



Richie G.
January 2012

Its Gone!!!

#73 will haunt me in my dreams forever.

When you pride yourself on being a manly man like I do, you never want to admit defeat. You realize there are people that are better than you at stuff, but you still feel on any given day you can beat them. Take Larry for example. In my mens hockey league, Larry was the best player. No matter who you thought was the second, third or fourth best player, literally 999 out of 1000 people would say Larry was the best.

Larry and I did not get along for awhile. He was on X-Press, and I was on Public Enemy. One day, down by a goal with 32 seconds left or so, he x-checked me in the back and I went flying. I started cursing him out and he said, "Like you haven't been hitting people all game Glanzer." I didn't know he knew my name.

I then decided I was going to give him reason to know my name, by kicking his butt all over the rink. So one day he was winning 7-1 or so and I had the ball. I decided I was going to go right around him. Now this was a pretty big deal. I don't have the stickhandling moves to do that, and Larry was the best defensemen I ever met. Despite getting killed in the game, this was going to send him a message. So instead of dumping the ball like I had done 100% of the time, I was going to use the element of surprise and go right around him.

The music plays, the fans are screaming and I go to make my move! He swats at my stick like I was a three-year-old, the ball goes flying away and back into my zone and he yells, "C'MON!!!" as if to say, "What the hell are you thinking??"

There were many options. I could charge him and start wrestling him to the ground. I could curse at him. Or I could do what I did. I laughed and said, "Sorry." I decided from that day on my life would be significantly better, if I didn't hate Larry anymore, and more importantly, if he didn't hate me. I'd still fight the good fight vs. him, but if I lost, I wouldn't let it be personal. And if I won, the glory of beating such a great player would be enough.

I sure as hell lost way more than I won vs. him, but like I thought, the pain wasn't nearly so bad, and the glory was just as good.

Which brings me to #73. He is a she. And I didn't play against her. But when I was at my recent hockey tournament, I watched some of my female teammates play on this team called the Sparks. And I saw #73. She must have been like 23-years-old. She was good, but not great. She

dominated all the other girls, but had no hands, and didn't score too many goals. She was a lot of fun to watch, but I was getting sad watching her. And the reason was obvious.

I used to be her. I used to be able to go into lower divisions and dominate. I'd dump the ball, chase, win the battle, shoot, the goalie would make the save. Sometimes I would score, sometimes a teammate would score, but rarely did the opposing team score when I was out there.

When I first joined the Elves in 2008, I thought I'd dominate like I used to in the lower divisions. I mean I was playing against girls! (No offense) But I surprisingly didn't. I then surmised since we were the worst team in the history of athletics, that must have been the reason.

In 2009 the Elves got a lot better, yet I still didn't dominate. Again I was surprised, but I just figured, we don't have too much offense. In 2010, we won the championship, had awesome players, and yet, I had zero goals during the regular season. I was coming off a pretty big MCL injury to my knee, so that wasn't the concern.

But this year I got into shape. I was running every day. And sure enough, I scored the first goal of the season against a great team this year. I thought this would be my year. My next goal came a few months later.

And then it hit me. There is an opponent better than Larry. His name is time. It's the most precious commodity, and though you can delay it, you can never beat it.

Fudge. Only I didn't say fudge.