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## Islanders' Photographer Has Show At Post

by Judy Fippinger

Bruce Bennett's photographs of the "New York Islanders: On the Ice and Behind the Scenes" at Long Island University/C.W. Post Center will delight more than just hockey fans. The show, which opens Saturday, June 21 and continues until July 12 at the Hillwood Commons Alumni Art Gallery on the lower level is a compilation of Mr. Bennett's favorite shots, taken over a period of several years as the Islanders' team photographer. In black and white as well as color and "Laser" color, the photographs tell the story of the members of the team, from the quiet mo-

ment before donning the pads of the uniform, to the split-second action of the game, to the dawn airport arrival after the game.

his Hicksville studio much of the time! Brian was at Post to help Bennett hang the show last week. Bennett never started out to be a photographer. In fact, his degree from Post is in accounting. However, he said that he continued to keep the major even after his success in photography, as "something to fall back upon". After graduation, he freelanced for four years, shooting mainly hockey, and then the Islanders called in 1981.

About 120 hockey games a year are photographed by Mr. Bennett and his assistants. He covers all the Islander's home games and some of the out-of-town



Pictured above is Denis Potvin (Captain).

ment before donning the pads of the uniform, to the split-second action of the game, to the dawn airport arrival after the game.

Mr. Bennett has been taking photos of hockey since his Freshman year at C.W. Post. He played it in high school in Westbury. Recently he received five awards from the Press Photographer's Association of Long Island, including

games as well. He also covers the New York Rangers, and New Jersey Devils and the Hartford Whalers. Off season, he does hockey books and posters, calendars, and operates his Bruce Bennett Studios in Hicksville, doing photography for advertising, business, industry, and company portraits, in the studio, which is also his home. His favorite subject remains people, with the exception of wed-



Left to right: Scott Howson, Monte Trotter, and Greg Gilbert.

dings and bar mitzvahs, which he is not set up to handle. Also, he does not feel he can handle food photography, although the brochure for his studio states: "Just Because We're From Long Island Doesn't Mean We're Small Potatoes." on a potato cover photograph. What he is looking for now, is to do a book on "Inside the Islanders" or "Inside the National Hockey League". His present show at the Hillwood Commons

Gallery is designed to give a viewer just that. Book publication is not new to Mr. Bennett. He has just completed a 160-page book on hockey in the Color Library Books series, sold in the United States and Canada, and was the only photographer for the book. More books are contracted for 1986 publication.



Brent Sutter relaxing in flight.

Time Magazine, Hockey News, Life, People, Sports Illustrated, Sporting News, Goal Magazine, The Hockey News, USA Today, Hockey Pictorial, SPORT Magazine Action-Sports Hockey are some of the publications that have listed Bruce Bennett's name below their photographs. Because of the great speeds at which the players move, hockey is probably one of the most difficult sports to photograph.

Mr. Bennett uses a 300mm Nikon lens with a fast motor drive, enabling him to shoot five frames a second. He does not usually use a flash, although the Coliseum has low light and the players make fast moves. When he does use a flash, however, the new technology has placed lights on the ceiling of the Coliseum which are radio-connected to his camera. These are expensive - they cost \$12,000 to install - lights are positioned so as not to shine into the players' eyes. He prefers to use black and white film without the flash however, for its clarity. For out-of-town games, he has to rent the flash equipment from a local supplier.

For the Stanley Cup Finals in 1983 Mr. Bennett had four assistants stationed at various points in the arena. They used ninety rolls of film for the game alone! After shooting so many pictures, Mr. Bennett says that the challenge to him is to be creative in his photography. He looks for something different, such as the behind-the-scenes shots that are in the Gallery at Post this summer. He also has several interesting shots on Laser color. The Laser beam goes through a color slide and etches onto a color negative, from which the print is made. This new technique in photography gives the special effects previously only an artist

could paint. The color picked up by the Laser is blocked out in areas on the photograph, giving a stark effect. Subtle changes become dramatic, and become "generic" rather than photographs of a particular individual. A photograph of Islander player Bob Nystrom was done in this technique; giving a "paint-by-number" schematic style. As Mr. Bennett said, "It looks like a Leroy Neiman sport painting".

In another photograph, "Gads Through The Looking Glass", Mr. Bennett had taken a color shot of a goalie making a save. Goalie Billy Smith had become an abstract design of colors as Mr. Bennett had the slide duplicated after being shot through the distorting glass used in shower doors.

Still another photograph, which was one of Mr. Bennett's favorites, showed Islander player Tomas Jonsson on a loading platform at dawn at the airport after the 1985 Edmonton Finals. There were 500 fans there to greet the players' return from the road trip, and Jonsson is shown holding a bottle aloft in greeting, silhouetted against a rosy sky like some chariot of old.

Mr. Bennett usually sits at ice level next to the Penalty Box during the games. Many times, he has received shots he hasn't taken with a camera. Hockey pucks have surprised him on several occasions, hitting him in the back and even in the head! However, his ability to see things from a new angle has kept him coming back for more. The photograph in the show of Mike Bossy, the shooter, and Kelly Hrudey, the goalie, in "The Deadly Shot of the Boss Man" shows a shot at the goal through the goalie's legs. It was done on commission for *Inside Sports Magazine*. It is color photography such as this, that keeps Mr. Bennett in the forefront of hockey photography. And it is his new angle that prove Mr. Bennett has a lot more than hockey pucks coming his way! Mr. Bennett has the best shots of all the Islanders!

All photos by Bruce Bennett