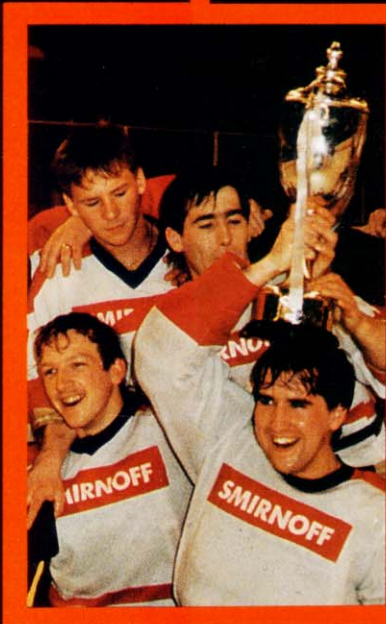


THE
ICE HOCKEY
NEWS REVIEW

WEMBLEY SPECIAL



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YEEEEAAAHHHHH!!!!

It's a GOOOAAAALLLLL—well that's the way it looks from the celebratin' being done here by Montreal's MIKE McPHEE and RYAN WALTER."

SO YOU WANT TO BE A

HOCKEY PHOTOGRAPHER...

So what if I left my home in New York at nine this morning. I'm stranded in Toronto at 2:30 in the afternoon as Air Canada has departed Edmonton without me. As I settle in at Lester B. Pearson International Airport, I think that at sometime in the past the U.S., and Canada were friendly countries and 'Immigration' and 'Customs' controls were seldom a problem.

Both delayed me just enough to miss the connection and leave me with a four hour layover. With a 6:30 flight and four hours in the air, I should be able to hit the sack in Edmonton at 11:30 New York time. All this for the NHL All-Star game which by nature is a bland display of individual talents with little or no teamwork or roughness. Sur-

rounded by nothing but empty seats with hours to kill, I've travelled much less for far more I thought.

This is not to say that in my fourteen years tracking the National Hockey League for a variety of clients, I haven't witnessed any boring games. Fifteen-hundred NHL games. Thirty-five international exhibitions. Ten Stanley Cup finals and nine All-Star games. I guess for a 34-year-old, I've been to more hockey games than most go to in a lifetime—especially those in Great Britain. Now, whether I've really seen those games is questionable! Everyone who wants to be a hockey photographer please stand up.

● JUST LIKE WORK...

Photographing hockey games for a living can become just like work. There's no cheering or jeering from the sidelines as members of the media should remain neutral or risk the wrath of team

public relations directors as well as players within earshot. In the early days I had problems with this 'neutrality' issue, but shooting over 125 games a year sterilizes one from the issue of good guy/bad guy. It also dulls the senses somewhat.

The good guy for me is defined as that player who my studio can sell the most photographs of. The bad guy can be many, from the linesman who steps in front of the lens as a player hurdles through the air or is issued a bone-jarring check, to the star who is traded, rendering thousands of photographs next to worthless.

When the King of Hockey became a Los Angeles King, I was stuck with 6,464 photographs of Wayne Gretzky whose value had dropped to equal that of Gary Unger in an Edmonton Oiler uniform. Then arose the task of blasting him (photographically) as soon as possible in his new uniform.

The regular season was to begin October 6th, by which time most hockey magazines are literally working on their February issues. To beat the deadlines and to beat the competition a trip to the West coast was planned, hitting the Kings in Los Angeles (vs. Winnipeg), Sacramento (vs. Calgary), and Oakland (vs. Detroit). Three pre-season games before October third and I'd have a good head start, not only on Gretzky, but on all the Kings in their new uniforms. Not only that but I'd have two shots of Smythe Division interplay which I don't often have a chance at, being on the East coast.

● TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE...

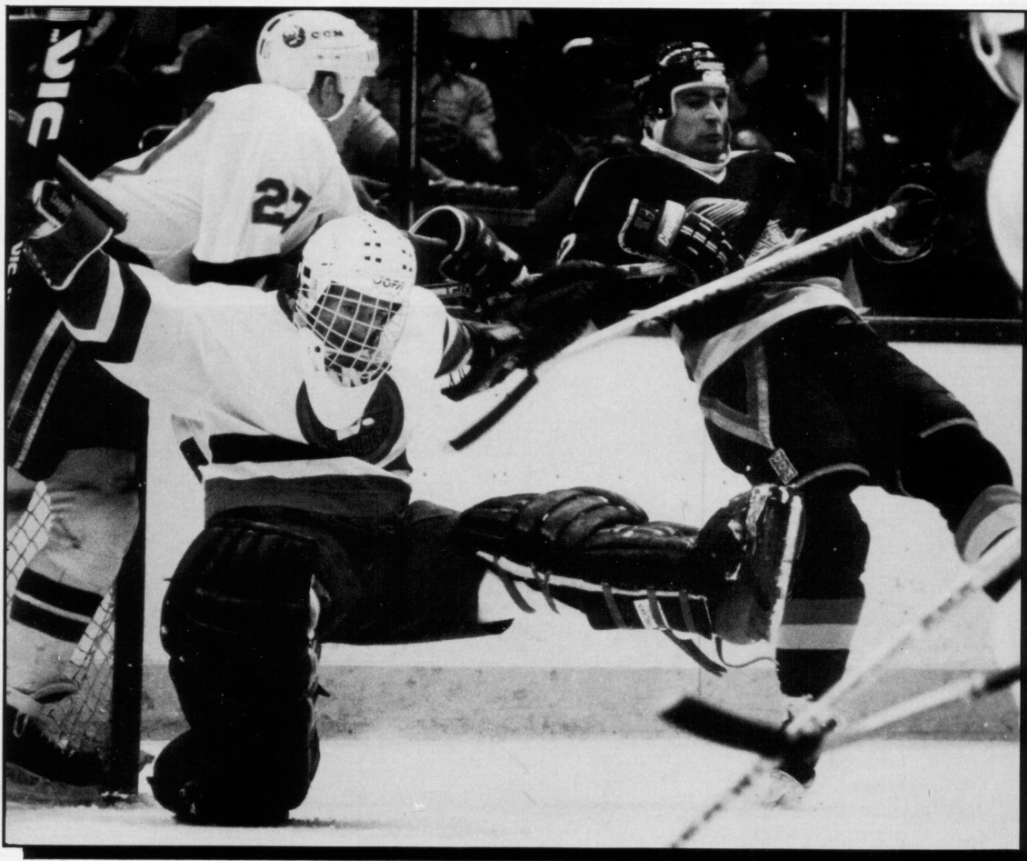
Of course this all sounded too good to be true. In Los Angeles, both the Kings and the Jets wore *AWAY* uniforms (the NHL'ers do some strange things in pre-season) rendering any interaction between teams worthless. I did shoot many tight shots that are saleable though. The Great One didn't make the trip out to Sacramento much to the dismay of that hockey starved community. Sacramento had hoped for a franchise in the International Hockey League this season but couldn't get it together in time to join the League. In Oakland the Kings and Red Wings both wore away uniforms hurting my chances of breaking even on the trip, but worse than that was a dispute with the arena director which led to our inability to install our strobe lights in the rafters making ALL our colour shots worthless.

Back in the old days I could travel relatively lightly and walk into an arena at game time and be ready to shoot in minutes. Today's technology in electronics and 'flash-power' has transformed me into a glorified pack-mule.

● OVERCOME POOR LIGHTING...

To overcome the poor lighting in many arenas and even the decently lit lighting in others, publishers now request and often demand 'strobe lit' colour shots. About one-hundred times more powerful (and twenty times more weighty) than that of that flash that attaches to your camera, the entire ice surface can be lit adequately with four of these units suspended from the ceiling some 80 to 100 feet above the ice. If you have got 'high anxiety,' this job's not for you. The flashes trigger automatically when my camera's shutter button is pushed via a 'hardwire' direct to the lights or by means of a radio remote that sends a signal from my camera to the lights.

Strobes enable you to use the best film available as in Kodachrome 64 or Fujichrome 100. This freezes the action and limits the grain, and there's no need

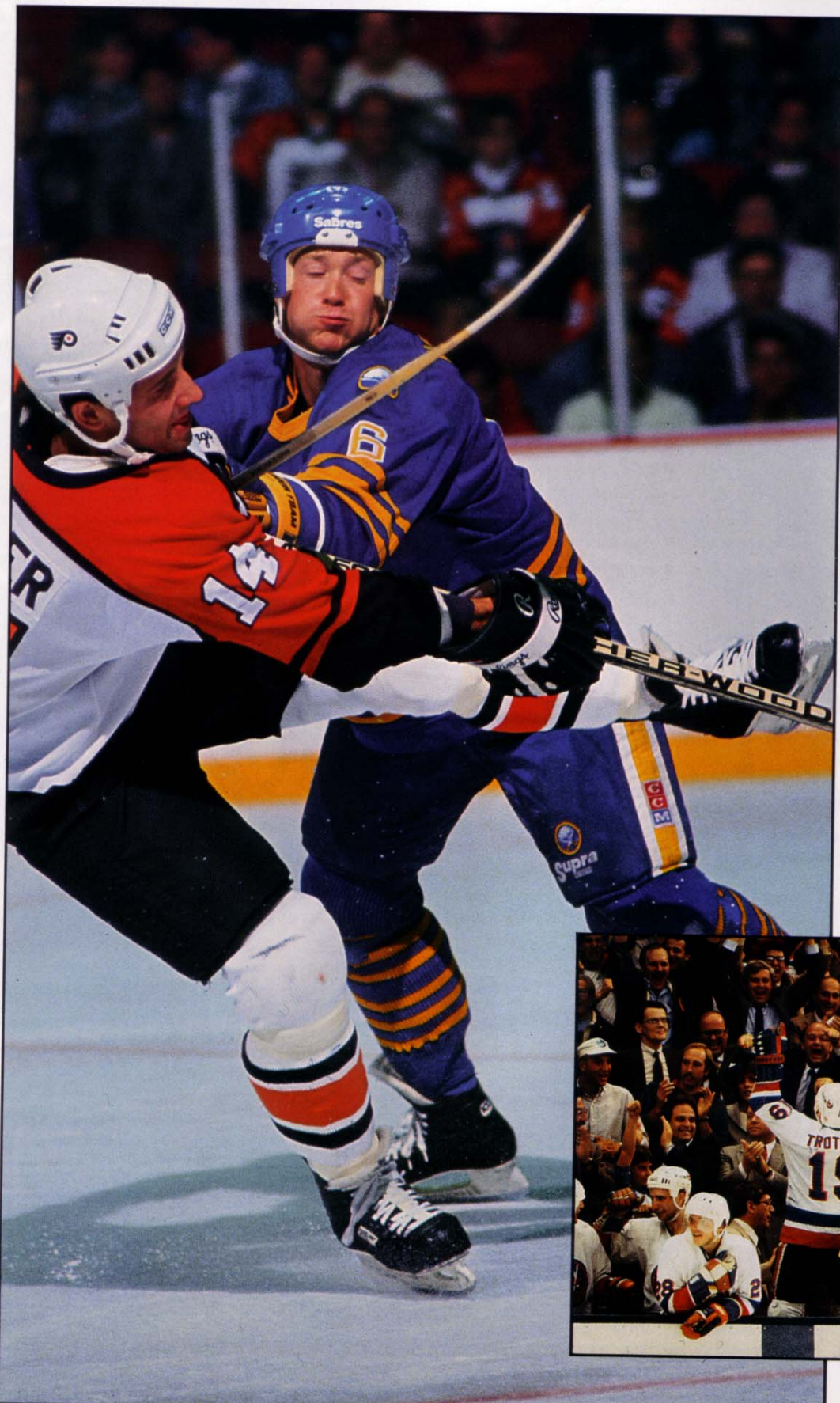


▲ "GET OUTTA MY CREASE"...New York Islanders' goalie BILLY SMITH has never been known to welcome too close attentions of opponents. Here he 'appears' to be giving the boot to one who ventured too close for Billy's comfort.

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM A 'FRIEND'!! Nice timing from Bruce here—and even better by Boston's KEN LINSEMAN as he 'aids' an unidentified opponent over the boards!



The BRUCE BENNETT



HOCKEY PHOTOGRAPHY— ANY WAY YOU WANT IT!

On these two pages we bring you four superb examples of Bruce's work. Each is different and collectively they show there are many different angles for the keen would-be hockey photographer to focus on.

There is, of course, always the 'pure' action and that is seldom better displayed than in the shot left, where he has brilliantly caught the moment of impact between Philadelphia Flyers' RON SUTTER (14) and PHIL HOUSLEY of the Buffalo Sabres.

Then again, 'action' of a different kind is displayed below, where New York Islanders' BRYAN TROTTIER leads the chorus of Nassau Veterans' Memorial Coliseum (to give their arena its full title!) faithful as they salute their heroes' achievement in winning a fourth consecutive Stanley Cup Final in 1983.

On the facing page we have two shots where a different technique has been applied. We guess the picture of the Islanders' goalie BILLY SMITH has been very carefully composed to bring over the mood of the moment, so to speak. If not then that has to be the neatest locker room we have ever seen—even down to the sticks being symmetrically displayed!

And finally, there is one that perhaps employs something of a gimmick with the use of a fish-eye lens giving this very interesting effect. Here, 35 is MIKE MCPHEE of the Montreal Canadiens.



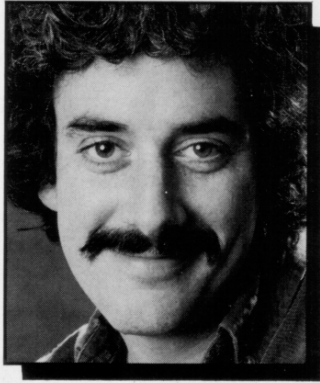
COLOUR SHOWCASE



to worry about what colour lights they have in the arena because the strobes overpower the available light by up to 400%.

Black and white photography is shot available light usually using Kodak Tri-X pushed to a rating of ASA1600 and shot at 1/500th second anywhere between *f/2-8* and *f/5-6* depending on the arena lights.

Currently I have two arenas with permanent strobes, Nassau Coliseum (New York Islanders) and the Spectrum (Philadelphia Flyers). In addition I carry portable strobes to other arenas in the League when assignments arise. Portable by some standards are not by others.



The writer Bruce Bennett

● ALL-STAR GAME...

For the All-Star game, take four strobes, clamps, wire, remotes and toss in protective cases, film, photographic equipment and clothes for a grand total of 150 lb. Now you see what I mean by pack-mule.

All those that *still* want to be a hockey photographer remain standing.

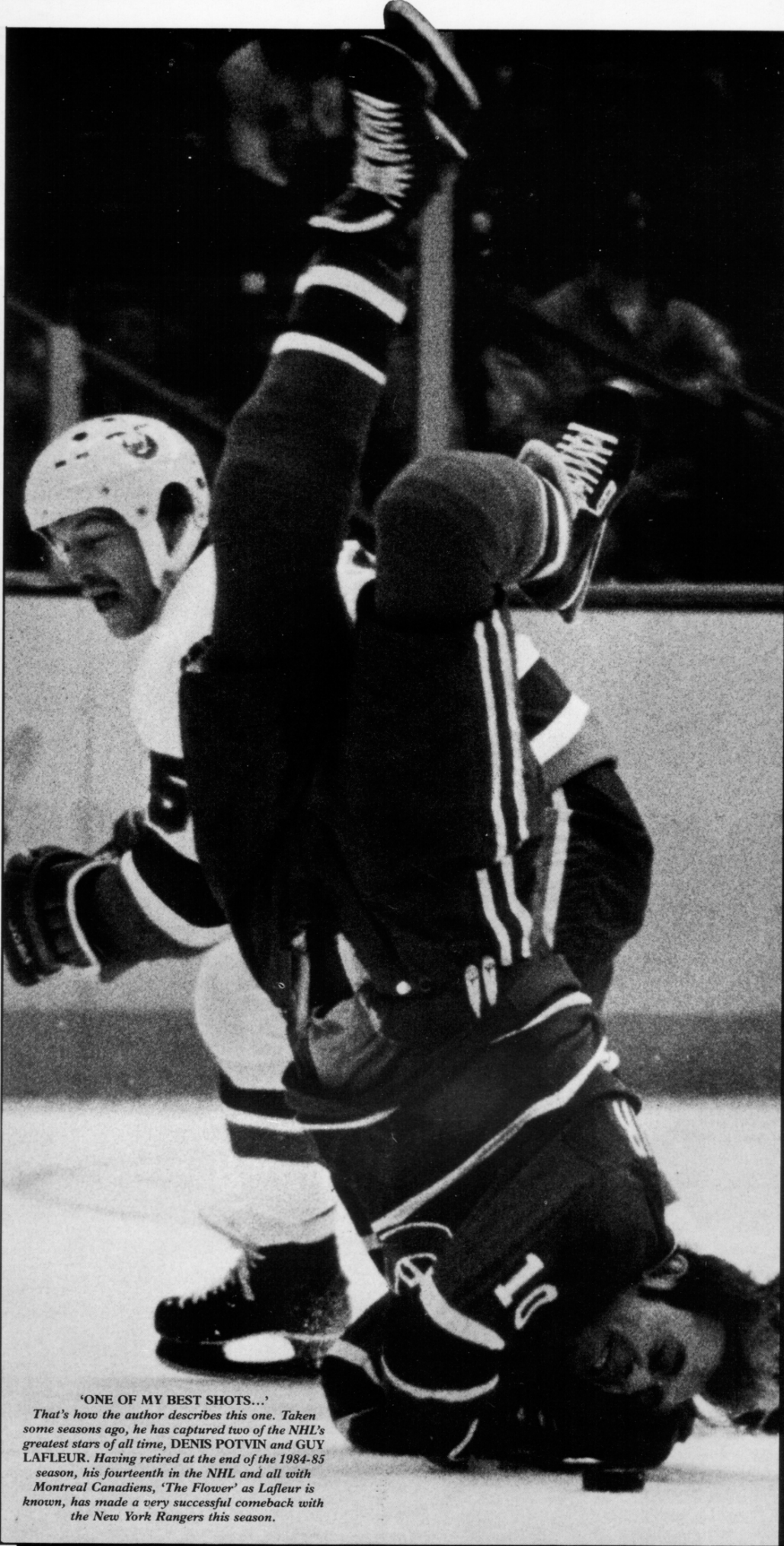
Normal procedure would be to arrive in the early afternoon before the game to hook up the units, wire them together and seek out electric outlets. Tests are done to even out the light that hits to ice and maximize the strobes output. Usually if travelling without an assistant and depending on the arena I'll pack just two lights and illuminate half the ice.

Between October 6th and April 3rd, I personally will shoot anywhere from three to six games a week, but usually five is the lucky number. My 'local' arenas include Islanders (15 minutes), the New York Rangers (1 hour), New Jersey Devils (1 hour) and the Flyers (2½ hours). I'm the team photographer for the Islanders and Flyers so they get preference should there be conflicts with other games. Also I usually bring an assistant to help cover my other clients.

Besides the *Ice Hockey News Review* and several other European clients, the work of myself and my assistants appears regularly in *GOAL*, *The Hockey News*, *Inside Hockey*, *Hockey Illustrated*, *Hockey Digest*, and *Hockey Stars*, as well as three big national magazines *The Sporting News*, *SPORT*, and *Inside Sports*. All the above are reasons to shoot teams as much and as often as possible, keying in on the stars, rookies and new faces.

● ON STAFF...

Conflicting games, or others where only a couple of players need to be shot, may be covered by one of my assistants. Currently on staff are four full-time photographers who have shooting experience as well as four other employees who catalogue colour slides, perform black and white darkroom work, research photo requests and perform other support services. Besides hockey 'Bruce Bennett Studios' cover



'ONE OF MY BEST SHOTS...' That's how the author describes this one. Taken some seasons ago, he has captured two of the NHL's greatest stars of all time, DENIS POTVIN and GUY LAFLEUR. Having retired at the end of the 1984-85 season, his fourteenth in the NHL and all with Montreal Canadiens, 'The Flower' as Lafleur is known, has made a very successful comeback with the New York Rangers this season.

many public relations and advertising jobs as well as several other sports on a limited basis.

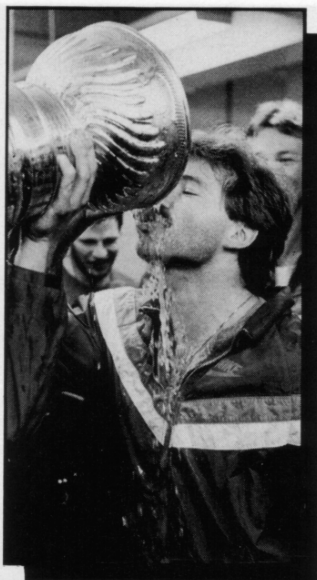
Quite often I'm asked how to get into the field, and my response is that I've got enough competition already! But since my audience is overseas the following advice can't come back to haunt me.

Becoming a good hockey photographer is a twofold process—Anticipation and Experience. You must know the sport to be able to anticipate where the play is headed. It takes time to become accustomed to shooting at ice level where you lose the three-dimensional aspect and the players true speed is more apparent. And experience means experience with hockey as well as with the equipment you are using. Don't expect to step right in and be a superstar. Part of the initiation here at BB Studios is that after a photographer shoots his first few games, I can take them through a tour of the garbage I shot my first year in the NHL. It usually gives them a good laugh.

You can get practice photographing kids games and industrial leagues where the players move a bit slower. You can even make good money showing the players contact sheets and charging a couple of pounds for each black and white.

● **EQUIPMENT...**

In terms of equipment a good camera with a 200mm f/2.8 lens should be sufficient. At pro games I use Nikons—F3, F4 and FE2 usually with a Nikkor 180mm f/2.8 lens from the corner.



▲ **HEINEKEN NEVER TASTED THIS GOOD...** And actually this picture has a current 'British Connection.' On the receiving end—and loving every minute of it we guess—is Edmonton Oilers' GLEN ANDERSON, whose brother DAVE is currently with Durham Wasps. Bruce got this picture after Oilers' Stanley Cup success in 1985. **'A BAD DAY AT THE OFFICE'**... Good hockey pictures are not only found on the ice. Here Bruce has captured the feeling of sheer despair that all hockey players and people know only too well when 'things have not gone quite right.' Under the towel is MIKE ALLISON of the New York Rangers in this dressing room shot captured after a play-off defeat at the hands of cross town rivals, the Islanders. ▼

Some arenas permit photographers in the penalty boxes at center ice. From there a 300mm f/2.8 is perfect.

Depending on position I would normally shoot between 4-6 rolls (of 36) from the corner and 6-10 rolls from center ice. From the corner you miss much of the action from the near blueline on down to the end of the ice. at 36 pictures to the roll the film prices add up, but with motor drives running up to six frames a second it's easy to get carried away. Besides, not all the frames are usable ones. Referees and linesmen skate in the way and with the speed on the players a certain percentage will be out of focus. Other frames will be just plain boring.

I have never used autofocus equipment but have been experimenting with the Nikon F4 and 80/200 f/2.8 Nikkor zoom lens. With all my experience behind me I've found that I can focus quicker myself. You may find otherwise though. If you get used to autofocus, and it works for you, there's no reason not to use it.

As for auto-exposure, don't even think about it. All that white ice will throw off even the smartest light meters. Zoom in on a neutral toned jersey or face, read the meter, set it manually and leave it alone. In many arenas the corners of the rink tend to be about 1/2 stop darker than centre ice so be aware of this and compensate accordingly. If your camera only works on automatic exposure, you can fool the meter by setting it at a different ASA setting. If using ASA1600 film, set the camera for ASA 800. This will increase

exposure by 100%, and help make up for the faulty reading caused by all that ice.

If not using strobes, I would recommend Konica 1600 or Fuji 1600 Negative film for prints, and for slides use either Fuji 400 or Kodak Ektachrome 400, and for Tungsten lit arenas you can use Ektachrome Tungsten 160 push processing the film to ASA320. Calling the building supervisor or experimentation will tell you what kind of lighting you're up against.

● **GAMES 98 THROUGH 102 SEE YOU SOME DAY...**

As for me, I'm off to games 98 through 102, with a roadtrip of four games in four nights in Philly, Washington twice, and back to Philly before returning home for five games in six nights at local arenas. The following week is a three day trip to Pittsburgh for a game against the Minnesota North Stars followed by a juicy assignment for *Inside Hockey* magazine with two days in Johnstown, Pennsylvania the home of the East Coast Hockey Leagues' Chiefs. Very, very, minor league but an interesting and creative story on the town that was the home for the Charlestown Chiefs in the movie Slapshot.

One of these years I promise to make it over to Great Britain. So don't be surprised if you settle in to watch a game in your local arena and you're temporarily blinded by a flash of light from above. It's probably just me and 150 pounds of lighting equipment in to catch a game or two.



◀ *Here's where you make sure your Life Assurance is paid Up-to-date...*

Bruce Bennett describes that part of his profession which requires him to climb on high and string up the strobes, as being not for those with 'high anxiety'!

And here, in the two pictures on this page, you can see exactly what he means.

He and colleague Brian Winkler are working amongst the roofing beams and girders way above the ice surface of the Nassau Coliseum, home of the New York Islanders. The lighting unit in the picture will give adequate illumination for the whole area of the ice when teamed up with three other such items, giving something akin to one-hundred times the light of the normal flash unit that will be attached to a camera.

Strobe lighting synchronised to the shutter button of the operator's camera, enables the best quality film to be used, freezing the fastest action and limiting the grain. It is sufficiently powerful as to 'out light' the normal rink lighting which can produce problems for photographers who turn up at rinks with one sort of film only to find the lighting—if good enough for colour in the first place even—is more suited to another. That is precisely why our regular readers will recall that some of our colour pictures do, from time to time, turn out to be of a rather different hue to that which they know their team usually appears in.

Mind you, some of our rinks get round that problem quite easily—they're so damn dark as to make any photography of a decent standard impossible to even consider.

