Historica Canada Education Portal

Leadership and Moving Mountains

Overview

This lesson plan is based on viewing the Footprint videos for Teeder Kennedy, Wayne Gretzky, Maurice Richard, Marilyn Bell, Terry Fox, and Larry Walker. Whether carrying a puck over the ice, slicing through water, crossing continents or excelling at America's pastime (baseball), these athletes are leaders in their respective sports. But what makes them icons of leadership is just as much a matter of what they did beyond the sports arena to change the way we look at ourselves as Canadians.

Aims

To increase student awareness of Canadian athletes as leaders and agents of change; to learn how they have demonstrated their leadership on the national and international arenas; to understand the challenges each of these Canadians faced in pursing their goals; to analyse how the Canadian public accepts or rejects the inevitable flaws of its athletic ambassadors; and, to question accepted notions that associate certain physical character traits with leadership potential.

Background

The roots of athletic leadership may exist before birth, but it could be argued that circumstances, rather than innate ability, determine leadership potential. Teeder Kennedy's father was killed in a hunting accident one month before his son was born, initiating a series of events that would lead Teeder Kennedy to worship the blue and white jersey of the Toronto Maple Leafs throughout his life. As Kennedy's career evolved, Toronto's fans would return this affection. Maurice Richard emerged from the tough streets of French-Canadian Montreal to hoist the hopes and dreams of the Québécois nation on his shoulders. While Wayne Gretzky was once described as a spindly-legged kid who would never make it to the NHL, he would eventually redefine the game and carry the dreams of a nation on his shoulders in the process. Marilyn Bell "looked like somebody's babysitter," and yet, she conquered the waters of Lake Ontario and challenged the nation's assumptions about female frailty. Perhaps most remarkable of all, due to the association of leadership with physical perfection, Terry Fox and Rick Hansen conquered mountains and valleys to lead the nation and the world in a collective marathon of hope. Fox and Hansen did more than lead a single team or a community; they changed the way we define athletic bodies and the nature of leadership itself.

Theodore Kennedy's path to becoming one of the greatest captains and competitors in Toronto Maple Leaf history began a month before he was born. When Gordon Kennedy was killed in a hunting accident in November 1925, Margaret Kennedy had to supplement her income with a job at an arena snack bar, with little Ted always nearby. Because of this, the hockey rink would become his second home.

In an odd twist, the real story of the Humberstone, Ontario native virtually inverts Roch Carrier's famous story, *The Hockey Sweater*. Kennedy was originally drafted by the Montreal Canadiens but refused to sign a

contract with the Leafs' rivals, explaining later, "It wasn't a bluff for more money, I simply had no intention of going to Montreal. It was a boyhood dream to play for Toronto." And for Kennedy's fourteen regular seasons in the NHL, this is exactly what he would do, in the jersey of his childhood heroes.

Biographies of the Maple Leaf captain invariably begin by trying to explain away his *lack* of skill as a skater. Kennedy was not fast, and he was not smooth. But he inspired hope in his team-mates and in Toronto fans. He was the kind of player who won the important face-offs, forechecked with ferocity, and scored the important goals. He did all this, not with flashes of brilliance, but with gleams of determination.

Covering the final game of the 1951 Stanley Cup between the Leafs and Canadiens, *Globe and Mail* sports editor Jim Vipond was generous with superlatives, but miserly with regards to Kennedy. The headline, "Leafs Win Stanley Cup in Dramatic Climax," followed by the subheading, "Barilko's Goal Sinks Canadiens, 3-2, To End Tremendous Overtime Series" begins a gripping story of the Toronto win, featuring the "scrappy little Howie Meeker" and the "thrill of watching the great Maurice Richard." Meanwhile, after being carried from the ice on a stretcher early in the game and returning to the ice two minutes later, "Kennedy the work horse...far from fit...went [on] to lead his team to victory. His hard work paved the way for two Toronto goals." The amazing thing about Vipond's telling of the exciting events is that Kennedy's gutsy performance was*expected* from the Maple Leaf leader. Kennedy was a captain of confidence - rousing team-mates and fans through his grit, drive and desire to win.

Legendary Leaf owner Conn Smythe understood Kennedy's quiet contributions. When he was asked to name an exemplary Maple Leaf in

his half-century of hockey know-how, Smythe named Kennedy: "If World War III broke out tomorrow, and I was going over the top again, there'd only be one Leaf I'd want at my side. Teeder. Only Teeder. When it came to laying guts on the line to win, Teeder Kennedy laid on the most."

Maurice Richard played hockey as though he were at war, his play even igniting battles in the streets of Montreal. Joseph Henri Maurice Richard was born on 4 August 1921. His childhood dream to play for the Habs was fraught with difficulties. After a junior career plagued with ankle and wrist fractures, he broke his ankle sixteen games into his rookie NHL season. But the tenacity, blinding speed, devastating shot, and nasty streak that defined his career erased all doubts about the 1.8-meter, 77-kilogram Montréaler. By the time Richard retired in 1960 at age 39, he owned seventeen NHL records and eight Stanley Cup Championships. In his way, the harder he worked, the more he produced. When Detroit Red Wings coach Jack Adams berated the Wings' defenseman Earl Seibert for failing to keep the Rocket from scoring, Seibert responded, "Mr. Adams, I'm 6-foot-2 [1.9 metres]. Any man who can carry me on his back from the blue line in deserves to score." Perhaps most impressively, though, was how Richard carried the hopes of the people of Québec on his shoulders both on and off the ice. Longtime Canadiens publicity director Camil Desroches once called him "our flag," - the representative of French Canadians in Montréal and *la belle province*.

Frank Selke, managing director for the Canadiens during the Second World War, explained that while Richard was not God, in Québec, "he is very close to [the] Pope." The zeal of French Canadians for the Rocket was rooted in his background as a scrappy kid from Montreal who seemed to play with divine presence. Richard was, and is still, loved as an everyman of French Canada, the representative of the uncompromising solidarity of a nation within a nation.

This affection was perhaps never more evident than in March of 1955. When NHL president Clarence Campbell, an English-speaking native of Sutherland, Saskatchewan, suspended Richard for the remainder of the 1954-1955 season and the playoffs after a violent on-ice incident in Boston, telephone calls and letters flooded League headquarters in Montréal. Four nights later at the Forum, Campbell was assaulted and pelted with food by an angry crowd that spilled into the streets and started a riot in the city. Tellingly, in the aftermath of the Richard Riot, a fan named André Robinson would say: "I got nothing against Campbell, but when I saw him at the game I got madder and madder about Richard's suspension. It was our hero Campbell was crucifying." In 1955, when covering a game between the Canadiens and the New York Rangers for*Sports Illustrated*, the great American writer, William Faulkner, would describe Richard as having a "passionate glittering, fatal, alien quality." This mysterious part of Richard's character combined with his remarkable achievements on the ice would knit him into the fabric of Québec culture. Richard seemed sent to score goals for the Canadiens on the ice while inspiring a burgeoning Québec nationalism throughout the rest of the province.

If the Rocket was so closely tied to Québec, it's fair to say that Wayne Gretzky has become a national icon throughout Canada. Walter Gretzky instilled in his son a way of looking at the game of hockey that helped produce the nation's most recognised and canonised athlete of the twentieth century - "Go to where the puck is going, not where it has been. Anticipate. Anticipate." Hour upon hour on a backyard ice rink his father built, Gretzky honed his skills to become a hockey player who revolutionised the game and rewrote the record books.

In the spring of 1972, at 1.3 metres, the eleven-year-old hockey

phenomenon was interviewed on *Hockey Night in Canada* during an intermission in an NHL game. By fourteen, he was already a minor Canadian celebrity, appearing on the CBC Radio program, *This Country in the Morning*, hosted by Peter Gzowski. Asked if he thought he would ever make $100,000 a year playing hockey, Gretzky just laughed.

Coaching legend Scotty Bowman was once asked why no one hits Gretzky, the question implying the Great One's Achilles' heel. "It is almost impossible," Bowman explained, "to hit a moonbeam." Bowman's observation is telling. Gretzky skated and passed softly. At less than 1.9 metres and slender, he always had a kind and even gentle demeanour off the ice, as though he were the perfect example of how Canadian parents want their children to act. But on the ice, there has rarely been a more competitive athlete, or a more complete player. With a quiet, humble confidence, Gretzky is a great leader who used the hockey rink as a venue to exemplify time and time again the characteristics we hope to see in the youth of Canada.

More than being Canada's native son, however, Gretzky also forced Canada to grow up, to accept that the game of hockey is a business. Prior to Gretzky's trade to the Los Angeles Kings in 1988, Canadians largely had a toque pulled over their eyes regarding the link between the nation's game and the money game. Americans matured earlier to the links between big business and their national pastime. Larry Walker had to leave his native land when the Montréal Expos faced financial woes. Like Gretzky, Walker's success south of the border allows him the opportunity to emphasise the bond between sport and childhood. He considers baseball a kid's game, and when he swats a ball over the ballpark fence, he recognises his duty to children and their vision of athletic leadership.

On 9 August 1988, when Gretzky held a press conference announcing the trade, Canadians were in shock and naturally suspicious of any explanation from Edmonton Oilers owner Peter Pocklinton. Yet regardless of the financial complexities of the deal and Pocklington's ultimate intentions, Pocklington uttered a revealing truth when he spoke to the press that day. Pocklington explained how trading Gretzky was akin to a parent's awakening to the maturity of their own child: "The situation also might be compared to a son or daughter advising their parents of the desire to leave the house, to go to university or to take a job. Your heart says 'no,' but at the same time, your head understands and says 'yes.'" So too did Canadians who gradually grew up to the realities of the game. Gretzky led the nation into the modern era of hockey as softly as he could, as softly as the innumerable passes he made to teammates in Edmonton, LA, St. Louis, and New York.

If Gretzky gradually nudged Canadians towards the realities of modern, professional sports, then Marilyn Bell quite suddenly shoved aside traditional notions of feminine frailty altogether. She feared the lamprey eels and the darkness; and yet, what she would change were a nation's attitudes towards the strength and stamina of women athletes. When Marilyn Bell, a sixteen-year-old grade twelve student at Toronto's Loretto College School, launched her 1.6 metre, 54-kilogram body into the cold waters of Lake Ontario, she was unaware of the mountains of both water and publicity she would endure. In retrospect, one wonders if the oiliest creatures that day were the eels that twined around Bell's fluttering legs or the journalists who battled among themselves for the Canadian human-interest story of the decade.

Veteran sports reporter Trent Frayne once noted, "Marilyn looked like somebody's babysitter." But when the polite, clean-cut, clean-spoken, and self-deprecating girl dove off a retaining wall in Youngstown, New

York at 11:07 pm on September 8, 1954, she proceeded to capture the spirit of the nation. The swim was originally the plan of the Canadian National Exhibition sports committee as a crowd-drawing spectacle. It paid thirty-four year old Californian Florence Chadwick a $2,500 advance of the $10,000 she was to collect if she succeeded in swimming the lake. The American was considered by many to be the world's greatest female swimmer. The Toronto *Telegraph* co-sponsored the promotion of the event. The *Telegraph*, apparently, had the inside edge in the media battle, initially ignoring Bell when she announced her plans to challenge Chadwick for free. Bell's coach, Gus Ryder, offered the *Telegraph* the opportunity to sponsor his swimmer. But when Ryder's offer was rejected he turned to the *Telegraph's* archrival, The *Toronto Star*. This move set the stage for a pitched battle: a baby-faced young Canadian against a veteran American, the *Telegraph* against the *Star*.

With a four-leaf clover tucked into her white swim cap, Bell entered the water seven minutes after Chadwick. She faced fifty kilometres of unlit open water, powerful winds and 3.7 metre high waves. And yet by four o'clock in the afternoon the following day, she was the only swimmer left in the lake.

Across Canada, radio audiences were glued to their sets. No one watched the event on TV, which at the time was a fledgling new technology, and the local CBC station had decided not to cover the story. A crowd estimated at 250,000 whooped and roared, while the assorted armada on the lake let off whistles and sirens. Six minutes after eight, her left hand touched the concrete breakwater just west of the area now known as Marilyn Bell Park. Some argue that the twenty hours and fifty-nine minutes she swam battling Lake Ontario shattered the myth of the fragile female. Prior to Marilyn Bell, the female sports figure most familiar to Canadians was "Canada's sweetheart," Barbara Ann Scott, whose

feminine grace on the ice was turned into an image of girlhood virtue off the frozen pond. In contrast to Scott, Bell provided a flood of evidence that women could succeed in sports requiring strength, stamina, and remarkable courage, and women could do this with the gritty determination associated with men on ice.

After her swim, someone predicted, "She'll be the darling of the empire tonight and forgotten tomorrow." However, in a 2002 *Toronto Star* poll, Bell's swim ranked forth as the finest made-in-Toronto sports moment, ahead of the 1972 Summit Series hockey game in Maple Leaf Gardens. Physically inconspicuous, yet eternally memorable, she recalled years after her 1954 swim, "The challenge for me was to go one further than the American. As corny as it sounds...I did it for Canada."

In waters across the Atlantic Ocean, on 15 May 1992, two months before the Olympic Games in Barcelona during a warm-up race in Essen, Germany, Canadian rower Silken Laumann's shell was hit broadside by a German double sculls crew. All the muscles, tendons and ligaments from midway up Laumann's right shin to her ankle were severed. After five operations over a ten-day period and a skin graft, doctors predicted she would never row again. Defiantly, however, Laumann would be helped from a wheelchair into her racing scull only three weeks following her operations. She could not walk, but she could once more fly through the water. On 2 August 1992, a Maclean's columnist began the lead paragraph with what he witnessed that day: "Canada won four gold medals and one bronze at the Barcelona Olympics. Let the word go out that on this occasion Silken Laumann's bronze medal shines as brightly in the Barcelona sun as any of the gold." Although Laumann's Olympic bronze in Los Angeles and silver in Atlanta may prove her athletic ability, her bronze at Barcelona confirmed her leadership.

The achievements of the athletes featured above hailed them as leaders to the country; but Terry Fox and Rick Hansen's achievements would make them leaders to the world. Interestingly, Fox and Hansen knew each other before their amazing feats of physical and emotional sacrifice. In the summer of 1977, Rick Hansen asked Terry Fox to join the Vancouver Cable Cars wheelchair basketball team. Both would later move from the court to the country and onto continents, straddling and moving over mountains.

Terry Fox was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba on 28 July 1958. In 1968, the Fox Family moved to the west coast city of Port Coquitlam, British Columbia. In grade eight, despite little interest in the sport, Terry began cross-country running to please his physical education teacher whom he highly respected. After high school, Terry enrolled in Simon Fraser University to study kinesiology. Complaining of a pain in his right knee, Terry visited a doctor. At the age of eighteen, he was diagnosed with osteogenic sarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer. Days later, his leg was amputated fifteen centimetres above the knee. Two years later, while in hospital in October 1979 and facing sixteen months of chemotherapy, Terry wrote a letter to the Canadian Cancer Society requesting support for a run across Canada to raise money for the fight against cancer.

Despite running more than 5,000 kilometres to prepare and competing in a 27-kilometre race in Prince George, BC, there was little media fanfare when Terry began his Marathon of Hope on 12 April 1980. After dipping his artificial leg into the Atlantic Ocean in St. John's, Newfoundland, he headed west. It was not long before Terry galvanised the nation with his will, courage, and to some close to him, his sheer stubbornness. For 143 consecutive days, he ran 42 kilometres or the equivalent of a marathon each day. Two-thirds of his way home, after crossing the Atlantic Provinces, Quebec and much of Ontario, and ignoring repeated requests

that he undergo medical check-ups, his stubbornness could no longer defy his disease. On September 1, just east of Thunder Bay, Ontario, Terry Fox was forced to stop. Cancer had spread to his lungs. Nine days later the CTV network organised a telethon to honour Terry's dream and determination. This event would raise more than $10 million towards cancer research. Only five months later, on February 1, 1981, the Terry Fox Marathon of Hope fund would reach $24.17 million or one dollar for every Canadian citizen. A media and a nation that had been initially rather unresponsive to the young runner's Marathon of Hope were now gripped by his odyssey.

From coast to coast, honours flowed in. However, on June 28, Terry died at Royal Columbia Hospital at the age of twenty-two. Since then, annual Terry Fox Runs have been held across Canada and in over 50 countries. Terry's Marathon of Hope continues, with more than $650 million raised globally. On day fifteen of his Marathon of Hope, Terry wrote, "Today we got up at 4:00 a.m. As usual, it was tough.... If I died, I would die happy because I was doing what I wanted to do. How many people can say that?... I want to set an example that will never be forgotten." Canadians clearly have not, recognising him as Canada's "greatest hero" in a year 2000 poll conducted by the Dominion Institute and The Council for Canadian Unity.

Rick Hansen and Terry Fox had more in common than the Vancouver Cable Cars wheelchair basketball team and a dogged determination to raise awareness about their disabilities. On 21 March 1985, in the parking lot of Vancouver's Oakridge Mall, only 300 invited guests and onlookers braved the wind and rain to see Rick Hansen off on his epic journey around the globe. But after covering 40,072 kilometres (the circumference of the earth) through 34 countries on 4 continents in 26 months, the Man in Motion Tour was front and centre in the Canadian

consciousness and on the front pages of the nations' newspapers.

Hansen was born on 26 August 1957 in Port Alberni, British Columbia. Growing up in Williams Lake, BC, the area allowed him to entertain his love for sport, particularly fishing. When returning from one of his fishing trips, bouncing along in the back of a pick-up truck with a friend, the fifteen-year-old Hansen broke his back when the vehicle went out of control and crashed. That day he was told he was a paraplegic and would never walk again.

Unwilling to give up his dream of becoming an athlete, Hansen simply chose a different road to success. After persevering through rehabilitation and graduating from high school, Hansen went on to become the first student with a disability to graduate in Physical Education from the University of British Columbia. In the meantime, he also became the best wheelchair athlete in the world, winning nineteen international wheelchair marathons, including three world championships, and competing for Canada in the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles.

Motivated by his achievements and wishing to foster awareness of the plight, potential and power of people with disabilities, Hansen began his Man in Motion tour. He sweated the 40° C heat of the Australian desert, battered against the windswept peaks of the Swiss Alps and pushed himself up mountains so steep he would roll backward when he took his hands off the wheel. Poor Portuguese farmers offered him humble donations, recognising the super-human man passing their homes. And it was such offerings that contributed to $14 million for research and rehabilitation projects by the time the Man in Motion tour was completed at the humble (but much more crowded) parking lot in Vancouver on 22 May 1987. Through ongoing funds, programs and organisations, Hansen has so far contributed more than $100 million to spinal cord injury

education, research and rehabilitation and to wheelchair sports.

While Kennedy, Richard, Gretzky, Bell, Laumann and Walker are great athletes and leaders who are integral to our history and identity, the achievements of Fox and Hansen show how sport can transcend its own limited sphere of influence and become the vehicle for leading all of us towards a more humane world.

Activities

1. The Responsibility to the Eye of the Public

Below are two comments-the first from Marilyn Bell, which is quoted from a 2 September 1999 article in the *Globe and Mail*, and the second, a comment by Wayne Gretzky from Ken Dryden's book, *The Home Game: Hockey and Life in Canada*. Present each comment to students and then using the ideas expressed by Bell and Gretzky, organize a classroom debate about whether Bell and Gretzky are justified in wanting to shun the media spotlight. Should we expect our sports leaders to be available to the public all the time? Why or why not? How does modern media affect this discussion?

The way I was brought up, once I was in the public eye I felt a tremendous responsibility to set a good example. It may have seemed cool, all these people watching me, but it wasn't, it was often very scary for me. Canadian people opened their hearts to me; I became like everyone's daughter. I became a very public person, and that meant no privacy.
-Marilyn Bell

In Canada, I always felt like people were watching me, you know, staring. It's nice to be able to sit down at a table in a restaurant and know that no one has a clue who I am or what I'm doing. It's funny but one of the reasons I moved away from home at fourteen was because the pressure and the focus on me in Brantford got to be so enormous.... Coming down here [Los Angeles] was very similar to that. I left the city [Edmonton] where there was an enormous amount of pressure, a tremendous spotlight, and have come to a bigger city where I can kind of blend in and be one of the crowd.
-Wayne Gretzky

2. Leadership vs. Celebrity

Instruct students to consider the stories of athletes featured in the Footprints, as well as current well-known athletes. Brainstorm athletes that our in the public eye outside of the realm of their sports. Do these athletes have responsibilities to their fans? Does exceptional skill mandate maintaining a public persona? Working in small groups, develop answers to the following questions.

- Is celebrity a necessary part of being a sports leader?
- Is leadership a necessary part of being a sports celebrity?

Students should assemble their answers into a short presentation (of five minutes) or a written assignment (of two to three double-spaced pages, 500-750 words) in which they defend their response to these questions.

3. The Press Gang

Perhaps the most memorable moment of Teeder Kennedy's career was a

controversial incident involving the Leafs' pursuit of their fourth consecutive Cup in 1950. In the semi-finals against the Detroit Red Wings, Gordie Howe missed a check on Kennedy, slamming headfirst into the boards. Howe was rushed to hospital where doctors drilled a hole in his skull to relieve the pressure. Howe recovered, of course, but the series took an ugly turn, especially after Detroit coach Tommy Ivan claimed that Kennedy had "butt-ended" Howe. Toronto lost the next game 3-1 and eventually lost the series. Not surprisingly, Toronto and Detroit newsmen took sides in the ensuing fracas; however National Hockey League president Clarence Campbell absolved Kennedy of any blame in connection with Howe's injuries.

As a class, discuss the reasons why the Toronto and Detroit press coverage of this incident would be different. Following this discussion, students should work independently and research a recent controversial incident involving a sports figure. Using the web as a research tool, find at least three articles or news reports about the incident which all offer a different opinion on the event. Drawing on the information and opinion in the articles, students are then to write a letter to the editor of one of the publications either agreeing or disagreeing with the opinions of the newspaper/magazine.

4. Was "The Rocket" Right?

The infamous "Richard Riot" in Montreal on 17 March 1955 was a rip in the already frayed relationship between the city's French and English communities. The rancor that spilled from the Forum that St. Patrick's night left the city in tatters, and it laid bare French Canadians' actual and perceived belief that they had been historically suppressed by the city and country's political and economic English elite. For many, the event was the symbolic beginning of Quebec's burgeoning Quiet Revolution.

Fearing renewed violence the following night, Richard went on the radio to broadcast a plea for calm, in French and English, on both language channels, appealing to fans to support the team and accept Campbell's decision. The city calmed, but the scars remained.

Working in groups of two or three, students should investigate the major sources of tensions between the English and French communities during the 1950s. On poster paper, each group should map out the events, people and places that led to the Richard Riot, and explain why these events, people, and places were so important an outcome on that March night. Images and text should accompany the timeline. Finally, in a presentation to the class, groups are to explain why they chose specific events, people and places to explain the history to the Riot and what it tells us about the role and impact of sports in a culture.

5. Moving Hearts and Moving Mountains

Leaders of all kinds inspire through oration. Speech can inspire revolutionary zeal, as did the words of Louis-Joseph Papineau and William Lyon Mackenzie. Words can enter the historical record and represent the hopes of a nation, as did those of Sir Wilfred Laurier's famous prediction that the "twentieth century shall be the century of Canada." In October 1979 Terry Fox wrote a letter asking for support for his Marathon of Hope.

Use an overhead projector and display Terry Fox's letter requesting support for the fight against cancer. With students, closely examine Fox's text and identify figures of speech and turns of phrase that seem especially important in making Fox's letter convincing. It might also be helpful to compare the way Fox uses language to make his case with

other, historically significant and inspirational speeches. For the purposes of this comparison, you might decide to use one of the three speeches listed below:

- Of Sir Winston Churchill's speeches, two of his most memorable include: "We Shall Fight on the Beaches," which was delivered in the British House of Commons of 18 June 1940 and "The Few," which was also delivered in the British House of Commons on August 20 of that same year. These, as well as many others, can be found at the website for The Churchill Centre. Accompanying each speech is an explanation of the context in which it was delivered as well as why the speech is thought to be particularly stirring.

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speech. On 3 April 1968, King spoke of having "been to the mountain top and seen the Promised Land." The following day, while seeking to support a garbage workers' strike in Memphis, Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot and killed by James Earl Ray, a white escaped convict. The speech can be found at The Martin Luther King Jr. Papers Project at Stanford University.

- John F. Kennedy's inaugural address has been studied over the years for its heavy concentration of figurative language. His inaugural address of 20 January 1961 can be found at the website of the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum.

7. The 49th Parallel Problem

This lesson explores how Canadians view home-grown athletes who move south of the border for professional or other reasons. In his 30 March 1998 article in *The Sporting News* TSN senior writer Steve Marantz encouraged Larry Walker to discuss his pride in being from

Canada. Interestingly, many of the questions encouraged Walker to associate himself with stereotypically Canadian character traits. Marantz' first question, "Would you trade your MVP Award for a Vezina Trophy?" followed closely by, "Who would you rather be, Babe Ruth or Rocket Richard?" The conversation also includes Walker's allegiance to *O Canada* ("It's prettier."), Canadian beer ("More alcohol in it.") and hockey ("It's [baseball] not the greatest game. Hockey is going to take a front seat to that.").

Marilyn Bell left Canada soon after retiring from competitive marathon swimming, moving to New Jersey after marrying an American. Wayne Gretzky's move south was a traumatic experience for many Canadians. All of these athletes, however, are at pains to emphasize their debt to their birth country when speaking to the Canadian press.

Conduct a classroom debate asking the following question: Is a Canadian athlete less of a leader to us if he or she decides to leave the country?

Resources

Footprint Videos
Teeder Kennedy
Wayne Gretzky
Maurice Richard
Marilyn Bell
Terry Fox
Larry Walker

The Canadian Encyclopedia
Teeder Kennedy

Wayne Gretzky
Maurice Richard
Marilyn Bell
Terry Fox
The Courage of Terry Fox
Larry Walker

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