



Trailblazing Hockey Photographer Bruce Bennett Focuses On His Next Career Milestone

PICTURE

Perfect

If a picture is worth a thousand words then Bruce Bennett has produced enough photographs over the course of his esteemed career to make “War and Peace” read like a short story.

Bennett traces his photographic roots back to 1974 when he wrangled a press pass to photograph a Rangers game at Madison Square Garden and sold a few images to The Hockey News for \$4 each. It was the start of a career that has spanned more than 40 years and 5,000 hockey games.

He owes his longevity to his love of the game, and an aptitude with numbers for keeping a running tally of the games he’s shot over the years.

“I have an accounting degree, and over the years I kept track [of the games I shot] for no specific purpose other than just to count. And year after year those numbers kept getting bigger,” admits Bennett, who has served as the director of Hockey Coverage for Getty Images for the past 10 seasons.

Although he generally shoots games within driving distance to his Old Bethpage, N.Y., home, Bennett still makes the rounds of every NHL arena, “every year or every other year.” He is also a familiar face at major international events, such as the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia.

In honor of his 5,000th game on April 8, the Islanders held a pregame ceremony with a video tribute on the Jumbotron at Nassau Coliseum and a jersey presentation with the number 5000 on the back.

After so many years of watching games through the viewfinder of his camera, Bennett admits that he can’t sit back and enjoy a game like a fan.

“That’s not for me. I’m too antsy,” he says. “I’ll see things that I would have loved to capture on film. So going to a game as a fan, that ship sailed a long time ago.”

As much as the game has evolved over the years, it pales in comparison with the changes that have taken place in sports photography. From the early days of processing black and white film in makeshift dark-rooms on the road to the advances in modern digital technology that allow him to immediately transmit images to clients, Bennett has managed to change with the times while still capturing the game’s greatest moments.

In honor of his milestone, Bennett performed the unenviable task of picking his all-time favorite hockey photos for a special feature on Getty’s website.

“Believe me, when you go from looking at two million [photos] and trying to whittle it down to your favorite, it’s not the easiest thing to do,” he admits. ★



Bruce's
TOP 10

Bruce Bennett poured through millions of images taken over the course of 40 years and 5,000 games to select his top 10 favorite photos for Getty Images.

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