1907, 3; *Ottawa Citizen*, 19 March 1907, 8; 20 March 1907, 1, 8; 21 March 1907, 1, 8; 22 March 1907, 8; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 20 March 1907, 1; 21 March 1907, 1, 2, 9; *Kenora Miner and News*, 20 March 1907, 1; *Toronto Globe*, 21 March 1907, 9; *Toronto Star*, 21 March 1907, 5, 12.

¹⁸¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 21 March 1907, 1. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 21 March 1907, 2.

to begin the series on that date, and they claimed that the Wanderers did not notify them soon enough that the Montreal club was coming to Kenora. After returning to Winnipeg without playing hockey, the Wanderers refused to go back to Kenora again. Meanwhile, the Thistles declined to play the entire series in Winnipeg, wanting to play at least one game in Kenora.¹⁸²

The acrimony surrounding the Stanley Cup challenge created both confusion and interest. For instance, the *Winnipeg Tribune* reported, “The hockey situation is on the mouth of every sportsman in the city at the present time, and many are the opinions expressed. At all events, never before in the history of the cup have the affairs concerning the cup been in such a muddled condition.”¹⁸³ Foran stated, “It would take a dozen Philadelphia lawyers to untangle this affair with so many different statements being made on both sides.”¹⁸⁴ However, rather than hold up the challenge any longer, the two clubs worked out a compromise that resolved the issues of imported players and host city. Both teams conceded a key point to their rival: the Wanderers agreed to allow Smith and Westwick to participate, and the Thistles decided to host the series in Winnipeg.¹⁸⁵ The

¹⁸² *Winnipeg Tribune*, 21 March 1907, 1, 6.

¹⁸³ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 21 March 1907, 1.

¹⁸⁴ *Montreal Star*, 21 March 1907, 1.

¹⁸⁵ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 22 March 1907, 8. See also 22 March 1907, 1; *Manitoba Free Press*, 22 March 1907, 1; *Montreal Gazette*, 22 March 1907, 4; 23 March 1907, 4; *Montreal Star*, 22 March 1907, 6; 23 March 1907, 14; *Toronto Star*, 22 March 1907, 12; 23 March 1907, 9; *Ottawa Citizen*, 22 March 1907, 1;

situation was resolved without Foran, who initially threatened to treat the series as “void” and take possession of the Stanley Cup until “the various hockey leagues can educate themselves up to a standard where decent sport will be the order of the day.”¹⁸⁶ Later, Foran backed off of this ultimatum, suggesting that the Wanderers had informed him that they were still playing the series “under protest against the Ottawa men.” He speculated that the Wanderers had consented to Kenora’s use of Smith and Westwick for financial reasons: “The club was, however, under a very great expense in going West and it would be most unfortunate were they compelled to return East without being able to recoup themselves for such an outlay. Therefore I think they took the only course open and protected themselves by playing under protest....in the event of their winning the series I shall have no hesitation in awarding them the Stanley Cup.”¹⁸⁷

Winnipeg was an attractive location for the challenge, as, in the words of the *Winnipeg Tribune*, “the ice surface is large enough to suit the fastidious eastern champions and the accommodations for spectators are ample to help fill

23 March 1907, 2, 8; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 22 March 1907, 1, 2; *Kenora Miner and News*, 23 March 1907, 1; 27 March 1907, 3; *Toronto Globe*, 23 March 1907, 25.

¹⁸⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, 23 March 1907, 1. See also 23 March 1907, 9; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 23 March 1907, 1; *Toronto Globe*, 25 March 1907, 9; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 70.

¹⁸⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, 25 March 1907, 6. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 25 March 1907, 4; *Montreal Star*, 26 March 1907, 12; *Ottawa Citizen*, 25 March 1907, 8; *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 25 March 1907, 8; *Toronto Star*, 25 March 1907, 10; *Toronto Globe*, 26 March 1907, 9.

the depleted exchequers of the clubs.”¹⁸⁸ The “temptation of the big Winnipeg gate” was difficult to resist, and there was a “Big Crush for Seats” when tickets went on sale in the city.¹⁸⁹ The two-game, total-goal series began on Saturday, 23 March, at the Winnipeg Arena, and the *Montreal Gazette* reported, “Rink Jammed and Hundreds Turned Away.”¹⁹⁰ About 3500 spectators watched the opening match, and there was a “packed rink” for the second game, with over 4000 people in attendance.¹⁹¹ “Never before has such interest been excited in a Stanley Cup game as in the present,” claimed the *Toronto Star*. “The recent disputes of the teams and the trustees has aroused every hockey fan not only in the West, but all over Canada.”¹⁹² Despite the addition of Smith and Westwick – making a seven that was thought to be “practically invincible” – the Thistles received a “rude jolt” when they lost the first game by a 7-2 margin.¹⁹³ According to the *Montreal Star*, the Wanderers “Showed the West What Real Hockey Was”: “The score indicates

¹⁸⁸ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 14 March 1907, 6. See also *Montreal Gazette*, 14 March 1907, 2.

¹⁸⁹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 22 March 1907, 1; *Winnipeg Tribune*, 22 March 1907, 1.

¹⁹⁰ *Montreal Gazette*, 25 March 1907, 4.

¹⁹¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 25 March 1907, 6; 26 March 1907, 6. Ticket sales generated about \$8000 to be divided between the two teams and the arena operator. Each club therefore had an income of close to \$3000. See also *Montreal Star*, 27 March 1907, 3.

¹⁹² *Toronto Star*, 23 March 1907, 9.

¹⁹³ *Manitoba Free Press*, 25 March 1907, 6.

the respective merits of the teams, and had not Smith and Westwick, of Ottawa, been on the Thistle line up, the score would have read 40 to 2, instead of 7 to 2.”¹⁹⁴ Although Kenora won the game on 25 March by a score of 6-5, the Wanderers’ 12-8 advantage in the series overall meant that the Stanley Cup was on its way back to Montreal.¹⁹⁵

The March 1907 challenge marked the end of the Kenora Thistles’ involvement in top-tier Canadian hockey. After that time, the Thistles could no longer compete economically in the changing world of professional hockey. “This trend towards professionalism and the promiscuous buying and selling of hockey players accelerated during the 1907-1908 season and led to the demise of the Kenora Thistles as a contender for the Stanley Cup,” writes Lappage.¹⁹⁶ Tom Phillips joined Smith and Westwick in Ottawa when the two imports returned to their former team. Meanwhile, Tom Hooper signed with the Montreal Wanderers, and Fred Whitcroft moved on to Edmonton. Combined with retirements and injuries, this loss of players weakened the Thistles significantly for the following year. In fact, Kenora withdrew from the now fully professional Manitoba Professional Hockey League (M.P.H.L.) early in the 1907-08 season.¹⁹⁷ Without

¹⁹⁴ *Montreal Star*, 25 March 1907, 12.

¹⁹⁵ *Manitoba Free Press*, 26 March 1907, 6; Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 71.

¹⁹⁶ Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 92.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 92-93; Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 183-185.

the population base or economic resources available to teams in places like Ottawa and Montreal, the Thistles “could not compete with the attractive salaries offered by hockey clubs from larger cities,” concludes Lappage. “Even though the town of Kenora supported its hockey team wholeheartedly, the Thistles Hockey Club simply could not offer competitive salaries to retain its stars and to attract new talent.”¹⁹⁸ Wong also links the team’s decline to an economic downturn in the Kenora region which began with the collapse of the mining industry around 1905. In combination with the escalating costs of acquiring professional players, the end of the economic boom meant that Kenora could not participate successfully in the aggressive hockey market of the post-1907 period.¹⁹⁹

This chapter has analyzed media coverage of Stanley Cup challenges involving the Kenora Thistles between 1903 and 1907. These four series occurred during a period of transition from amateurism to professionalism at the highest levels of North American hockey. In particular, this study has explored “the representative character of sporting spectacles”²⁰⁰ by examining changing narratives of community identification as the Kenora Thistles moved from a team

¹⁹⁸ Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 94.

¹⁹⁹ Wong, “From Rat Portage to Kenora,” 183-186.

²⁰⁰ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 67.

of “home brews” to one that also embraced a number of imported professionals. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, sports teams came to be viewed as symbolic representatives of their communities. As a result, sporting contests were sites “where new kinds of popular civic identity were publicly rehearsed and celebrated.”²⁰¹ Sport also functioned as an advertising agent for growing towns and cities eager to bolster their image and gain attention and recognition. As the Kenora Thistles challenged some of the country’s strongest teams for the Stanley Cup, respect for this small-town squad increased both locally and in central Canada.

Writing about changing notions of sport and civic identity, Whitson states, “What needs to be traced, in the evolution of professional sport, is a shift from sporting competitions as more or less organic rituals in which people re-experienced attachments to others in their immediate community, to today’s norm in which professional teams promote themselves as civic representatives.”²⁰² Utilizing the Kenora Thistles as a case study, this chapter has examined how followers of a successful small-town hockey team negotiated this shift during the early years of professional hockey. Newspaper coverage of the Thistles incorporated elements of both the “member” and “customer” narratives of community representation. “The town of Rat Portage took tremendous pride in its

²⁰¹ Whitson, “Hockey and Canadian Popular Culture,” 190.

²⁰² Whitson, “Hockey and Canadian Popular Culture,” 191.

team, especially since almost all the players were hometown boys,” writes Lappage.²⁰³ Media accounts of early Kenora clubs – in particular, the 1905 Stanley Cup challengers – stressed the Thistles’ local roots and community connections. When Kenora won the championship in January 1907, the dominant discourse was still one of local loyalty and civic closeness, despite the presence of paid professionals on the Thistles’ roster. At the same time, however, a “customer” narrative was emerging. The *Winnipeg Tribune*, for instance, supported the importation of two players from Brandon because they strengthened the Thistles’ line-up “immensely” and improved the club’s chances of victory: “There is danger in weakening the team by too many last minutes re-arrangements, but that the Thistles in their former shape were unable to cope with the Wanderers was only too apparent.”²⁰⁴

In order to remain among the top clubs in Canada, Kenora adopted elements of the new professional model of sport. As the *Kenora Miner and News* commented in March 1907, “Eastern cities must not think that because the game has become professional that Kenora will be out of it on account of inability to meet the demand....What Kenora has it will hold by every fair means.”²⁰⁵ Although “local players who grew up in town still composed the core of the

²⁰³ Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 82.

²⁰⁴ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 9 January 1907, 6.

²⁰⁵ *Kenora Miner and News*, 16 March 1907, 3.

club's roster,"²⁰⁶ the Thistles recruited a number of "ringers" to help them retain the Stanley Cup – most notably, Ottawa's Alf Smith and Harry Westwick. Professionals like Smith and Westwick were not "members" of the community they represented. In the words of Gruneau and Whitson, they were "specialists whose livelihoods depended upon fulfilling customers' expectations for skilled play and winning performances."²⁰⁷ Nevertheless, while the importation of paid players to represent cities in competition transformed the fan/team relationship, athletes and their supporters maintained a powerful connection. For instance, the *Winnipeg Tribune* reported that fans of the Thistles welcomed Smith and Westwick "as if they had been home-brews."²⁰⁸

Whitson concludes, "Professional sport established the place it did in North American popular culture in part because it was able to trade on discourses of representativeness, in which professional teams were positioned as civic representatives and most fans did identify with the local team."²⁰⁹ Although Kenora's experience of professional hockey was brief, the Thistles' early twentieth-century Stanley Cup challenges illustrate some of the key issues surrounding community identity, town promotion, and the amateur-professional

²⁰⁶ Wong, "From Rat Portage to Kenora," 185.

²⁰⁷ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 71.

²⁰⁸ *Winnipeg Tribune*, 25 March 1907, 6.

²⁰⁹ Whitson, "Hockey and Canadian Popular Culture," 199.

controversy in this period. A plaque in Kenora established by the Ontario Archaeological and Historic Sites Board declares, “Kenora is the smallest town ever to win the Cup.”²¹⁰ As the *Montreal Gazette* noted in 1905, “The record of the club is exceedingly creditable in view of the comparatively small population upon which it can draw for support.”²¹¹ After teams from Moncton, New Brunswick, and Sydney, Nova Scotia, fell short in Stanley Cup challenges in 1912 and 1913, smaller towns and cities no longer contended for the trophy. The Thistles “were the last [successful] challengers from small-town Canada,” writes Jenish. “From that point on, the pursuit of the Cup ceased to be an egalitarian free-for-all, open to big and small communities, to amateur and professional teams alike. Instead, it became a trophy pursued exclusively by professional teams based in big cities.” Thus, the Kenora Thistles’ evolution from the “member” to the “customer” model between 1903 and 1907 signified an important transition in hockey as professionals “established themselves as the game’s premier players...[and] small-town challenges for the Stanley Cup became a thing of the past.”²¹²

²¹⁰ Lappage, “The Thistles’ Stanley Cup Trail,” 79.

²¹¹ *Montreal Gazette*, 7 March 1905, 2.

²¹² Jenish, *The Stanley Cup*, 66, 90.

Chapter Six

Conclusion:

Constructing a Cultural History of Canadian Hockey

In 1993, Richard Gruneau and David Whitson called for Canadian scholars and intellectuals “to take hockey seriously as something suitable for social and cultural analysis.” Gruneau and Whitson suggested that they wrote the book, *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport, Identities, and Cultural Politics*, “partly out of frustration with the ambivalence of Canadian academics towards hockey.”¹ They later indicated that they “were perplexed that so little sustained scholarly attention had been devoted to the place of hockey in Canadian life, despite all the claims about the game’s importance.”² Since that time, a wide range of studies

¹ Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport, Identities, and Cultural Politics* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1993), 3, 4.

² David Whitson and Richard Gruneau, eds., *Artificial Ice: Hockey, Culture, and Commerce* (Peterborough: Broadview Press and Garamond Press, 1999), 1.

dealing with various aspects of hockey have attempted to address this deficiency. As a result, there has been a notable increase in the volume and quality of the scholarly literature dealing with hockey's role in Canadian society and culture. "Today, professing any sort of academic 'ambivalence' rings false," notes Jason Blake. "Especially in fields such as cultural studies and sociology, there has been an explosion of specialized writing over the past two decades or so."³

This doctoral thesis contributes to this growing area of academic interest by enhancing our understanding of the historical meanings and significance of Canadian hockey. It adds to what Andrew C. Holman describes as "the interdisciplinary scholarly field – 'hockey studies,' perhaps – that Gruneau and Whitson carved out a decade ago and continue to define."⁴ In particular, this dissertation explores aspects of hockey – and its connection to the sports media – which have not been sufficiently examined by historians. The cultural history of hockey in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has not been researched thoroughly by those working in the fields of sport history, Canadian history, or cultural studies. For example, the only book-length academic study of hockey in this period, John Chi-Kit Wong's *Lords of the Rinks: The Emergence of the*

2006), 12. See also Jamie Dopp and Richard Harrison, eds., *Now Is the Winter: Thinking About Hockey* (Hamilton: Wolsak and Wynn, 2009), 9-10.

³ Jason Blake, *Canadian Hockey Literature: A Thematic Study* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 5.

⁴ Andrew C. Holman, ed., *Canada's Game: Hockey and Identity* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 7.

National Hockey League, 1875-1936, focuses on the business and organizational sides of the game, not its cultural significance.⁵ Similarly, there is no treatment of Canadian hockey from a local, regional, or national perspective which compares to Colin Howell's analysis of baseball in *Northern Sandlots: A Social History of Maritime Baseball*.⁶ Although Canadian sport historians have investigated the time frame from about 1850 to 1914 more thoroughly than any other period, the topics addressed in this dissertation have not been covered adequately.⁷

⁵ John Chi-Kit Wong, *Lords of the Rinks: The Emergence of the National Hockey League, 1875-1936* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 12-27.

⁶ Colin D. Howell, *Northern Sandlots: A Social History of Maritime Baseball* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

⁷ See, for example, Morris Mott, "The British Protestant Pioneers and the Establishment of Manly Sports in Manitoba, 1870-1886," *Journal of Sport History* 7, no. 3 (1980): 25-36; Alan Metcalfe, *Canada Learns To Play: The Emergence of Organized Sport, 1807-1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987); Don Morrow, "The Knights of the Snowshoe: A Study of the Evolution of Sport in Nineteenth Century Montreal," *Journal of Sport History* 15, no. 1 (1988): 5-40; Michael Smith, "Graceful Athleticism or Robust Womanhood: The Sporting Culture of Women in Victorian Nova Scotia, 1870-1914," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 23, no. 1/2 (1988): 120-137; Colin D. Howell, "Baseball, Class and Community in the Maritime Provinces, 1870-1910," *Histoire Sociale-Social History* 22, no. 44 (1989): 265-286; Gerald Redmond, "Some Aspects of Organized Sport and Leisure in Nineteenth-Century Canada," in *Sports in Canada: Historical Readings*, ed. Morris Mott (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1989), 81-106; Patricia A. Vertinsky, *The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Doctors, and Exercise in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Robin John Anderson, "'On the Edge of the Baseball Map' with the 1908 Vancouver Beavers," *Canadian Historical Review* 77, no. 4 (1996): 538-574; Ken Cruikshank and Nancy B. Bouchier, "Dirty Spaces: Environment, the State, and Recreational Swimming in Hamilton Harbour, 1870-1946," *Sport History Review* 29, no. 1 (1998): 59-76; Kevin B. Wamsley and Robert S. Kossuth, "Fighting It Out in Nineteenth-Century Upper Canada/Canada West: Masculinities and Physical Challenges in the Tavern,"

This thesis has attempted to rectify this situation, at least in part, by assessing several key aspects of the media-constructed “world of hockey” during the early years of Stanley Cup competition. It has looked at local and national newspaper coverage of championship hockey games between 1894 and 1907 in order to explore interurban and regional rivalries (Chapter 2), the national scope of the sports media (Chapter 3), violence and gender construction (Chapter 4), and community representation (Chapter 5). This project has reconstructed part of the cultural history of hockey by using media texts to analyze the meanings and identities attached to the sport during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this way, the dissertation contributes to such diverse fields as sport history, cultural studies, media history, gender history, Canadian history, and “hockey studies” – especially the study of hockey and Canadian popular culture. It also aims to satisfy the criteria for writing hockey history described by Holman in, “Hockey and History: Scholars’ New Challenge with Canada’s Game”:

We should expect that historians of hockey, like all
scholarly historians, will engage in exhaustive research and
critical readings of primary sources, craft arguments
pertinent and contributory to other scholarly literature,

Journal of Sport History 27, no. 3 (2000): 405-430; Nancy B. Bouchier, *For the Love of the Game: Amateur Sport in Small-Town Ontario, 1838-1895* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003); Robert S. Kossuth, “Dangerous Waters: Victorian Decorum, Swimmer Safety, and the Establishment of Public Bathing Facilities in London (Canada),” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 22, no. 5 (2005): 796-815.

avoid bald partisanship, pursue objectivity, and assess the significance of their work as contributions to what we already know. But even more important for this discussion, historians of hockey must relate their findings *in context*, that is, as part of and in relation to the political, economic, legal, cultural, and literary milieux of the times....Hockey history is filled with great, tell-able, romantic stories, but none of them happened in a vacuum and all of them will lose their broader historical meaning if they are not related critically or told without contextual richness.⁸

In particular, this study has paid close attention to the wider contexts in which hockey was played, watched, discussed, and read about. For example, it examines media coverage of hockey in relation to the overall development of sports reporting, the mass press, and communications technology in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Canada. The daily newspaper and the telegraph opened up new possibilities for engagement in a national and international culture of sport, and hockey coverage was an important element of this sports information system. At the same time, this thesis considers some of the media narratives that were part of the emerging “world of hockey” in the context of broader community, class, and gender identities in Canada. Stanley

⁸ Andrew C. Holman, “Hockey and History: Scholars’ New Challenge with Canada’s Game,” *Sport History Review* 37, no. 1 (2006): 2.

Cup hockey games were national events that shaped how cities and regions saw themselves, and each other. The meaning of these games must be understood in light of local boosterism and east-west rivalry, as well as changing perceptions of civic identity as professional players began to represent communities. In addition, hockey was viewed as an essential vehicle for turning boys into men. As Howell points out, historians have finally “begun to turn their attention to the ways in which notions of manhood have been constructed, just as feminist historians have been concerned with the social definition of femininity.”⁹ During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, sport was considered an incubator and a testing ground for manhood. Hockey offered opportunities for men to forge, display, and demonstrate their “manly” qualities, and this dissertation argues that the game’s celebration of rugged, aggressive – even violent – versions of masculinity embodied middle-class and working-class ideals. By using such approaches to the analysis of sport and the media, this study aims to contextualize the development of hockey within the broader social and cultural history of Canada.

Another goal of this project is to present evidence and interpretations that deepen – and dispute – our understanding of some of the long-standing ways we have thought about the cultural meanings of hockey in Canada. While the prominence of hockey in Canadian culture is widely proclaimed and, frequently,

⁹ Howell, *Northern Sandlots*, 97-98.

celebrated, the game's precise role and meanings are not as easily explained or understood. At the same time, there is a tendency to take for granted that hockey has *always* been significant to Canadians, or that there is something *natural* about the sport's place in Canadian life.¹⁰ For instance, Gruneau and Whitson caution us about accepting "an idealized, organic conception of hockey as a natural Canadian cultural resource, something that developed almost magically out of an exposure to ice, snow, and open spaces." Instead, they "argue that the centrality of hockey in Canadian cultural life has never been inevitable or predetermined."¹¹ For example, during the time frame of this research, baseball – not hockey – was probably the most popular sport in Canada. Because baseball was the only game played and watched in all geographic areas and by all social classes, Alan Metcalfe writes that "baseball was truly Canada's national sport" around the turn of the century.¹² John Herd Thompson and Allen Seager describe major league baseball's World Series as "Canada's greatest 'national' sporting event" during

¹⁰ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 3, 6-7, 25-27; Whitson and Gruneau, eds., *Artificial Ice*, 1-2, 12; Dopp and Harrison, eds., *Now Is the Winter*, 9; Bruce Kidd, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 186-187.

¹¹ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 26, 6.

¹² Metcalfe, *Canada Learns to Play*, 98. See also Ibid., 85-95; Stacy L. Lorenz, "'Bowling Down to Babe Ruth': Major League Baseball and Canadian Popular Culture, 1920-1929," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 23, no. 1 (1995): 22-26.

the 1920s.¹³ By looking at hockey in its early years, at a time when the sport did not attract the same level of public attention as baseball or, in some cases, boxing, we can also, in Bruce Kidd's words, "assert a note of contingency" in regards to hockey's position in Canadian culture.¹⁴

This thesis sheds light on some of the specific ways in which hockey evolved as an object of national interest in Canada, particularly through newspaper coverage and telegraph reports. While it has long been *assumed* that hockey was a key component of an emerging Canadian national popular culture, there has been no comprehensive study of when and how this happened. Similarly, the precise *content* of these hockey narratives has not been analyzed sufficiently. What kind of hockey information was available to turn-of-the-

¹³ John Herd Thompson and Allen Seager, *Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 187. See also Lorenz, "Bowling Down to Babe Ruth," 28-32.

¹⁴ Kidd, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport*, 186. Another reminder of hockey's less secure cultural position in Canada during this time period is to look across the border to American perspectives on the game. For instance, Holman's study of American juvenile sporting literature suggests that "no mention of the Canadian influence on or origin of hockey appears in these stories until after the First World War." Before 1919, hockey novels and stories were "conspicuous in their depiction of ice hockey as a home-grown, indigenous *American* product." Holman suggests that it was not until the 1920s and the establishment of National Hockey League (N.H.L.) teams – with their Canadian players and "Canadian" style of play – in major United States markets that "the Canadian connection began to compete with earlier constructions of ice hockey as a wholly *American* game." Holman's research raises questions about the close identification of hockey with Canadian national character during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See Andrew Holman, "Frank Merriwell on Skates: Heroes, Villains, Canadians and Other *Others* in American Juvenile Sporting Fiction, 1890-1940," in *Now Is the Winter*, ed. Dopp and Harrison, 58-59.

century followers of the sport? How did media institutions create opportunities for fans to experience hockey games? How did these experiences convey ideas about place, manhood, and civic representation? For instance, even though numerous studies of Canadian sport have addressed issues surrounding boosterism and local identity, actual media narratives of community rivalry and civic pride have not been the focus of such research. Likewise, although sport is widely seen as a key contributor to the construction of gender identities in modern societies, a closer inspection of some of the precise narratives of masculinity that were encountered in hockey coverage helps to explain this process more thoroughly. Thus, by assessing the particular media narratives surrounding sporting rivalries and sporting violence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this thesis seeks to provide a more detailed and nuanced appreciation of the cultural meanings of representative and “strenuous” sport. It tries to convey what Stanley Cup hockey games meant to the communities involved in these rivalries, and provide a sense of what it was like to live in a city chasing one of these championships. At the same time, this dissertation utilizes the specific example of the Ottawa Silver Seven to explore broader ideas and anxieties about hockey violence and manhood in this period. The richness and depth of these case studies confirm and, at times, challenge what we thought we knew about the history of Canadian hockey.

The nature of such case study research also means that there are limitations to the insights that can be derived from this thesis. For example, while

this dissertation has examined several important research topics in considerable detail, it has not attempted to provide a comprehensive analysis of all of the cultural meanings of Canadian hockey in this period. The thesis focuses on Stanley Cup games as covered by English Canadian newspapers; the emphasis on media texts related to local and regional identities, national sports coverage, manhood, and violence means that other elements of the Canadian “hockey world” have received little attention in this particular study. As a result, there is room for further research into such areas as women’s hockey, local and community leagues, the role of hockey in French Canada, and the ways in which the sport was used “as an instrument for social and moral improvement and for nation building.”¹⁵ Such research would assess how narratives of femininity, race, ethnicity, health, play, respectability, science, and nationalism were connected to Canadian hockey in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition, as sports like hockey developed into marketable commodities, the interests of promoters, entrepreneurs, and spectators often clashed with those of social reformers. As Howell writes, with the growth of professional sport, conflicts emerged “between those who promoted sport as a moral tonic, and those entrepreneurs and athletes who saw it as an opportunity for making money.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Colin D. Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers: Sport and the Making of Modern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

The cultural clash between “moral entrepreneurs” and “economic entrepreneurs” could also be explored in greater depth by historians of hockey.¹⁷

In terms of media research, this thesis contributes significantly to our understanding of media institutions and media texts, but it does not give as much attention to media audiences. In other words, its main concern is to examine the sports media from the perspectives of *production* and *content*, rather than *consumption*.¹⁸ Michael Oriard describes his efforts “to reconstruct the world of football experienced through the media” as “an attempt to understand what the public thought about football as it developed, and where it got its information.”¹⁹ Similarly, this dissertation maps the media infrastructure for Canadian hockey in the 1890s and early 1900s, and discusses some of the notable cultural narratives that were produced by the mass press. Moreover, while this study tries to “read” and interpret these texts, it is important to acknowledge that media sources “can reveal the ideas and images in widest currency, but they cannot finally tell us how their audiences understood them.” Again, as Oriard notes in relation to his football research, “Unfortunately, this book cannot be a history of what football

¹⁷ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 56.

¹⁸ Lawrence A. Wenner, ed., *MediaSport* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998); David Rowe, *Sport, Culture and the Media: The Unruly Trinity* (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1999).

¹⁹ Michael Oriard, *King Football: Sport and Spectacle in the Golden Age of Radio and Newsreels, Movies and Magazines, the Weekly and the Daily Press* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 16.

meant to its actual fans – that would be my wish – but only of the media universe within which they lived.”²⁰ Likewise, this investigation into the mediated world of hockey cannot discern precisely how Stanley Cup audiences interpreted hockey through the media. It can, however, reveal the range of media narratives that were available to newspaper readers. It also provides new insights into an important facet of the audience for hockey which has not been thoroughly scrutinized by historians: the groups of interested fans who gathered to experience games through telegraph re-enactments.

Finally, this thesis is more concerned with describing and analyzing the dominant, national experience of hockey in Canada than it is with exploring challenges to these ascendant cultural meanings. Because this is the first study to examine the construction of a mediated Canadian “world of hockey” in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, its primary purpose has been to investigate the ways in which a national community of fans and followers of hockey acquired access to a common body of information about the sport. The dissertation traces how newspaper coverage and telegraph reconstructions enabled local and national audiences to develop shared experiences and understandings of hockey. As Stanley Cup games became “national” events, people across the

²⁰ Ibid., 17. See also Michael Oriard, “A Linguistic Turn into Sport History,” in *Deconstructing Sport History: A Postmodern Analysis*, ed. Murray G. Phillips (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 75-91; Jeffrey Hill, “Anecdotal Evidence: Sport, the Newspaper Press, and History,” in *Deconstructing Sport History*, ed. Phillips, 117-129.

country were exposed to similar cultural narratives about community representation, regional identity, violence, and masculinity. As a result, this thesis does not “*problematize*” hockey to the extent that other recent work does.

Holman writes, “To understand hockey in a scholarly way is to see it as a series of historical struggles that emanate from its central position in Canadian culture as national icon, as work and entertainment, as pastime, as enterprise, as privilege, and as a class-, race- and gender-based locus of identity.”²¹ While this study illuminates how hockey came to occupy this “central position in Canadian culture,” and it assesses, in particular, the gender- and community-based identities at the core of this place of privilege, it leaves much of the work of probing the cultural struggles over the sport’s meanings to future research. However, before scholars can evaluate challenges to dominant understandings of hockey, it is essential to comprehend the most widely accepted cultural narratives associated with the sport. As Oriard points out, “Within, or against, the particularities of regional and demographic differences, however – as well as those of the readers’ class, race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, education, even personality and temperament – there also exists a body of shared football narratives that ultimately derive from common sources. We read them differently, but we read

²¹ Holman, ed., *Canada’s Game*, 6.

the same ones.’’²² This dissertation identifies and explains the kinds of hockey narratives that turn-of-the-century newspapers were beginning to make available to readers throughout Canada. The next step is to uncover alternative meanings and counter-narratives, as conflicts emerged over the contested terrain of modern hockey.²³

²² Michael Oriard, *Reading Football: How the Popular Press Created an American Spectacle* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 133. See also *Ibid.*, 120-121.

²³ On sport as a site of cultural struggle, see, for example, Metcalfe, *Canada Learns to Play*; Richard Gruneau, “Modernization or Hegemony: Two Views on Sport and Social Development,” in *Not Just A Game*, ed. Jean Harvey and Hart Cantelon (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988), 9-32; Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*; Howell, *Northern Sandlots*; Kidd, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport*; Bouchier, *For the Love of the Game*.

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