

Flyers Red Tape Gives Sticky Fingers

by CHRIS

In case you missed it, and chances are you did, here is my description of the Philadelphia Flyers inter-squad game, which took place September 16th.

Tickets for this game and the training camp workouts were all sold out the first day of ticket sales, August 22nd. Lacking a ticket and wanting to take photographs, I thought it would be no problem to get in, being a member of the press. At about noon on game day I went to the Civic Center to inquire about obtaining a free pass. Two Civic Center officials told me, "All media had to be accredited two weeks ago in order to get into the game. If you don't have a ticket, you don't get in." Barely containing my anger, I left without causing a ruckus.

Next, I phoned Garth Hurley, sports editor at the Guardian/Patriot. He advised me to phone the O'Leary rink and get in touch with the director of media relations. I called O'Leary and was told that the media director was out golfing. I was then told to contact Mark Tiezam, who would be at the Civic Center at 3PM. Once again I phoned, and no one at the Civic Center had ever heard of Mark Tiezam.

At 6PM I was at the Civic Center. There I attempted to simply walk through the side entrance where a sign read "Pass Holders Only." Security stopped me and when I protested "too much red tape" they replied, "That's right, red tape." He's lucky a rocket launcher wasn't in my possession.

My only hope of getting into the game was to find either a scalper or someone with an extra ticket.

Soon a well dressed, pass-holding middle-aged man popped outside. I knew he would have tickets for sale so I rushed up to him before the other six vultures could reach him. The man said, "I'm part of the opening ceremonies. I have two tickets. Hurry with your money; the ceremonies begin shortly." I reached for my wallet and was shocked to see that I'd left in the car parked half a mile away. It was a long twenty minutes before another person had tickets for sale. Finally, a young man walking to the entrance casually asked, "Anyone want to buy a ticket?" Sounding like the old prudent commercial I said, "I do, I do." I bought the ticket long before the remaining vultures could blink an eye.

At last I was inside the most important sports event yet in my experience. I found a good shooting view on the stairs overlooking the plexiglass and near center ice. I was happy to be near the reserved seating as just before the opening

ceremonies my favourite hockey player of all time, Bobby Clarke, walked just inches away from me. I watched Clarke take a seat way up high near the TSN and ESPN cameras.

Soon the Flyers were introduced and, of course, Eric Lindros was given the loudest applause. The game was a thrill to watch, although not quite as intense as it could have been. It ended up that Mark Reechi and Eric Lindros's orange team was defeated 8-4 by the white team, led by Rod Brindamour and Kevin Dineen. Lindros had a goal and an assist and despite his less than outstanding performance, he was named third star of the game. This was a bad choice. Islanders hate injustice and I guess that is why Lindros's third star announcement was protested by loud boo's. Pele Eklund was more deserving of the third star.

For me, the highlight of the evening was when I met three NHL Hall-of-Famers - Bob Clarke, Bill Barber and Bernie Parent. They signed my program and I looked with admiration at the two huge, gold Stanley Cup rings on their fingers, beautiful rings that Lindros and company will be hoping to land soon themselves.



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