

Jennifer Gaudet

March 15, 1980 -

Jennifer started playing ringette at the age of six when she was living in Edmonton.

"I was at an Edmonton Oilers hockey game with my dad (Glen) and they demonstrated ringette at intermission." It was the first exposure to the sport for both father and daughter.

"Dad, I want to play that."

And that's how both Jennifer and little sister Jacqueline got into the sport that would take them to the very heights of the sport globally. Quite simply, the sisters became two of the best players on the planet.

Jennifer was a huge Oilers fan at the time. Gretzky was at his peak with the Oilers then. He led the team to four Stanley Cups during that era, in 1984, 1985, 1987 and 1988.

Glen, who had coached hockey, signed her up and signed up younger sister Jacqueline the next year. He also began coaching ringette. During the next decade the family grew into the sport together.

"The sport really become part of your family, and the people you play with. It's such a fun, fast, competitive game," says Jenn.

The family moved to Cambridge shortly afterward and it was in Cambridge where they made their mark on the sport, both nationally and internationally.

During the next two decades, for the general public, at least, it was difficult to separate the sisters; they often appeared together in newspaper articles and in photographs.

"I used to love playing with my sister," says Jennifer. "We know where each other is going to be. We played the same systems and have the same kind of philosophy about playing ringette."

Among her highlights was the first time she won nationals. It was 1996. "This was the second time I had gone to a Nationals, but that year was the first time I went with my own club team, Cambridge. We represented Ontario. My dad was coaching and I was with all the girls I grew up playing with. That was really special, and I'll always remember that."

Another highlight was being named to the national team program. "Being part of that over the years has been really fun because you play with so many different styles of players (globally), but it's also really challenging because it pushed me to become a better player."

An early highlight was going to the Canada Winter Games in 1999 in Newfoundland. She and Jackie were on the same team for those Games.

"As we got older, we could play together, but when we were younger we were not in the same age division."

A rare exception happened in 1996 when there was no team for Jackie's age division, so she was able to play up with Jennifer's team.

Playing for Canada at the Worlds was another key moment in her ringette history, as was the three-peat that her Cambridge Turbos accomplished, winning three straight national championships. Both sisters played on those teams, and their father managed them.

One year Rick Mercer put their team on TV's The Mercer Report. Mercer pretended to be Don Cherry on the bench.

As Jennifer grew up, ringette became increasingly competitive and was a year-round activity. When she got to university at Western ('03) she played lacrosse, and also played a year of varsity hockey.

At Western, Cambridge Sports Hall of Famer Anne Benedetti coached her in lacrosse. "She put that lacrosse program together and it was so good because of her, mainly because she was coaching us and playing. She was such a good athlete and an amazing coach."

The team made it to the finals that year.



Jennifer and Jackie Gaudet, left, with Rick Mercer and Cambridge Turbos teammate

Jennifer then went to teacher's college at Brock and currently teaches in Waterloo.

As an adult she's started to try different things like ballet, though her competitive career didn't wind down until 2023. And what a career it was. Most of it was with the Cambridge Turbos.

She represented Cambridge at the National Championships and won 10 National Championship gold medals. She also won gold medals at the National Championships playing with other teams when her club team did not qualify. She has a total of 12 gold medals, 6 silver medals and 4 bronze medals from the National Ringette Championships.

As a member of Team Canada from 2002 to 2013, she won one gold (in 2002) and four silver medals (2004, 2007, 2010, 2013) against Finland.

As head coach of the U19 Team Canada west squad (the junior national team) in 2012, she guided her players to a bronze medal.

At the time of her induction, in addition to her teaching career and being a mother, she continues to play ringette, the sport she loves.



Jacqueline Gaudet

Jennifer Gaudet

Inducted 2024