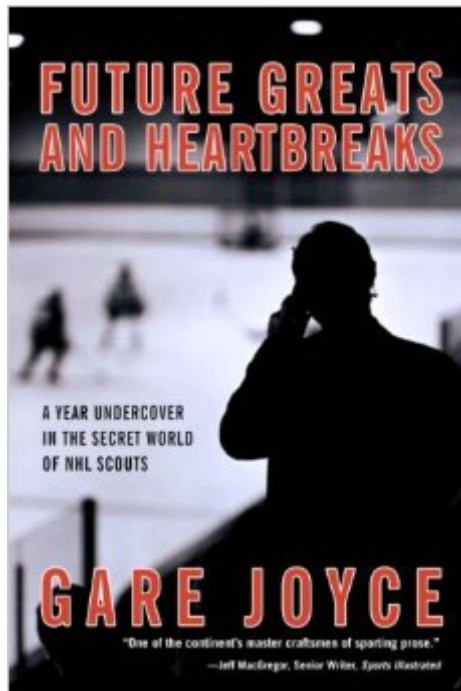


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Future Greats And Heartbreaks: A Year Undercover In The Secret World Of NHL Scouts



Synopsis

One of this continent's master craftsmen of sporting prose (Sports Illustrated) and three-time National Magazine Award-winner Gare Joyce goes undercover to learn the secrets of NHL scouts. Veteran sports writer Gare Joyce realizes a long-held secret ambition as he spends a full season embedded as a hockey scout. Joyce's year on the hockey beat is a steep learning curve for him; NHL scouts spend each season gathering information on players fighting it out to break into the world of professional hockey. They watch hundreds of games, speak to scores of players, parents, team-mates and other scouts, amassing profiles on all the top contenders. It's a form of risk assessment "is this young hopeful deserving of a multi-million dollar contract?" and it can be a tough and thankless task. Scouts are ground into the game, picking up nuances of play that even the most committed fan would miss, but they are looking at more than just how well a kid can play. And come the final draft, only a tiny percentage of their full year's work might matter. Examining the amount of information gathered on the under-eighteen hopefuls, the scrutiny to which they are subjected, and the differences between the rigour of American and Canadian junior teams, Joyce opens a window on the life and methods of an NHL scout and penetrates the mysterious world of scouting as no one has before.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Here's one of the best parts of Gare Joyce's book, "Future Greats and Heartbreaks": It doesn't date. In other words, you can read and enjoy it now just as much as you might have in 2007. Canadian writer Joyce gets the hockey award for an audacious idea that he actually pulled off.

He contacted several NHL teams in early 2006, asking for a chance to sit in during preparations for the upcoming NHL Entry Draft. Only one team had the nerve to accept the offer, as the Columbus Blue Jackets took him up on the idea. So Joyce got to sit in during some organizational sessions and interviews as the Blue Jackets got ready for that June's draft. In fact, he even got to ask the prospects a question or two along the way. So he had plenty of information in his head when the Blue Jackets took Derick Brassard in the first round. That sounds like a lengthy magazine article, but Joyce wanted more. So he maintained contact with the Blue Jackets' organization for the following year, and watched as much junior hockey as his other obligations allowed. That included a couple of trips to Europe, as well as snowy drives to places like Sudbury, Ontario. With the advantage of a couple of years of hindsight, it's fun to read these initial reports on the stars of tomorrow. Patrick Kane, for example, looks like a top draft choice throughout the season. Indeed, he wound up going first overall (and has had fine years with the Chicago Blackhawks since then). Others bounce up and down the draft board like issues on the New York Stock Exchange. Joyce also hangs out with scouts for teams throughout the league, trading information. These are the foot soldiers of hockey, trudging all over the country for little pay and a similar amount of job security.

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