

Laval hockey icon Mike Bossy on the Islanders and TVA Sports



Mike Cohen

BROOKLYN — When I attended a National Hockey League game at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn between the host Islanders and the Toronto Maple Leafs recently, I looked down on the ice from the press box and thought of my favorite player to ever suit up in the home team's uniform. I am talking of course about number 22 Mike Bossy, who had a legendary 10-year career halted only by a bad back.

The former Laval Nationals junior hockey superstar was nothing less than the most prolific goal-scorer in Islanders history and a member of the Hockey Hall of Fame. He played right wing and won four consecutive Stanley Cups from 1980 to 1983 while scoring 573 goals. He netted an NHL record 50 or more goals in nine of his 10 seasons to go with 553 assists and also won the Calder Trophy in 1978-79, the Conn Smythe Trophy in 1981-82 and three Lady Byngs.

Bossy grew up in the Ahuntsic area. The Nationals thought so highly of him as a teenager that they offered to cover part of the living costs of his family if they moved there in order to gain territorial rights. So he left his friends at St. Pius X Comprehensive high school and enrolled



Mike Bossy.

at Laval Catholic. In four full seasons for the Nationals he had 70, 84, 79 and 75 goals respectively and was drafted by the Islanders 15th overall in the first round.

While Bossy retired in 1987, he was lured back to the Islanders family nine years ago to work in corporate sales. He retained Rosemere as his base and commuted, spending weekdays in Long Island and returning home on weekends. When the team relocated to Brooklyn for this season he saw an opportunity for a change. Since the sales and marketing of the team is now in the hands of the Barclays Center, he reached an agreement to play a very part-time role and come to town for specific games. "I basically go visit people in the suites and shake a lot

of hands," he says.

Bossy had done some work for TVA Sports in Montreal and he raised the possibility of coming on board as a regular contributor. That proposal was accepted and he can now be seen four to five days a week on sportscasts, between periods of game broadcasts and as a panelist on the *Dave Morrisette Show*. "I am very much enjoying it," he says. "I work nights, so it gives me a chance to spend more time with my grandchildren and even drive them to school."

Bossy is impeccably bilingual, pretty impressive considering the fact he did not speak a word of French until the age of 16 when he met his future wife Lucie. "I lost the coin toss and had to learn French," he said. "When we moved to New York, though, she had to learn English."

It is hard to believe that Bossy will turn 59 on Jan. 22. He and Lucie have two daughters and two grandchildren.

While there is a Mike Bossy Arena on Ste. Rose Blvd. E in Laval, he is intrigued by the 10,000 seat Place Bell being constructed now in Laval. "The city of Laval deserves to have an arena like that," he said, agreeing that the Canadiens will likely move their American Hockey League farm team there.

As for Islanders, Bossy is impressed by their lineup. "They have a good team that is developing nicely," he said. "There are a lot of pieces to the puzzle and they are

on the right road." ■

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JUSTICE

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the same time as Vaillancourt have already passed away.

Engineer Robert N. Cloutier, 76, died in March 2014. He was followed to the grave by contractor Valmont Nadon, 78, in May 2015, and businessman Anthony Mergl, 82, in June 2015.

Notwithstanding the slight thaw in the hitherto-glacial pace of justice, a 2017 trial would still mean that four years will have elapsed since police accused three-dozen municipal officials, construction contractors and engineers and alleged accomplices of rigging government contracts and engaging in various acts of fraud and conspiracy.

In the meantime, the city has independently filed a \$12.8 million civil lawsuit against Vaillancourt and two former municipal mandarins, as well as executives with the contracting firm Nepcom.

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