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This is Why We Cheer!

Written By: Harry Gribnitz

I'll admit it. I am a hockey nut!! It started in my teenage years in Chicago. I was never a player, but a rabid fan. With my friends, I would ride the CTA bus from the near Western Suburbs to the Chicago Stadium. We would buy standing room only tickets for \$3.00 and stand in the back of the lower level. The mezzanine hung so low that you could only see the ice by bending at the waste and peering over the shoulder of the fans in the last row of seats. We didn't care if was uncomfortable, we were in the Stadium cheering for our Blackhawks. (For those of you that are Red Wings fans, please don't stop here. I am sure some of you had similar memories of the Olympia.)

My most intense Stadium memory was from the Stanley Cup playoff in 1961. It was the era of six NHL teams, no helmets, no masks, one goalie, real wooden sticks and the goals firmly attached to the rink. The Blackhawks and Canadians met in the first round of the playoffs. In game three, the teams ended regulation time tied 1-1. The first overtime was filled with shots, great saves by both Glenn Hall and Jacques Plante and a couple of "posts". In the second overtime the players become more cautious as they became more tired. When the third overtime started, both teams looked exhausted but intense. We were equally exhausted, but didn't mind that are backs ached from being hunched over to see the action. Twelve minutes and twelve seconds into the third overtime, Murray Balfour buried a backhander into the net! The old building erupted! We didn't know whether to cheer or cry. I think, we screamed, hugged and just jumped around.

When the opportunity was available to buy season tickets to the Griffins, I did not hesitate. I had always dreamed of actually having a seat for every home hockey game. The Turner Cup Playoffs are here! The players say "This Is Why We Play". I would like to borrow a few words from Ed Patterson's (The Captain) letter to the Fans:

"The playoffs are where hockey legends are made. It is the defining moment of a season, a team, and a career. A hockey team works all season for this moment." "Playoff hockey is intense. Every game, every goal and every shift count. There is no room for error. If you have a bad night, you could be going home for the summer." "Imagine that sellout game you came to in January, and multiply the intensity by ten. That is what playoff hockey is all about."

"If you haven't been to a playoff hockey game, there is no better explanation than experiencing it for yourself." I'll be there, please stop in Section 109 Row E and let me know you are there too!!!

The playoffs are here, and this is why we cheer!!!!!!!!!!

Go Griffins,

Harry Gribnitz

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