



# **HOCKEY MANITOBA**

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### **2011 LEVEL VI OFFICIATING SEMINAR DEBRIEF – PATRICK GAGNON**

Garth,

I believe that the experience started before the Level 6 Seminar. It allowed me to get closer with the other candidates in our & other branches through the studying that was done for the much anticipating exam. It ended up being a very busy month before heading out to Guelph, ON.

Once arriving at the Toronto Airport, we were greeted with gentleman holding Hockey Canada posters. This really made us realize that this was going to be a good week as we were at the point of our careers that we all have strived for. Arriving at the hotel was awesome as we got to reunite with fellow officials that we have worked with in the past as well as meet new officials from the Eastern part of the country. It was neat being able to speak French with the Quebec officials. I'm sure they appreciated the fact that there were many others that could speak their language.

Starting the week off was the exam. Having the exam first thing is something that all of us appreciated as we all knew how much work the week was going to be and how tired we were going to be at the end of the week. Then came the fitness testing the next morning, this was a 3 hours of pain that really tested your fitness level. Everyone I spoke to were aching the next morning as we made our way to the rink for our skating session with Dave Smith. Dave is an expert at what he does working with the NHL level officials on skating techniques and weaknesses in order to make them the best they can be. Dave teaches you things that you may not know your weak out and pushes performance out of you each and every time. His passion for the game is unbelievable and we couldn't have been more appreciative of the work he put in for us.

Throughout the week, we were each assigned 2 games to work. I was assigned my first game on Friday night with an official out of Montreal. It was a great experience to work with officials from other branches. This game was a Jr.A game in Milton, ON. The game went well but at times felt that the commitment level of the players were lacking. But we practice to be our best each and every night and I believe we gave it our all. My second game was on Saturday night at Western University in London, ON. They were playing the University of Laurier. I worked with an official from Guelph, ON. CIS hockey in Ontario is very comparable to the CIS that we work at the U of M; Very fast and hard nose hockey. Even though the game ended up being a blow out, it was still a great experience.

The greatest thing about the week in Guelph was being around many officials across the country and being able to celebrate the accomplishment that we all wanted to achieve together. Looking back, a lot was learned without even knowing it. The improvements that you need to do in your skating, habits that you need to avoid on the ice, the opportunities that Level 6 will give you and how important professionalism is in the industry of Officiating. This is a week that I will never forget and am truly great full for. It truly puts an exclamation mark to all the hard work that was put in throughout the years of my officiating career.

Patrick Gagnon