

Paul Henderson - living with 'The Goal'

by Mark Spector

At first glance one can immediately recognize Paul Henderson as a highly successful man. And there's no doubt that he is.

He is in town speaking on behalf of Campus Crusade For Christ, and he couldn't be happier doing what he's doing.

Most people can't say that. Henderson, in case you have forgotten, scored the winning goal with only 34 seconds remaining in the eighth and final game of the 1972 Canada-Russia hockey series.

A series that will never be equaled no matter how many Canada Cups Paul Coffey and the boys pull out in overtime.

"I was the luckiest guy in the world to have scored that goal," recalled Henderson on Tuesday afternoon. "Every young Canadian kid has a dream of scoring that big goal. I never even thought about any Russians but..." he said with a grin on his lips.

Sure the glory has worn off somewhat, but once Paul Henderson begins to actually recall the event instead of merely relaying information to an interviewer, he cannot help but smile.

"The other day I had a 65 year old lady come up to me and say that September 28, 1972 was the greatest day of her life," he says in disbelief. "People today still come up to me and tell me exactly where they were when it went in."

But the ironic thing is that not only did Henderson not expect to score such a heroic goal in his life-

time, he would have sworn that there would be no such goal in that first series.

"Going into the series, we all figured that if we didn't win all eight games that it would be an embarrassment. All of our scouts had told us that the Russians couldn't skate very well and were poor shooters. And they had some goalie named Tretiak that couldn't stop a football.

But on my very first shift of the first game in Montreal, after Phil (Esposito) had scored right off the bat (at the 30 second mark), I'm skating beside this Russian and I'm huffin' and puffin', and I look beside me and this guy isn't even breathing."

"I went back to the bench and told (linemate Ron) Ellis and (Bobbie) Clarke that this was going to be one long series."

The USSR went on to win that game by a 7-3 margin and open up a lot of eyes around the Great White North.

But the fame and the recognition took advantage of a headstrong Paul Henderson. He smiles the smile of school principle recalling a disorderly youth when he tells you about the good times that he and his Leaf teammates shared in the seventies. But he couldn't handle the star status that "The Goal" had earned him.

"The best thing that has happened to me since 1972, besides finding The Lord, was moving down to Birmingham (in 1981)."

That's right. The Lord. After a brief stint with the WHA



Photo Bill St. John

Birmingham Bulls, Henderson retired to a seminary in Alabama. And as every Born Again Christian that I've ever met will tell you, from that point on it was history.

But Henderson is different, I think.

He holds the same opinions as any other ex-hockey player: That fighting has its place in the game; that drugs don't; that you could put "two hinged doors" at Gretzky's side; but Paul Henderson is different.

"There's nothing that I hated worse back then than those Bible thumpers that would come around and try to shove their beliefs down my throat. I just couldn't stand it."

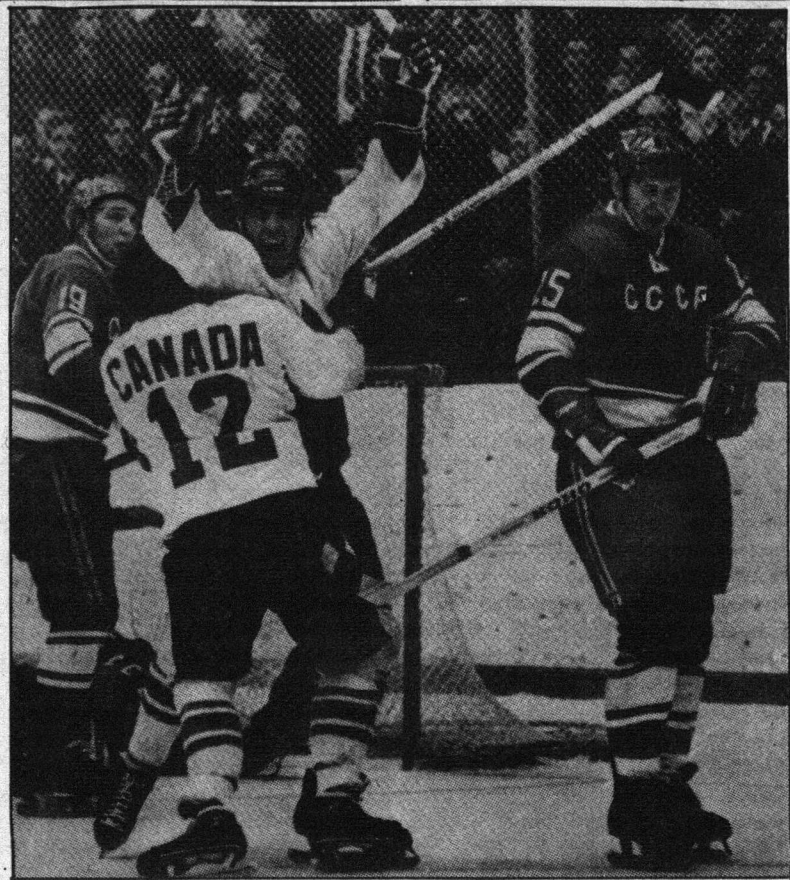
And Henderson practices just what he preaches, if you'll excuse the pun.

Unlike so many athletes today who are turning the once barroom atmosphere of the dressing room into what could sometimes be mistaken for a _____ (fill in the blank) recruitment center, Henderson isn't one to push his religion on you.

And you've got to respect the man for that.

I've got to admit that when I asked him what the one thing was that he would say to Wendel Clark and Dan Hodgson (two promising young Leafs), I expected to here the Gospel.

"I would tell them not to get down on themselves, that they can't get a losing attitude. I mean, those



Henderson scores the goal that is etched in the memories of Canadians. There were 34 seconds left.

guy's aren't losers. Gary Nylund isn't a loser. None of those guys are happy about the situation in Toronto right now. They probably don't even want to walk the streets, for cryin' out loud."

An honest answer from an honest person.

Athletes in Action, the Canadian Christian athletes group, knew what they were doing when Paul Henderson became involved with their organization.

A nicer man you'll not often meet.

Swimmers fare well in Washington

On Friday November 1, the Bears Swim team travelled to Washington to compete in the University of Washington's Huskie Relays that evening and against the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma the fol-

lowing day.

The teams participating in the Husky were from the Universities of Alberta, B.C. Puget Sound, Victoria, and Washington. A men's team from the University of Idaho

and women's team from Washington State also attended the meet.

The Pandas placed third overall behind the U of Washington and Washington State. U.B.C., last year's C.I.A.U. champions placed fourth. In the meeting against Puget Sound on Saturday, the score for the women's side of the competition was 65 for the U of A and 30 for UPS. Winning performances were turned in by the 400m medley relay, 400m freestyle relay, Elaine Lebuke in the 200m I.M. with a time of 2:32.75, Barb Jickling in the 100m free, 1:03.62, and Jan Meunier in the 200m breaststroke, 2:50.47.

Regarding the Bears, at the U of Washington on Friday night, they placed sixth. Against Puget Sound, the men lost 59 to 35. Exceptional performances were turned in by Grant Stewart in the 200m free placing second with a time of 2:05.58, Mike Preston in the 100m free, 58.17, and Larry Schulhauser placing first in the 200 I.M., 2:16.56, second in the 200m fly, and second in the 200m breaststroke. Pete Seeger also finished second in the 200m backstroke. The men also placed first in the 400m free relay, 3:53.18, allowing the U of A to win the meet overall, 100 to 89.

The U of A swim teams are next in action on Friday at 7:00 against UBC in the Varsity Pool, and the following night at the Commonwealth Pool in the Keyano Invite.

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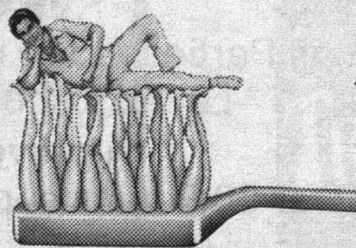
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