

WHAT MOTIVATES HOCKEY PLAYERS?  
Analyzing NCAA, AHL, and NHL Hockey Players

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WHAT MOTIVATES HOCKEY PLAYERS?  
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**Abstract**

The main focus of this study is to examine what factors play the most important roles in hockey player's motivation. Hockey players from NCAA Division I, the American Hockey League, and the National Hockey League are analyzed. After conducting twelve interviews, the player's responses are recorded and displayed in case studies. The research shows that there are many factors that motivate hockey players and that some play more important roles than others. Furthermore, some factors that were expected to be important contributors to hockey player's motivation proved otherwise. Many conclusions are drawn based on the results of the investigation.

KEYWORDS: (Motivation, Hockey, NCAA/AHL/NHL)

ON MY HONOR, I HAVE NEITHER GIVEN NOR RECEIVED  
UNAUTHORIZED AID ON THIS THESIS

B. G.

Signature



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Many questions surround athletes and what motivates them. In the sport of hockey there is a question that has gone unanswered. What motivates hockey players? Comparing NHL, AHL, and NCAA Division I hockey players, this study will examine what really inspires them and what factors play significant roles in their motivation. The first part of the introduction will look at the importance of the topic and why it is relevant to look at such an unfamiliar aspect of hockey. In the second part of the introduction, questions of the model will be analyzed and certain variables that will impact the dependent variable will be discussed. The final section will explore the expected outcomes of the study.

#### **Importance of the Research**

Like any other sport played at a high level, hockey is a full-time job, even if playing NCAA Division I where players don't get paid a salary. At the same time, hockey is a very dangerous contact sport at which any time a player's career can be ended. There is a lot riding on a hockey player's health and the length of his career. For all of these reasons, motivation is a very interesting topic. Like any other job, an employee craves financial security and with the life expectancy of a hockey player's

career uncertain they are expected to be more motivated by money. With the average player career getting shorter and shorter every year, players are more likely to be extrinsically motivated than intrinsically. A second reason for the importance of this research is that a study like this has never been done before. There have been studies on motivation in sports but mostly youth sports. An in-depth look at hockey players, based on interviews with NCAA Division I, AHL, and NHL hockey players is a rare opportunity. Along the same lines, looking at the role money plays in hockey players' motivation is an interesting study in itself, and the question of whether athletes are dominantly motivated by extrinsic wants will be answered in this research.

### **Analyzing the Model and Variables**

In this investigation the phenomena of motivation in hockey players will be explained. The dependent variable in this study will be the motivation of the athletes, either extrinsic or intrinsic. There will be various independent variables such as salary, feedback, personal success, teammates, winning, and the three components of the expectancy theory. Each of the independent variables has an impact on a hockey player's motivation. Depending on the different athletes being interviewed, it is hypothesized that variables will have varying impacts. Specifically, it is proposed that the NCAA Division I hockey players will be more driven by extrinsic wants yet still having the intrinsic wants present. As a player progresses the variables such as salary and personal success will impact the dependent variable more. While extrinsic motivation still plays a major role, the intrinsic wants move more to the forefront. The influence of the independent variables will have a positive effect on the dependent variable, by influencing either extrinsic motivation or intrinsic motivation.

### **Expected Outcomes**

The main focus of the study is to investigate the factors that play the most important roles in hockey players' motivation. This research is expected to show that many factors contribute to their motivation. As a player progresses through the leagues his paycheck will grow marginally. From NCAA Division I where a player makes no salary to the AHL, where he can make a maximum five-digit salary, a player's motivation will change slightly. If he is able to make the final leap to the NHL, where he is guaranteed a six-digit salary with the possibility of a seven-digit salary, a player's motivation should have distinct change. The correlation is expected to show that as players' salaries increase their intrinsic motivation should overshadow their extrinsic motivation. Looking at the opposite side of the spectrum, players playing for free should be driven more by extrinsic desires than the intrinsic ones. The four players in each of the leagues are projected to be very similarly driven as their fellow league members. The results of this research will show one major similarity. Although extrinsic motivation plays a large role in any people and their job, no matter how much money they make, intrinsic motivation will always be there. People must love what they do in order to achieve their goals. This study should prove that many factors are present in a hockey players' motivation, some having larger impacts than others.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on motivation in the workplace as well as in sports. Each article and book will be discussed based on its importance to the research on motivation of hockey players. The first section of this chapter will discuss the literature on motivation in general. The second section will examine literature specifically on motivation in sports.

The study of motivation is a complex issue, which can be examined through Victor Vroom's expectancy theory. The theory suggests that individual's goals are based on a number of factors that influence their drive towards their aspiring goals. Expectancy theory states that if people believe that efforts and performance are positively correlated and that the reward will satisfy an important need they can be motivated. This theory is based on three beliefs: valence, expectancy, and instrumentality. Valence is the perceived meaningfulness of the task to be done. Expectancy is the level of confidence individuals have and what they feel they are worth. Instrumentality is the belief that they will actually get what they desire and with that comes incentive.<sup>1</sup>

Being able to comprehend the literature on motivation should create a model that will assist in a better understanding of what drives hockey players.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.valuebasedmanagement.net/methods\\_vroom\\_expectancy\\_theory.html](http://www.valuebasedmanagement.net/methods_vroom_expectancy_theory.html)

## Theories of Motivation

In this section three of the most influential motivational theories will be examined. These theories will lay the foundation for this study.<sup>2</sup>

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### *Hierarchy of Needs Theory*

Abraham Maslow developed a theory that every human possesses a hierarchy of needs. Maslow's theory proposes that humans have a hierarchy of five needs that they seek to satisfy. (Figure 1) The five needs in order from bottom to top are physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization need. Physiological needs are biological needs. Oxygen, food, and water are the most essential of these needs. As humans search for satisfaction, physiological needs come first therefore are the strongest needs. Safety needs or the need for security are prevalent once the physiological needs have been satisfied. Although safety needs are more recognized in children, adults still possess this trait, which is more visible when there is trouble or an emergency. Once humans satisfy their needs for physiological comfort and safety, social needs can surface. Maslow's idea behind the social need of humans is that people in general will try to conquer feelings of alienation and loneliness. This includes the need for acceptance, friendship, and a sense of belonging. When the first three levels of Maslow's hierarchy are achieved, esteem needs can move to the forefront. Esteem needs consist of both self-esteem and respect from others. If humans are able to satisfy their esteem needs, they will feel valuable to society and more self-confident. People find they feel helpless and have low self-esteem when they are unable to satisfy their esteem needs.

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<sup>2</sup> This source was consulted for all three motivational theories. Stephen P. Robbins, *Essentials Of Organizational Behavior*, Seventh Edition, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2003: 43-52.

Self-actualization can only be obtained once the first four needs of Maslow's hierarchy are satisfied. Self-actualization is when people strive to become what they believe they are meant to be. This is the most complex of the five needs in that some people have a need for self-actualization yet do not know what that need is and how to satisfy it. The first four needs can be more easily addressed, but when there is a need for self-actualization it's not always clear what a person wants.

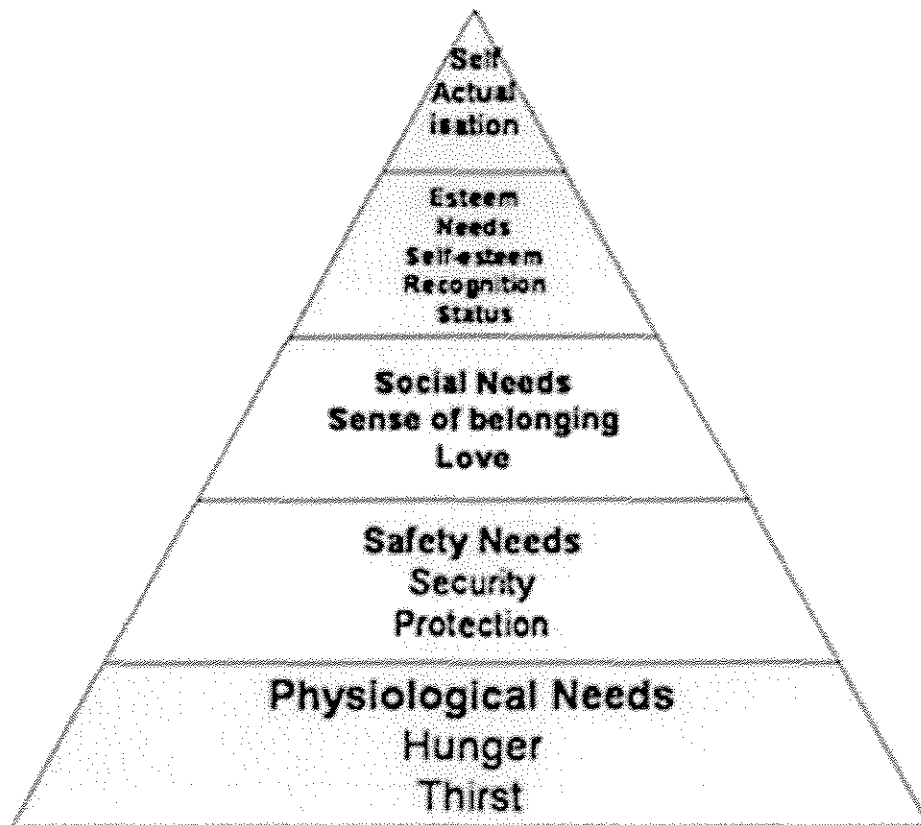


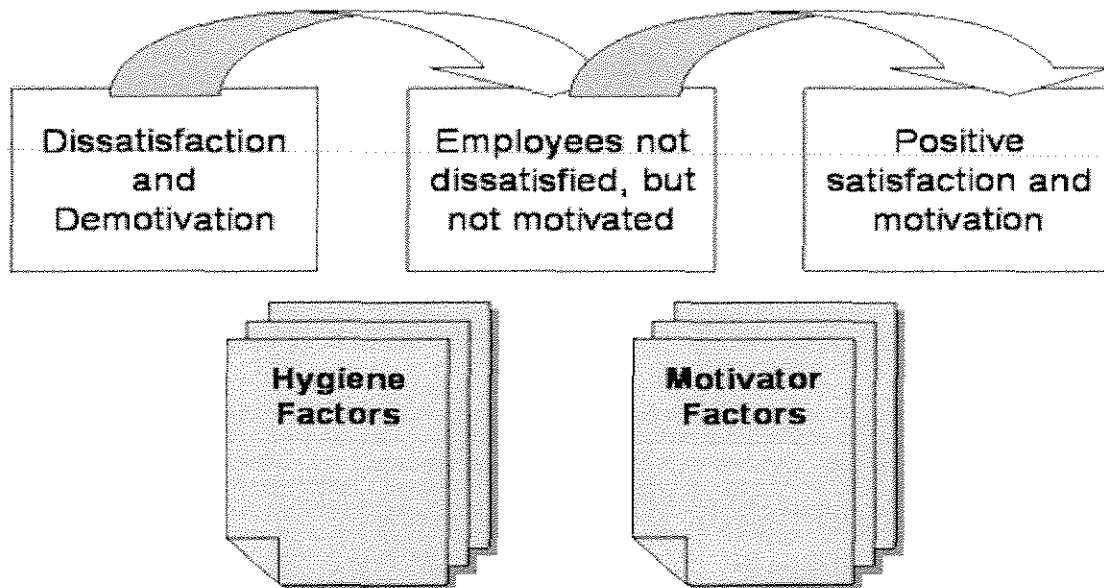
Figure 2.1 - Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is often depicted as a pyramid consisting of five levels: the four lower levels are grouped together as deficiency needs associated with physiological needs, while the top level is termed growth needs associated with psychological needs. While our deficiency needs must be met, our being needs are

continually shaping our behavior. The basic concept is that the higher needs in this hierarchy only come into focus once all the needs that are lower down in the pyramid are mainly or entirely satisfied. Growth forces create upward movement in the hierarchy, whereas regressive forces push prepotent needs further down the hierarchy.

### *Two-Factor Theory*

Frederick Herzberg developed Two-Factor Theory, a.k.a. motivation-hygiene theory, which proposed that people are confronted by motivating and hygiene factors. (Figure 2) He came up with this theory while he examined the psyches of 200 accountants and engineers across the U.S.A. Motivation factors are associated with satisfaction in employees as well as psychological growth. Hygiene factors were usually the cause of dissatisfaction in employees. Working off the belief that employees' attitude towards their work plays a huge role in their success or failure, Herzberg was able to analyze what people desire from their jobs. Basic hygiene factors are working conditions, quality of supervision, salary, job security, company policies and administration, and interpersonal relations. Herzberg's theory suggests that these factors are needed to ensure an employee does not become dissatisfied, however, these factors will not lead to increased motivation in employees but an absence of them will lead to employee dissatisfaction. Basic motivating factors are opportunities for promotion, recognition for achievements, opportunities for personal growth, and task responsibility. Herzberg's theory suggests that these factors are crucial in the motivation of an employee, leading to higher performance.



**Figure 1.2 – Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory Model**

Intrinsic and extrinsic factors seem to be related to job satisfaction. In Herzberg's study he found that respondents who were happy with their work would describe intrinsic factors such as advancement, recognition, and achievement with themselves. Conversely, respondents who were not happy with their work would describe extrinsic factors such as pay, company policies, and working conditions with themselves.

The combination of hygiene and motivation factors results in four possible scenarios.

- High Hygiene + High Motivation = this is the ideal situation where the employee is highly motivated and has very few complaints.
- High Hygiene + Low Motivation = employees are not very motivated but still have very few complaints. They view their job as a paycheck.



- Low Hygiene + High Motivation = employees are highly motivated but still have a lot of complaints. This occurs when the job is exciting and challenging but salaries and working conditions may not be up to par.
- Low Hygiene + Low Motivation = worst possible situation. Employees are not motivated and have a lot of complaints.

### *Equity Theory*

Equity theory, in business terms, describes the relationship between employees' motivation and their perception on being treated fairly. It suggests that employees will weigh what they put into job (input) against what they get from it (outcome). Inputs such as effort, experience, education, and competence are compared with outcomes such as salary levels, raises, and recognition. They will then compare their ratio of input to output with the input to output ratios of workers in the same field. (Figure 3) A state of equity will exist if employees feel their ratio is equal to the ratio of the employees they are comparing themselves with. A state of inequity will exist if employees feel their ratio is unequal to the ratio of the employees they are comparing themselves with.

$$\frac{\textit{individual's outcomes}}{\textit{individual's own inputs}} = \frac{\textit{comparable others' outcomes}}{\textit{comparable others' inputs}}$$

**Figure 2.3 – Equity Theory Model**

Employees who believe they are being under compensated may make one or more of five choices:

1. Distort either their own or others' inputs or outcomes.
2. Behave in some way so as to induce others to change their inputs or outcomes.
3. Behave in some way so as to change their own inputs or outcomes.

4. Choose a different comparison referent
5. Quit their job

Equity theory strongly argues that when people perceive an imbalance, whether good or bad, in their ratios relative to other employees, tension is formed. Comparing payment by time with payment by quantity of production brings two different outcomes when looking at the employee's motivation. Looking at payment by time, over-rewarded employees will produce more than equitably paid employees and inversely under-rewarded employees will produce less output. Looking at payment by quantity of production, over-rewarded employees will produce fewer but higher-quality units than equitably paid employees and inversely under-rewarded employees will produce large amounts of low-quality units in comparison with equitably paid employees.

After analyzing the equity theory there are two certainties: One is that the motivation of an employee is influenced considerably by relative rewards as well as by absolute rewards. Two is that when employees perceive inequity, they will correct the situation, and this can be achieved in many different ways. Quality of output may go up or down, productivity may fluctuate and absenteeism or resignation are also possibilities.

### **Motivation in General**

J.J. Jehring explores the concept of "participation bonus" in government organizations. This can be described as a program of financial reward under which all regular employees of a given department or agency, meeting certain eligibility requirements, are compensated in addition to their regular pay through sharing, according to a predetermined formula, in the labor and supply savings the organization is able to generate. Research on this topic shows that incentive programs such as this one have

proven to be not only highly motivational but also effective in lowering costs while at the same time increasing the income of the individual employees. Studies in some major companies like Proctor and Gamble have shown that income for employees has risen at a much faster rate than employees in comparable jobs that aren't using the participation bonus program. This study shows that through incentives, productivity and motivation can be increased.<sup>3</sup>

Mills, Chase, and Margulies discuss the same concept as Jehring, that productivity improvement is said to be more easily realized by implementing motivational concepts such as goal setting and incentives.<sup>4</sup>

Donald P. Robin analyzed similar studies in his article. The theme of this model is that people will work when they gain, or believe they will gain, more from their work than they give. However, unless the organization is getting more than it gives to the employee, this phenomenon could not exist. Dual emphasis is a main point in this model. Robin explains why dual emphasis is very important, and that people and production must be viewed together. The model stresses the significance of an organization viewing its employees' need for satisfaction as an input. The employee is put on the same level as the other factors of production. The overall message in this research paper is that employee input must include higher level need satisfiers.<sup>5</sup>

Keith Davis discusses models of organizational behavior as he examines how they have evolved over the years. The significant point about these models is that the model,

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<sup>3</sup> J.J. Jehring, "Participation Bonuses," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 32, 1972: 539-543.

<sup>4</sup> Peter K. Mills, Richard B. Chase and Newton Margulies, "Motivating the Client/Employee System as a Service Production Strategy," *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 8, 1983: 301-310.

<sup>5</sup> Donald P. Robin, "An Input—Output Model of Employee Behavior," *The Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 10, 1967: 257-268.

which a manager holds normally, determines his perception of the organizational world about him. Davis discusses the autocratic, custodial, supportive, and collegial models. He concludes that no model is "the best model," although change is a normal condition of these models. The models depend on what is known about human behavior in whatever environment and a priority of objectives exists at a particular time. He also concludes that the autocratic model meets a person's subsistence needs, but does not meet his or her needs for security. The custodial model serves a person's second-level security needs. The supportive model attempts to meet employees' higher level needs like affiliation and esteem, which the custodial model does not serve. The collegial model is the highest towards service of a person's need for self-actualization.<sup>6</sup>

Kim and Schuler investigate the relationship between extrinsic feedback and employee responses. Previous research has shown that extrinsic feedback has a positive relationship with employee feelings of competence and intrinsic motivation. Yet in other studies no relationship between direct formalized feedback and attitude change was found. In order to resolve the inconsistent findings in past studies, Kim and Schuler used the nature of the task as a moderator variable. This model was used because it provides stimulation and information opportunities for the employee. Their study supported two hypotheses. One, when the task itself provides these opportunities, it was hypothesized that the level of employee responses would be the same regardless of the level of extrinsic feedback. Two, when the task does not provide these opportunities, however, high extrinsic feedback was hypothesized to be associated with higher levels of employee responses than low extrinsic feedback. Further results also showed that the use of

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<sup>6</sup> Keith Davis, "Evolving Models of Organizational Behavior," *The Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 11, 1968: 27-38.

extrinsic feedback is contingent upon the nature of the employee's task when considering employee satisfaction and internal motivation.<sup>7</sup>

In another article, Tsui, Pearce, Porter, and Tripoli describe the four different approaches to the employee-organization relationship when looked at from an employer's standpoint. In a study involving samples from ten different organizations in five different industries, they found that when employers commit to a fairly long-term relationship with their employees, the employees seem to respond favorably in terms of both performance and attitudes. The results show that employees show more commitment to a project if they are working in an over-investment opportunity. The results also suggest that firms should consider moving back toward mutual investment approaches in the long-term to remain viable.<sup>8</sup>

Edwin A. Locke's research focuses on the theory that rational human action is goal directed. He concludes that although goal setting helps to motivate employees, it is only one of many factors that impact motivation. He also finds that the concept of goals is not the most fundamental concept in motivation simply due to the fact that goal setting does not provide a definitive explanation of human action.<sup>9</sup>

In Bruno S. Frey's book, he claims that people do not act just because they expect a monetary gain. He believes that people take on many jobs and activities merely because they are passionate about them and not solely because they are getting paid to do

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<sup>7</sup> Jay S. Kim and Randall S. Schuler, "The Nature of the Task as a Moderator of the Relationship between Extrinsic Feedback and Employee Responses," *The Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 22, 1979: 157-162.

<sup>8</sup> Anne S. Tsui, Jone L. Pearce, Lyman W. Porter and Angela M. Tripoli, "Alternative Approaches to the Employee-Organization Relationship: Does Investment in Employees Pay off?," *The Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 40, 1997: 1089-1121.

<sup>9</sup> Edwin A. Locke, "The Ubiquity of the Technique of Goal Setting in Theories of and Approaches to Employee Motivation," *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 3, 1978: 594-601.

the jobs. He also argues that higher monetary compensation crowds-out inner motivation in crucial circumstances. He believes that the more a person gets paid the less committed to their work they become, and their performance will suffer. He develops his theory around the idea that human motivation is not restricted to monetary incentives. The book builds on five basic propositions that characterize the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation:

1. Intrinsic motivation is of great importance for all economic activities. It is inconceivable that people are motivated solely or even mainly by external incentives.
2. The use of monetary incentives crowds out intrinsic motivation under identifiable and relevant conditions (crowding-out effect).
3. Other external interventions such as commands or regulations can drive out intrinsic motivation.
4. External interventions may enhance intrinsic motivation under some conditions (crowding-in effect).
5. Changes in intrinsic motivation may spill over to areas not directly affected by monetary incentives or regulations (spill-over effect).

Though explaining these five propositions throughout the book, Frey develops an economic theory of human motivation showing that although extrinsic motivation is important, intrinsic motivation is also crucially important.<sup>10</sup>

Laming also investigates human motivation by analyzing why people do certain things. He examines all aspects of human life from determinism and free will to why people are aggressive towards one another. He concludes his study with three

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<sup>10</sup> Bruno S. Frey, *Not Just for the Money*, Switzerland: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1997: 1-35.

fundamental ideas from which he believes motivation is formed. They are personal view and camera view, Quasi-mechanical behaviour, and social conventions (money is the focus of many social conventions).<sup>11</sup>

Donald Campbell attempts to determine the impact incentives have on employees from a wide variety of professions. Campbell explores how lower bracket employees differs from higher bracket employees. He works off the notion that incentives work best when they result in a high level of individual benefit. Combining theory and examples he is able to show that individuals will act to maximize their personal profits with little concern for the personal well being of others around them.<sup>12</sup>

### **Motivation in Sports**

The second section focuses on motivation in sports. Miller and Carlyle investigate the relationship between motivation and self-efficacy in swimmers, ice hockey players, and basketball players. The data collected in their study proved to be inconclusive, as the correlation between motivation and self-efficacy was not very strong. The study showed that athletes with high levels of expectancy actually had lower motivation and although previous studies have shown a positive linear relationship between motivation and self-efficacy this was not the case in these studies of three types of athletes.<sup>13</sup>

Weigand and Stockham do a similar study on women's field hockey players.

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<sup>11</sup> Donald Laming, *Understanding Human Motivation*, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Donald E. Campbell, *Incentives*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> Merry Miller and Steve Carlyle, "The Relationship Between Motivation and Self-Efficacy in Competitive Athletes Participating in Swimming, Ice Hockey, and Basketball," *Journal of Sport Behavior*, Vol. 15, 1992: Issue 3.

They examine the difference in expectancy between forwards, midfielders, and defense as well as the difference between first, second and third division players. Data were collected from 110 British amateur players. MANOVA/ANOVA and Scheffe tests showed that forwards scored significantly higher on the forward-specific self-efficacy scores than either midfielders or defense. The data also show that the first division athletes scored significantly higher than the 2nd and 3rd division athletes. The results of this study suggest that, at least in team sports, self-efficacy should be considered relative to role-specific skills.<sup>14</sup>

Christina M. Beaudoin explored competitive orientations and motivation of professional women football players. The goal of this research was to examine relationships among competitive orientations, sport motivation, and the age of professional women football players. She also examined the differences in competitive orientations and sport motivation between younger and older players. The women were surveyed via an Internet survey. The survey had the Informed Consent, Sport Orientation Questionnaire, and the Sport Motivation Scale. The SOQ and SMS showed significant moderate correlation. There was also a significant negative correlation between age and the SMS Extrinsic Motivation. The results revealed that extrinsic motivation proved to be higher in the younger players than the older players. The overall consensus from the study was that all the women were highly competitive and intrinsically motivated.<sup>15</sup>

Bergen and Habusta look at the goal orientations of ice hockey players and their parents. Youth hockey players took a questionnaire and rated their own goal orientations

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<sup>14</sup> Daniel A. Weigand and Kimberley J. Stockham, "The Importance of Analyzing Position-Specific Self-Efficacy," *Journal of Sport Behavior*, Vol. 23, 2000: Issue 1.

<sup>15</sup> Christina M. Beaudoin, "Competitive Orientations and Sport Motivation of Professional Women Football Players: An Internet Survey," *Journal of Sport Behavior*, Vol. 29, 2006: Issue 3.



for hockey as well as their perception of their parent's goals. When ego orientation was measured, the sons' self-ratings were strongly correlated with the goals the parents had for their sons. The sons were significantly more ego-orientated than their parents wanted them to be. When task orientation was measured the correlation between the parents and sons was not as strong. From this study, it was discovered that ego orientation was easily communicated whereas task orientation was not.<sup>16</sup>

In another study on male adolescent hockey players, Losier and Gaeten explore the relationship between perceived competence and self-determined motivation over a time period. The article challenges the belief that perceived competence is a determinant of motivation. Elite level Canadian adolescent male hockey players filled out a questionnaire at the beginning of the season and once again at the end of the season. Perceived competence and self-determined motivation was measured at both times using a three-item scale adapted from Harter's scale of perceived competence. The results partially supported that perceived competence determines motivation over a period of time. This is the opposite of the belief that perceived competence is a determinant of motivation.<sup>17</sup>

Walker, Foster, Daubert, and Nathan investigate motivation by combining their differing perspectives on the subject. As a researcher, consultant, coach, and athlete, they surround the topic of motivation and contribute unique insights. The purpose of their chapter is to review previous theoretical models and come up with ways to increase motivation's positive impact on athletic performance. Through their study they were able

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<sup>16</sup> David A. Bergen and Steven F. Habusta, "Goal Orientations of Young Male Ice Hockey Players and Their Parents," *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, Vol. 165, 2004: Issue 4.

<sup>17</sup> Gaeten F. Losier and Robert J. Vallerand, "The Temporal Relationship Between Perceived Competence and Self-Determined Motivation," *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 134, 1994: Issue 6.

to determine that motivation is a critical variable in an athlete's or a team's performance. They conclude that athletes can control their motivation by becoming more aware of what drives them and how high their levels of motivation can reach. The research also shows that motivation is a factor that athletes may have the most control over and that there is a continuing effect of intrinsic motivation on sport performance.<sup>18</sup>

Butt looks at sport motivation from many different aspects in her book. She develops a motivational model, which allows her to show the importance for motivational theory. In her first motivational theory, she discusses how aggression, conflict, and competence play instrumental roles in an athlete's motivation. In the second part of her book, she discusses how competition and cooperation, internal and external reinforcements, and motivation measurement also play crucial roles in athlete's motivation.<sup>19</sup>

The important question of whether high-paid employees' motivation differs from lower-paid employees was not addressed in the literature. It can be concluded that most individuals are extrinsically motivated yet how does the motivation differ for people who have achieved their goals compared to people still striving for them? There are gaps in the literature, especially the sports pieces. The sports literature fails to examine the valence and instrumentality aspects of the expectancy theory. One should understand from the literature that individuals in the business world and in sports are driven mostly by self-efficacy. Intrinsic rewards still play a role in motivation but are overshadowed by the extrinsic rewards individuals work towards.

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<sup>18</sup> Brent Walker, Sandra Foster, Scott Daubert and DeDee Nathan, *Applying Sport Psychology*, United States: Human Kinetics, 2005: 3-19.

<sup>19</sup> Dorcas Susan Butt, *Psychology of Sport*, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company Inc, 1987: 3-88.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

To obtain the qualitative data for this study, twelve hockey players were interviewed. Four players from the NHL, four players from the AHL, and four players from NCAA Division 1 represented the sample used in this study. The interviews were conducted over the phone or via web cam if possible. Basic questions covering relative player information were the first stage of the questioning. For example, how many years they have played in their present league, past leagues they have played in and for how long, and what team they play for now. The second stage of the interview got into the motivation aspects. The questions were focused around the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of motivation. In each league the questions varied slightly, yet overall had the same foundation. Starting with the NCAA Division I hockey players, the focal point of their interviews was their futures in hockey. They were questioned on what motivates them to excel and what they strive to achieve in their hockey careers. The question of whether the possibility of signing a contract with a professional team (extrinsic motivation) motivates them more than the chance to achieve a lifelong dream of playing professional hockey (intrinsic motivation) was answered. The AHL player interviews were similar with slight variation in the questions. These players are now making five digit salaries compared to the zero salaries of NCAA Division I hockey players. Through a series of

questions they were asked if the possibility of getting a huge raise in salary (extrinsic motivation) plays a larger role than the opportunity to make the final step in their careers to the NHL (intrinsic motivation). The interviews with the NHL players were focused more on the financial aspect, simply on the fact that they have fulfilled their dream of playing in the best league in the world. The question that was investigated was the role money plays in their motivation. However, these players are making six to seven digit salaries, lending the idea that intrinsic motivation may play a bigger role than first thought. The NHL players' were the most complex of the interviews because with more and more success a player's motivation should change. The one question that remained the same for each player interviewed was how much they think they are worth. Self-efficacy plays a huge role in motivation and the interviews also explore this aspect.

The players in this study all have a personal relationship with the interviewer. Either playing on the same team in the past, or just having met through hockey. This allowed for more of a conversational rather than a strictly formal interview. Due to this relationship, the questions were answered more honestly with less bias making the data validity stronger. Overall, these interviews lasted around 20-30 minutes and if needed, follow up interviews were available until the study was finished.

## CHAPTER 4

### CASE STUDIES

#### NCAA Division I Case Studies

The four players interviewed for this segment of the study are all currently enrolled and playing hockey for colleges and universities in the United States. Two of the players are graduating this season as the other two have one and two years left respectively. Two of the interviews were completed over the phone and two of them were done in person.

#### The Case of Charlie – NCAA #1

Charlie is 22 years old. He is currently in his fourth year at Colorado College where he is majoring in economics. Considered a junior due to an injury red-shirt year for hockey, he still has one year left at CC. He was born and raised in Rochester, Minnesota where he grew up playing hockey.

I've played in the RYHA Rochester Youth Hockey Association for 10 years. From there I played in the MSHSL, Minnesota High School Hockey League, I played in that for four years, and then I spent three months in the USHL, the United States Hockey League.

He currently plays for the Colorado College Tigers, Division I hockey program. He is playing in his fourth year in the WCHA, Western Collegiate Hockey Association,

which is considered the best league in NCAA Division I hockey. Charlie's career at CC has been up and down with him being sidelined twice due to anterior crucial ligament injuries but has recovered and is healthy again. In his sophomore year he tore his ACL and spent a year in recovery only to tear it again in his second game back in his junior season. He is currently an assistant captain at CC and is known for his solid two-way play.

Today, Charlie reflects upon his hockey career and the time in which he was the most motivated to play the game that has defined his life.

It would have to be my senior year of high school hockey when I played for Rochester Mayo. I was motivated because my team wasn't supposed to be very good that year and I wanted to prove the critics and other teams wrong. Also, I wanted to earn a Division I scholarship from an elite program.

Although Charlie was highly motivated during this period, he did not draw much inspiration from his coach.

My coach did not have a huge impact on my motivation. He was more about having fun then winning and advancing to the next level. He didn't challenge players very often and wasn't much of a motivator.

Charlie compares the impact his coach in high school had on him with his current coach at Colorado College and finds that although his present coach shows more commitment to winning and advancing to the next level he still does not draw very much motivation from him.

My coach motivates me a little more than my coach in high school did, but still not a whole lot. I guess he motivates me in a way that if I don't play well I won't play, but I'm not motivated to win games for him.

I wish my coach was more personable, more one on one with me, then I think I would be able to draw more motivation from him. Also, if I really like the coach I would be more motivated to win for him.

During Charlie's senior year in high school his passion to excel to the next level was not shared by his teammates. Many of who were multiple sport athletes, they did not share the same goals or desires as Charlie did therefore leading him to be more selfishly motivated.

My teammates did not motivate me very much at all. My team was a bunch of guys who were baseball players playing hockey. Very much like the coach they were playing for the fun of it, so they did not put much time into hockey during the season and the off season.

As mentioned before Charlie is an assistant captain at Colorado College, and his teammates play a large role in what inspires him today.

Nowadays, teammates are one of the biggest motivating factors for me, because I know we all share the same goal of winning. I want to have success with them. I think of them as family, we are a tight group, pretty much the opposite of high school. We go out there and play for one another.

Charlie is not a player who thrives to be in the limelight. Throughout his four years at Colorado College, Charlie's teammates acknowledge him as being a team first

kind of player. Yet back in his senior year at Rochester Mayo High School he craved to be recognized by for his accomplishments at that level.

I would say that recognition was pretty motivating. I was always expected to be one of the best players in southern Minnesota. It was very motivating for me to get good recognition in the area and also recognition from college scouts.

Charlie still has high aspirations of playing professional hockey in his future. His ambitions to be acknowledged for his personal achievements has changed over his years in college but as is very common in any individual he still accepts recognition with open arms when the situation presents itself.

Recognition is still motivating, but not as important as it used to be, it's always been my dream to play college hockey and I've achieved that. Personal recognition is always nice, but the team and winning are more important to me. Nearing the end of my career in college it has become more motivating to me to become recognized by professional scouts.

Hockey was not always the most important thing in Charlie's life. Charlie reflects on the time in his hockey career when he was the least motivated. Although it was at a very young age, he demonstrated that until he began to love the game, he really didn't find any motivation to play hockey.

When I was about 10 when I was trying out for the travelling squad in youth hockey. During tryouts I wasn't very motivated to make the team, I didn't really care that much about hockey, and I ended up



getting cut and made the worst team. I really developed a love of the game the next year and I started becoming a better player and hockey became more fun.

Growing up in southern Minnesota, Charlie always dreamed of playing college hockey, which differs from most young hockey players who dream of one day playing in the NHL. He was more focused on making it to the next step in hockey rather than looking too far in the future. Now that he has achieved his childhood dream, he has new goals and playing in the NHL is definitely one of them.

In the past it wasn't a huge motivating factor, I always wanted to play college hockey. Now that I'm getting near to the end of my college career, it motivates me more, because I see friends and former teammates playing in the NHL. I realize now that it is more of a real possibility than I thought it was when I was younger.

Charlie ponders his future in the game that his life has revolved around for so many years. When he thinks about the possibilities the years to come present, he cannot help but look at hockey as a job, rather than the game it has been to him his the last 17 years of his life. The opportunity to make a living by playing a sport that he has trained for since childhood motivates him more than achieving his lifelong dream.

The possibility of signing a contract and making a good amount of money to play the game of hockey motivates me more than achieving my dream to play pro hockey. I want to be able to make a good living out of playing hockey. If I weren't going to make a decent amount of money I would retire.

Charlie ranks the factors that motivate him as follows:

1. Winning.
2. Teammates.
3. Signing a contract, to make money.

Last: Coaches

On a scale of 1 to 5, with one being playing completely for the love of the game and five being playing completely for the money, Charlie ranked himself at 3. He finds the most motivation from team success and his teammates now, which was not the case four years ago when he was a senior in high school. Recognition does not play a huge part in his motivation but he is still driven by the possibility of advancing his career to the next level. At this point in Charlie's career he now looks at hockey as a career choice more so than the game he loves and because of this, money plays a large part in Charlie's motivation.

#### The Case of Martin – NCAA #2

Martin is 21 years old. Martin is just finishing his sophomore year at Michigan Technical University. He hails from the city of Sherwood Park, Alberta, which is a suburb to the city of Edmonton. Martin played his entire youth hockey in Sherwood Park and then moved to northern Alberta to play juniors.

I grew up playing hockey in my hometown, Sherwood Park, Alberta. I had two pretty good years of Midget AAA, which helped propel me to the next level. I spent two years in the Alberta Junior Hockey League playing for Fort McMurray before getting my scholarship to Michigan Tech.

Martin just finished his second season for the Michigan Tech Huskies. Michigan Tech is in the Western Collegiate Hockey Association, considered the top league in NCAA Division I hockey. The ten seasons before this past one were dark years for this team as it continually found itself at the bottom of the league. Martin has been a big part of the resurgence of this program starting with his freshman year. He is part of one of the best two goalie rotations in the nation but this has also hurt his recognition. Martin didn't win a single game his freshman season but still put up some impressive numbers. This past year he was in the top ten in most goaltender categories in the nation and the Huskies made an impressive jump up the standings to finish in sixth place. His laid-back style of net minding has gotten all sorts of attention and he definitely has a bright future.

Martin thrives on playing his best when it matters the most. He loves the pressure of the big game; he wants to be the one in net carrying his team. He could not pinpoint a single time in his career when he was the most motivated but rather described a part of the season when he gets really inspired to play.

I get most motivated during the playoffs. As a hockey player, the playoffs are the most important part of the season. A team works hard everyday to get a berth in the playoffs, if I was not motivated, then I'd fail each and every teammate. In my mind, the playoffs are what separates good players from great players. Good players put up big numbers during the regular season, get all sorts of recognition, but aren't leaders. Great players lead their teams to championships.

Martin also looks to a time of the season when he is the least motivated. The big games are what he lives for and during this point in the season he finds little inspiration and too many distractions to really focus his game.

I feel the least motivated during the month of December. During that month, there are many distractions; Christmas break is approaching, this means that the team is able to go home and visit family and friends. I also find this month especially difficult to be motivated because during this point of the season, the games do not seem as important as the beginning and end of the season.

Teammate is the first word that comes to mind when thinking of Martin. He is the guy who even when things are going really well for him, will give all the credit to his teammates. He will record a shutout and tell the media that his defensemen deserves all the credit and that he really did not do that much. He is just that kind of player, completely selfless and humble. It is because of this mindset that Martin finds most of his motivation from his teammates and winning.

As a goalie, I do not feel like I need recognition to stay motivated. I would just as soon not be in the spotlight and have some of my defensemen get some attention. I thrive on the success of my team. Winning is something that everyone on the team will be noticed for. I am a player who wants every player on my team to do well. If they are playing well, then I am happy. I believe that's what a true teammate is.

In juniors, Martin began to realize what it takes to get to the next level. He developed an incredible work ethic with the tutelage of his coach and became a great

goaltender. He attributes much of his success to his career to his coach in Fort McMurray.

The best coach I ever had was Gord Thibideau, when I played for the Fort McMurray Oil Barons. He was so dedicated to getting his players to play at the best of their capabilities. If a player worked hard, then he'd reward them with more ice time. He is a person who puts 100 percent into his job, and that shows the players that they should do the same. He showed me that if you want to excel in this sport you have to be 100 percent committed and when you show up to rink you better be ready every night.

Like many goalies, Martin has definitely had his run of good games and bad. He never gets too high when things are going well and never too low when they aren't. Goaltenders are the backbones of any team, and when a team has success, credit and positive feedback are sure to follow. Martin refuses, however, to let positive feedback motivate him.

Positive feedback does not play a large role in my motivation.

While playing for Gord Thibideau, I learned that positive feedback wasn't a necessity to be successful. I believe that a good player needs positive feedback to play well; a great player can do it on his own.

Martin grew up in the hockey hotbed of Alberta, where the Edmonton Oilers have captivated audiences for many years. He, like most young boys in that area, dreamed many nights of playing on T.V. for the copper and blue Oilers. The NHL was just dream back then, however now it has become more of a reality for him.

When I was young, playing in the NHL was great motivation for me. I worked very hard so that one day I would be the one on TV, I'd be the one that little kids would be watching and looking up to. Playing NCAA hockey shows me that the NHL is not far away at all. At the same time, I have to be realistic and know my limitations. It still is nice to think that one day I could be playing in the NHL.

With every stellar performance Martin has in the coming seasons his chances of signing a professional contract become more and more real. Still though, the humble Sherwood Park native realizes that achieving something he had worked so long and hard for would be much more rewarding than signing a contract.

My whole life has been revolving around hockey. I have given everything to this sport. My family has also made huge sacrifices for me to play at the highest levels (traveling, moving cities, paying great amounts of money). To fulfill a lifelong goal is something that very few people will ever do, it is such a rare thing, that is why it is much more important to me than just a contract. An AHL or NHL contract is just a sign that I have reached my goal.

Martin ranks the factors that motivate him as follows:

1. Teammates – A team is like a family, and you want to give every ounce of effort on the ice so that your family can succeed. If I am not playing in a game, I'll still have the same intensity and passion while I am on the bench as I would if I was on the ice.

2. Winning – To be a good teammate and player, you have to have the desire to win. If your team is playing bad, you have to personally take the team on your shoulders and carry them to victory. I would do this because I know that every other teammate would do the same for me.

Last: Money - Not a factor for me. I still play hockey for pure enjoyment. I obviously love winning, but at the same time, if I'm losing, it makes me look deep within myself and shows what I am truly made of. Hockey has made me do things that I never could have dreamed of, I just have to work hard and play harder.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with one being playing completely for the love of the game and five being playing completely for the money, Martin ranked himself at 1.

Playing NCAA hockey does two things for me. It shows me that I am 21 years old and still playing hockey. This means that I still have the love and passion for the game. Secondly, if I was not to make the NHL, I would still have a degree to fall back on, this tells me that with a business degree, I would still be able to start my own company and make money.

Martin finds his most motivation in his teammates and team success. Positive feedback and recognition play very minor roles. Martin has drawn motivation from coaches but it is still not a major driving force for him. He has realized that the NHL is not too far away from where he is playing now, and this inspires him. At this point in Martin's career he is going to continue to do what got him to this point and see what the future holds for him.

I play hockey to have fun. I am always joking around and laughing. At this level, not many people can say that.

The Case of Steve – NCAA #3

Steve is 24 years old. He is currently in his senior year at Merrimack College in Massachusetts. Steve grew up in a small town of Edgerton, Alberta where he spent most of his childhood. In his mid-teens however he had to move away from home to further his hockey career.

I moved to Sherwood Park, Alberta when I was sixteen and played two years of Midget AAA. I then signed with a team in the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League where I played for two years before coming back to Alberta to play one year before getting my scholarship to Merrimack College.

Steve currently plays for the Merrimack College Warriors, Division I hockey program. Merrimack is in the Hockey East Conference, which is one of the top conferences in college hockey. Merrimack has struggled, however, the last few years and has found itself near the bottom of the rankings year in and year out. Steve has also struggled in his time at Merrimack, struggling to really find the offensive side of his game. He is currently an assistant captain and is known for his solid play at both ends of the ice.

Looking back at his junior days, Steve remembers his decision to leave the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League for the Alberta Junior Hockey League as the time in his career when he was the most motivated.



The time when I was most motivated in my career was when I asked for a trade from the Humboldt Broncos (SJHL) and was traded to the St. Albert Saints (AJHL). This was a time in my life where I knew that if I played well I could achieve an athletic scholarship, which had always been a goal of mine. Achieving this goal had more significance than just a goal that I set for myself. A scholarship would mean that my parents would not have to pay for my education and I could come out of school debt free. Also I would be exposed to several NHL scouts on a nightly basis. This would increase the chance of achieving another goal of mine, making it to the NHL or sign a pro contract.

Steve has always been acknowledged as being a great teammate and a player who coaches love to coach. He is the kind of player who will do anything for the team and just wants to win. Because of this attitude Steve is highly motivated by coaches and his teammates.

I would have to say coaching, teammates, recognition and team morale all play important roles in my motivation. I think that hockey players respond to one thing and that is the amount of ice time they are getting. Coaches hold the key to this and therefore give the power and ultimately motivation. I have a strong team spirit so the bond that my teammates and I have formed recently has sourced my motivation.

The time in Steve's career when he was the most motivated was his final year in juniors, which incidentally was the year he played for the best coach he has ever played for.

Gord Thibideau was the best coach I ever had. He knew how to get the most out of me as a player. He could mentally manipulate or intimidate me into playing my style of game and play above my potential.

He used my ice time very affectively in order to exceed my potential.

Because he was able to get this high level out of all of his players his teams saw a lot of success and my team was no exception.

Inspiration can be found in many different forms and for Steve he found a lot of inspiration in positive feedback, but not just from his coaches.

I always play harder when I know a coach appreciates how hard I'm working. If it weren't for positive feedback I wouldn't be nearly as motivated as a player and would not play as hard for my coach. However, positive feedback from my coach was not the only place I received positive feedback from. Friends, family and fans also play a large role in my motivation.

The past four years at Merrimack College have definitely taken their toll on Steve's confidence. He went to college with high expectations and dreams but things have just not fallen into place for him. Now in his final year, Steve finds himself the least motivated he has ever been in his career.

The time when I was the least motivated in my career has been this past year. It is my last year of school and the chances of me signing a pro contract have diminished significantly. My team lost more games than it won; in fact we only won three games. The degree that I have achieved while at college has greater potential of making me money than I could

make at hockey. My motivation has been diminished by the lack of personal and team success while here at Merrimack.

Steve has come to the realization that his dream to play in the NHL may be out of his reach. He has had a very successful career up to this point, but his once very real dream of playing in the NHL has vanished.

I think it is every young hockey player's dream to play in the NHL. Growing up it was my sole motivation. However, over the years and as I get closer to the NHL level I realize that the odds are stacked against me. Without the motivation to make it to the NHL early I don't think I would have made it this far in my hockey career.

Still, however, Steve is not driven by money, he has a true passion for the game and if the chance to achieve his childhood dream came along, he would take it in a second.

Achieving my lifelong dream plays bigger role in my motivation than the chance to sign a professional contract because even if they didn't pay me I would still play in the NHL.

Steve ranks the factors that motivate him as follows:

1. Winning – It doesn't matter what level of hockey or competition I am playing, my motivation is to win. Why else would you play hockey except to win?
2. Teammates – Hockey is such a team game and without teammates it is nearly impossible to win.

Last. Money – I have seen some monetary rewards throughout my career yet I would have done the same even if the money weren't there.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with one being playing completely for the love of the game and five being playing completely for the money, Steve ranked himself at 2. Steve finds his most motivation in team success and his teammates. Positive feedback and recognition also play large roles. Coaching was a big factor for him back when he was in juniors but nowadays he draws little motivation from his coaches. He has come to the realization that the possibilities of playing the NHL are very slim so he does not draw much inspiration from that anymore. At this point in Steve's career he wants to continue to play hockey but if he isn't able to play at a high level he has opportunities away from the sport that he would pursue.

#### The Case of Patrick – NCAA #4

Patrick is 23 years old. He is currently a senior at Colorado College and is majoring in Economics. Patrick is nearing the end of his time at CC and will be graduating in May 2007. He was born and raised in Yorkton, Saskatchewan where he played hockey growing up before going to British Columbia to play juniors.

Before CC I played two years in the British Columbia Hockey League (BCHL) and before that I played minor hockey in Saskatchewan.

Patrick currently plays for the Colorado College Tigers, Division I hockey program. He is playing in his fourth and final year in the WCHA, the Western Collegiate Hockey Association. Patrick's career at CC began in 2003 when he came to the Tigers from the Vernon Vipers of the British Columbia Hockey League. Not playing many games early in his first year Patrick was suddenly thrust into the starting goaltending role

when CC's starter at the time fell ill to mono. Patrick made the best of his opportunity and spent the next season splitting games with his counterpart until he became the outright starter his junior year at CC. Patrick is currently an assistant captain at CC and is an NHL draft pick of the Los Angeles Kings.

Patrick remembers the time just a few years back when he was the most motivated to play hockey.

I would have to say I was the most motivated in my second year of juniors. I was playing in Vernon at the time and I really wanted to get a scholarship to an NCAA school. It was always a goal of mine to play in the NCAA. Also, we had a good team that year and hockey was extremely fun. My coach also was a big factor in my motivation.

Patrick was quick to give credit to his coach back in Vernon for his high motivation during that time period. He and his coach had a good relationship and Patrick knew he was held accountable for his play and that inspired him.

I would say that coaching has a lot to do with it. I think it is easy to be motivated when you play for a coach that you respect. The best coach I ever had would have to be Mike Vandekamp of the Vernon Vipers. Vandy made sure that every player knew his role on the team and he gave us specific goals that acted as blueprints for how the team was supposed to play. We had the same nine goals for every game and the consequences weren't fun if we didn't meet those goals. He would give positive feedback when I did something well, but he would also give negative

feedback as well. I think every player wants to know that they are doing a good job and appreciated by their coach.

However, the last four years at Colorado College have changed Patrick's outlook on his personal motivation. He doesn't claim that the coaches have no impact on him nowadays, but he finds inspiration from his teammates more so than any another motivational factor.

The last few years at Colorado College I've been motivated mostly by not wanting to let my teammates down. Being able to accomplish things as a team is very rewarding because it takes all 20 guys in the locker room to accomplish your goals.

Coaching played a large role when Patrick was the most motivated in his hockey career, but it also played a large role when he was the least motivated too. When reflecting on the time when he was the least inspired to play, Patrick goes back to his first year in juniors when he was playing in Penticton, British Columbia.

Umm, the time I was least motivated would probably be my first year of junior hockey with the Penticton Panthers, the coach made me a lot of promises that turned out to be lies just to recruit me to come and play for them. I found it hard to be motivated to play for him.

Growing up in a small town in Saskatchewan, Canada, Patrick has followed the NHL all his life. Every Canadian hockey player grows up with the goal of one day playing in the NHL, but Patrick doesn't find motivation in something that is so far in the future.

I don't use the NHL as motivation, I think it's a goal I would love to attain but I try not to think about that far in the future. Of course being a small-town kid from Canada I dreamed many nights of playing in the NHL but now I just look to the next step for motivation.

Being a draft pick of the Los Angeles Kings, Patrick stands to get a nice signing bonus when he signs a contract with them. This opportunity to make a substantial amount of money overshadows his desire to achieve a lifelong dream.

The possibility of signing a contract motivates me more than the chance to achieve my goal of playing pro hockey. The money in pro hockey is such a large amount nowadays it's hard to not to look at it as a motivational factor.

Patrick ranks the factors that motivate him as follows:

1. Winning
2. Teammates

Last: Recognition, Coaching

Patrick was also quick to point out that his confidence has a direct impact on his motivation.

I find that when my confidence is high that I'm extremely motivated because I feel that no one can score on me.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with one being playing completely for the love of the game and five being playing completely for the money, Patrick ranked himself at 2. Patrick draws his most motivation from team success and not wanting to let his teammates down. During the period when Patrick was most motivated he gave a lot of credit to his coach.

During the period when Patrick was least motivated he blamed his coach for empty promises. In juniors, coaches played front roles in his motivation but nowadays they have taken a back seat to other factors. Recognition has never played a major role in his motivation, as Patrick has always been a player that gives the credit to others even when he deserves it. At this point in Patrick's career he realizes that he has the opportunity to make a lot of money and therefore approaches the game with a business attitude.

### **American Hockey League (AHL) Case Studies**

The four players interviewed for this segment are all currently playing in the American Hockey League. Three of the players are in their first seasons in the league while the other one is playing in his third season. All four of the interviews were completed over the phone.

#### **The Case of Trevor – AHL #1**

Trevor is 24 years old. Trevor is currently playing in his first year in the American Hockey League (AHL). He's part of the Iowa Stars organization who are affiliated with the Dallas Stars of the National Hockey League. He grew up in Roseville, Minnesota where he played minor and then high school hockey before leaving to play juniors.

I played for Roseville in the Minnesota High School league for three years and then the USHL for one year before getting a scholarship to go play for Colorado College.

Trevor is not a very big player in stature and many thought that would be his downfall when it came to playing college and pro hockey. He has proved everyone



wrong especially when he took the college hockey world by storm and won the Hobey Baker Trophy as the nation's top collegiate hockey player his junior season. He signed with the Iowa Stars after graduating in 2006 and began impressing coaches and players in the AHL and NHL. After getting off to a good start this past season he ran into some injury problems that will sideline him for the remainder of the season. With his superior ice vision and silky smooth hands, Trevor is the type of player who makes everyone around him better. He was the captain of Colorado College his senior season.

Minnesota high school hockey is the best high school hockey in the country. In Trevor's three seasons, he was able to accomplish many personal goals and was given many accolades. In his senior year in high school, he was awarded the Minnesota Mr. Hockey award for the best high school hockey player in the state. Although Trevor's career has been filled with personal achievement, the opportunity to realize childhood dreams inspires him.

I was the most motivated in my career when I was playing high school hockey. Growing up in Minnesota, the high school state tournament was something every young player dreamed of playing in. It was held at the Minnesota Wild's (NHL) arena and crowds were sold out for every game. It was something I grew up watching and the opportunity to play in it really motivated me.

Family has always been the top priority in Trevor's life. That's why in the summer leading into his final season at CC, he had little drive to play hockey.

I was least motivated during the summer going into my senior year of college because of personal/family issues. Hockey takes a backseat

when it comes to family. It really put things into perspective for me and made me realize that hockey is just a game and the people you love are what really matters.

Some players look to their teammates or coaches for motivation. Others find it in money or winning. Trevor is different though, he finds his motivation when he looks in the mirror everyday. He doesn't take anything for granted, Trevor has realized in his life that nothing is for certain, and that he has to make the most out the opportunities he is presented with.

The main factor that drives me is advancing my career to the next level. Everyday I try to get better and better, I work on things I need improvement on and I work on things I already do well. I remind myself everyday that there is always someone close behind me looking to take my spot on the roster. Of course there are other factors that drive me but that's by far the most prominent one.

Trevor has great respect for the game of hockey; he is a true student of the game. He has followed it ever since he was little and is very knowledgeable when it comes to the history of it. He can often be seen smiling and joking around on the ice, but at the same time is a fierce competitor. This attitude is a great reflection of the man who taught him the game and coached him growing up.

The best coach I ever had was Steve Sertich. He taught the game in the most fun way possible. Steve was very passionate about everything he did and really cared about his players. He coached like he was still a

kid playing the game. That is the way I try to approach the game, with that same attitude.

Even when Trevor was the captain at CC, he never was a vocal leader. He let his play on the ice do the talking. Never seeking personal attention, Trevor was still smothered with positive feedback for his outstanding play night in and night out. People telling him how good he was definitely helped build his confidence, but the times when he was told what he needed to work on motivated him much more.

Positive feedback absolutely played a role in my motivation. It is nice to know you are appreciated for your contributions to the team. In my mind, a mixture of positive feedback and constructive criticism is the best mix. Instead of always hearing what I was doing well, I liked to hear what I was doing poorly so I could work on it to improve my game.

Trevor has always been concerned with making the next step in his hockey career. When he was in high school, he was motivated to play juniors, and from there he was motivated to play college hockey. Now that he has made the step to the AHL, to play in the NHL is all that he wants.

The possibility of playing in the NHL only started motivating me after I graduated from college and signed an AHL contract. Now, playing in the NHL means everything to me. It is the biggest thing driving me to get better.

Although very humble and modest, Trevor realizes that with his abilities, there is good money to be made in hockey. The countless hours he has spent honing his game

give him the opportunity to make a career out of hockey and to Trevor that is just what he wants to do.

Salary does play a role in my motivation. Obviously the money in the NHL is very good, so it's an incentive to get to that level. I feel I get paid pretty well in my league compared to other players. I feel lucky being able to play a sport for my living and make more money than a lot of people who work nine to fives everyday.

Trevor welcomes his salary, yet money isn't the driving force behind his motivation. He believes that money will come as long as he continues to work on his game and improve.

I feel if I continue to work hard, the money will take care of itself, and in the end, I'll make what I deserve. I can't just expect to go out there and play mediocre hockey and get a raise in my pay. I'm a firm believer that people get what they deserve.

The money he is earning now in the AHL is without a question the most money he has ever made in his life. It hasn't changed how he views the game though; he still feels the same about it as he did when he was growing up in Roseville.

Hockey is still a game to me, and I still feel the same about it as I did when I was a young kid. Don't get me wrong though, I can't help but approach it a little differently now that it has become my career. I'm going to try to make good money playing hockey for as long as I can.

Trevor weighs what plays a more important role in his motivation and does not have to think long when it comes to the opportunity to achieve a lifelong dream.

Definitely the chance to play in the NHL and be able to say that I've played at the highest level in the world definitely motivates me more than the opportunity of signing a big contract. The feeling of suiting up to play in just one NHL game would mean way more to me than any amount of money.

Trevor ranks the factors that motivate him as follows:

1. The chance of playing the NHL and reaching the highest level.

Everything else matters but definitely not nearly as much.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with one being playing completely for the love of the game and five being playing completely for the money, Trevor ranked himself at 1. He finds his most motivation in making the final step in his hockey career. Winning, his teammates and recognition all play roles in his motivation but don't compare to his primary source of drive. At this point in Trevor's career he still loves the game as much as he ever did but has realized that it is his career now. Money plays a role in his motivation but is still overshadowed by the opportunity to play just one game in the NHL.

#### The Case of Joe – AHL #2

Joe is 24 years old. Joe is currently playing in his third year in the American Hockey League (AHL). He is a member of the Omaha Ak-sar-ben Knights who are affiliated with the Calgary Flames of the NHL. He grew up in Edmonton, Alberta where he played in their minor hockey ranks up until he was 16. He then played in junior leagues for about five years.

I played in the Alberta Junior Hockey League for about two and a half years and then I played in the Western Hockey League for two and a half years as well.

Joe's hockey career has had its peaks and valleys as most players go through. Joe was a highly touted player when he first entered the Alberta Junior Hockey League but did not live up to expectations. He was not getting along with his coach and was not happy where he was playing. His hockey career took a big turn when he was traded and he became the player every one knew he was capable of being. He had a great season and then made the step up to Major Juniors where the Omaha Ak-sar-ben Knights eventually signed him. Joe is a prime example of a player not giving up on his dreams even when his career seemed to be going in the wrong direction. He showed great resilience and because of this was able to achieve some of his goals.

Although most players are most motivated in their careers for personal gains or achievements, Joe remembers that he was most inspired when he was having team success.

I have to say that the time I was the most motivated would be during the two playoff runs my teams made in juniors. One was with Camrose in the Alberta Junior Hockey League and another one with Red Deer in the Western Hockey League. Just the chance to win a championship and accomplish something special as a team was real motivating for me. Also, going deep into the playoffs and winning championships plays a large role in getting to the next level. Scouts notice team success and with that personal success is sure to follow.

Joe's experience when he first entered the Alberta Junior Hockey League gave him a greater appreciation for a coach that he could get along with and be motivated to play for.

I think coaching plays an important role. First off, when I do something well and get acknowledged for it, I feel appreciated and want to continue to do well. I think coaching is huge because if you don't like your coach, it's going to be difficult to play for him and keep motivated.

Fortunate is the word Joe used to describe the opportunity to play for two outstanding coaches in Camrose and Red Deer. He credits these two well respected coaches for the resurrection of his career, and points out that he could not be where he is today if it weren't for them.

There were two coaches that played important roles in my development as a player and as a person. The first is Boris Rybalka of the Camrose Kodiaks. He really believed in me and told me how good I could be. He just gave me so much confidence and helped me to believe in my own abilities. He truly cared about his players and it made me want to do well for him in return. The other is Brent Sutter of the Red Deer Rebels. Brent taught me so much about competing and the will to win. He taught me how to demand more out of myself. He also got me to bring my competitiveness and battle levels to a new level. Those two coaches were the best I've ever had.

Coaching and feedback go hand in hand, so when Joe talks about his two great coaches from the past he reflects that positive feedback can go along way, especially with

a player like himself.

Positive feedback lets me know what kinds of things are working for me and in turn helps me to be more successful. It is also one of the things that really boosts my confidence, and when I'm confident, I'm motivated. Looking at it from the other side however, negative feedback lowers my confidence and my motivation too.

Growing up in a city that revolves around its NHL team, the Edmonton Oilers, it's easy to understand why Joe has dreamed his whole life of one day playing in the National Hockey League himself.

As young as I can remember, the NHL has been the main driving force for me and it still is today.

Many players in the AHL and NHL are highly motivated by the opportunity to get a raise in salary. Although Joe is making good money for playing a game, he doesn't draw much motivation from it. However, when comparing the talent level from the AHL to the NHL, he feels that AHL players are not justly paid.

My salary does not play a big role in my motivation. Of course it's nice to be able to make a career out of playing hockey, but I don't play hockey for the money. I think the gap between AHL and NHL salaries is too large, when you have players in the NHL making millions and no player in the AHL making over \$100,000.

When it comes to incentives in his contract however, the possibility to gain something that is not guaranteed factors into his motivation.



I'm always motivated to achieve something. If something is guaranteed, I have a tendency to take it for granted, whereas if I have incentives to work towards, I'm way more motivated.

Money has a funny way of changing people's outlooks on certain things, especially when it comes to sports. Many athletes become overwhelmed by their extrinsic desire that they forget why they are really playing the sport. Although money has definitely changed the game for Joe, he still thinks of the sport he has played for 19 years in the same way.

Money hasn't changed my love for the game. But hockey has become somewhat of a business to me now. Things changed a little bit when I realized I could make a career out of this. I find myself treating it more like a job to some degree in that I'm getting paid to perform and get results just like any other job.

When thinking about what it would be like to finally make the last step to the NHL, even with the possibility of a huge increase in salary, Joe still looks to his childhood dream for his motivation.

Taking that final step and making it to the NHL and achieving a life-long dream plays a bigger role than getting a huge raise in salary.

Joe ranks the factors that motivate him as follows:

1. Recognition.
2. Winning.
3. Coaches.
4. Teammates.

Last: Money.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with one being playing completely for the love of the game and five being playing completely for the money, Joe ranked himself at 1. He finds his most motivation in being recognized for doing things well. Winning and coaching are other factors that play a large role in his drive. At this point in Joe's career he looks at hockey as a job but hasn't lost his love for the game. Money plays a minor role in his motivation as he still strives to achieve his lifelong goal of playing in the NHL.

### The Case of Vincent – AHL #3

Vincent is 22 years old. Vincent is currently playing in his first season in the American Hockey League (AHL). He is part of the Chicago Wolves organization, which is affiliated with the Atlanta Thrashers of the NHL. He grew up in Pasadena, California where he played his youth hockey growing up. Then he was a member of the National Development Program for two years before going to college.

I played 12 years of youth hockey in California, where hockey really wasn't that big. I then played for the under seventeen NDP for one year in which we were a part of the North American Hockey League (NAHL), and then played for the under eighteen NDP program for one year and was part of the United States Hockey League (USHL). When I was eighteen I got recruited to play for Colorado College in which I played for years in the WCHA.

Vincent has always had a knack for scoring goals. Every league he has played in he has filled the opposition's nets with pucks. Although he has a lightning quick wrist shot, it's not his abilities that make him so dangerous; it's his will to win. Although

small in stature, he plays much bigger than he is and is not afraid to get his nose dirty. It is this desire to compete that has made him so successful. After putting up incredible numbers throughout his college career, he has made a smooth transition to the pros and currently leads the AHL in goals as a rookie. Vincent leads by example every night he laces them up, and is highly respected among his teammates and peers.

Everything he does on the ice is because he so desperately wants to be a champion. The time in his career when he was the most motivated was not his junior year of college in which he lead the nation in goals but his senior year, when he knew time was running out on his chance to win it all.

I was probably the most motivated my senior year of college. One of my goals entering college was to win a national championship and I realized that it would be my last chance. I knew that no matter what happened there was no way I would play another college game at the end of that year. Although I had a pretty good college career, not winning the national title is still one thing that bothers me when I look back on it. We had the team to win it all and I definitely feel somewhat responsible for our shortcomings.

Being the high scoring threat that he is, Vincent always draws a lot of attention on the ice. Opposing teams look to hit him early and often, and try to take him off his game. With his style of play, Vincent has had numerous injuries over the years. With such a strong desire to win, Vincent felt it hard to be motivated when he could not be out there with his teammates.

My sophomore year of college was probably the least motivated I have ever been. I was coming off shoulder surgery in the off-season and then sustained another injury a month into the season, which took me out for an extended period of time. I was so frustrated and getting tired of rehabbing my injuries. It just took so much out of me mentally, and my desire began to fade. Not being able to play really dampened my spirits.

The main ingredient to successful teams is unity. The more teams come together as one the more the more success they have. Vincent is the type of teammate who can lighten up the mood in the locker room. He believes that players should be excited to come to the rink everyday, and that hockey should always be fun.

Team morale is definitely a factor in my motivation. The more fun I have and the better I get along with my teammates makes it easier coming in to the rink each day. Winning is the foundation for all of my motivation. Winning leads to personal success, success of my teammates, and of course winning is fun. Coaches affect my motivation too. I love when coaches challenge me and get me to play harder. They can get their players to work harder with the right tools.

Vincent has all of the offensive tools. Good speed, great shot, heady passer, and most importantly a nose for the net. Sometimes, however, players with an abundance of skill can become lazy and forget that hard work beats skill any day of the week. Vincent became the player he is today because he developed an above average work ethic to accompany his above average skill. He gives credit for his work ethic to his National Development Program coach.

The best coach I have ever had was Mike Eaves. Not only was he extremely knowledgeable but also he kept every player accountable. As a result, he forced you to work hard and stay motivated to play. With him it was black and white, you either worked hard or you did not play regardless of how skilled you were.

If there is one thing Vincent is not short of, it is confidence. He believes in his abilities and because of this his motivation is usually very high. Even though he is very confident, he still thrives off positive feedback.

In a lot of ways positive feedback helps reinforce the motivation I already have inside. The better I think I am doing the more I think I can make it all the way to the next level. It is nice to hear from coaches and teammates that they value my contributions. It definitely instills confidence in me and makes me more motivated to play for them.

Growing up in California, Vincent was one of very few kids who dreamed of one day playing the NHL. While hockey has gained in popularity over the years, still there are very few Californians playing pro hockey. For Vincent, being able to make the final step to the NHL is his main driving force and would be very special to him, especially because of where he comes from.

Playing in the NHL is still the most important reason for my motivation. My dream has always been to play in the NHL and still is to this day, so that is what I am working towards. Not many people would have given a little California kid a chance at making it, so that would make it extra special for me.

Coming from college, where players do not get paid because of the amateur status of the sports, Vincent was very excited when he got his first taste of professional money. Although it does play a role in his motivation, he feels that if he continues to play like he has, the money will come.

Salary is a concern of mine but not the driving factor. Obviously I want to play better so I can get to the NHL and increase my salary in the process. Unfortunately in this business there are limitations on what you can make at the start of your career. I feel I am paid fairly well in comparison to other players in the league, but I will definitely welcome a raise if I get the opportunity to play in the NHL.

At this point in Vincent's career, still very young, money is not a dominating factor in his motivation. His goal to make the NHL outweighs his financial desires.

Right now being a young player and not having played in the NHL at all money is low on my list of priorities. I'd like to make enough money to start a life for myself but I would rather be in the NHL playing for less money if it came to that.

Hockey changed forever for Vincent when he began playing in college. He admits that hockey is a business now and just like any other business employees must earn what they are getting paid. However, his love for the game is still very strong.

Hockey became somewhat of a business in college because I got a scholarship, which is basically like getting paid to play. It really has not changed my love for the game at all. I think to myself, wow I get paid to play a game. It's a pretty cool thing to be doing. However, I feel

obligated to produce first off because I need to earn my paycheck and secondly because it is a business, if I cannot help the team they will have no problem replacing me.

The chances of Vincent playing in the NHL are very good right now. He is on pace to win the rookie of the year award in the AHL this year and an NHL contract should be waiting for him after this season. When he thinks about, just the opportunity to play in the NHL means more to him yet the increase in pay definitely gets him excited.

The opportunity to make the NHL plays a bigger role in my motivation than the money but because the raise is a given while playing in the NHL it is an extra plus for getting there.

Vincent ranks the factors that motivate him as follows:

1. Teammates/Winning.
2. Coaches.
- Last: Recognition.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with one being playing completely for the love of the game and five being playing completely for the money, Vincent ranked himself at 2.

I'm not in a situation where money doesn't matter at all but the hockey is the most important part by far.

Vincent finds his most motivation in team success and the success of his teammates. Coaches also play a big role for him, as he gets inspired when coaches challenge him. He also takes a lot of pride in proving people wrong and overachieving. At this point in Vincent's career he still loves that game as much as he did when he was

young but he realizes that it is a business now. His dream to play in the NHL is still his main driving force but the chance to make a lot of money does play a role as well.

#### The Case of Nicklas – AHL #4

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Nicklas is twenty-one years old. Nicklas is currently playing in his first season in the American Hockey League (AHL). He plays for the Portland Pirates, which are affiliated with the Anaheim Ducks of the NHL. He grew up in Hermosa Beach, California, where he played hockey growing up until he went to a prep school to play Midget. He then received a scholarship to play NCAA Division I hockey.

I grew up playing hockey for the junior kings organization in Los Angeles before I went to Shattuck St. Mary's prep school to play Midget AAA for three years. After that I got a scholarship to play at Colorado College where I played for three years before leaving prior to my senior year to play for Portland in the AHL.

Nicklas is a skilled defenseman that is known for his exceptional offensive abilities. His soft hands and incredible composure back on the point have made many scouts notice him throughout the years. While playing Midget AAA Nicklas accumulated impressive numbers that had many schools recruiting him. He had a setback his first year in college, however, when he only played 12 games and was a healthy scratch for most of the season. He broke out in his sophomore year and showed why he was so highly touted. He continued his great play the next season and decided to forgo his senior year and signed with Portland in the summer. Known as a very unselfish player, Nicklas makes every player on the ice better when he is out there. His defensive play was his one weak point entering college, but has improved immensely in the past



few years to become very dependable defensively.

Nicklas has been incredibly motivated the past few seasons after getting drafted by Anaheim when he was 19. He looks to that time in his career as well as his time spent at Shattuck St. Mary's as the time when he was the most motivated.

I would have to say the time I was most motivated was in high school playing Midget AAA hockey. I was on a team with a lot of very good players and everyone's goal was to move on to play college hockey. With everyone pushing each other and having similar goals it really kept me focused and motivated to get better for that next level. I think the other time I was most motivated was after my sophomore year of college. I had had a decent year and improved a lot from the year before. I really wanted to come back and have another good year. I started to understand what it took to get better and potentially make it to the next level. I wanted to prove to myself and other people that my previous year wasn't a fluke. So I was more motivated than I had ever been over the summer to work hard.

Nicklas's struggles his first season in college can be attributed to his lack of preparation the summer leading into the season. He was a highly recruited player and he got complacent thinking his abilities would be enough for him to succeed at the next level. That summer was the time in his career when he was the least motivated.

I think the time I was least motivated to play was after my high school season was over and I had committed to go to college the following year. I was playing lacrosse and was not motivated to work out, get bigger

and stronger and more ready the summer before my freshman year at Colorado College. I think I was just making excuses and reasons not to get a head start to the summer because I was a senior and already set for college as far as where I was going, which was a problem for me. My motivation really was at an all time low and I was not focused on what I should have been.

Players who have played with Nicklas over the years would be the first to tell you that he is an incredible teammate. He has a great presence in the locker room and has always put his teammates before himself. Recognition has never been a big factor for him; he would rather see his teammates get the credit.

My teammates play a huge role in my motivation. I feel like motivation is contagious and I act on what I see around me. Whether that means a rookie looking up to the veterans or a freshman getting tips from an upperclassman. I love to see my teammates do well, and I'm motivated to be a big part in their success. I think coaching plays a part as far as setting guidelines but I can get really unmotivated by coaches too. In the end, it is all individual preference I feel and I tend to be a little more motivated when I have someone to push me or to compete against. As far as recognition goes, it's not a huge factor for me, but I would like to be recognized to advance my career.

Nicklas is complex player. He has fragile confidence that can go up and down in an instant. At the same time, his risky style of play can cause coaches to have fits. In college, he made so many great plays and got no praise but the coaches would magnify

his mistakes. His current coach understands what kind of player he is, and that is why Nicklas has so much respect for him.

The best coach I have ever had is my present coach Kevin Dineen.

He has close to twenty years experience in the NHL and I feel there is no better way to learn the game than from experience like that. He has been there and really understands what it takes to be a successful player in hockey. He is very good at motivating me and recognizes my strengths and weaknesses. He helps me better myself in places that I need work as well as bringing out the areas that I'm good at. He takes credit when it is due and takes the blame when it is needed. He also understands what players go through after a hard weekend or a week of tough practices with injuries and the mental aspects of a season. I get along with him and he can be approached very easily.

Positive feedback plays a role in his motivation. He also appreciates constructive criticism if it can help him improve.

Yeah, I think both positive feedback and constructive criticism both play a role in motivation for me. It is important for me to know when I am doing something well and know what I need to improve on. When a coach gives me confidence I feel like I play my best. And that when a coach talks to me and lets me know how I am doing.

The possibility of playing in the NHL has always been something Nicklas has dreamed of ever since he was a kid. He grew up watching the Los Angeles Kings and imagined himself one day playing for his hometown team. Where he is at in his career

right now, the possibility of playing in the NHL is ever present in his mind but does not play a major role in his motivation.

Playing in the NHL has always motivated me. I think every kid growing up has a dream of playing in the NHL. For me, I kind of feel like playing in the NHL is more of a secondary motivation. I feel that when I am most motivated I have other things in mind. Like, I feel that when I am working my hardest or most motivated it is to get better for where I am at the time. In the end it would be amazing to play in the NHL, but I need to succeed and take steps before that can happen. And that is a long ways away and a long time of development. I think in the end that is the goal but I am motivated to get better where I am first.

Nicklas earns an entry-level contract right now that all first-year players make. He will continue to earn the same salary for first three years he plays in the AHL. Although his salary does not play an important role right now, down the line it will factor in much more.

Salary right now for me gives me little motivation. My salary is based on something I have no control over until my first contract is over. It is not based or does not change on how good or bad I do under the new collective bargaining agreement. In the past, similar players as me have received a lot more money and better signing bonuses. In the end, I want to make the big bucks so how well I do now can affect how much money I get later.

Money has never been a big factor in Nicklas's life. Still though, he welcomes the possibility of making a lot of money in the future playing hockey for his career.

Right now I feel like it does not play a huge role. I have enough money for the lifestyle that I lead. Down the line my motivation is definitely to make as much money as I can. So that means I have to work hard and get better and have some good years playing hockey. In the end this is what I want to do and this is my job. I am competing with a lot of other hockey players to make money to support my family and myself down the line. And that is important to me, so there is definitely motivation to make money.

His attitude towards the game has changed with the introduction of money. It is hard for players especially in his situation to ignore that hockey has become much more than just a game. Nicklas understands that his job is not guaranteed and that he is replaceable.

It is definitely more of a business. I love hockey and it is what I enjoy. But at this stage of my career I am trying to get my foot in the door. Like I said, it is a job now and I am competing every day to keep my job. If I don't take care of my body or work hard over the summer, I might be out of work.

When it comes down to money or achieving his lifelong dream, Nicklas still insists that playing in the NHL outweighs the possibility of signing a substantially larger contract than he has presently.

In the end, I want to play in the NHL. That is my dream. I think playing in the NHL was a bigger goal of mine when I was younger compared to making money. I want to play and have a career in the NHL but money is definitely a motivation of mine to make it to that level. Just the security of doing something I love and getting paid for doing it means a lot too.

Nicklas ranks the factors that motivate him as follows:

1. Teammates.
2. Winning.
3. Coaches.
4. Money.
5. Recognition.

They are all pretty close in the middle there. Winning, coaches and money can probably be moved in and out with each other.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with one being playing completely for the love of the game and five being playing completely for the money, Nicklas ranked himself at 2. He finds his most motivation in his teammates. Winning, coaches and money all play significant roles in his motivation as well. At this point in Nicklas's career, he is realizing that hockey is a business and that he has to work hard to keep his job. Money is not very important where he is at right now but the prospect of making a lot of money in the future is definitely a driving force for him.

I love playing hockey. Not many people get to experience being on a team in sport like this. I feel money definitely drives me, who

doesn't want to get the big paycheck? But in the end it is the game that drives me to improve.

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### National Hockey League (NHL) Case Studies

Of the four players interviewed for this segment, two have spent time up and down between the NHL and AHL, while the other two are full-time NHL players. Two of the players are in their second seasons in professional hockey while the other two are playing in their third season. All four players were interviewed over the phone.

#### The Case of Ryan – NHL #1

Ryan is 24 years old. Ryan is currently playing in his fourth year of professional hockey, which has seen him spend two years in the AHL and the last two in between the AHL and NHL. Ryan grew up just outside of Edmonton, Alberta in a town called Sherwood Park. He played hockey in Sherwood Park until he was 16 years old.

When I was sixteen, I got the opportunity to go play in the Western Hockey League, (which is considered the best major junior league in Canada). I played for the Swift Current Broncos for five years and then was lucky enough to sign an AHL deal with the Toronto Marlies. After two seasons with them I signed an NHL contract with the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Ryan has had an injury-riddled season up to this point and has found himself back in the AHL playing for the Toronto Marlies. Before his injuries however he was a staple in the Toronto Maple Leafs line-up playing an important checking role on their fourth

line. Once he gets 100 percent healthy there is no question he will return to the NHL and resume his role for the Leafs.

Like many hockey players that make it to the AHL, Ryan got complacent when he made the big step from major juniors to the professional ranks. However, he finally realized what he needed to do to make the final step to play in the best league in the world:

I was most motivated about three-quarters of the way through my first year of professional hockey. I had not had the best season up to that point and I got caught just going through the motions everyday just to get through it. As in any profession your goal is to be at the highest level and I assume make as much money as you can. I had only an AHL contract my first year, with the Toronto Maple Leafs' option to make it into an NHL contract after the season. Finally realizing that this was my job now I really got motivated to be the best I could be at my job.

Six years earlier however things weren't looking so bright for a young 11<sup>th</sup> grader, who moved from his home in Sherwood Park to play in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. This was the point in his career that he remembers being the least motivated to play hockey.

I was the least motivated my first year of junior hockey. I had just moved away from home at 16 and was probably pretty immature. I didn't play very much at all, I was away from all my friends at home, I made next to no money and I was very far away from turning pro. It took me a year to figure out why I was really there.



Players that played with Ryan or even against him would be the first to tell you that he is a team guy who puts his body on the line every night he steps on the ice. For a player like Ryan there are many factors that drive him. To play the kind of role he plays where his contributions are rarely recognized he finds inspiration in many things.

Definitely my team plays a significant role in my motivation. If you have a great group of guys who get along on and off the ice it makes it so much better coming to the rink everyday and playing each game for each other. I think if I have a coach who really fits my preference that definitely helps. Some coaches suit different types of players. A good coach in my eyes knows how to find each individual's buttons. If my coach likes me, plays me a lot, but holds me accountable, that does wonders for motivating me. With playing pro there are other motivating factors as well like fulfilling life long dreams and, of course, the financial side. Being able to fulfill a dream that I have thought about and projected for my whole life is very satisfying. Meeting goals and then maintaining them is also great motivation. I think I speak for all hockey players when I say that you want to play at the highest level also because of the financial benefits. Speaking for myself, making the most money I can while I am young and still playing a game for my profession, is definitely a motivator.

Playing at the high levels Ryan has over the last few years, he has definitely had the chance to play for some pretty prestigious and knowledgeable coaches. Paul Maurice coached Ryan in the AHL and later was named the head coach of the NHL team in the same system. Ryan has had the opportunity to play for him in both leagues and speaks

very highly of him.

Paul Maurice was the best coach I have ever had. He knew exactly how to motivate and prepare our team for a game or practice. He was never caught by surprise and our team was always ready to play. He held everybody accountable and made it fun to come to the rink everyday. I learned new things all the time, and he had confidence in everyone on our team.

Positive and negative feedback also is an important driving factor for Ryan. Every player at one time or another is going to get yelled at and also be told how good they are. The important thing for Ryan is to keep a level head whether it is positive or negative feedback.

Both motivate me. More so I would say I get motivated from positive than negative. Positive reinforcement and feedback always build my confidence. It's nice knowing that something you are trying to accomplish is being recognized and appreciated. Negative feedback gets me mad and wants me to be better which also helps motivate me. A good yelling at puts things back into perspective for me. Some guys handle each differently and too much of either is probably not good either. Too much positive can make me start thinking I'm never in the wrong and too much bad can just kill my confidence.

Growing up Ryan never set his goals too high. He was always focused on the next step ahead, never looking too far ahead in the future. As he began to realize his potential, however, the once-distant dream of playing in the NHL began to become a reality for him

and this drove him.

Playing in the NHL was always something that I aspired to accomplish but I don't think I really started realizing it until the last couple years of junior. It was the main motivating factor for the hard work that I have put in everyday. Always being around guys who had the same goal made it fun and competitive.

Ryan would be the first to tell you that a hockey player's career can be cut short at any time. He has had many injuries, especially in the last few years that could have easily forced him into an early retirement. He wants to make the most out of his situation while he still can.

My salary plays a big role in my motivation. I could say that getting to the NHL was my motivation but then my salary took care of itself when I got there. In any profession you want to make the most money you can, especially with the uncertainty of hockey and if you do not have an education to fall back on. I want to make the most money I can while I can to support my family down the road because I know I cannot play forever. I feel I get paid what I deserve compared to the other players in the NHL. Salaries are based on how many points you get and they compare them to others in the league so it is usually pretty fair.

Before the collective bargaining agreement, incentives played a large role in most players' motivation. However, now only certain players are allowed incentives in their contracts so they have become nearly obsolete. Ryan thinks about when incentives were prominent in the NHL.

Incentives were a big motivating factor for me. With the new collective bargaining agreement there are no incentives allowed unless you fall under a certain criteria that not many players do. I think it applies to older players who have been injured a lot. But yes, the more I can make definitely motivates me. My salary is what I'm getting paid no matter what so any bonus is always a good motivator.

Ryan is at a point in his career where money is an important factor. He's at the age where he wants to start a family, and he wants to live a good life after hockey has passed him by.

Money plays a pretty big role. Playing at the highest level of hockey I can is the ultimate goal and motivator, but along with that comes numerous perks, along with a bigger paycheck. I think money is a non-motivator for those who already have too much.

Still through all the success he has achieved and the big deposits he has made to the bank, Ryan remains attached to the game that has given him so much. He still treats hockey as just a game and he could not be happier making a living playing it.

Money hasn't changed my love for the game but when I got into professional hockey I saw that it is a business and that money is the number one thing owners and shareholders are looking to increase. I still look at it as just a game and that I am very fortunate to get to play it for a living. But that is what it has become, a profession in which I can play a game and support my future family and myself. I think I appreciate the game more now seeing that it is a way of life and a business as well.

Ryan ranks the factors that motivate him as follows:

1. Winning – Winning takes care of everything else.
2. Money – You need it to live and you know it is there to obtain.
3. Teammates – Huge motivating factor for me.

It may seem weird that they are in that order but no matter what motivates me, the more I can motivate myself, the more I will win, the more my teammates will benefit, the more recognition I will get, the more money essentially I will get. I get motivated to win games and become a winner, for my family, my teammates and in turn when I do that, I will make money.

On a scale of one to five, with one being playing completely for the love of the game and five being playing completely for the money, Ryan ranked himself at 2. He realizes that by loving hockey, he has made a lot of money. He would never stop loving hockey but also realizes that he cannot live and support a family if he doesn't get paid. Ryan finds his greatest motivation in winning which in turn will lead to financial stability. Positive feedback and teammates' success also play large roles in his motivation. Ryan has a good understanding of what a coach needs to do to motivate him. He has realized his lifelong dream to play in the NHL so now his personal goals are based more around money. At this point in Ryan's career he wants to continue to play hockey at the highest level, and if he can make good money and retire at an early age that would be just perfect.

### The Case of Peter – NHL #2

Peter is 28 years old. He is currently playing in his third season in the NHL. He spent his first two seasons with the San Jose Sharks before being traded this past off-season to the Ottawa Senators. Peter grew up in Rosemount, MN where he played all of his minor hockey including four years in the Minnesota High School League.

Growing up I played in Rosemount, MN until I finished high school. I then went to play in the USHL for two years before getting a scholarship to play for Colorado College. Following my four years at CC I played one season in the NHL, then one season in the German DEL for one year during the NHL lockout season.

Peter was a highly recruited player when he was playing in the USHL. After signing with Colorado College he had four outstanding years in college including serving as the captain his final season. He put up big numbers in college and this brought him a lot of attention from NHL scouts. After playing one season in the NHL, Peter had to spend one season playing in Germany because of the NHL lockout. He used this time to hone his skills and when his chance to play in the NHL again came, he made the most of it. This past season he led the Ottawa Senator defensemen in scoring and was second in the entire league's plus/minus rating. Peter has quickly become one of the NHL's top defensemen yet his salary does not reflect his great play.

Peter used his incredible senior season of college to springboard into his professional career. He remembers the days following his final college game as the time in his career when he was the most motivated.

The time I was the most motivated was just after I signed my entry-level contract with the NHL. It was just after the completion of my senior year of college before I started my professional career. I was so motivated at this point because my dream of playing in the NHL was a lot closer than I ever realistically believed it could be. I basically felt I wanted to do anything in my power to realize that dream.

After his first season in the NHL, Peter was forced to play a season overseas during the NHL lockout. Coming from a class organization like the San Jose Sharks, Peter felt like he was taking a step backward in his career and had little inspiration.

Playing over in Germany during the lockout, I had come from playing in the NHL and the organization as a whole was very unorganized and very unprofessional (as compared with my NHL team). It just soured my overall experience to be treated so poorly by a professional sports franchise.

Although there are many factors that drive Peter, he really looks inside himself for his most motivation. He is a true competitor in every sense of the word, and that shows when Peter suits up.

Coaching, teammates, and team morale all play important roles in my motivation. I want my coaches to trust me in all situations, I want my teammates to know that I'll bring my best every night and I when the team is winning everyone benefits from that. Still though, I think that my underlying driving or motivating force is my inner desire to succeed and be around people with similar feelings.

The two years Peter spent in the USHL may have been the most crucial in his development as a player. This is the time in his career that he began to understand what it would take to become a great player. He thinks of that time and early in his NHL career when his coaches had the biggest impact on him.

The best coach I have ever had was Mark Osiecki, who coached me in the USHL. I think he was great because he was: 1.) A very knowledgeable coach who had a relatively successful hockey career, 2.) He was willing to pass on that knowledge to his players and 3.) He knew his players well enough to know what motivated them and how to motivate them. For example he knew that yelling at some players was an effective coaching mechanism, but others did not work that way. A close second was the coaching staff in San Jose. Something that (as an inexperienced player in the league) I felt they did an absolutely amazing job of was setting me up in situations where I could succeed. They were not afraid to show confidence in me early in my career, which in turn bred inner confidence.

Never a player who craved to be praised, Peter finds little motivation in positive feedback. His level-headedness keeps him from becoming influenced by factors outside of himself. Instead, he keeps an even keel, which has definitely been a factor in his success.

I would say that neither positive nor negative feedback plays much of a role in my motivation. As I stated previously, I am mostly motivated by inner drive and outside forces don't necessarily play a huge role in that



drive. If pressed, negative feedback has a small negative impact on my motivation, and vice-versa for positive. In other words my motivation is helped by positive feedback. Probably a better way to put it is that my confidence is greatly affected by feedback, but I don't necessarily feel my motivation is. My personality is such that I try to keep myself from getting too high or too low, which may be the reason I don't necessarily feel my motivation is affected by feedback.

Growing up in Rosemount, MN, Peter never used the NHL for motivation. It was a childhood dream, but really did not think it was an attainable goal.

Playing in the NHL did not really motivate me much at all. I always wanted to play in the NHL, but realistically never thought I would ever make it growing up. Being such a distant goal, it was hard to draw motivation from it.

Peter's salary plays a role in his motivation, yet it is not a very big factor. He also feels that for the high level of hockey he is playing currently that he does not make as much money as he deserves when comparing himself to other players in the league.

Salary plays some a role in my motivation, albeit a small one. I feel that if I was in the business world, or had a different job that paid me less than the NHL does, my motivation would be pretty much the same. The only change in motivation levels would probably be directly attributed to my co-workers' motivation. Again my desire to be successful is what truly motivates me. As compared to other players in the NHL, I think I am underpaid. In addition I feel I am underpaid when comparing me to

other players similar to me. I make enough money that I am able to live a comfortable life and that is more than enough for me. With that being said, I am on the lower part of the pay scale for the NHL, which may account for the lack of money being a motivating factor. Now if I was making \$2 million a year, I might put more pressure on myself because of the money, which would mean money might be more of a motivation factor.

Peter has always had a great appreciation for the game of hockey. He realizes that not many people are lucky enough to be able to play a game they love so much for a living.

Money has made my love for the game even greater. The reason is simple; someone is paying me a good wage for playing a game that I love. Hockey has definitely become a business, which is one of the realities of professional hockey. I learned that lesson when I was traded from San Jose in the summer of 2006. I am able to separate the business aspect of hockey from the game aspect though.

Peter ranks the factors that motivate him as follows:

1. Winning - Although it is not my only measure of being successful.

2. Teammates.

Last: Recognition.

On a scale of one to five, with one being playing completely for the love of the game and five being playing completely for the money, Peter ranked himself at 3.

I'm not necessarily driven by my love of the game or money significantly; I'm, again, driven by my desire to succeed.

Peter finds his most motivation in winning and being successful. Positive and negative feedback play minute roles in his motivation. He has realized his dream to play in the NHL and has become a top-end defenseman. At this point in Peter's career he is focused on improving his game and continuing to succeed. Money does not play a huge role in his motivation but he feels he deserves a raise when he compares himself to other players in the league.

### The Case of Mike – NHL #3

Mike is 22 years old. Mike is currently playing in his second season of professional hockey, spending time in both the AHL and the NHL. Mike is from Rochester, Minnesota where he grew up playing his hockey until he joined the National development program when he was 16.

I played high school hockey for two years in Rochester and then joined the NDP in Ann Arbor, Michigan when I turned 16. I played two years for the NDP and then signed to play in the WCHA for Colorado College. I left after my junior season in college to sign with the Boston Bruins organization.

Mike began this past season playing for the Boston Bruins but was quickly sidelined with a knee injury, which caused him to miss a large chunk of the season. After successful surgery he has returned to finish the season playing for both the Boston Bruins and the Providence Bruins (AHL).

Mike is a born leader. He has been the captain at every level he has played at growing up. He possesses qualities that make other players look up to him and have the utmost respect for him. His superior work ethic, focus, preparation, toughness,

determination and heart define him as a player. Mike is a big part of the Boston Bruins future and will play a big role for years to come.

The thrill of competition has always been a huge driving force for Mike. Whether it's a practice or a game, he comes to the rink to compete and leave it all on the ice. That is why when Mike reflects on the time in his career when he was the most motivated, it is no surprised he doesn't think of just one moment.

I think my motivation has remained pretty constant throughout my career starting at the end of high school. I was very motivated to earn a college scholarship, and once in college I was pushed to get drafted and earn a contract. I have always been very competitive, so winning was always a motivation at any level. Presently, my ultimate goal is to play in the NHL full time. My motivation remains the same though; continue to improve every single day.

Being able to maintain such a high motivation is a rarity in any sport. His commitment to excel is why he cannot recall a moment in his career when he was the least motivated.

I really think I have maintained a high level of motivation throughout my career. After I knew I would receive a college scholarship, our team was still playing for championships so my motivation didn't slow down. After I was drafted, my college team was very competitive so motivation to win and improve was always there.

Mike attributes many factors playing important roles in his motivation. Coaches, teammates, recognition, and team morale are all factors that Mike uses to inspire him.

His desire to win, however, is the most crucial factor in his motivation.

There are many things that factor in my motivation. I want to make my coaches happy with my play and work ethic. My teammates depend on me to put forth maximum effort and that motivates me to do my best in order to be an important part of the team. Personally, I want to get to the next level now just like I have throughout my career so that is a huge part of wanting to succeed. Hockey is always more fun when you are winning. Most of my motivation comes from wanting to play on a winning team and have the chance to win a championship.

Playing for the U.S. National Development Team paid huge dividends for Mike when he was maturing as a player. Mike became a more complete player during this point in his career and he credits his coach for his improvements.

The best coach I ever had was Mike Eaves when I played for the U.S. Development Team. He was a very knowledgeable coach who himself played the game at the top level. He was very intense and expected a lot from his players. He made me better by teaching me how to work hard everyday plus his knowledge taught me a lot about how to be a smart hockey player. He knew how to win. He knew what it took as far as hard work, systems, and especially player development. He worked very hard himself with video and running us through creative practices so I always knew that our team was ready and prepared for every game.

Emotion has always been a cornerstone of Mike's great play. He plays with his heart on his sleeve every night and this is very contagious throughout whichever team he

is playing on. It should come as no shock that both positive and negative feedback play essential roles in his motivation.

When I receive positive feedback, it tells me I am doing something right and my hard work is paying off so it pushes me to continue to work hard and it gives me confidence. It is also a very addicting feeling, so I want that feeling of satisfaction again which motivates me to get better to receive more positive feedback. Negative feedback lets me know what I need to work on, motivating me to concentrate on those areas and fix the problems with my game. They each motivate me at about the same level, but negative feedback hits home a little harder and forces me to think a little bit more about my game and what I need to work on.

Having such focus on what he wanted to achieve, growing up Mike always looked at the near future for his motivation. Keeping his primary goals attainable, the possibility of playing in the NHL really did not factor in until it became a real possibility.

The NHL was never really a goal for me growing up. I always was motivated to get to the next level and continue to get better. So the NHL didn't seriously motivate me until the college level. I always think in steps, so I really only had my eyes on what was coming next.

Mike has got paychecks from both the AHL and NHL. He will be the first to tell you that the money he has earned in the NHL is substantially more than what he gets paid in the AHL. He does not, however, use money as a key factor in his motivation.

Everyone wants to make money. Hockey is my job now, so making money is important. However, I don't look forward to getting

paychecks and push myself harder to make it to the NHL because the money is better. My motivation still comes from the same places and the money is just a bonus. It may be because I am still a young pro without a family, but for now my salary seems like just something that comes with playing professional hockey and is not a big deal in my mind. On top of that I feel I get paid what I deserve compared to other players.

Although money has definitely changed Mike's lifestyle and the types of cars he drives, it has not changed his passion and love for hockey.

Money has not changed the way I feel about hockey. My feelings toward the game are the same right now as they were years ago. Like I said before, the money is a bonus. I realize that hockey is a business. I am learning it more and more as I play professionally. It still is a game when I am playing, however. As a player, you need to understand that it is a business but it does not affect my outlook on the game. So it is a game to me, but I know what is at stake and know that to a lot of people around me it is strictly a business.

Mike ranks the factors that motivate him as follows:

1. Winning and Improving - The way I see it if I work with my teammates to win, that is going to make me better in the process and hopefully get me to the next level.
2. Recognition - It's all about making it to the next level for me when it all comes down to it.

Last: I don't really think about it because I know it will come if I push myself with the things that motivate me.

On a scale of one to five, with one being playing completely for the love of the game and five being playing completely for the money, Mike ranked himself at 1.

I don't know if it is because I am young but I rarely think about money. I find myself in the mindset I have been my whole career, playing to get better and make it to the next level. I am driven by accomplishment more than money. That may change, I don't know, but right now I have the same mindset I did as a college player.

Mike finds his most motivation in winning and improving his game everyday. Positive and negative feedback play large roles in his motivation as well. He has realized his lifelong dream to play in the NHL but still strives to become an everyday player in the top league. At this point in Mike's career, money is not a huge factor yet he understands that he is still young and that money may play a more important role later in his career.

#### The Case of Bill – NHL #4

Bill is 23 years old. He is currently playing in his second season in the NHL. He spent one year playing in the AHL before making the jump to the NHL. Bill moved to Sherwood Park, Alberta when he was 12 years old and played there until he was 16 years old.

When I turned 16 I decided to go play major juniors for the Red Deer Rebels of the WHL (Western Hockey League). When I was 18 the Carolina Hurricanes drafted me. I played one more year in juniors and then signed a NHL contract with them when I was 19. I played for the



Lowell Devils in the AHL for one season and have spent the last two seasons in the NHL.

Scouts began noticing Bill when he was just a young netminder playing in Sherwood Park. High expectations followed him and he did not disappoint. He put up staggering numbers as he rose through the minor league hockey ranks. Every junior team in Canada tried to recruit him to play. Bill continued his dominance in the WHL where he won goaltender and player of the year honors. He also won the CHL player of the year award for the top player in Canada.

Bill was a first round draft pick of the Carolina Hurricanes in 2002. Many teams overlooked him earlier in the first round but the Hurricanes were not going to miss the opportunity to draft him. No more than four years later, Bill led the Hurricanes to a Stanley Cup championship as a rookie. He also took home the Conn Smythe trophy as the playoff's most valuable player.

His first season in the NHL Bill served as a back-up goalie and only played 16 games out of 82. They did not want to rush him into the starting position but in the playoffs they had no choice. In the first round the Hurricanes went down two games to nothing and the starting goaltender was struggling. The coach made the decision to go with Bill in game three and Bill took advantage of the opportunity. Becoming only the third goaltender in the history of the NHL to win playoff MVP honors as a rookie it comes as no surprise that this was the point in his career when he was the most motivated.

Our team's playoff run in the 2005-2006 season was without question the most motivated I have ever been. Getting the opportunity to

start in the playoffs was unbelievable. It was something I used to dream about when I was playing street hockey up in Canada growing up. As the playoffs progressed, my confidence grew and so did my motivation. The closer we got to winning the Stanley Cup the more motivated I was. I knew that it was a once in a lifetime opportunity and I didn't want to take it for granted. When I made it to the NHL, winning the cup was a goal of mine and to achieve that goal my first year in the league was surreal.

Bill is what you would call a winner. He suits up for every game with one thing on his mind, winning the game. It does not matter if the score is 7-6 or 2-1 as long as his team comes out on the better end of the score. This mentality is why Bill cannot think of a time in his career when he was the least motivated.

I take hockey very personally. If we lose, I will gladly take the blame. That is what keeps me going though, the motivation of always wanting to get better. Sure, I have had some slumps throughout my career when I've been pretty down but my motivation has always remained high. I feel a responsibility to my teammates to be the hardest working player on the team.

Although Bill puts a huge emphasis on winning, there are still many factors that contribute to his motivation. Teammates, coaches, and personal goals all play significant roles in inspiring him.

My teammates are big factors in my motivation. I go out every night and I play for them and I hope they do the same for me. In my mind, trust among teammates is what makes teams successful. I trust that they

will do their jobs and I want them to be able to trust me to do mine. Coaching is another factor in my motivation. Like in our playoff run, he took a chance on me and I was motivated to not let him down. At the same time I want a coach who will be tough on me to challenge me to be better. There are personal goals that impact my motivation as well. Money is not a huge factor, but I just recently got married, so financial security is something I think about for when we start a family.

Bill has made many coaches happy over the years with his stellar play and work ethic. He has been very fortunate to have great coaches pretty much everywhere he has played. He speaks highly of his coach in midgets and his current coach in Carolina but he gives the most praise to his coach he played for in Red Deer.

My coach in midgets really taught me about discipline and commitment. I did not have a very good work ethic back then and if I didn't practice hard he would not play me. He made me realized that I had to work hard everyday if I wanted to achieve my goals. My present coach in Carolina showed a lot of faith in me early in my career and that has given me so much confidence. He is a very straightforward man and he lets me know exactly what he expects out of me. The coach who has had the biggest impact on my career, however, was Brent Sutter, my coach in major juniors. He showed me how to win and developed my desire to compete. It was this point in my career that I started to realize my potential.

Positive and negative feedback used to play a big role in Bill's motivation and it used to affect his play. Over the years, however, Bill has learned not to get too high when he is praised and not get too low when he is criticized.

When I was younger I let feedback, either good or bad affect me too much. I would get full of myself when I got positive feedback and vice versa, my confidence would waiver when I got negative feedback. Now, I try not to let either affect my game. The only positive feedback I really care about now is from my teammates and I use negative feedback as motivation to work harder.

The NHL has always served as a huge motivating factor for Bill. From as early as he can remember, his ultimate goal was to play in the best league in the world.

The NHL was always present in my motivation. When I was playing major juniors I began to realize that I could achieve my lifelong dream. Playing in the NHL means so much to me, especially with everything my family has done for me over the years.

Bill was a first-round draft pick, which means he signed a large contract when he entered the league. He is making a seven-digit salary and on top of that he got a huge signing bonus. Already being fairly secure financially after his first two seasons, money does not play a significant role in his motivation.

Money has never really been a main factor in my motivation, but it still is a factor. That being said, it's nice to be able to give back to my family for everything they have done for me. Like I said before, I just got married and will probably be starting a family soon myself, so I would like

to make as much money as I can for the future. I feel I get paid what I deserve and that I make pretty good money compared to other players in the league.

Bill has incredible passion for the game of hockey. He has dedicated so much of his life to reach the pinnacle. Even with the large amount of money he has made in his two years in the NHL, his love for the game that has given him so much in return has remained strong.

Money has not changed my love for the game. It's nice to get rewarded for giving so much of my life to this sport. If you think about it, I've spent 15 years training for my job before I started getting paid. Hockey is my career now, so I have to treat it like one. In my next contract negotiation I will try to get as much money as I can.

Bill ranks the factors that motivate him as follows:

1. Winning.
2. Teammates.
3. Coaches.
4. Money.

Last: Recognition.

On a scale of one to five, with one being playing completely for the love of the game and five being playing completely for the money, Bill ranked himself at 2. He treats hockey as a job now but has not lost his love for the game. He wants financial security for his family in the future and that is a factor in his motivation. Bill finds his most motivation in winning and his teammates. His coaches have played big roles in his

motivation as well. He has realized his lifelong dream and has won the Stanley Cup in his short career. At this point in Bill's career he wants to continue to improve his game and become a top goaltender in the league. He also won't shy away from making as much money as he can.

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## CHAPTER 5

### RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter will analyze the data received from the interviews of the 12 hockey players. First, the data will be summarized to show what responses were most common among the players. Secondly, the study's contribution to motivational theory will be discussed. It will state what factors play the most important roles in players' motivation, what factors play lesser roles, and what factors were the most surprising. Lastly, the practical implications of the study will be examined. The results from the research will be used to suggest ways to motivate hockey players to maximize their potential.

All of the players' responses have been broken down and displayed in five tables. The color patterns indicate similarity in responses and this should help in understanding what factors play key roles in the players' motivation. Blue signifies the most common response, red is the second most common response, and green is the third. If the text is black, it has no common responses. The ten categories are based on the questions the players were asked during their interviews.

### Summary of Data

#### **The Time in Their Careers They Were the Most Motivated**

The data for this question can be found in Table 1.1. Four of the players interviewed were the most motivated in their careers when they were pursuing a college scholarship. Three of the four players with this response are currently playing NCAA Division I hockey. Three players found that the time in their careers that they were the most motivated was when their teams were making playoff runs. One player from each of the three leagues had this response. Two players were the most motivated in their careers when they realized that the opportunity to play in the NHL was right in front of them. These two players are currently playing in the NHL. The final three players all had unique responses to times in their careers when they were the most motivated.

#### **The Time in Their Careers They Were the Least Motivated**

The data for this question can be found in Table 1.1. Three of the players interviewed were the least motivated in their careers when they were playing junior hockey. One player from each of the three leagues had this response. Two players could not recall a point in their careers when they were the least motivated. Both are currently playing in the NHL. The other seven players had varying responses about points in their careers when they were the least motivated. One player was least motivated when he was having personal/family issues while another was least motivated when he was ten years old.

#### **The Best Coach They Have Ever Played For**

The data for this question can be found in Table 1.2. Eight of the players interviewed said that the best coach they have ever had was their coach in juniors. Three



players with this response are currently playing NCAA Division I, three are currently playing in the NHL and the other two are in the AHL. Two of the players said the best coach they ever had was their current coach in professional hockey. Only one player said that his coach in college was the best coach he ever had, and the last player looked to his father who coached him growing up as the best coach he ever had.

### **The Role Positive and Negative Feedback Plays in Their Motivation**

The data for this question can be found in Table 1.2. Five of the players interviewed said that both positive and negative feedback play important roles in their motivation. Two NHL players, two AHL players and one NCAA player had this response. Four players said that positive feedback is key to their motivation, but negative feedback either plays a small role or no role at all. Two NCAA players and two AHL players had this response. The last three players said that positive and negative feedback play no role in their motivation, with two of these players being NHLers.

### **The Role the Possibility of Playing in the NHL Impacts/Impacted Their Motivation**

The data for this question can be found in Table 1.3. Six of the players interviewed said that the possibility of playing in the NHL has always been an important factor in their motivation. Three AHL players, two NCAA players, and one NHL player had this response. Five players said that the possibility of playing in the NHL did not motivate them when they were younger but started motivated them later in their careers. Three players with this response are currently playing in the NHL while the other two are playing in the AHL and NCAA respectively. The last player said that the possibility of

playing in the NHL motivated him when he was younger but does not play a role in his motivation presently.

### **The Role Salary Plays in Their Motivation**

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The data for this question can be found in Table 1.3. The four NCAA Division I players were not asked this question during their interviews. Five of the players interviewed said that their salary is a factor in their motivation but does not play a big role. Three NHL players and two AHL players had this response. The other three players said that their salary plays a significant role in their motivation.

### **The Impact Money has had on Their Love for the Game**

The data for this question can be found in Table 1.4. The four NCAA Division I players were not asked this question during their interviews. All eight players interviewed said that money has not changed their love for hockey. They all, however, realize that hockey has become their careers now and that they have to treat it like a business to make sure they keep their jobs.

### **Which Plays a Bigger Role: Fulfilling a Life Long Dream vs. Signing a Pro Contract/Raise in Salary**

The data for this question can be found in Table 1.4. The four NHL hockey players were not asked this question during their interviews. Six of the eight players interviewed said that the chance to fulfill a life-long dream plays a larger role in their motivation than the possibility of signing a pro contract or getting a raise in salary. All four AHL players and two NCAA players had this response. The last two NCAA players

said that the chance to sign a professional contract plays a bigger role than achieving a lifelong dream.

### **The Factors That Play the Largest Roles in Their Motivation**

The data for this question can be found in Table 1.5. Nine of the players interviewed ranked winning and teammates as the top two factors that motivate them. All four NCAA players, three NHL players, and two AHL players had this response. The other three players had varying rankings of factors that play the largest roles in their motivation. One player had money second in his rankings while another had the chance to play in the NHL ranked first and everything else last.

### **On a Scale of 1(Love) to 5(Money) Where They Rank Themselves**

The data for this question can be found in Table 1.5. Five players interviewed rank themselves at 2 on the scale of one to five. Two NHL players, two AHL players, and one NCAA player had this response. Four players ranked themselves at 1 on the scale of one to five. Of these players, two are currently playing in the AHL and the other two are playing in the NHL and NCAA. Three players ranked themselves at 3 on the scale of one to five. Two NCAA players and one NHL player had this response.

<b>Table 1.1</b>	<b>The Time in Their Careers They Were the Most Motivated</b>	<b>The Time in Their Careers They Were the Least Motivated</b>
<b>Charlie NCAA #1</b>	During his senior year in high school. He wanted to prove critics wrong and earn a Division I scholarship from an elite program.	When he was 10 years old. Didn't really care that much about hockey and ended up getting cut and making the worst team.
<b>Martin NCAA #2</b>	During the playoffs. He believes that players define themselves at this point in the season.	During the month of December. There are too many distractions and the games just do not seem as important at this point in the season compared to the beginning and end of the season.
<b>Steve NCAA #3</b>	In juniors when he was traded to St. Albert. He knew that if he played well, he could earn a Division I scholarship.	This past season. His chances of signing a pro contract have diminished. His lack of personal and team success have killed his motivation.
<b>Patrick NCAA #4</b>	During his second season in juniors. He really wanted to get a scholarship to play in the NCAA.	His first season in juniors. His coach made him a lot of promises to recruit him that ended up being lies. He was not motivated to play for his coach.
<b>Trevor AHL #1</b>	When he was playing high school hockey. He wanted to play in the high school state tournament.	Summer leading into his senior year in college. He had personal/family issues, which made him realize that hockey is just a game and family is what really matters.
<b>Joe AHL #2</b>	During the two playoff runs his teams made in juniors. The chance to win a championship inspired him.	When he was playing for Sherwood Park in juniors. He had very little confidence and really felt that his career was winding down.
<b>Vincent AHL #3</b>	His senior year in college. It was his last chance to win a national championship and that was a goal of his entering college.	His sophomore year of college. He was coming off shoulder surgery and spent months rehabbing. His injuries took their toll on him mentally and his desire began to disappear.
<b>Nicklas AHL #4</b>	When he was in high school playing Midget AAA. He was on a team where everyone shared the same goal of playing college hockey.	The summer before his freshman year at college. He lost focus and got complacent already being assured a college scholarship.
<b>Ryan NHL #1</b>	Three quarters of the way through his first professional season. He finally realized that if he worked hard he could make the NHL and make a lot more money.	His first year of junior hockey. He had just moved away from home at 16 and did not play very much at all. On top of that he made next to no money.
<b>Peter NHL #2</b>	Just after he signed his entry-level contract with the NHL. His dream of playing in the NHL was now a very real possibility.	Playing over in Germany during the NHL lockout. He had just finished his first season in the NHL and felt that he was taking a step backwards in his career.
<b>Mike NHL #3</b>	His motivation has remained constant throughout his career. His motivation is to continue to improve everyday.	He has never had a point in his career when he felt the least motivated.
<b>Bill NHL #4</b>	During his team's playoff run in 2005-2006. He proceeded to win the Stanley Cup and Conn Smythe trophy (playoff MVP).	Cannot recall a time he was the least motivated. Even through points in his career when he was in slumps his motivation remained high.

<b>Table 1.2</b>	<b>The Best Coach They Have Ever Played For</b>	<b>The Role Positive and Negative Feedback Plays in Their Motivation</b>
<b>Charlie NCAA #1</b>	His coaches in college. They have made him a more two dimensional player. He has become a solid defensive player to go along with his great offensive skill.	Positive feedback motivates him to continue to play at a high level. Negative feedback motivates him more though. He wants to prove to his teammates and coaches he can contribute.
<b>Martin NCAA #2</b>	His coach in juniors. Martin learned that if he wanted to excel in hockey he had to be 100% committed every time he showed to the rink.	Positive feedback does not play a large role in his motivation. He believes a great player does not need positive feedback to be motivated.
<b>Steve NCAA #3</b>	His coach in juniors. He was able to get the most out of Steve. He knew how to motivate him and got him to play above his potential.	He plays harder when his coach appreciates how hard he is working. Feedback from his friends, family and fans also motivates him.
<b>Patrick NCAA #4</b>	His coach in juniors. The team had the same nine goals every game and if they did not meet them there were consequences. Every player knew their role on the team and he gave them each specific goals.	He appreciates positive feedback when he is playing well especially from his coaches. Negative feedback does not motivate him as much.
<b>Trevor AHL #1</b>	His father who coached him growing up. He truly cared about all of his players and he taught Trevor that hockey should always be fun.	Positive feedback plays a significant role in his motivation. He likes to know that he is appreciated for his contributions. In his mind, a nice mixture of positive and negative feedback is the best formula for him.
<b>Joe AHL #2</b>	Two coaches. His coach in juniors really believed in his abilities told him how good he could be. His coach in major juniors taught him about competing and having the will to win.	Positive feedback motivates Joe. It really boosts his confidence. Negative feedback has an inverse impact in that it lowers his confidence and his motivation.
<b>Vincent AHL #3</b>	His coach when he played for the National Development Program. He taught Vincent that no matter how skilled he was if he did not work hard he would not excel.	Positive feedback increases his confidence and reinforces the motivation he already has inside. Negative feedback also contributes to his motivation but on a lesser scale.
<b>Nicklas AHL #4</b>	His present coach in the AHL. He is very good at motivating Nicklas and recognizes his strengths and weaknesses. Being a former player he understands the mental aspects of the game.	Positive feedback and constructive criticism both play roles in his motivation. He appreciates when a coach lets him know what he is doing well and what he needs to work on.
<b>Ryan NHL #1</b>	His coach that he played for in the AHL and now in the NHL. He held everyone on the team accountable and made coming to the rink everyday fun.	Positive and negative feedback both motivate him. Positive feedback builds his confidence. Negative feedback gets him mad and makes him want to fix what he is doing wrong.
<b>Peter NHL #2</b>	His coach in the USHL. He was very knowledgeable and willing to pass his knowledge on to the team. He knew what motivated players and how to motivate them.	Neither positive nor negative feedback plays much of a role in his motivation. He is mostly motivated by his inner drive.
<b>Mike NHL #3</b>	His coach when he played for the National Development Program. He made Mike better by teaching him how to work hard everyday. He also taught him how to win.	Positive and negative feedback both motivate him. Positive feedback gives him confidence and negative feedback makes him concentrate on the areas of his game he needs to work on.
<b>Bill NHL #4</b>	His coach in major juniors. He taught Bill how to win and developed his desire to compete. He had a huge impact on Bill's career.	When he was younger, positive and negative feedback played a factor in his motivation. Now, he does not let either feedback affect him too much.

<b>Table 1.3</b>	<b>The Role the Possibility of Playing in the NHL Impacts/Impacted Their Motivation</b>	<b>The Role Salary Plays in Their Motivation</b>
<b>Charlie NCAA #1</b>	Was not a huge motivating factor when he was younger, his goal was to play college hockey. It motivates him more now because it's a more real possibility.	N/A
<b>Martin NCAA #2</b>	When he was young, playing the NHL was great motivation for him. Playing NCAA he realizes that the NHL is not that far away and it is a realistic goal.	N/A
<b>Steve NCAA #3</b>	Growing up playing in the NHL was his sole motivation. He realizes now that the odds are stacked against him and his chances to play in the NHL are slim.	N/A
<b>Patrick NCAA #4</b>	When he was young he dreamed many nights of playing in the NHL but now he does not use the NHL as motivation. He just looks to the next step for motivation.	N/A
<b>Trevor AHL #1</b>	The possibility of playing in the NHL only started motivating him after college when he signed an AHL contract. Playing in the NHL means everything to him.	His salary plays a role in his motivation. He realizes that the money in the NHL is very good so that inspires him to get better.
<b>Joe AHL #2</b>	Growing up playing in the NHL was his main driving force and still is to this day.	His salary does not play a big role in his motivation. He acknowledges that it is nice to be able to make a career out of hockey but he does not play hockey for the money.
<b>Vincent AHL #3</b>	Playing in the NHL is and has always been the most important factor in his motivation.	Salary does play a role in his motivation. He wants to make the NHL so he can increase his salary in the process.
<b>Nicklas AHL #4</b>	Playing in the NHL has always motivated him. It is the ultimate goal for him but he still focuses on improving where he is playing currently.	Right now salary gives him little motivation. It is based on something that he cannot control until his first contract is over.
<b>Ryan NHL #1</b>	He always aspired to play in the NHL but did not really realize it as a possibility until his last couple years of juniors.	Salary plays a big role in his motivation. He wants to make the most money he can while he can to support his family in future.
<b>Peter NHL #2</b>	Playing in the NHL did not motivate him much at all. It was such a distant goal when he was growing up that it was hard for him to draw motivation from it. It became a goal after he graduated college.	Salary plays a role in his motivation but a very small one. His desire to succeed is what truly motivates him.
<b>Mike NHL #3</b>	The NHL was never a goal of his growing up. He has always been focused on the next step in his career. It started motivating him when he was drafted while playing in college.	Making money is important to him yet he does not look forward to getting paid. He treats the money he makes as a bonus.
<b>Bill NHL #4</b>	The possibility of playing in the NHL was always present in Cam's motivation. Began to realize he could achieve it when he was playing major juniors.	Money is not a main factor in his motivation, but it still plays a role. He wants to have financial security to support his family and live comfortably in the future.

<b>Table 1.4</b>	<b>The Impact Money has had on Their Love for the Game</b>	<b>Which Plays a Bigger Role: Fulfilling a Life Long Dream vs. Signing a Pro Contract/Raise in Salary</b>
<b>Charlie NCAA #1</b>	N/A	The possibility of signing a contract and making good money motivates him more than achieving his lifelong dream to play pro hockey. If he were not making good money he would retire.
<b>Martin NCAA #2</b>	N/A	Fulfilling his lifelong dream of playing pro hockey is much more important to him than signing a contract.
<b>Steve NCAA #3</b>	N/A	Achieving his lifelong dream to play in the NHL still plays a bigger role than the chance the sign a pro contract. He would play in the NHL even if they did not pay him.
<b>Patrick NCAA #4</b>	N/A	The possibility of signing a contract plays a bigger role than the chance to achieve a lifelong dream. He realizes that there is a lot of money to be made playing pro hockey.
<b>Trevor AHL #1</b>	He still feels the same about it as he did when he was a kid. He does approach it a little differently now that it has become a career.	The chance to play in the NHL and say that he has played at the highest level motivates him much more than the possibility of signing a NHL contract.
<b>Joe AHL #2</b>	Money has not changed his love for hockey. He has become more of a business to him now. He realizes that he is getting paid to perform just like any other job.	Taking the final step to the NHL motivates him more than the possibility of getting a huge raise in salary.
<b>Vincent AHL #3</b>	It has not changed his love for the game. He feels obligated to perform at a high level, however, to earn his paychecks and keep his job.	The opportunity to play in the NHL plays a bigger role in his motivation yet he views the increase in salary as nice bonus.
<b>Nicklas AHL #4</b>	He still loves hockey but admits that it is his job now and that he has to treat it that way. He understands that if he does not play well he will out of work.	Fulfilling his dream of playing in the NHL means more to Nicklas than the increase in salary. Still though, money motivates him to get to the next level.
<b>Ryan NHL #1</b>	His love for the game remains strong but he realizes that professional hockey is a business like any other. Money has made him appreciate hockey more.	N/A
<b>Peter NHL #2</b>	Money has made his love for the game even greater. He feels blessed that someone is paying him good money to play a game that he loves.	N/A
<b>Mike NHL #3</b>	Money has not changed the way he feels about hockey. He realizes that hockey is a business now and but still looks at money as a bonus while playing the game he loves.	N/A
<b>Bill NHL #4</b>	Money has not changed his love for the game. He feels he is getting rewarded for giving so much of his life to the sport. He realizes it is a business now and will try to make as much money as he can.	N/A

<b>Table 1.5</b>	<b>The Factors That Play the Largest Roles in Their Motivation</b>	<b>On a Scale of 1(Love) to 5(Money) Where They Rank Themselves</b>
<b>Charlie NCAA #1</b>	1. Winning. 2. Teammates. 3. Signing a contract, making money. Last: Coaches.	3 – He looks at hockey as a career choice now so money plays a pretty big role.
<b>Martin NCAA #2</b>	1. Teammates. 2. Winning. Last: Money.	1 – He still has the love and passion for the game and money is not a factor.
<b>Steve NCAA #3</b>	1. Winning. 2. Teammates. Last: Money.	2 – He wants to play hockey as long as he can at a high level and the amount of money he makes is insignificant.
<b>Patrick NCAA #4</b>	1. Winning. 2. Teammates. Last: Recognition and Coaches.	3 – He loves the game but also realizes that he can make a very good living playing hockey.
<b>Trevor AHL #1</b>	1. The chance to play in the NHL. Last: Everything else.	1 – The opportunity to suit up in just one NHL game would mean way more to him than any amount of money.
<b>Joe AHL #2</b>	1. Recognition. 2. Winning. 3. Coaches. 4. Teammates. Last: Money.	1 – Money plays a minor role in his motivation. Making the final step to the NHL mostly drives him.
<b>Vincent AHL #3</b>	1. Winning and Teammates. 2. Coaches. Last: Recognition.	2 – The opportunity to make a lot of money plays a factor but is overshadowed by his desire to play in the NHL.
<b>Nicklas AHL #4</b>	1. Teammates. 2. Winning. 3. Coaches. 4. Money. Last: Recognition.	2 – Money is not important to him right now but the prospect of making a lot of money in the future is a driving force for him.
<b>Ryan NHL #1</b>	1. Winning. 2. Money. 3. Teammates.	2 – By him loving hockey so much it has made him a lot of money.
<b>Peter NHL #2</b>	1. Winning. 2. Teammates. Last: Recognition.	3 – He is not driven by his love of the game or money necessarily. He is motivated by his desire to succeed.
<b>Mike NHL #3</b>	1. Winning and Improving. 2. Recognition.	1 – He is driven by accomplishment more than money. He understands that he is still young though and that money may play an important role as his career progresses.
<b>Bill NHL #4</b>	1. Winning. 2. Teammates. 3. Coaches. 4. Money. Last: Recognition.	2 – He treats hockey as a job now but still has great passion for the game. Money plays a role but is not a major factor in his motivation.



### Contributions to Theory

Motivation is a very complex topic, especially when dealing with motivation in athletes. Literature in the past has failed to look at what motivates athletes playing at a high level. Most of the literature focuses around motivation in general or motivation in youth athletes. This study has not only provided a better understanding of what motivates high-level hockey players but it has also provided a better understanding of what motivates high-level athletes of all kinds.

This study has shown how hockey players have varying factors that play significant roles in their motivation. Each player has his own outlook on the game and what he has to do to be successful in his career. They all have a coach they either played for in the past or play for presently who has had a huge impact on their careers. The research shows that successful hockey players have similar mindsets. Although their responses were not all the same, the same underlying message can be found in what they say. This section will discuss what are the most important factors in hockey players' motivation, what factors are less important and what factors were the most surprising.

#### **Most Important Factors in Hockey Players' Motivation**

Factors such as winning, teammates, feedback, and the possibility to play in the NHL are the most significant factors affecting hockey players' motivation. But before discussing why these are so important, just looking at the points in their careers they were the most motivated should shed some light on these factors. Nine of the twelve players were most motivated either when they were pursuing college/NHL hockey or when they were making playoff runs (winning and teammates). Hockey is something these players

have been playing for well over 15 years of their lives. In essence, it is their lives. That is probably why these factors play the most significant roles in their motivation.

The desire to win cannot be taught to athletes, they either have it or they don't. Successful hockey players and their desire to win go hand in hand. Every player interviewed in this study has won a championship of some point in his career. It's their competitiveness that pushes them to be better than those around them. That is why this factor is so major in their motivation. The impact teammates have on motivation has a direct influence on winning. Nine of the players interviewed said winning and teammates were the top two factors that motivate them. That is because these players think of their hockey teams as family and they know that for them to have personal success they need to have team success first. Hockey is a unique sport in that the bond between players is always very strong. It could be the physical nature of the game that brings players together or it could just be the mindset that is instilled in hockey players at a young age. Martin's comments are a prime example of a player who is highly motivated by these two factors: "I would just as soon not be in the spotlight and have some of my defensemen get some attention. I thrive on the success of my team. Winning is something that everyone on the team will be noticed for. I am a player who wants every player on my team to do well. If they are playing well, then I am happy. I believe that's what a true teammate is."

A simple fact of hockey is that professional scouts recruit winners, they look for leaders and players who make everyone on the team better around them, and it is not always about physical ability and how skilled a player is. The thing that has made Bill into a world-class netminder is his desire to win and not let his teammates down, "I take hockey very personally. If we lose, I will gladly take the blame. That is what keeps me

going though, the motivation of always wanting to get better... I feel a responsibility to my teammates to be the hardest working player on the team.” These examples show just how important these two factors are in a hockey player’s motivation.

Another major factor in hockey players’ motivation is feedback. Players can get feedback from their family, friends, scouts, but the most important feedback they receive is from their coaches and teammates. Five of the players interviewed said that they were highly motivated by both positive and negative feedback, while four others said that positive feedback played a big role but negative feedback either played a small role or no role at all. Players like to know that their coaches and peers appreciate their hard work and determination. Being told that they are doing something well motivates them to continue to do well and to work even harder. This has a lot to do with their confidence and can have a direct impact on their motivation. Positive feedback makes players less nervous and confidence is a huge thing in hockey. Most of the players said that when they are confident, their motivation increases. What Joe said in his interview is a great example: “Positive feedback lets me know what kinds of things are working for me and in turn helps me to be more successful. It is also one of the things that really boosts my confidence, and when I’m confident, I’m motivated.”

Negative feedback factors into hockey players’ motivation as well. From the data collected in this study, negative feedback can have both positive and negative impacts on a hockey player’s motivation. Some players can take criticism a lot better than others. Those that can handle it seem to draw a lot of motivation from it. Mike is a primary example of a player who gets highly motivated from negative feedback: “ Negative feedback lets me know what I need to work on, motivating me to concentrate on those

areas and fix the problems with my game... negative feedback hits home a little harder and forces me to think a little bit more about my game.” Negative feedback has an adverse effect on some players, however. Some hockey players get really down on themselves when they get told they are doing something wrong. The player’s confidence lowers and his motivation begins to fade. Joe is a player who does not respond well to negative feedback: “Looking at it from the other side however, negative feedback lowers my confidence and my motivation too.”

The possibility to achieve a lifelong dream to play in the NHL is a very important factor in hockey players’ motivation. Six of the players interviewed said that the NHL was and still is to this day a big part of their motivation. Five more players said that although it was not a large part of their motivation when they were younger, it has become an essential piece in their motivation nowadays. These data prove that hockey players are highly motivated to play at the highest level possible. The NHL is considered the best hockey league in the world and players come from all over the world to play in it. Whether or not the possibility of playing in the NHL motivates younger hockey players, every player dreams of one day playing in the NHL.

Once a player reaches the major junior or NCAA ranks, the once far away dream becomes a reality and that is when it really begins to motivate. Players begin to see teammates and opposing players make the final step and that is huge inspiration for hockey players. Trevor said it best: “...playing in the NHL means everything to me. It is the biggest thing driving me to get better... The feeling of suiting up to play in just one NHL game would mean way more to me than any amount of money.” The opportunity

to achieve something that they have devoted their entire lives to, is and will always be a major role in a hockey player's motivation.

### **Least Important Factors**

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Factors such as money, coaches, and recognition are the least significant factors affecting hockey players' motivation. These three factors were present in each of the twelve players' motivation, yet they all played minor roles when compared with the factors that were previously discussed.

The literature discussed in the previous chapters had big emphasis on the correlation between money and motivation; that people were highly motivated by the prospect of making money. This is not the case with hockey players. Five of the eight players who were asked this question said that their salary does not play significant role in their motivation. Furthermore, all eight players responded that money has not changed their love for hockey. And, finally, in a question asked to just the NCAA and AHL players, six players said that the possibility to fulfill their lifelong dream to play in the NHL was a more important factor in their motivation than money.

These data do not prove that money is not a factor in hockey players' motivation, but they do prove that money plays a small role in their motivation. Of course, with any career, money will always be a factor but for hockey players it is not a crucial element in their motivation. They believe that if they stay focused on what has got them to be so successful that the money side of things will take care of itself. For the players who earn salaries, money has made them appreciate and love hockey more than they did before. Tom attests to that: "Money has made my love for the game even greater. The reason is simple; someone is paying me a good wage for playing a game that I love." For the

NCAA players, two of them are driven more by money than the opportunity to achieve a lifelong dream, but neither of them ranked money in the top two factors that motivate them. With the exception of one player, money ranked close to the bottom of every players ranking's on factors that motivate him. On the scale of 1 to 5, with one being playing completely for the love of the game and five being playing completely for the money not one player ranked himself above a 3 and nine of the players ranked themselves at either 1 or 2. This shows even more conclusively that hockey players truly are motivated by factors other than money. The very emotional quote from Trevor says a lot about the mindset of a hockey player: "The feeling of suiting up to play in just one NHL game would mean way more to me than any amount of money."

Coaches are another factor that does not play a large role in hockey players' motivation. Although the players in this study all remembered a distinct coach who had a huge impact on their hockey careers, only three of them mentioned coaches who they are presently playing for. This suggests that as hockey players evolve into high-level athletes the motivation they draw from coaches diminishes. They become more motivated by things they can control rather than playing for their coaches. Coaches do play a role in feedback, however, but only three players ranked coaches in their top three factors that motivate them. Even Charlie, who stated that the best coach he ever had was his present coach in college, has coaches as the last factor that motivates him. "My coach motivates me a little more than my coach in high school did, but still not a whole lot. I guess he motivates me in a way that if I don't play well I won't play, but I'm not motivated to win games for him." The strong motivation hockey players draw from their teammates and winning definitely push coaches to the back burner. The study showed that certain

coaches have big impacts on hockey players' success but still do not play a large role in their personal motivation.

A player who thrives on recognition is most likely not going to excel in any sport. That is why it comes as no surprise, that for the elite athletes interviewed in this study, recognition is a near non-factor. Six players ranked recognition last in the factors that motivate them. Joe ranked it first, however, and that is quite simply because his desire to play in the NHL is so strong. He wants to be recognized by NHL scouts so that he can achieve his dream. Hockey players in general are very selfless and team-oriented. There are, of course, the select few who love to be in the spotlight but hardly are those players ever successful. This study proves that unlike other major sports where players love to be the focal point of the team, hockey players would rather be recognized as a whole, for winning games and championships. Many of these players have won personal accolades such as Trevor (Hobey Baker, top college player), Vincent (AHL rookie of the year), and Bill (Conn Smythe Trophy, Stanley Cup playoffs MVP) but none of them mentioned anything about their awards in their interviews. The only trophy Bill would talk about was the Stanley Cup, which his team won. Of course, hockey players want to make steps in their careers and recognition is needed to achieve their goals. Don't mistake that, however, for them wanting to be in the limelight.

### **Most Surprising Factors**

The most surprising factor is the role money plays in hockey players' motivation, especially when dealing with the huge amounts of money that are presented to professional players. After reviewing the literature on this topic, one should think that money would be a large part of what motivates professional athletes, in this case hockey

players. Yes, some of the players said that they wanted to make as much money as they could while they were playing so they could live a nice life when they retire but they still put their teammates and winning ahead of it on their factors that play the biggest role in their motivation. The most intriguing part of this study was that for some players money was barely even a factor and some of these players are making six to seven digit salaries. In most any other profession, money would be a top two factor for motivation. People generally want to make money even if they are doing a job they hate, if the money is good that is all that matters. The reason hockey players do not feel the same way is because they are able to play a game they love very much and get paid to do so. It seems these hockey players have these personal dreams, whether it is to make the NHL or just to be successful in their own minds that overshadow the money aspect. This result from the study is fascinating and should definitely be a topic to be discussed in the future.

Coaches are another surprising factor in hockey players' motivation. With so much credit being given their previous coaches for having enormous impacts on their careers and where they are today, only four players had coaches ranked in the top three. After talking to these players, it seems that as they developed into the elite players they are now, the impact coaches have on their motivation has nearly disappeared. They do not thrive on making their coaches happy or winning for their coaches. It fell into the same realm as the money factor. There are just too many other factors that overshadow the role coaches play on hockey players' motivation. A great topic for the future would be to interview players at the junior level, which is the time most of the players in this study recall having their best coach ever. I would expect a little different result because



coaches seem to play bigger role in hockey players' motivation when they are just coming into their potential.

### Practical Implications

The purpose of this study was to investigate what motivates hockey players, but through the interviews of these twelve men so much more has been uncovered. We now have a better understanding of the mindsets of elite hockey players. This data should educate those who work with athletes of this nature. From this study they should realize that each and every player is unique. They all come from a wide variety of backgrounds and upbringings so they all must be treated differently. What motivates one player does not necessarily motivate another. Some players thrive on negative feedback while others do not. To some players, money is a big factor while to most it is a minor role in their motivation.

The key is to find what motivates each different player and to exploit it. There are great examples from when the players being interviewed talked about the best coaches they ever had. The qualities their coaches brought out of them were not skill or talent; it was work ethic, teamwork, determination, and the desire to be a champion. It is these qualities that are so tough to teach but are the foundation to any elite athlete. There is a reason why these players are so successful; it is because they learned at an early age that their skill was not going to be enough for them to reach their goals. They needed to find motivation in being involved in something bigger than themselves. They get motivated from their teammates and from wanting them to succeed just as much as themselves.

Hockey players find motivation in their love for the game that has given them so much, whether it is a scholarship to attend college or a pro contract. Their desire to be a champion overshadows their desire to make a lot of money. Just to hear from two prominent NHL players making seven digit salaries say that money is not everything is refreshing. Especially in this age where the amounts of money professional athletes make is absurd. To see that these players are inspired by winning and teammates and love for the sport is the most fascinating aspect of the research. To hear from one player that playing one game in the NHL would mean more to him than any amount of money is absolutely astounding. The one common thing among the players interviewed is that hockey is still fun to them, and if it were not, then they would not be playing it anymore. Hopefully this study will bring about more investigations into the motivation of elite and professional athletes.

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### Miscellaneous

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