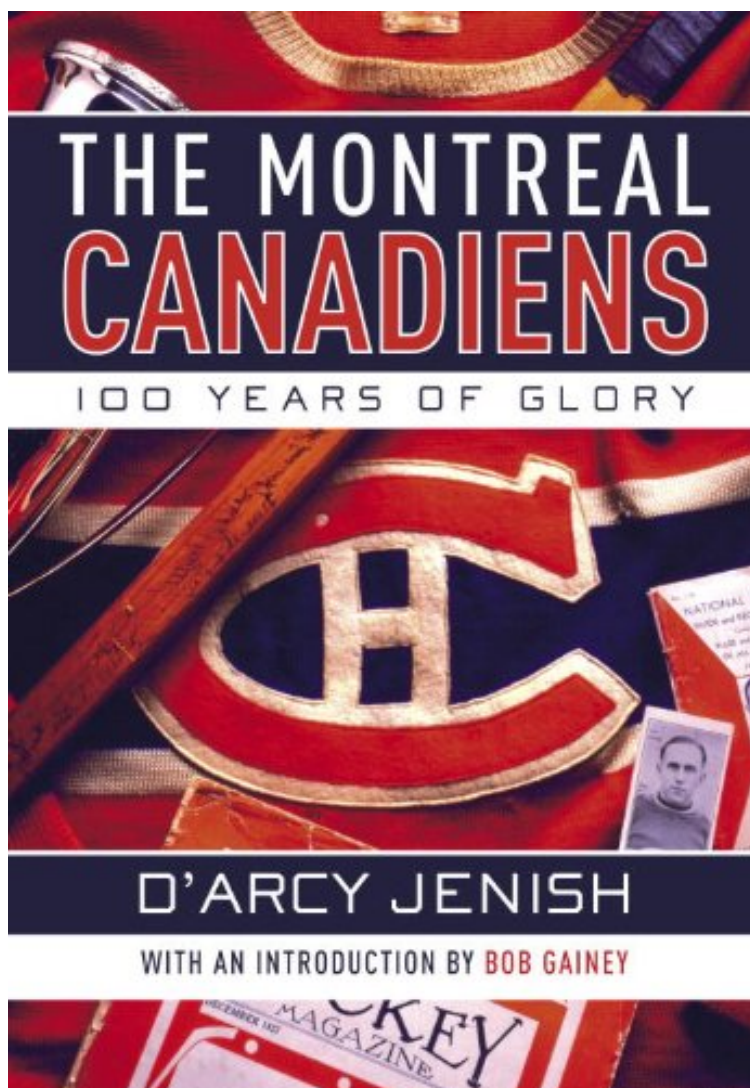


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The Montreal Canadiens: 100 Years of Glory



Par D'Arcy Jenish
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurNational BestsellerThe definitive history of the Montreal Canadiens to coincide with their Centenary in 2009.Before there were slapshots, Foster Hewitt, or even an NHL, there were the Canadiens. Founded on December 4, 1909, the team won its first Stanley Cup in 1916. Since then, the Canadiens have won 23 more championships, making them the most successful hockey team in the world.

The team has survived two wars, the Great Depression, NHL expansion, and countless other upheavals, thanks largely to the loyalty of fans and an extraordinary cast of players, coaches, owners, and managers.

The Montreal Canadiens captures the full glory of this saga. It weaves the personalities, triumphs, heartaches, and hysteria into a compelling narrative with a surprise on every page. It sheds new light on old questions how the team colours were chosen, how the Canadiens came to be known as the Habitants and goes behind the scenes of tumultuous recent events still awaiting thorough examination: why Scotty

Bowman was passed over as general manager after Sam Pollock resigned; why Pollock's successor, Irving Grunman, failed; why Serge Savard was dumped as GM so hastily despite his record. Colourful and controversial, The Montreal Canadiens is the history of a team that has been making news for 100 years and continues to do so with the return of legendary player Bob Gainey as general manager, determined to bring the Stanley Cup back to Montreal. From the Hardcover edition.

Extrait Introduction By Bob Gainey You can't go back, but you can go there again. These are the words that pushed me from decision-making to decision on a beautiful spring day in May 2003. As I turned my car into the long driveway at our home on Stony Lake, forty kilometres northeast of Peterborough, I knew I would be the next general manager of the Club de Hockey Canadien. A few days later, on June 3, 2003, a press conference was held at the Bell Centre, home of the Canadiens, to introduce me in my new role. The questions from the herd of journalists came at slap-shot speed. Cameras clicked and flashed even faster. Many of the questions I didn't have answers for . . . yet. Would coach Claude Julien be returning? What would I do with player contracts? Who were the prospects in the system? How did I explain the dismal season the Habs had just completed, missing the playoffs? There was one answer I did have, to a question which came both subtly and directly: Why would I agree to take this position? The team was a disaster. The fans were enraged. The media were on the warpath. The future looked dismal. Why put myself in this unenviable position? The answer was easy and, to me, crystal clear; In Montreal, the Canadiens matter! In Quebec, the Canadiens matter! In Canada, the Canadiens matter! All of that only made the general manager's job more challenging, a point captured by Terry Mosher, also known as Aislin, celebrated editorial cartoonist of the Montreal Gazette. In the next day's paper, Mosher depicted me standing behind the podium at the press conference being asked, Do you think you can walk on water? Answer: see page viii! The Montreal Canadiens mattered to me. And I knew how important, how vital and how deeply rooted they were in the culture and history of Montrealers, Quebecers, Canadians and others. I had learned these lessons early in my playing days. In September of 1973, I began what would be a sixteen-year career with the Habs. I recall a situation about a year later, while looking for a dentist office early one morning in the borough of Verdun. Hoping to ask for directions, I walked into a caf filled with diners enjoying breakfast. The entire place went completely silent. Nobody moved. Every person there recognized me. And all of us were in shock they because I was there, and I at the realization they knew me. I got my directions and left, relieved, as quickly as I could. I was reminded of the importance of the Montreal Canadiens in many ways and many places, like the time I was in Helsinki, Finland, playing with Team Canada. Walking incognito (I believed) along a downtown street, I was approached from the opposite direction by a person who made eye contact and then asked in heavily-accented English: What happened to the Canadiens in the playoffs? There is no escape from Montreal fans! Loyalty to the Canadiens tends to run deep and long, as I learned from my old friend Richard Halford of New York City. A year ago, he called to let me know it was the fiftieth anniversary, to the day, of the game he saw with his father at Madison Square Garden between the Canadiens and Rangers. He got Rocket Richards' autograph after the game and has been a fervent Canadiens fan ever since. From my rookie season thirty-five years ago, I have been in contact, directly or indirectly, with much of the Canadiens history. In that time, I met many former players and staff. I was curious about their careers and put a lot of questions to Blake, Richard, Bouchard, Curry, Pollock, Mahovlich, Laperrere, Bowman and others. They were generous with their replies. Their memories let me touch, hear and see the reality of their lives with the Habs back to the 1930s. In this centennial history, Darcy Jenish gets it right. He pushes aside the cobwebs of memory. He has sanded and scraped away the layers of time. He has resisted the fluffy, romantic versions which have become common, and delivered us the nitty-gritty, real-deal story the good, and the not so good. I can tell you this because I know. The Canadiens will be 100 years old on December 4, 2009. The story of the team runs parallel to, and often intersects with, the history of Canada. They are one and the same. Les Canadiens have been parts of the lives of our great-grandparents, our grandparents, our parents and ourselves. May long life be the hallmark of this great Canadian, Quebec, Montreal institution. May not only our children, but grandchildren and great-grandchildren, have the opportunity to learn about, watch and understand why the Habs are such an important part of our collective history and culture. Bonne Anniversaire centime Club de Hockey Canadien! Many, many, more to come! Prologue This is Hockeytown Other cities may lay claim to the title, says Pierre Boivin during an animated discussion in his corner office on the seventh floor of the Bell Centre, home of the Montreal Canadiens. Then, with a sweep of his arm, he gestures at the city beyond his windows. Make no mistake about it, this is Hockeytown. Montreal is Hockeytown by dint of history and the citizenry's enduring passion for the sport. It is where a raw and ragged game shinny played on the icebound creeks and

rivers and lakes of a wintry nation came indoors and became hockey, the worlds first arena sport. It is where the first rules were written, where the first team was formed the McGill University Redmen in 1877 and where the sports most hallowed prize, the Stanley Cup, has come to rest thirtynine times since it was first awarded in 1893, a prize captured by the Canadiens, Maroons, Wanderers, Shamrocks, Victorias and the Winged Wheelers of the Montreal Amateur Athletic Association. In the 1890s, when the sport was young and the Stanley Cup brand new, the Winged Wheelers, Victorias and Shamrocks and their rabid followers were hockeys hottest rivals. A few decades later, in the Roaring Twenties and Dirty Thirties, English Montreal had its team, the Maroons, and French Montreal had its standard-bearer, the Canadiens, and games between them produced war both on the ice and in the stands. For seven decades now, ever since the demise of the Maroons, Montreals sporting public has worshipped at one altar, that of the Canadiens, and the passage of time has done nothing to diminish the ardour of the citizenry. When we win on Saturday night, you get on the subway Monday morning and threequarters of the people are smiling, says Boivin, president and CEO of the Canadiens. If we lose a couple and Torontos ahead by a point, Montrealers are very unhappy. If we dont make the playoffs, spring is hell. To some degree, the citys productivity is influenced by the teams performance. Hockey is part of what makes this city tick. And yet, in the first years of the current century, hockey in Montreal was in jeopardy. Le Club de Hockey Canadien was grievously ill and in danger of folding. The team was mediocre and missing the playoffs more often than not. Attendance was declining. Financial losses were mounting. Furthermore, there appeared to be no way out. The Canadiens were damned by circumstances beyond their control. Player salaries had risen to untenable levels, owing to the freespending ways of wealthier rivals, most of them in the United States. The Canadiens, like the five other NHL teams based in this country, were paying their athletes in U.S. dollars but earning their revenues in a domestic dollar worth about twentyfive percent less. On top of all this, the Canadiens were saddled with over eight million dollars per year in municipal taxes, whereas the league average was less than a million per team. We were losing a ton of money year in, year out, Boivin recalls. There was no way we could make money because of structural economic and competitive disadvantages. We had no hope of surviving. The Canadiens and their Coloradobased owner, George N. Gillett Jr., solidly supported the lockout of the players that cost the NHL its entire 200405 season. The NHL Players Association eventually capitulated and accepted a new collective bargaining agreement with a yearly salary cap, initially set at \$39 million (U.S.) per team. This drastic measure trimmed the Canadiens payroll by about \$12 million annually and helped save the franchise. Toronto was the only Canadian club that could have survived long-term and been competitive under the old regime, Boivin adds. We would have seen the relocation or the demise of the other five teams, and Montreal was no exception. Hockey returned to the city in the fall of 2005. The Canadiens played their first home game against the Ottawa Senators on the evening of October 10, a Tuesday. About ninety minutes before the puck dropped, the main doors of the Bell Centre opened and a crowd several hundred strong surged into the lobby. Boivin was there to welcome them. So were Gillett and general manager Bob Gainey and former players Henri Richard, Yvan Cournoyer and Rjean Houle. By game time, they had greeted several thousand people, a slice of the sellout crowd of 21,273. The return of the NHL was cause for jubilation in the city that gave birth to the game. The leagues financial foundation had been restored and the future of its oldest and greatest franchise seemed assured. And the Canadiens had something else to celebrate: the onehundredth anniversary of Le Club de Hockey Canadien formed on December 4, 1909. That fall, the Canadiens launched their centennial celebrations. The first significant public event occurred prior to a Saturday night game on November 12, when the Canadiens retired jersey number twel...Revue de presse A fascinating, necessary read for any Canadiens fan or hockey historian. The Gazette (Montreal) From the Hardcover edition.