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*Goalie*  
ISSUE



2021

**JACK**  
**BE**

Although His Journey To The NHL  
Has Been Anything But Quick,  
**Jack Campbell's** Career Takes Off  
Under The Bright Lights Of Toronto

**NIMBLE**





THE HOCKEY MOM | By Christie Casciano Burns

## Parents Face Their Own Challenges When Kids Strap On The Pads

JACQUES PLANTE—one of the greatest goalies to ever play the position—aptly described the pressure of playing between the pipes as, “How would you like a job where, every time you make a mistake, a big red light goes on and 18,000 people boo?”

His take echoes the famous maxim of Heywood Broun—one of America’s first sportswriters—who noted, “Sports do not build character, they reveal it.”

But that’s what made Plante one of the best backstops in hockey history: a willingness to shoulder both the heavy pads, but also the pressures of an entire team and its fans.

As a goaltender, you’re a part of the team, but you’re also an island unto yourself. Your shortcomings are immediately apparent and the finger pointing can often start with you.

So when your Baby Brodeur says he or she wants a blocker and glove for Christmas, don’t leave them alone on as island. While it’s not easy to watch the rubber fly on the games when they’re looking like Swiss cheese, if you can get past the understandable trepidation, you may learn something very special about your child.

“Chances are if your child has chosen to become a goalie, they are much stronger than you think,” says veteran hockey mom Diane Pelton of Syracuse, N.Y.

Being a goalie parent isn’t easy either. They’re usually the ones standing behind the glass, walking from end to end and yelling, “Cover it” at the top of their lungs. Early on, Pelton heeded the advice from a favorite goalie coach, that it’s better to be seen and not heard.

“If your goalie is looking at you, they’re not focused on the play in front of them,” she says.



*“Chances are if your child has chosen to become a goalie, they are much stronger than you think”*

Stephen Bowker’s son knew the moment he strapped on the goalie gear, he wanted to be a keeper. Now that his son is playing for his JV team, the Wilmington, Mass., dad has learned that kids need to be treated as kids and not pushed too hard.

“It can be nerve-racking at times. They are going to have good and bad games. You have to be supportive,” Bowker says.

“It’s very hard to watch him get down on himself and go through the emotions of losing a game,” adds Auburn, N.Y. goalie mom Denise Farrington.

“Make sure they know that winning or losing a game does not define them.”

When there are more lows than highs, Farrington suggests that it may be time to stack the pads on a shelf in the garage.

It takes a unique temperament to bear the burden between the pipes. But with the right support and nurturing, you may find goaltending reveals something we all want for our kids—that they are special. ☆

### THE SEVEN STAGES OF GOALIE MOM GRIEF

By Sharon Enck

I was thinking about funerals the other day, which is not that odd considering I now pass a boneyard every day coming home, when I got to thinking about grief. It not only applies to friends and family of the dearly departed, it also applies to goalie moms.

Do the seven stages apply? I think they do. Does any of this sound familiar?

**1. Shock:** Did that puck just go through the five hole?

**2. Denial:** No, that couldn’t have! Her stick was down, wasn’t it?

**3. Pain and Guilt:** Oh no, parents are looking at me. Maybe I should have sprung for that extra goalie coaching in addition to the four times a week she is already on the ice.

**4. Anger:** She KNOWS BETTER!

**5. Depression, Reflection, and Loneliness:** That puts us down two goals in the third period, what are they going to do? Maybe if she saves everything else and the team steps up offensively, we can pull it out. I better not talk to anyone or make eye contact, and should go crawl in a hole.

**6. Upward Turn:** Two down is not that bad.

**7. Acceptance and Hope:** It’s just one game and there is always next week, next game, and next tournament.

So yes, goalie moms do go through the seven stages of grief. Now it’s time to set up a goalie mom counseling group. We’re going to need some wine.

# JACK BE

Although His Journey To The NHL Was Anything But Quick,

***Jack Campbell's Career Has Finally Taken Off***

Under The Bright Lights Of Toronto

# NIMBLE

## THE ROAD TO THE NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE

is a hard one, and it requires more persistence than most people can muster. But few players have had a journey as long and arduous as Jack Campbell. Fewer still start out with as much promise.

Campbell is the American goalie who led the Toronto Maple Leafs to the North Division title, winning 17 games and losing just two in regulation in the 2020-21 regular season. Along the way, he put up W's in his first 11 appearances. It was the longest win-streak ever by a Leafs netminder. In fact, it was an NHL record. In the league's 104-year history, no goalie had ever started a season with 11 wins in a row.

A year shy of turning 30, the man teammates call "Soup" has suddenly, belatedly, emerged as one of the league's elite goaltenders. This is a guy who a decade ago was a first-round draft choice and seemed destined for stardom. But then his career took an unexpected and lengthy detour to obscurity. At one point Campbell was minding the pipes, and feeling lost, in Idaho, suiting up in a 5,000-seat arena, 700 miles from the nearest NHL franchise. In his first seven pro seasons, Campbell appeared in just seven NHL games.

Now, though, he's at the top of the game, and the top of the league, and his turn in the NHL spotlight has been one of the best feel-good stories of this strange, truncated season of Covid hockey.





**if** *I think I've  
been able to  
what I'm able to do. It's so  
fun to be part of a great  
It's been a fun ride."*

AMPBELL

# Goalie ISSUE



**2021**





A NEW  
NHL  
RECORD.

***He's such an amazing person and he's brought a lot of joy into everybody's lives and in the locker room."*** /// AUSTON MATTHEWS

"I had to wait for a while for a real opportunity and I finally got that," Campbell said after a May practice. "I think I've been able to show what I'm able to do. It's so much fun to be part of a great team. It's been a fun ride."

There was probably no better moment than when the horn sounded after the record-setting tenth win. Teammate Mitch Marner skated to Campbell, tapped a fist on his chest and then counted off on gloved fingers. One, two, three, four, five...all the way until he had no more fingers to count. It was a scene that bounced around social media and was celebrated on NHL and Leafs telecasts.

"That was pretty cool," Campbell said. "At the time I was in the moment and not thinking about it, but then it sunk in. Mitch has become a great friend, so it was special to share it with him."

It couldn't happen to a nicer guy, either.

"Wherever he's been, if you talk to teammates, you hear, 'Best teammate, works his butt off,'" said his agent, Kurt Overhardt. "He's always just so positive with his teammates and enthusiastic for the game. Jack's a guy who, if you get to know him, you just want him to succeed."

Jack Campbell's easy-going demeanor and tireless work ethic have made him a favorite among his Toronto Maple Leafs teammates.

Just ask Auston Matthews, who has provided much of the firepower for the Leafs this season.

"He's such an amazing person and he's brought a lot of joy into everybody's lives and in the locker room," said Matthews, who is the first American to win the Maurice "The Rocket" Richard Trophy for the most goals scored in a season with 41.

"He's been unbelievable all season and he's such a special person and we're all just so happy for him."

Campbell grew up in Port Huron, Mich., a small, maritime city at the southern tip of Lake Huron. His father, Jack Sr., owns an electrical distribution company. His mother, Debra, stayed home and took care of Jack and his older sister, Casey. As a kid, Campbell looked up to his cousin Marshall, who everyone called Duke. He was a pretty good goalie and naturally Campbell wanted to emulate him. Who wouldn't want to be just like a guy named Duke?



# 1

## games won in a row by Jack Campbell to start the 2020-21 NHL season.

In 2008, Campbell was chosen for USA Hockey's National Team Development Program, and helped Team USA to back-to-back gold medals in the IIHF Under 18 Men's World Championship. He also stopped 32 of 34 shots to lead a come-from-behind overtime win over Canada in the gold-medal game of the 2010 World Juniors. Several months later, the Dallas Stars took the kid from Port Huron with the eleventh overall pick. Interesting footnote: taken in the seventh round of that same draft was another goalie, a Danish kid named Frederik Andersen.

Campbell had committed to play at the University of Michigan but switched to the Ontario Hockey League.

"I started thinking it would be better to play more hockey and I just went with my gut," he said.

After two seasons in "the O," he turned pro and Dallas assigned him to the Texas Stars of the AHL. His stats were good but not the kind expected of a high draft pick. In his third pro season, he finally got an NHL start, a loss in which he let in six goals.

Over the next two seasons, he struggled to hit his stride with the Texas Stars and was sent down—twice—to the Idaho Steelheads of the ECHL, probably the last place Campbell figured

hockey would take him. A lot of drafted players start in the ECHL, but most are from lower rounds. The Steelheads have only ever had one first-rounder wear their sweater, and that was Campbell.

How did this happen? Campbell was asking himself that just about every day. The problem was more between his ears than between the pipes. Every goal haunted him. He beat himself up every time he fished the puck out of his net. Hockey wasn't fun and a lot of days in Idaho he wondered what's the point of even playing.

"I was really hard on myself back then," he recalled.

The road back started in 2016 when he was traded to the Los Angeles Kings, whose goaltending coach, Dusty Imoo, rebuilt Campbell's game and his psyche.

"He just made me have fun out there," Campbell explained. "Mentally, that's a big thing. Once I started to gain confidence, we worked on becoming that athletic goalie that I was before."



Jack Campbell's heroics at the 2010 IIHF World Junior Championship helped his draft stock skyrocket several months later when he was taken 11th overall by the Dallas Stars.

"LA saw Jack's potential as an untapped asset, and they put the effort in to tap that," Overhardt said. "Jack's timeline may be different than other people, but he's got such a bright future going forward."

There were two more seasons with LA's AHL club and then on Feb. 18, 2018, he started for the Kings against red-hot Las Vegas. The Knights peppered him but Campbell allowed only a single goal on 42 shots. After seven pro seasons, Campbell had his first NHL win.

Every now and then, he re-watches that game.

"It was pretty special," Campbell recalled. "My folks came out. It was like turning a page and not focusing on the past. It was like, 'I can do this.'"

The following season he appeared in 31 games as the Kings' primary backup. In February of last year, Campbell learned he was about to be dealt to Toronto.

"I took a couple days for the deal to be final, so I wasn't sleeping much," he said. "If somebody trades for you, they really want you. I was excited to be going to a strong team and start a new chapter."

Campbell started this season as backup to Frederik Andersen, the same guy who was taken in the same draft as Campbell, in the seventh round. Campbell looked sharp in two early wins, was sidelined about a month with an injury, then picked up a couple more wins.

When Andersen got hurt, Campbell stepped in and kept piling up one win after another, eventually setting the record, securing the starting role for himself, and leading the Leafs into the playoffs.

After that practice in May, Campbell had a chill evening all planned out—a steak with corn and potatoes for dinner, a movie, then a good night's sleep. Still, he was itching to be back on the ice with his teammates the next night.

"Everybody's pretty close. You don't see that everywhere, so it's pretty special when the team gels like this."

So, is hockey fun again?

"Yeah," he replied. "Absolutely." ★

Neal Boudette is a freelance writer based in Ann Arbor, Mich.



BY TOM WORGIO

# UNBREA



*Goalie*  
ISSUE



## Injuries And Insults Can't Stop W.Va. Goalie From Achieving Her Goals

**FRESHMAN WILLOW HERMAN** was literally and figuratively just a few steps away from her dream last October as she anxiously waited for the start of her first West Virginia University hockey practice at Morgantown Ice Arena with the American Collegiate Hockey League Division II club women's team.

Herman had grown tired of playing on boys' teams where she never felt like she fit in and wasn't well received by either coaches or players.

Unfortunately, where she lived in Bunker Hill, W.Va., boys' teams were the only option. The nearest girls' teams were two hours away in Rockville, Md.

"I was very excited to be at West Virginia for many different reasons, mostly because none of my past coaches believed I would play in

college," she recalled. "I had a coach even look me in the face and tell me, 'I wouldn't play anywhere but in beer leagues.' It made me work 10 times harder."

The 5-foot-2 Herman never made it onto the ice for that first practice. Before she sat down to change near the bleachers (pandemic rules), a puck flew over the boards and hit her in the head. She suffered her fourth concussion and needed four stitches.

"I was thinking, 'This will only happen to me. It's just kind of my luck,'" said Herman, who started playing ice hockey in eighth grade. "By the time I got cleared to play [in mid-November], the rink closed because of Covid."

Fortunately, she got over that setback and looks forward to being West Virginia's starting goalie this winter.



# KABLE SPIRIT

*I have never come across someone with her determination in 15 years of coaching."*

/// CHERYL CHURCH, FREDERICK VICTORY COACH



**Willow Herman** deals with a rare disorder, Osteogenesis Imperfecta, or brittle bone disease, which has led to her suffering from multiple broken bones, 40 to 42 of them by her mother's count.

is also called brittle bone disease.

"When I get an ankle x-rayed, you can't tell a new stress fracture from an old fracture because I have had so many," she said. "If the weather is bad, my joints and back hurt and my hip drives me insane. I will lay in bed for most of the morning until I absolutely have to get up. With my hip injury, I tore a muscle and when

Throughout her hockey career, starting at age 5 when she began playing inline hockey, she faced another serious challenge: injuries. Actually, a staggering number of them.

The 19-year-old Herman suffers from a rare disorder, Osteogenesis Imperfecta, which

I sit in a chair, my leg falls asleep. It causes immense pain in my back. I have learned to deal with the pain."

Painkillers helped her deal with her beat-up body. She took Advil and a prescription medication frequently.

Her mother Amy, who works as an orthopedic technologist at a trauma center, said she lost count of her daughter's broken bones around 2012.

"I put it at 40 to 42," Amy estimated. "It's just kind of sad. Some coaches were afraid of her and treated her like glass because of all her injuries."

They ran the gamut from a broken hip and four concussions to a fractured humerus bone, nine broken ankles and seven broken wrists.

That includes a broken hip that occurred during an inline game in 2018, which ended her participation in that sport.

"I told her that was the last time I carrying her off the ice [actually playing surface]," Amy said.

Despite the agony, Herman continues to play

for two reasons. She absolutely loves the sport and she said it helps her cope with the pain.

"If I didn't play I wouldn't have muscle strength," she said. "Walking would hurt more than it already does because my body wouldn't be used to it. Playing hockey helps my body stay young."

Herman has fewer fractures nowadays because she's slowed and calmed down in life.

"She was making better decisions," Amy said. "She's not jumping out of trees or flying out of swings sets."

But Herman is so dedicated to hockey that she is willing to put up with the more recent issues of torn tendons and muscles. For example, she tore the medial collateral ligament in her knee in 2017, a ligament in her ankle the following year and sustained a torn muscle in her hip in 2019.

Besides the physical pain, she also had to put up with constant disrespect and belittlement during high school.





While some of her teammates have treated her with respect, **Willow Herman** has had her share of challenges dealing with other teammates and coaches playing boys' hockey.

"It was basically every single game or practice," she said of the insults. "Certain teammates didn't like me because I was the girl on the team. I would also get comments from players on other teams."

Herman had particular problems with two coaches, one from a West Virginia team and another one from a Maryland squad. She played three seasons with one high school team and quit it after a couple of practices during her senior year because of the coach's beer league comment.

She played only one season for a travel team because the coach "never talked to me. He acted like I didn't exist. I was the last-resort goalie."

Amy added: "That coach wouldn't even let her practice. He would make her sit and watch. People knew she was being discriminated against."

Herman often came back from practice crying.

Luckily, she finally found a coach, Frederick Victory coach Cheryl Church, who believed in her. Herman played two seasons for the western Maryland co-ed team.

"She is a very good goalie," Church said. "She is very coachable and also good at directing her defense. She is better than some of the boy goalies on her teams. I have never come across someone with her deter-

mination in 15 years of coaching. She finished a game after breaking her foot."

After all she had been through, Herman wrote Bauer a four-page letter, detailing her story and praising the company's equipment that she knows very well.

Bauer was so impressed that they invited Herman to the Clarkson Cup in Toronto in 2019 as a guest of honor. She dropped the ceremonial puck before two professional teams, the Calgary Inferno and Les Canadiennes de Montreal, played for the Canadian Women's Hockey League championship.

The company produced a one-minute video about Herman's story and it's had nearly 90,000 views on Instagram.

"The Clarkson Cup meant a lot to me," Herman said. "I got to have breakfast with

*I had a coach even look me in the face and tell me, 'I wouldn't play anywhere but in beer leagues.' It made me work 10 times harder."*

/// WILLOW HERMAN



both teams. They really got to know me. I built strong relationships with female role models who have gone through the same experiences I have with the boys.

"It showed me if you continue to have that determination, that you can achieve your goals." ☆

*Tom Worgo is a freelance writer based in Annapolis, Md.*

# Goalie ISSUE



# THE LONG & WINDING ROAD

*When It Comes To Developing  
Collegiate Goalies, The Journey  
Between The Pipes Requires  
Patience And Persistence*

Connor Hellebuyck  
honed his game  
at the University  
of Massachusetts  
Amherst.



BY NATE EWELL & SEAN HOGAN

**THERE'S NO ONE PATH** to reach Division I men's hockey, a tenet that is proven true over and over again.

Nowhere is it more true than at the goaltending position, where the winding road from youth hockey to the college game resemble a plate of spaghetti.

It's a path and a position that certainly rewards patience, as a closer look at current college goalies and their paths reveal. But that research also shows some surprises, including the ages that college goalies tend to enroll in school.



# MEN'S COLLEGE GOALIES



**Zach Stejskal** backstopped the Minnesota Duluth Bulldogs to the 2021 Frozen Four.

where at age 17 and still reach the top level of college hockey.

"This research reinforces an important point, that there's no need for goaltenders to rush to junior hockey," said Steve Thompson, USA Hockey's American Development Model manager of goaltending. "Well over half of all Division I men's goaltenders played 18 & Under, prep school or high school hockey as 17-year olds. What's important is that they are playing and developing at that age, not trying to advance too quickly."

## Junior Achievement

The simplest way to see how goaltenders got to the Division I level is to look where they played immediately prior to college. While that may seem simple on the surface, the data doesn't paint a clear picture. No fewer than 20 leagues sent goalies directly to Division I rosters in 2019-20.

College Hockey, Inc., examined the routes that 187 goaltenders took to Division I in 2019-20. The results show a variety of leagues, mostly at the junior level—with more than half of all goaltenders coming from the USHL, NAHL or BCHL.

Eleven other leagues produced more than one goaltender, though, proving that top goalies in any of those pre-college leagues can get Division I opportunities.

## BEFORE NCAA – 2019-20 GOALTENDERS

League	No.	Pct.
ACHA	1	1%
AJHL	6	3%
BCHL	23	12%
CCHL	8	4%
EHL	1	1%
Europe	4	2%
GOJHL	2	1%
LHJQ	1	1%
MJAHL	1	1%
MJHL	3	2%
NA3HL	1	1%
<b>NAHL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>23%</b>
OJHL	11	6%
Prep School	7	4%
RMJHL	1	1%
SJHL	2	1%
USHS	3	2%
U.S. NTDP	4	2%
<b>USHL</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>27%</b>
USPHL	14	7%

Focusing on primary starting goalies—defined as those who played at least 20 games in 2019-20—shows a bit more focus, but it's still a wide funnel. The USHL's share jumps to 40 percent in this group, but there are still 10 leagues sending starting goalies to the NCAA level.

## BEFORE NCAA – 2019-20 GOALIES WITH 20+ GAMES PLAYED

League	No.	Pct.
AJHL	2	4%
BCHL	7	13%
CCHL	1	2%
Europe	2	4%
GOJHL	2	4%
MJAHL	1	2%
NAHL	11	21%
U.S. NTDP	2	4%
USHL	21	40%
USPHL	2	4%

## Better With Age

Looking beyond goalies' most recent junior team yields even more interesting data. College Hockey, Inc., looked at where current college goaltenders spent each of their junior-eligible seasons—at ages 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20. There were two key findings:

First, there's no need for goaltenders to rush to get to the junior hockey ranks. When looking at Division I men's goaltenders in 2019-20 and where they played at 17 years old, the majority (58 percent) were playing 18U, prep school or high school hockey.

The three leagues that end up producing the most Division I goalies—the USHL, NAHL and BCHL—are home to only 16 percent of them at 17 years old. Goaltenders, the data shows, can be playing virtually any-

## AT AGE 17 – 2019-20 GOALTENDERS

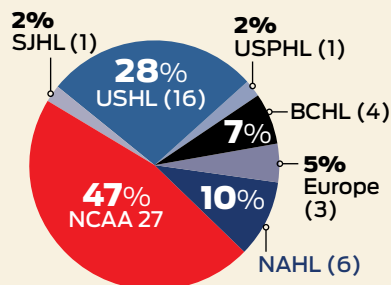
League	No.	Pct.
18U	55	29%
AJHL	2	1%
BCHL	4	2%
Cdn. HS	2	1%
CCHL	2	1%
CSSHL	1	1%
EHL	1	1%
EmJHL	3	2%
EOJHL	1	1%
Europe	12	6%
GMOHL	1	1%
GOJHL	2	1%
KIJHL	1	1%
MetJHL	1	1%
MJHL	2	1%
NAHL	11	6%
NDJCHL	1	1%
NOJHL	1	1%
OJHL	3	2%
Prep Schools	29	16%
QJAAHL	1	1%
USHS	23	12%
U.S. NTDP	6	3%
USHL	15	8%
N/A	6	3%

Second, goaltenders reach college at varying ages. Among all NCAA goaltenders last year, 29 percent were playing college by the time they are 19.

When looking at the top men's goaltenders in college—however that is defined—that skews even younger. Among starting goaltenders (20+ GP in 2019-20), 43 percent are playing college by age 19. Among those who signed NHL contracts between 2012-20, 47 percent were in college at 19.



### AT AGE 19 – GOALTENDERS WHO SIGNED NHL CONTRACTS, 2012-20



Successful goaltenders who do make the jump to college at age 18 or 19 tend to play a lot right away, rather than serving as a backup. Among that same group of goalies who signed NHL contracts, 65 percent of them who were freshmen at 18 or 19 played the majority of their team's games that year.

That reinforces Thompson's earlier point: for a goaltender, getting ice time can be more important than what level they are playing.

### Case In Point

The myriad of ways that a goaltender can reach the Division I level may be best represented by a man at the top of his profession: Connor Hellebuyck.

Hellebuyck, who won the Vezina Trophy last season with the Winnipeg Jets, wasn't scouted coming out of high school in Walled Lake Northern in Michigan, and wasn't drafted to the USHL. His break eventually came at an NAHL tryout camp with the Texas-based Odessa Jackalopes.

The early setbacks lit a fire under Hellebuyck, who continued to work harder to achieve his dream. Those habits developed in high school at the junior level and in the NAHL have helped shape him into the goaltender that he is today.

"If I would've had success, I probably would've kept doing what I was doing," Hellebuyck said in a 2020 article on **USA Hockey.com**. "With a little bit of failure, you learn what you're doing wrong, and you learn how to correct it. I had a ton of drive, but not only that, I was having a lot of fun."

Hellebuyck's .930 save percentage in the NAHL earned him a scholarship to UMass Lowell and made him a fifth-round draft

Now in his sixth year in the league, **Connor Hellebuyck** has taken his place as one of the NHL's top goaltenders.

pick of the Jets. Two spectacular seasons in college led to a year and a half in the AHL before becoming an NHL starter.

"When I went to college I got a lot stronger and built up my body right. Not only that but I had a great goalie coach there, Cam Elsworth, and we

really worked on some details that I still carry to this day," he said. "Every place that I've been to has been a piece here and a piece there of the whole puzzle."

Hellebuyck was 23 when he became the Jets' No. 1 goaltender, which is younger than most of his peers. But he never rushed in the path to get there, which has paid the ultimate dividends in the end. ★

*Nate Ewell is the deputy executive director and Sean Hogan is the director of education at College Hockey, Inc.*



# TOP-SHELF GOALIE

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# GEAR

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# Competition And Camaraderie On Display As National Team Vets And Hopefuls

Story, Photos and Video by MAE DIVINSKI

# VETGA

*Goalie*  
ISSUE



VIDEO



Goalies participating at a recent Goaltender Development Camp at the conclusion of the U.S. Women's National Team Camp were put to the test by a group of talented shooters.

# WIMS



**IT'S NO SECRET THE PRIDE AND PASSION** that exists within the USA Hockey goalie nation, and for three days in April, the goaltenders of the U.S. Women's National Team Program took Blaine, Minn., by storm to further foster their already considerable skills.

The development camp roster featured seasoned veterans like Olympic gold-medalists Maddie Rooney and Nicole Hensley side by side with rising stars like Josie Bothun and Abbey Levy. Having wide-eyed rookies train teaming up with established pros not only brought out the best in each goalie's competitive spirit but provided peer-to-peer collaboration that helps everyone in the end.

"For me, these goalie camps are extremely important when it comes to pushing you to be a better goaltender and providing you the opportunity to take a step back and assess what it is you need to continue to improve on to be the best for your team," said Alex Cavallini, an Olympic gold medalist and five-time world champion.

"As a veteran goalie in the program, I try to be a mentor to the younger goalies because I was fortunate to have great mentors when I was coming up through the program. I was able to watch and ask questions from goaltenders like Jessie Vetter, Molly Schaus, and Brianne McLaughlin and to me those are invaluable experiences to have growing up.

Among the main takeaways from the three-day camp were how to sharpen cognitive skills with a pre- and post-game/practice mental checklist to retain as much information as possible after sessions; and the importance of always being a student of the game so when the athletes are away from the team, they can act as their coach.

But the ultimate goal for each netminder is to always perform at their best when wearing the red, white, and blue on the international stage.

To raise the level of competition during the camp, talented shooters like Hilary Knight, Abby Roque and Dani Cameranesi stayed back after the U.S. Women's National Team evaluation camp ended to help their teammates elevate their game even further.

"These events are always a highlight on everyone's calendar due to the fact that so many like minds can spend a few days together sharing their love for the position and their love for representing their country on the world's biggest stage," said Steve Thompson, ADM manager of goaltending for USA Hockey.

"We shared with them many new tools on how to evaluate their own play as well as ways to learn from other goalies to help them continue on their path of becoming the best goalies in the world." ☆



Over the course of three days, a number of talented American netminders were able to train and pick the brains of some of the top goalie coaches in the country.



BY KYLE HUSON

# PLAYING FOR PRIDE

## *Cal Petersen Made The Most Of His Opportunity To Backstop The U.S. On International Stage*



**Cal Petersen**, left, and teammate **Matt Hellickson** celebrate another U.S. medal at the 2021 IIHF World Championship.

▶ **WHEN CAL PETERSEN** and the Los Angeles Kings take the ice at the beginning of the season, the goal is always to make the playoffs. As the season wound down and it seemed that goal would fall a tad short, Petersen began hoping to have a chance to play for another championship.

That call came, and Petersen hopped on a flight to Riga, Latvia, to compete at the 2021 IIHF Men's World Championship.

"It's been awesome. It's some of the most fun I've had playing hockey," the goaltender from Waterloo, Iowa said about his experience playing for the 2021 U.S. Men's National Team.

"Any time you have the opportunity to wear the USA colors, especially at the World Championships, it's a no-brainer for me."

Petersen had previously donned the red, white and blue at the 2017 World Championship, but did not see any game action. So this year was his first opportunity to make an impact on the ice for his country, and he certainly made the most of that. He recorded his first international shutout against Kazakhstan, a 3-0 victory, on May 27, and added his second against Germany on May 31. His most important wins came in a pair of 6-1 victories over Slovakia in the semifinals and against Germany to help the U.S. take home a bronze medal.



# Goalie ISSUE



2021



**Cal Petersen** comes up with another big save against Germany in the bronze-medal game.



# CAL PETERSEN



“Being able to win games and put ourselves in a good position for a shot at the gold is what we want, so it’s been awesome,” said Petersen, who led all goalies in the tournament with a .953 save percentage and 1.29 goals-against average.

What makes it even more special for Petersen is not only being able to represent the country on the ice, but represent his family that served in the armed forces. When Petersen talks about his grandfather, among other members in his family, it makes him even more proud to wear the USA crest.

“It’s been everything. It adds another level of pride. You’re playing for something bigger than yourself, bigger than your own personal pride,” he said.

“Winning on Memorial Day was special. I was texting with my family and other relatives and they said my grandfather would obviously be super proud as would my other relatives that have served. We’re playing hockey and that’s not nearly as important as the sacrifice of serving. But I think you pay sort of that same

*I was actually just thinking about it the other day, all of the American goalies that are getting their first chance in the NHL. I think it’s awesome and a testament to the college route.”*

respect to the people have come before you and that have worn these colors and have given you the opportunity to play hockey and follow your dreams.”

## **Winning on Memorial Day was special. I was texting with my family and other relatives and they said my grandfather would obviously be super proud as would my other relatives that have served.**

Petersen's journey to where he is today is unique to say the least. As a youth player from Iowa, he grew up watching the local USHL team, the Waterloo Blackhawks, a team that he would eventually play for.

He started out as both a forward and a defenseman, but like many goaltenders, was drawn to how cool the goalie equipment looked. The right-handed catcher suited up in net and never looked back. He began to get better and better, which in turn required more sacrifice from his family, who would routinely make six-hour round-trip drives to his practice for his youth team.

"There was a lot of sacrifice for my family," Petersen said. "I played youth hockey in Waterloo and then played for a couple years in Minnesota and Wisconsin before coming back to Waterloo...I then went to Chicago for a couple of years.

"Huge sacrifice for my family, and that's one of the big reasons I want to honor them by my effort and what I can do. I think it's only right that I take it as far as I can."

That journey eventually led him to the University of Notre Dame, where he started every game he played, and eventually landed him with the Kings. Now in his fourth professional season and third with the big club, Petersen has had the opportunity to learn from one of the greatest American goaltenders of all time in Jonathan Quick.

"He's a legend. The kind of success that he has had is something that I can only strive to achieve someday," Petersen said. "I realize how competitive he is and how great of a teammate he is. He has a leadership aspect that I strive to kind of do.

"Just watching him play such a unique style, I feel like I've added a new level of athleticism trying to do the stuff that he does on a regular basis. It's helped me make some saves that previously I wouldn't have been able to make."

Petersen was joined on this year's U.S. squad by Jake Oettinger of the Dallas Stars and Drew Commesso of Boston University, who replaced Anthony Stolarz, who suffered an injury early in the tournament. The trio are just three of the many U.S.-born goaltenders that are making their mark in the scope of goaltending.

Petersen saw the success of fellow Americans including Spencer Knight (Florida Panthers), Jack Campbell (Toronto Maple Leafs) and Jeremy Swayman (Boston Bruins), and is excited about the state of goaltending in the United States.

"I think it's tremendous," he said. "I was actually just thinking about it the other day, all of the American goalies that are getting their first chance in the NHL. I think it's awesome and a testament to the college route. I know I benefited from that being a



After a strong season with the Los Angeles Kings, **Cal Petersen** brought his game to Riga, Latvia, where he earned the directorate award as the top goaltender at the 2021 IIHF Men's World Championship.

little bit of a later goalie. Especially for American goalies, and I hope there are more to come."

As other young goaltenders watch the World Championship, they may be studying what Petersen does, similar to what he did with Jonathan Quick. And one thing that these young goaltenders will notice is the medal around Petersen's neck.

"We put ourselves in the best position to win gold," said Petersen, who was named the tournament's top goaltender.

"I think we realized that we had a really special group, and we wanted to end this thing on the right note and we deserved to end it on the right note. Everybody showed up [in the bronze medal game]. It shows a lot about the guys here. It shows a lot about the guys that USA Hockey selects. I'm extremely proud to wear this medal and be a part of this team. It's something I am going to remember for the rest of my life." ☆

*Kyle Huson is the digital content coordinator at USA Hockey.*



by HARRY THOMPSON

# AMERICAN MAD

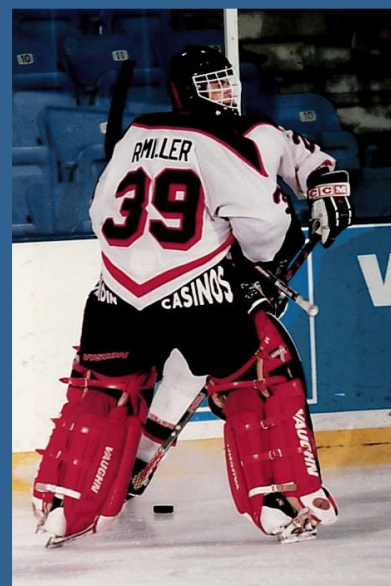


## YOUTH HOCKEY

**Growing up as a forward with his East Lansing, Mich., youth team,** Miller begged his father and coach to let him play in goal. His father told him that if he scored two goals and three assists the next game he would buy Ryan a catching glove. Miller accepted the challenge and finished the game with two goals and three assists.

## JUNIORS

After being spotted at a USA Hockey Select Festival, Miller accepted an invitation to move five hours from his home in East Lansing to play for the **Soo Indians of the North American Hockey League**. In his two years there, he gained five inches and more than 20 pounds in addition to refining his game for the next level.





# Goalie ISSUE



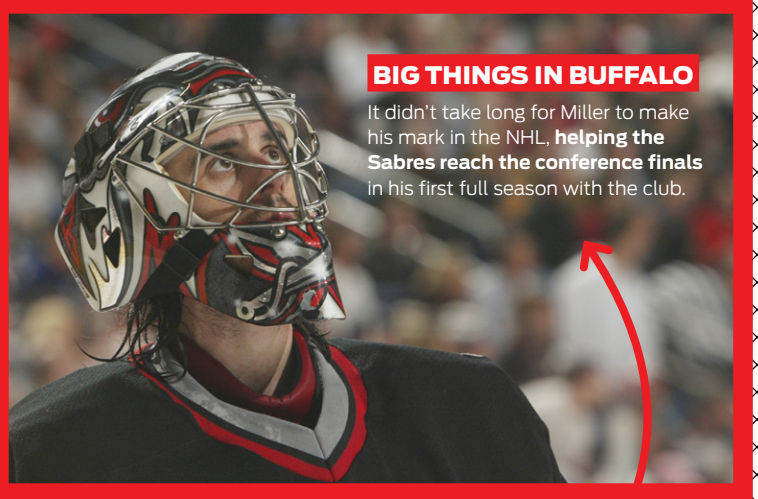
## Ryan Miller Set Himself Apart From The Competition One Win At A Time

**FROM HIS HEROICS** at the 2010 Olympics to his professional swan song in Southern California, Ryan Miller set the standard for all U.S. goalies to follow.



### COLLEGE

Like so many members of his family, Miller played college hockey at **Michigan State University**. Over his three seasons with the Spartans, Miller set the NCAA record with 26 career shutouts. In his junior season he led the country in wins, winning percentage, save percentage (an NCAA record .950 mark), goals-against average and shutouts (an NCAA record 10) and was the winner of the Hobey Baker Award.



### BIG THINGS IN BUFFALO

It didn't take long for Miller to make his mark in the NHL, **helping the Sabres reach the conference finals** in his first full season with the club.



### PRO DEBUT

After being drafted by the Buffalo Sabres in the fifth round (138 overall) in the 1999 NHL Entry Draft, **Miller began his pro career with the Rochester Americans**. During the 2004–05 season, with the NHL not playing due to a lockout, he won 41 games, tying Gerry Cheevers' record.





### STAR ON THE RISE

Miller would start the 2006–07 season with the number one job, helping the Sabres win their first 10 games. **He was voted the starting goaltender for the Eastern Conference of the 2007 NHL All-Star Game.** The Sabres advanced to their second conference finals, losing to the Ottawa Senators in five games.



### TAKE IT OUTDOORS

On Jan. 1, 2008, Miller played in the first **NHL Winter Classic at Ralph Wilson Stadium**, the home of the NFL's Buffalo Bills. While the Sabres lost in a shootout to the Pittsburgh Penguins, Miller only allowed one goal (on 25 shots) in regulation.



### MILLER'S TIME TO SHINE

After making the 2006 Olympic Team as a reserve, **Miller stepped into the spotlight in Vancouver, leading the team to a 5-0 start**, including a 5-3 win over gold-medal favorite Canada in the preliminary round. The North American rivals would meet again in the gold-medal game in front of a record TV audience. Despite Miller's heroics, the U.S. lost in overtime. Miller finished with a .946 save percentage and 1.35 GAA, and was named the most valuable player of the tournament.



### HERO'S WELCOME

Buoyed by his success at the Vancouver Games, Miller returned to Buffalo to great fanfare and would have one of his finest seasons in the NHL, **winning the 2010 Vezina Trophy.** He would also become the first American player to win the NHL Foundation Player Award.



## SHORT BLUES RIFF

Shortly after returning home from Sochi, Miller was traded to the **St. Louis Blues**. He helped the Blues reach the Stanley Cup Playoffs, where they were eliminated in the first round by the defending champion Chicago Blackhawks.



## NORTH OF THE BORDER

Not long after, Miller signed a three-year, \$18 million contract to become the starting goaltender with the **Vancouver Canucks**. Early in his first season north of the border, Miller became the 30th goaltender in NHL history to reach 300 career wins. Later that season he would beat the Sabres, giving him at least one victory against every NHL team.

## NEW ROLE IN RUSSIA

Miller returned to the Olympic spotlight in Sochi, Russia, although this time as the second goalie to LA Kings Jonathan Quick. In his one start between the pipes, Miller turned in a 17-save performance as the U.S. beat Slovenia, 5-1.



## A MAGIC ENDING

At the end of his deal, **Miller took his talents to Southern California** where he served as teammate and mentor to rising Anaheim Ducks star John Gibson. After announcing his retirement at the end of the 2020-21 season, Miller played his final NHL game, an overtime loss to the Minnesota Wild, on May 8, 2021.



## DOMINATING THE DOMINATOR

On Feb. 4, 2012, **Miller surpassed Dominik Hašek** as the Sabres' franchise leader in wins with 235 in a 4-3 shootout win against the N.Y. Islanders. Miller accomplished the feat in six-and-a-half years, compared to nine for Hasek.



## WHAT'S NEXT

The kid who had to convince his dad to let him get between the pipes wrapped up his professional career as the all-time leading American goaltender with 387 wins, surpassing the great John Vanbiesbrouck. Next stop on what has been an incredible 18-year NHL career is a place in the **U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame**.