

Noah Laybolt
Mr. Coffin
English 521
Tuesday, January 12th, 2015

Multi-Genre Collection

Overcoming Adversity



1. A Memoir on Noah Laybolt- A Triumphant End; Non-Fiction



The year of 2014-2015 was an eventful one for myself hockey wise. Last year was the most hockey-filled year of my hockey career. From the beginning of the year, to Canada Games, and onto the Combine, it's safe to say i was tired at the end. Along the way I had many obstacles I had to overcome, and I managed to persevere and come out on top.

At the beginning of the year I honestly had no intention of making the Charlottetown Islanders. It was actually my Canada Games coach Ryan Ramsay who encouraged me to come tryout because I was in the Hockey P.E.I. program and he was the assistant coach of both teams. I faced the obstacle of being the smallest goalie out there and there were so many of us that I wasn't sure of my chances. This didn't really affect me because I was trying out and working hard which was all that mattered. That attitude was really what I believe got me on the team.

The difference in the caliber of shots and speed of the play from Bantam to Major Midget was crazy. It did take me a bit of time to adjust but it was seamless when I did

get used to the play. I truly believe that the hardest position for a new player to come into a better league is goalie. You can hide a weaker defenseman by pairing him with a better one or putting a less able forward on the fourth line but you can't hide a weaker goalie. That was my first real challenge, getting better.

Last year with the Islanders I was inconsistent. I had really good games but then had some not so good. That is one thing I feel I've gotten better at this year is being more consistent. I was chosen to the Canada Games team halfway through the year last year and that was a big confidence booster for me. I felt my play ramped up then when I knew I was going to be playing on a National stage. Myself, along with four others from my Islanders team prepped for the Games in the second half of the year. The day we left was February 21st and it had finally came. The week two athletes took off for Prince George.

Going into the Games I was the only Major Midget goalie on the roster so I thought I had the inside track on the starting job. I felt I practiced well

when we go there but I didn't get the first game so I was lack for a better word, pissed off. We played Yukon that game then I got the start the following game against Northwest Territories. Both me and the other goalie Luke Oliver had shutouts, then we moved onto playing against Newfoundland. A win in that game was huge for us and we moved on to meet New Brunswick in a pivotal game.



That game was supposed to be mine as i felt myself and Luke both played good and I deserved another game. This wasn't the case. I sat on the bench and we lost to Team N.B 5-1. Our next game was against the Northwest Territories and I faced them again. Winning easily, I hoped to possibly face a tougher game when we played



Newfoundland in a 9-10 placement game. This was not the case again and I sat out once again.

We finished off the Games with a 6-5 OT win against the Newfoundland team and went home disappointed as a team because we felt we could've done better. As for me,I went

home with a lot of fire under me because I was

upset I didn't get to play as much as I would've liked. This helped when our Islanders team moved into the playoffs.

I'm sure I have said before that adversity comes in the form of many different ways, injuries, coaches, or not getting played enough. Perseverance is what helps you succeed and overcome adversity and that's what I did at the end of the year. Using the fuel of being doubted allowed me to play better and help my team win the Island.

This past hockey season was an adversity filled one to say the least. I wasn't sure if I was going to make both the Islanders and the Canada Games team at the start of the

year. I was injured for a part of January, and I felt I wasn't played enough. These things may have got me down but I wasn't going to let other people or things get in my way.



2. Research Essay on Patrick O' Sullivan- A True Warrior; Informational

Patrick O'Sullivan was like a lot of young hockey players growing up in small towns. He had a dream of getting to the N.H.L. and it was everything he wanted in life. Patrick although wasn't like most boys in one aspect. After games when most children were getting praise or constructive criticism from their parents, Patrick was more often than not getting beaten by his father. This is the kind of adversity that most kids didn't have to face, but for Patrick, it affected him even into his N.H.L. days.



O'Sullivan was born in Toronto, Ontario then moved to Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He was brought up playing hockey and always had a stick in his hand because his father played minor-pro in the Winston-Salem area. With a failed attempt at a hockey career, Patrick's father John O'Sullivan shifted his focus to living his dream through his son. As soon as the skates first game on, Patrick said the abuse was ongoing every single day, "Every day after hockey, no matter how many goals I scored,

he would hit me. The man was 6-foot-2, 250 lbs. It would start as soon as we got in the car, and sometimes right out in the parking lot” (O’Sullivan). This behavior isn’t what a child should have endure, especially starting at the young age of five. The act of child abuse is something that would be a huge wall or amount of adversity to overcome for



anybody.

It continued for Patrick and increased in harm as he got older. By the age of ten he was getting cigarette burns and cans of soda thrown at his head. He outlines what would happen to him even with his best performance in an article labeled ‘Black and Blue’, “I’d score a hat trick, and afterward we’d

get in the car and he would tell me that I played “like a faggot” (that was his favorite term, which says a lot) (O’Sullivan). The simple fact that even in a game where Patrick was the best player on the ice and racked up points, it wasn't good enough for his father.

One of the saddest parts of the story is that it became the norm for O’Sullivan. When abuse and constant work becomes “normal” for a ten-year-old, something is seriously wrong. However, people just assumed everything was okay even though sometimes, the abuse would be taken out in the parking lot of the rink. No one

bothered to ask the deeper questions. The only one that came from others would be, “are you okay?” to which he answered, “yes”. Patrick was just trying to get by until he was old enough to stick up for himself. This wasn’t until six years later.

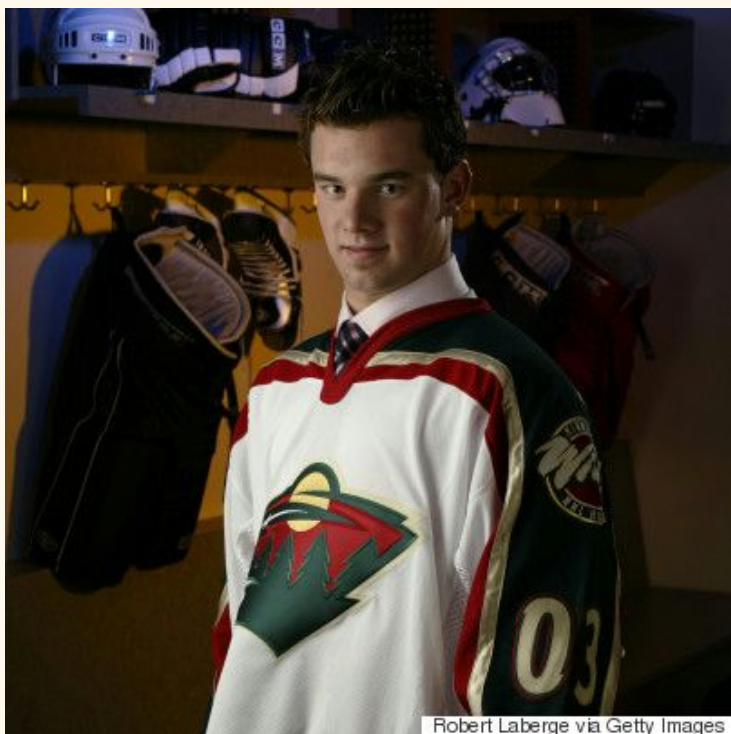
The constant abuse and over the top training didn’t translate to on-ice success. The fact Patrick was away from his dad for hours when he was on the ice was how he got to be the player he was. He could be free of the abuse and heckling and could be the hockey playing teen. With his on ice skills and speed, he was drafted first overall to the Mississauga Ice Dogs of the Ontario Hockey League. Some may come to the conclusion that the



abuse would stop at this time, but Patrick explains that it only intensified, “ One night after a game during my first year in the OHL, I was sitting on the bus with my teammates when my dad came storming in and literally grabbed me by the arm and dragged me to his car” (O’Sullivan). That night he stood up for himself.

After John said his hockey career was over, Patrick snapped. The two brawled in his Grandmother’s driveway. He was finally able to stand up for himself. He was done with the abuse. John was released from prison a month later after police located him at

Patrick's next game. A restraining order couldn't keep him away from being in the same spot at all of his hockey games.



Robert Laberge via Getty Images

The 2003 N.H.L. Draft was the day John O'Sullivan's dream came true. Patrick was drafted 53rd overall in the second round by the Minnesota Wild. Among an entourage of N.H.L. hired security he tried to enjoy his day to the fullest, knowing his father believed his tactics worked.

There was no doubt Patrick showed serious promise as a hockey player. He was originally ranked as a top five talent in the

2003 draft but was a late second to the Wild. O'Sullivan began his pro career in the A.H.L. recording a 93 point season as a rookie. His O.H.L. and A.H.L. success didn't pan out into the scoring centre many projected him to be. His career resulted in a eight year stint in "The Show" then off to the top professional league in Finland known as the SM-liiga to finish his hockey career in 2013.

Patrick's adversity was a tragic kind that no kid should have to go through. The simple fact that on weekends and any other time he could get to be away from his father he did



it. When he did get away he always brought a stick and ball along with him. To keep his mind off the abuse, he would stickhandle and shoot. Getting away from the actual conflict is something that is important in getting to your goal.

Seeing Patrick O’Sullivan’s story brings to light that there are stories like this, maybe not as physically abusive, but there are stories similar to his. What I mean by similar is that parents are trying to live their dreams through their children. Constantly having them train, practice, sleep, then repeat. If abuse ever factors into this, it can create a huge problem for the child. In an article on Sportsnet titled “Former NHLer Patrick O’Sullivan opens up about abuse” he explains that he still fidgets and has trouble sitting still, “He said he has trouble sitting still. There are certain triggers, like the smell of freshly-cut grass. He was regularly beaten after cutting the lawn if his job was not up to his dad’s impossible standards” (Canadian Press, O’Sullivan). Some parents need to start seeing the big picture.

O’Sullivan is the spitting image of adversity. He started off with a dream of playing in the N.H.L. He for sure encountered obstacles along the way, the biggest being the abuse from his father. Patrick was able to use the time away from his dad to perfect his hockey skills and achieve his ultimate goal of playing hockey in the big



league. He still loves the game of hockey and is helping his two sons along the way, supporting them in whatever they choose. Patrick O’Sullivan is a true warrior on and of the ice.

Citations

- "Former NHLer Patrick O'Sullivan Opens up about Abuse - Sportsnet.ca." *Sportsnet.ca*. 19 Oct. 2015. Web. 12 Jan. 2016.
<<http://www.sportsnet.ca/hockey/nhl/former-nhler-patrick-osullivan-opens-up-about-abuse/>>.
- O'Sullivan, Patrick. "Black & Blue." *The Players Tribune*. 9 Dec. 2015. Web. 12 Jan. 2016.
<<http://www.theplayerstribune.com/patrick-osullivan-nhl-abuse/>>.
- Lewis, Scott. "Patrick O'Sullivan Hopes His Story Leads to Change - Sportsnet.ca." *Sportsnet.ca*. 22 Oct. 2015. Web. 12 Jan. 2016.
<<http://www.sportsnet.ca/hockey/nhl/patrick-osullivan-hopes-his-story-leads-to-change/>>.

3. A Poem about Charlie Stevenson- To All the Doubters; Fiction



The local outdoor rink had a frequent visitor,
his name was Charlie.

He was there everyday, skating and shooting for one
reason

Charlie wanted to play in the N.H.L.

The local gym had a frequent visitor,
his name was Charlie.

He was there everyday, doing every exercise for one
reason,

Charlie wanted to play in the N.H.L.

Charlie was at both of these places every morning and after school,
with the intentions of getting better.

Although, when he hit the ice in his league,
Charlie was continually doubted because of his size.

Standing at 5'5 and 110 pounds,
he was considered too small to succeed in hockey.
What the skeptics didn't see was his determination,
Charlie knew he was going to play in the N.H.L.

Charlie continued his routine into his teens,
lifting weights and shooting pucks.

When a scout noticed his work ethic and drive, and asked him to come tryout for junior,
his dream was starting to evolve.

Charlie moved away from home to play junior in
Kelowna,

at the young age of 17.

He could begin to work even harder,
never once straying away from his routine.

Everyday you could find Charlie on the ice or in the
gym,

working to prove his skeptics wrong.

Now his dream was not only to play in the N.H.L.,
but to show the doubters how good he really was.



Now standing at 5'9 and 160 pounds,
he was still too small by some people's measures.

It was his draft year and scouts were at all his games, watching every shift,
this made Charlie work that much harder

Charlie finished first on his team in points,
competing in every game.

Even though he did all the right things,
he wasn't ranked for the upcoming draft.

When people asked about him they often said,
“he just doesn't have the size to be an N.H.L. player”

Once again, he was counted out on his size,
What they failed to see was how much he put into the game



It was draft day,

Charlie sat at home with his two biggest supporters,
his parents.

They watched all seven rounds,
hoping to hear the name of Charlie Stevenson.

The teams were rounding out the seventh round,
and Ottawa was on the clock with the 210th and final
pick.

“With the final pick, we take from the Kelowna
Rockets, Charlie Stevenson”

Charlie was almost there, his dream was within his
grasp.

Ottawa’s General Manager was questioned on the pick and this was his response,
“We believe we found in a gem in Charlie and we were very pleased to draft him.”

That summer was the hardest he worked in his life,
Charlie was going to be in the lineup on opening night with the Senators.

He showed up to both the rookie and main camps,
impressing everyone along the way.
Management were impressed with his preparation,
and how much he loved the game.

The Senators cut down to their final roster,
RW- Charlie Stevenson was penciled in.
He was going to play on opening night,
His dream was going to come true.



It was gameday,
not just any gameday though.
It was Charlie's N.H.L. debut,
trying to approach games the way he always did.

It wasn't until the coach came in and said the starting lineup,
that the butterflies came on.

“On right wing, the rookie Charlie Stevenson!”
it was really happening.

In front of 20,000 people,
Charlie stood out and listened to the playing of O Canada.

He stood in shock and he realized he was in N.H.L.

A tear fell down his face.

All the years of early morning ice and training,
all the friendships and parties he missed out on.
He finally said quietly at the end of the National Anthem,
“To all the doubters, look at me now.”



4. A Photograph of My Brother and I- WWE Champion; A Visual Text



The reason I chose to get this picture captured was because I felt it describes overcoming adversity very well. In the picture my brother is feeling a sense of

achievement and success. As for me, it depicts me as feeling upset and defeated. What this means to me is that me being a bigger opponent is posed as a bigger challenge to my brother Drew. This makes my brother work harder to defeat me in the match for the belt.

I thought the theme is very prominent in this picture. Looking at the age differences between my brother and I, upon first glance one would say I would beat him in a match. This would be an obstacle my brother would have to face. The difference between our heights and weights would pose a difficult challenge for him. What happens in the end though is what typically happens when people overcome adversity.

What some people fail to see is the sense of pride and joy comes with overcoming adversity and completing a goal. I know it first hand that being able to prove the doubters and critics wrong, and to be able to achieve greatness feels amazing. This such reaction is found on my brother's face when he comes out on top.

I know I could've used a couple other visual representations to support my theme but I believe that my picture best represents it. The theme of overcoming adversity is a lot like the theme of an underdog. In both cases, more often than not the person is doubted or posed a challenge that some think they cannot surpass. In both cases you have to be able to work hard and keep your goal or goals in mind to be able to get over the wall of adversity and achieve your dream.