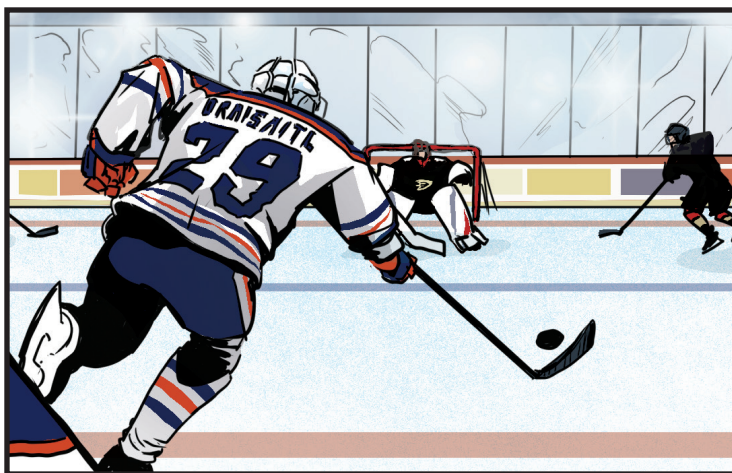


AMAZING HOCKEY STORIES

LEON DRAISAITL

Lorna Schultz Nicholson

Illustrations by D. A. Bishop



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To all kids playing hockey, all over the world.

— *L.S.N.*

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UPS AND DOWNS

Leon travelled from the World Championships to Toronto for the NHL Combine being held from May 26 to 31, 2014. He weighed in at 92.5 kilograms (204 pounds) and was 187 centimetres (6'2") in height. He didn't crack the top 10 in any of the physical contests, and he also wasn't sure how he fared in the interviews with the general managers. They'd asked a lot of questions, including "Would you rather be a pilot, a doctor or a sharpshooter?" Was that a trick question? Leon answered "doctor."

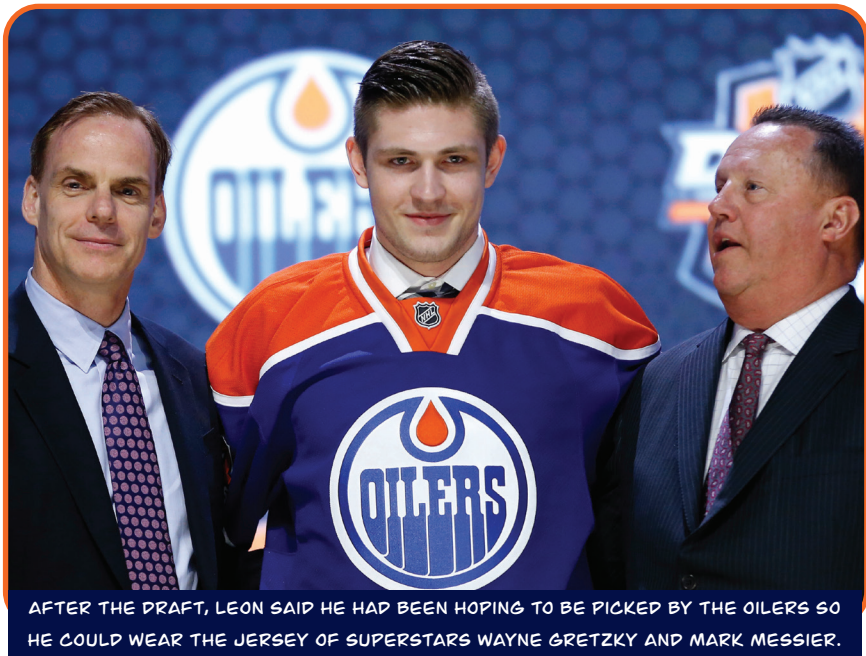
The 52nd NHL Entry Draft was a live event, held on June 27 and 28 at the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Unlike the Import Draft, it was a huge in-person event. Leon needed to buy a suit! Dressed in a black jacket, checkered tie, and crisp white shirt, he waited in the stands with his parents.

The Florida Panthers had the first pick. They chose defenceman Aaron Ekblad. Leon wasn't surprised; Ekblad had been talked about as the number one pick for months. The Buffalo Sabres had the next pick, calling forward Sam Reinhart. The Edmonton Oilers had the next pick. Leon sat nervously in his seat. It would be so great to be an Oiler. But Sam

Bennett, a forward for the Kingston Frontenacs, had been ahead of him in the rankings all year. Would it be Bennett?

Then the Oilers' general manager called Leon's name. He'd gone third in the first round. He was the highest-drafted German player ever! He hugged his family and headed to the stage. Leon proudly pulled on his blue-and-orange jersey.

On August 12, he signed a three-year, entry-level contract with Edmonton and was told to show up at training camp along with the other Oilers hopefuls.



AFTER THE DRAFT, LEON SAID HE HAD BEEN HOPING TO BE PICKED BY THE OILERS SO HE COULD WEAR THE JERSEY OF SUPERSTARS WAYNE GRETZKY AND MARK MESSIER.

DOWN, NOT OUT

SEPTEMBER 2014
OILERS TRAINING CAMP

I NEED TO PROVE MYSELF OR I'LL GET CUT.

GO WIDE. SHOOT FROM THE RIGHT ANGLE.

GOT IT.



NO PRESSURE, RIGHT?

RIGHT! FINGERS CROSSED WE GET SOME PRE-SEASON ACTION.

SEPTEMBER 24, 2014
PRE-SEASON GAME
EDMONTON OILERS VS. WINNIPEG JETS



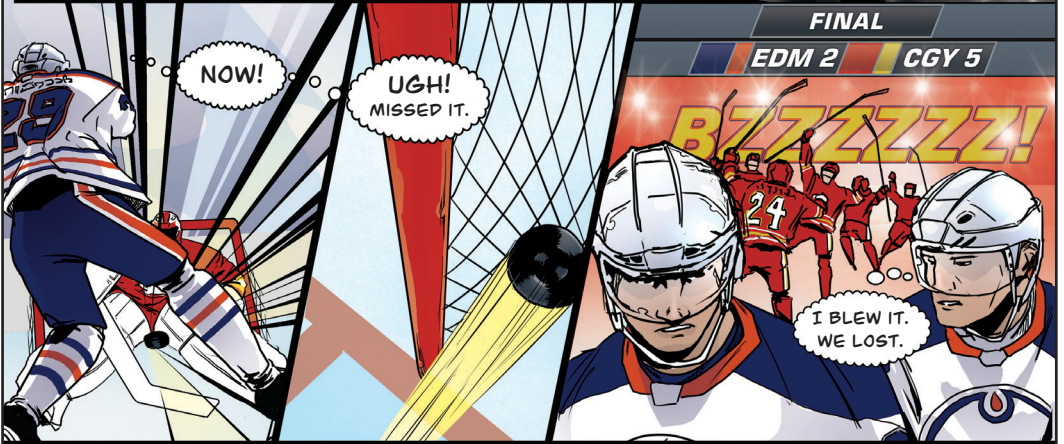
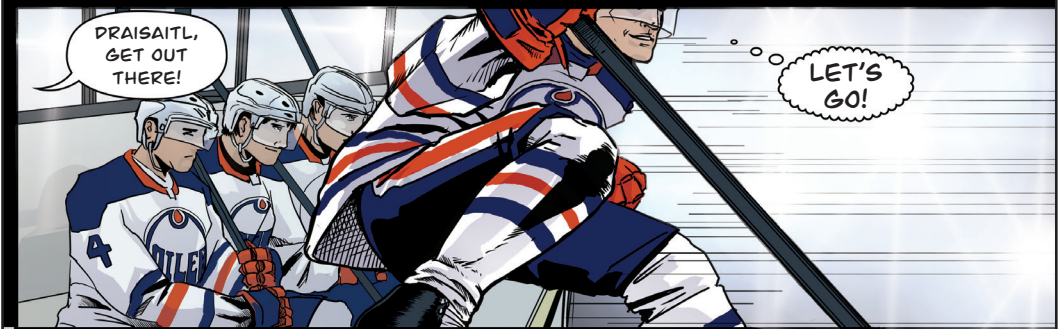
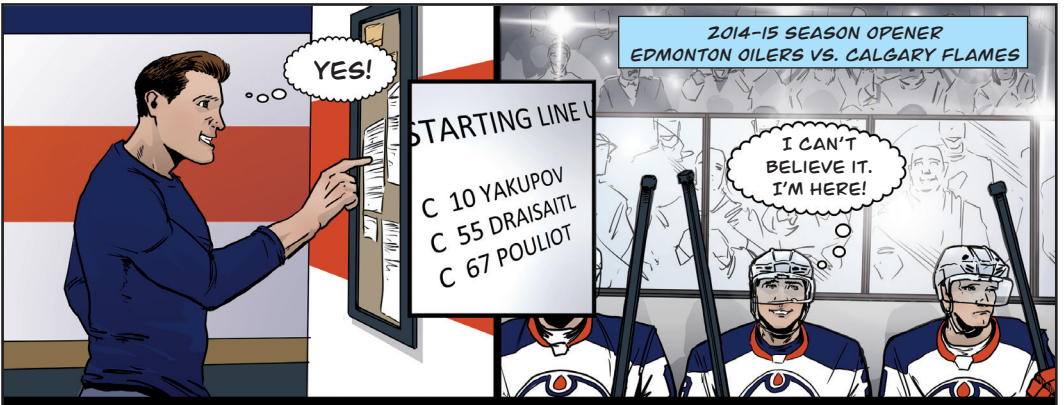
DRAISAITL, THE FIRST-ROUND PICK, TAKES THE PUCK ALL THE WAY DOWN THE ICE!

YOU GOT CUT? FEELS LIKE IT COULD BE ANY ONE OF US.

YEAH. I'M DONE HERE.

BUT I HOPE YOU MAKE THE LINEUP FOR OPENING NIGHT.





OCTOBER 24, 2014
EDMONTON OILERS VS.
CAROLINA HURRICANES

3RD PERIOD 7:10
EDM 3 CAR 3

WE'RE
RUNNING OUT
OF TIME!

DRAISAITL'S
OPEN...

...WHAT
A SAVE!

HERE'S THE
REBOUND...

... FIRST
NHL GOAL
FOR DRAISAITL!

