


# JORDIN TOOTOO: HOCKEY NIGHT IN NUNAVUT

## Introduction

### Focus

This *News in Review* story focuses on a young man from Nunavut named Jordin Tootoo, who is poised to make history as the first Inuit to play hockey in the NHL. It also examines the special importance of Canada's national game in this remote northern part of the country and why it has such a strong following among its Aboriginal inhabitants.

 Sections marked with this symbol indicate content suitable for younger viewers.

### Further Research

The Nashville Predators Web site is at [www.nashvillepredators.com](http://www.nashvillepredators.com). For information about Aboriginal hockey, visit [www.nativehockey.com](http://www.nativehockey.com). You might also consider watching the Aboriginal People Television Network (APTN) for coverage of Aboriginal hockey matches.

Jordin Tootoo is a remarkable young Canadian who may become the first Inuit to play professional hockey in the NHL. He hails from Rankin Inlet, a small community in Nunavut, Canada's newest territory. Tootoo has been honing his skills on the ice since he was eight years old. He is considered by many hockey experts to possess all the skills and requirements necessary for a successful professional career. Tootoo plays an exciting, fast, and aggressive style of hockey. He is not afraid to go after the puck and risk taking penalties in order to score goals. Blair Mackasey, a scout with the Canadian Hockey Association, notes that advancing in the tough, competitive world of professional hockey is hard enough for anyone, but that it poses a special challenge for young Inuit players like Tootoo.

Facilities are few and far between in the remote northern parts of Canada. When they come far from their homes to play in the south, young Aboriginal players face considerable cultural difficulties in adapting to a very different way of life.

The fact that Jordin Tootoo appears to have overcome these barriers is all the more remarkable when one considers the major personal tragedy he experienced in 2002. In the summer of that year, his brother Terrence, who was also a rising hockey star of some promise, committed suicide after struggling with serious problems of depression and substance abuse. Suicide among Aboriginal youth in Canada is, unfortunately, quite common. It represents a social problem of major proportions in Nunavut and other northern areas of the

country. It was particularly poignant that Jordin Tootoo's brother took his own life just when it appeared that his dreams of breaking into professional hockey were coming true. For Jordin, Terrence's tragic death makes him even more determined to persevere and to reach his goal of playing in the NHL.

In January 2003, Jordin Tootoo made hockey history when he took to the ice as a member of Canada's team in the world junior hockey championships in Halifax. Wearing his brother's number on his jersey, Tootoo electrified fans with his gritty, aggressive style of playing. He made an outstanding contribution to Canada's effort in the games. He has been signed with the Nashville Predators, one of the NHL's newest expansion teams, and is waiting for his chance to show what he can do at that level of play.

Jordin Tootoo's career so far exemplifies both the challenges and the inspiration that hockey represents for Canada's Aboriginal peoples. They are among the most passionate fans of the game, and follow it avidly. But to date, there have been very few Aboriginal players in the NHL with whom young people can identify. People in the Far North will go to great lengths to find the money and resources that will enable their youth to gain expertise in hockey. The fact that Jordin Tootoo has defied the odds and appears ready to become the first Inuit player in the NHL gives them hope that they may be able to make a greater contribution to Canada's national game.

Some past Aboriginal hockey stars include George Armstrong (Mohawk) of the Toronto Maple Leafs and Bryan Trottier (Métis) New York Islanders.

## To Consider

1. Why is Jordin Tootoo such a remarkable young hockey player?

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2. Why do young Aboriginal Canadians face special difficulties in pursuing careers in professional hockey?

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3. In what ways does Jordin Tootoo exemplify the challenges facing Aboriginal competitors in hockey or sports in general in Canada?

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4. What do you think could be done to make access to hockey facilities more available to young people in remote northern regions of Canada?

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5. What advantages might players from the Far North have when it comes to mastering the skills of hockey?

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## Viewing Activity

Along with a profile of rising Inuit hockey star Jordin Tootoo, this video provides some important insights into the role that Canada's national game plays in the lives of Aboriginal inhabitants of the country's remote northern regions. Watch the video with these two themes in mind. Then answer the questions on this page and complete the suggested viewing and post-viewing activities based on the video.

### A. Viewing for Information

Watch the video, and after doing so, answer the following questions:

1. a) From what part of Canada does Jordin Tootoo come?

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b) How large is this region?

- \_\_\_\_\_
2. Use three words to describe Jordin Tootoo's style of playing hockey.

i) \_\_\_\_\_ ii) \_\_\_\_\_ iii) \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the name of Jordin Tootoo's home town? \_\_\_\_\_

4. a) What is the name of Jordin Tootoo's brother? \_\_\_\_\_

b) What happened to him in the summer of 2002?

- \_\_\_\_\_
5. What NHL team has drafted Jordin Tootoo as a possible player?

- \_\_\_\_\_
6. What international hockey competition took place in Halifax in January 2003?

- \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is the capital of Nunavut? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What television broadcaster was the host of *Hockey Day in Canada*?

- \_\_\_\_\_
9. From the video, give three examples that illustrate the difficulties Aboriginal communities in the Far North face in trying to promote hockey. What have they done to overcome them?

i) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ii) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

iii) \_\_\_\_\_

## B. Critical Thinking and Responding

Watch the video again, and after viewing, form groups with your classmates to discuss the following questions. Prepare and present your groups' responses to the rest of the class:

1. What challenges has Jordin Tootoo faced in pursuing a career in professional hockey? Which of these challenges would face any ambitious young athlete in Canada, and which of them are specifically related to his Aboriginal background and origins?
2. What initiatives have been introduced to promote greater access to hockey facilities among young residents of Canada's remote northern communities? How successful do you think these have been to date?
3. In what respects do you think this video portrays the disparities (inequalities) that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Canada?
4. What is the status of hockey among residents of Aboriginal communities in Canada? Why is Jordin Tootoo such an important symbol to them?

## C. Thinking about National Symbols

As a class, discuss the importance of hockey in Canada's national and cultural life. Use the following questions as a basis for the class discussion:

1. Why do you think hockey is referred to as this country's "national game"?
2. Why do so many Canadians respond with such enthusiasm and emotion when Canadian teams perform well in international competitions (e.g. the 2002 Winter Olympic Games)? To what extent is the National Hockey League (NHL) really a Canadian as opposed to an American professional sports association?
3. How many teams are currently in the NHL? How many of them are based in Canadian cities? What does this suggest about the state of professional hockey in North America? Why do you think this is the case?
4. Why have Aboriginals and other minority groups (e.g. African Canadians, South Asian Canadians, East Asian Canadians) been underrepresented in professional hockey up to now?
5. When was the last time an NHL team based in a Canadian city won the Stanley Cup?

Each group should brainstorm, prepare, and present a written response to one of these questions. Be prepared to share your response with the class for a more general discussion.

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## *Profile of Nunavut*

On April 1, 1999, history was made in Canada when the Northwest Territories, a vast region in the far north of the country separated into two administrative units. The eastern Arctic became the new territory of Nunavut, an Inuit word meaning “our land,” with its capital city at Iqaluit on Baffin Island. Nunavut’s land mass is vast. Larger than most of the world’s countries, it covers 1.9 million square kilometres, or one-fifth of Canada’s total area. Almost half of Nunavut is located on the Canadian mainland north of the province of Manitoba and east of the Northwest Territories. The rest of it is composed of a huge archipelago of hundreds of Arctic islands, including the largest of them, Baffin Island. Nunavut’s population is tiny in relation to its huge land area, with approximately 30 000 people. The vast majority are of Inuit background. The territory’s people are scattered in 28 communities, the largest of which is Iqaluit. Nunavut’s population is probably the youngest in Canada, with over half of its people under 25 years of age.

Nunavut’s Arctic climate is very harsh, with long cold winters and very brief mild summers. The entire region lies well north of the tree line. Its ground is permanently frozen, with only a small surface area thawing enough in the summer to support some vegetation growth. The coastal areas have somewhat more moderate temperatures than the interior zones. However, it does not snow much in Nunavut, an area geographers refer to as a “polar desert” because it receives less annual precipitation than the Sahara Desert. Ice caps and glaciers cover nearly 150 000

square kilometres, much of which is found on Ellesmere Island, where ice covers an area larger than New Brunswick.

Nunavut’s Inuit people have seen many changes in their once-traditional way of life that centred on hunting and fishing. Most Nunavut residents now live in permanent communities with federally funded or administered schools and hospitals. Although it is not a province, Nunavut is a federal territory with an elected government, headed by Paul Okalik. His government is responsible for education, health, social services, language, culture, housing, justice, and other areas. Because of the territory’s small population and tax base, federal funding provides the vast majority of the government’s operating budget.

In the four years since its creation, Nunavut has made great progress, but its leaders admit there is still much to be done to improve the lives of its people. As John Amagoalik, recognized as the “Father of Nunavut,” has said, “we have the means now and we have the responsibility. We must get down and tackle the problems.” The problems the Nunavut government faces include high unemployment, serious substance abuse, suicide, and a lack of social services for Nunavut residents. However, despite these challenges Amagoalik and other Nunavut leaders such as Premier Okalik remain optimistic that they can achieve a better standard of living for those they govern. As Amagoalik notes, the fact that Nunavut’s mainly Inuit people are now in charge of running their own affairs represents a major step forward. “One

### Further Research

To learn more about Canada’s newest territory, consult [www.gov.nu.ca](http://www.gov.nu.ca), the official Web site of the government of Nunavut. For more information about Jordin Tootoo’s hometown, visit [www.kivalliq.org/eng/rankin.html](http://www.kivalliq.org/eng/rankin.html) and [www.arctictravel.com/chapters/rankinpage.html](http://www.arctictravel.com/chapters/rankinpage.html).

### Further Research

To stay informed about recent developments in Nunavut, visit [www.north.cbc.ca](http://www.north.cbc.ca).

difference,” he says, “is that we now have control of the government, of the budget, of the priorities. A lot of efforts in the past have failed mainly because the people who controlled the money were not part of the Aboriginal community it was meant to serve.”

Amagoalik, who served as the Chief Commissioner of the Nunavut Implementation Commission, recognizes that Nunavut’s people need jobs, a more diversified economy, a greater sense of hope, and a vastly improved educational system and social services network. However, he is determined that any growth in the region’s economy should not come at the expense of the natural environment and way of life of the people, which the government of Nunavut has pledged to protect. The future of Nunavut is clearly linked to the development of its main natural resources, including mining and petro-

leum, commercial hunting and fishing, and eco-tourism. It is hoped that this development will result in substantial economic benefits for Nunavut’s Inuit population, since over 80 per cent of the territory’s vast mineral reserves, including copper, lead, zinc, gold, and silver, are located on Inuit-owned land.

The creation of Nunavut is proof that a small population living on a vast area of land in an extremely harsh climate can overcome what might seem to be huge barriers to maintaining a distinct culture and society while at the same time making economic and social progress. “We are very much a distinct society,” says Amagoalik, “and the Nunavut government will have the responsibility of protecting and preserving this distinct society. But we’re not trying to break up Canada. We’re trying to join Canada.”

### Responding

1. Why was the creation of Nunavut in April 1999 such an important event in Canada’s recent history?

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2. In what ways does Nunavut differ from other provinces and territories of Canada?

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3. What are the main problems that the new government of Nunavut faces? How is it trying to overcome them?

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### Activity

Using an atlas, almanac, or other resource, prepare a map of Nunavut, indicating the main population centres, geographic features etc.

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## A History of Hockey in Canada

### Did You Know . . .

Although hockey is first in the hearts of most Canadians, the official national sport is actually lacrosse? Lacrosse, which was originally an Aboriginal sport, is claimed by some to be the true inspiration for hockey.

Hockey, or “ice hockey” as it is known outside Canada, is our country’s most famous contribution to the world of sport. It is played by more people in Canada than any other game. Although it is also popular in many other countries, it is still widely considered to be the Canadian national sport. Here is a brief history of hockey, from its origins to the present day:

**1850s** British troops stationed in Kingston and Halifax play a game called *shinty* or *shinny*, using sticks and a ball on the ice. Soon the game comes to be called *hockey*, from the French word *hoquet*, meaning a shepherd’s crook, which the stick resembles. A version of hockey is also played among the English and Dutch settlers in New York.

**1875** Ice hockey as we now know it is first played in Montreal, with a set of rules formalized by J.G.A. Creighton, a student at McGill University. He substitutes a flat rubber disk called a *puck* for the ball that was previously used.

**1879** The first organized hockey team, the McGill University Hockey Club, is formed, and others soon follow across the country. Four years later, the first hockey championship, held at the Montreal Ice Carnival, is won by McGill. In 1886, the Amateur Hockey Association of Canada is formed with teams from Ottawa, Quebec City, and Montreal.

**1893** The Governor General of Canada, Lord Stanley, donates a trophy for a national hockey championship.

The first Stanley Cup in Canadian history is won by Montreal AAA.

**1903** After years of amateur play, the first professional hockey league is formed, with teams from Pittsburgh, Sault Ste. Marie, and various cities in Michigan. Most of the players are Canadian, and are well paid for their services. Fred “Cyclone” Taylor, the first hockey star, becomes the highest-paid athlete in North America.

**1917** The rival Eastern Canada Hockey Association and National Hockey Association merge to form the National Hockey League (NHL). By this time, teams are playing in indoor stadiums, on artificial ice, and paying their players large salaries. Smaller cities are no longer able to afford teams that are now based in large urban centres in Eastern Canada and the U.S.

**1920s** The NHL includes the Montreal Maroons (1924), Boston Bruins (1924), New York Americans (1923), Pittsburgh Pirates (1925), New York Rangers (1926), Chicago Black Hawks (1926), along with the Montreal Canadiens, Ottawa Senators, and the Toronto Maple Leafs. The first national radio broadcasting of hockey games begins with *Hockey Night in Canada* in 1923, hosted by Foster Hewitt.

**1930s** The number of teams in the NHL drops to six, with only two, the Maple Leafs and the Canadiens, representing Canadian cities. During the Great Depression, hockey players’ salaries drop dramatically, but the popularity of the game continues to rise.

The immortal lines, "He shoots! He scores!" were first uttered by Foster Hewitt during the early days of hockey radio broadcasting.

### Further Research

To delve deeper into hockey's glorious history, visit the Web site of the Canadian Hockey Hall of Fame at [www.hhof.com](http://www.hhof.com). The National Hockey League itself is at [www.nhl.com](http://www.nhl.com). The National Women's Hockey League is at [www.nwhlhockey.com](http://www.nwhlhockey.com) and the National Hockey League Fan Association is at [www.nhlfa.com](http://www.nhlfa.com).

### Did You Know . . .

The CBC Archives has an excellent audio and video file of the famous Maurice "Rocket" Richard? It can be accessed at [www.cbc.ca/archives](http://www.cbc.ca/archives).

Some of the stars of that era include Frank "King" Clancy, Charlie Conacher, Bill Cook, Aurele Joliat, Lester Patrick, Nels Stewart, Howie Morenz, and Eddie Shore.

**1940s** The classic hockey rivalry between Toronto and Montreal becomes more intense as the Maple Leafs win the Stanley Cup six times that decade, led by players like Syl Apps, Walter "Turk" Broda, Ted Kennedy, and Max Bentley. But the Canadiens have outstanding players like Maurice "Rocket" Richard, who scores 50 goals in 50 games in the 1944-45 season.

**1950s** During this decade, the Detroit Red Wings become a force in the NHL, with outstanding players like Gordie Howe, Red Kelly, Ted Lindsay, and Terry Sawchuk. But the Montreal Canadiens emerge as the league's powerhouse team, winning the Cup five straight times, under the skillful leadership of the "Rocket" and his brother Henri Richard, Jean Beliveau, Dickie Moore, Doug Harvey, and Bernie "Boom Boom" Geoffrion. Montreal goalie, Jacques Plante, is the first in the league to wear a protective face mask. In 1955, Montreal erupts in a major riot when NHL president Clarence Campbell orders Maurice Richard benched for an infraction.

**1967** The NHL expands from its "original six" teams to include six new American ones, with more added during the 1970s. The Toronto Maple Leafs dominate during the early to mid-sixties, but win the Cup for the last time to date in Canada's centennial year, 1967. After that, Montreal begins another string of Cup victories. The Chicago Black Hawks, with Bobby Hull, Stan Mikita, and Glenn Hall, and

the Boston Bruins, with Bobby Orr and Phil Esposito, also become major teams during this decade.

**1971** The World Hockey Association (WHA) is formed, signing a number of former NHL players and attempting to break the National Hockey League's monopoly over the game. By 1979, the two leagues merge after poor crowds and lawsuits force the WHA into bankruptcy.

**1972** The first Canada-Russia hockey series is played, the most dramatic event in Canadian sports history. For the first time, NHL players are allowed to participate in an international competition, previously open only to amateurs. In the final game of the series, Toronto Maple Leaf player Paul Henderson scores the winning goal, and Canada narrowly wins the competition. By this time, skilled national teams from Russia, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, and Finland are providing stiff competition for Canadian teams in the Olympics and other international contests.

**1980s and 90s** Montreal's domination of the NHL comes to an end. The Edmonton Oilers, under superstar Wayne Gretzky, win the Stanley Cup five times, with the New York Islanders not far behind. The Pittsburgh Penguins, with star player Mario Lemieux, are also a strong contender during these decades, as are the Detroit Red Wings, the New Jersey Devils, and the Colorado Avalanche. By this time, of the 30 teams in the NHL, the only Canadian ones left are based in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver. Franchises in Quebec City and Winnipeg are forced to transfer to U.S. cities for economic reasons. Canada's national game becomes

increasingly dominated by teams from the United States. While most players are still Canadian, there are by now

strong contingents of Americans, Swedes, Russians, Czechs, Finns, and others playing in the NHL.

## Hockey Quiz

Test your knowledge of Canada's national game by taking this quiz. Circle what you believe to be the correct answer. Some of the questions are based on the historical timeline above, while others are general knowledge.

1. Who gave his name to hockey's oldest trophy?
  - a) Gordie Howe
  - b) Clarence Campbell
  - c) Lord Stanley
2. Who invented the machine that resurfaces ice, making it fresh and smooth for players?
  - a) King Clancy
  - b) Abby Hoffman
  - c) Frank Zamboni
3. Which NHL team has won the most Stanley Cups?
  - a) Toronto Maple Leafs
  - b) Montreal Canadiens
  - c) Boston Bruins
4. What rival league competed with the NHL during the 1970s?
  - a) American Hockey League
  - b) World Hockey Association
  - c) International Hockey League
5. Who holds the NHL record for most career points (goals and assists)?
  - a) Rocket Richard
  - b) Wayne Gretzky
  - c) Bobby Hull
6. Who scored the series-winning goal in the 1972 Canada-Russia series?
  - a) Phil Esposito
  - b) Larry Robinson
  - c) Paul Henderson
7. Which NHL trophy can a player win only once in his career?
  - a) Smythe
  - b) Art Ross
  - c) Calder
8. How many teams are currently in the NHL?
  - a) 30
  - b) 40
  - c) 50

**Quote**

"Hockey captures the essence of the Canadian experience in the New World. In a land so inescapably and inhospitably cold, hockey is the dance of life, an affirmation that despite the deathly chill of winter we are alive." — Bruce Kidd in *The Death of Hockey*

**Quote**

"It is perhaps fitting that this fastest of all games has become almost as much of a national symbol as the maple leaf or the beaver. Most young Canadians, in fact, are born with skates on their feet, rather than with silver spoons in their mouths." — Former prime minister Lester B. Pearson, 1939

9. How many NHL teams are currently located in Canadian cities?
  - a) three
  - b) six
  - c) nine
10. How many regular season games does each NHL team play?
  - a) 60
  - b) 70
  - c) 80
11. Name the player who was still playing in the NHL when he was 50 years old.
  - a) Gordie Howe
  - b) Phil Esposito
  - c) Bobby Hull
12. When did a Canadian team last win the Stanley Cup finals?
  - a) 2000
  - b) 1993
  - c) 1990
13. When was the first amateur hockey team in Canada established?
  - a) 1850
  - b) 1879
  - c) 1893
14. What NHL player scored the most goals in one season of play?
  - a) Wayne Gretzky
  - b) Mario Lemieux
  - c) Brett Hull
15. In what city is the Canadian Hockey Hall of Fame located?
  - a) Montreal
  - b) Vancouver
  - c) Toronto
16. Which Canadian hockey team(s) won a gold medal in the 2002 Winter Olympics?
  - a) Men's
  - b) Women's
  - c) Men's and Women's
17. Which NHL trophy goes to the most valuable player in the Stanley Cup playoffs?
  - a) Norris
  - b) Smythe
  - c) Hart

18. When did regular radio broadcasts of *Hockey Night in Canada* begin?
- a) 1923
  - b) 1930
  - c) 1918
19. Who was the first NHL goalie to wear a protective face mask?
- a) Terry Sawchuk
  - b) Jacques Plante
  - c) Glenn Hall
20. What NHL star's suspension from play in 1955 touched off a riot in Montreal?
- a) Jean Beliveau
  - b) Henri Richard
  - c) Maurice Richard

**Answers**

1. c, 2. c, 3. b, 4. b, 5. b, 6. c, 7. c, 8. a, 9. b, 10. c, 11. a, 12. b, 13. b, 14. a, 15. c, 16. c, 17. b, 18. a, 19. b, 20. c.

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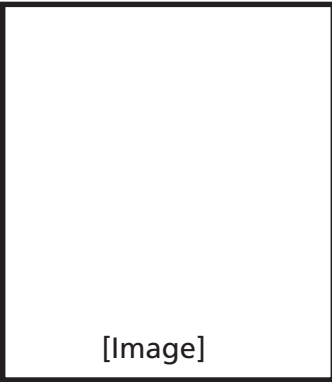
## Activities

### Further Research

More information about Jordin Tootoo may be investigated at [www.cbc.sportsline.com/u/hockey/nhl/players/273354.htm](http://www.cbc.sportsline.com/u/hockey/nhl/players/273354.htm), [www.cbc.sports.hockey](http://www.cbc.sports.hockey), or [www.joyofhockey.com/N1JordinTootoo.html](http://www.joyofhockey.com/N1JordinTootoo.html).

Choose one of the following activities.

1. Design a "Jordin Tootoo" hockey card. Your card should contain biographical details concerning Tootoo, based on the information you were able to obtain about him from the video. The card might look like the following:

 <p>[Image]</p>	Name:
	Birth Date:
	Personal Information:
	Hockey Stats and Skills:
Likely Future:	

OR

2. As a class, discuss and compose a joint letter you might want to write to Jordin Tootoo, commenting on his aspirations to play professional hockey, what it would mean for the Inuit people in Canada, and what wishes you would like to extend to him for his future career. Feel free to include illustrations, etc. You might send your letter care of the Nashville Predators via their Web site at [www.nashvillepredators.com/contactus/index.html](http://www.nashvillepredators.com/contactus/index.html) or by post to Nashville Predators, 501 Broadway, Nashville TN 37203, USA.