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# Best of the Best defenceman: The winner

November 15, 2010 3:13 PM | Comments 3 | Recommend 6

By Scott Morrison



Bobby Orr #4, honorary captain of the Boston Bruins, walks onto the ice before the game against the Philadelphia Flyers during the 2010 Bridgestone Winter Classic at Fenway Park. (Elsa/Getty Images)

The conversation over who was the best defenceman of the modern era was slanted in one direction. Everything pointed to number 4, Bobby Orr.

As part of this discussion we promised to give one of you a copy of the new *Hockey Night in Canada* book by Scott Morrison called Best of the Best. The winner is The Torch, and here is a portion of his winning comment.

*#1 - Bobby Orr ... and then you can sort out the rest by any other criterion you want.*

*However, Bobby Orr was not just the best defenceman of all-time - in any era - but he is also the greatest hockey player of all-time. Gordie Howe sure thought so. He was the best skater. He was the fastest skater. He defended. He scored. He set-up goals (check all of the Bruins stats before Orr arrived and after he retired - none of them ever reached the heights they did without him: Esposito included). He blocked shots. He bodychecked. He fought. He was easily the best puck-stripper I have ever seen. His sense of anticipation has never been approached by anyone else since he retired - only Gretzky came close. He did it all. ...*

*I have seen every great hockey player since 1970 as a dedicated and conscious fan. I played Major Midget Triple A and continue to play hockey at the age of 47.*

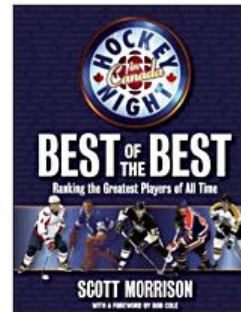
*There has never been anyone come close to him as a complete package in the game.*

*If you didn't see him play, you have no conception of what you missed. I feel fortunate to have watched him play our game. ....*

*One other thing ... in the three seasons Orr was under contract with Chicago, he NEVER cashed a cheque - because he felt he had not earned the right to because of his injuries. Imagine that happening today ?!*



## About the Book



Hockey Night in Canada has been the source of this country's greatest hockey moments for more than five decades.

That tradition continues with the release of a new book called "Best of the Best".

It's from hockey columnist Scott Morrison who put together an esteemed panel from members of HNIC to rate the very best before expansion in 1967 and

then the years up to now.

It is a must-read for every fan of the game.

You can go [here](#) to buy it from the CBC or you can make a comment on today's nominees (to the left) and have the chance of winning an autographed copy of the book.

Either way, we encourage you to enter the debate!

## About the Author

Scott Morrison is a 25-year veteran hockey journalist and recipient of the Hockey Hall of Fame's 2006 Elmer Ferguson Memorial Award. Morrison appears as an analyst on CBC's Hockey Night in Canada and keeps hockey fans on top of all of the breaking news from the world of hockey with reports, columns and blogs on CBCSports.ca. He's also a regular member of HNIC Radio on Sirius Satellite Radio. Morrison appears on CBCSports.ca's I-Desk with HNIC Radio on Sirius across the country. Fans can follow Morrison on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/morrisonHNIC>

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So, one book awarded. Now to the list that the *Hockey Night in Canada* panel selected for best defencemen of the modern era:

1. Bobby Orr
2. Nicklas Lidstrom
3. Ray Bourque
4. Denis Potvin
5. Larry Robinson
6. Paul Coffey
7. Scott Niedermayer
8. Scott Stevens
9. Brad Park
10. Al MacInnis

Here's an excerpt from the book:

*He is arguably the greatest player - and not just the greatest defenceman - to ever play the game. Number 4, Bobby Orr. The native of Parry Sound, Ontario, revolutionized the game, forever changing the way defencemen played and eventually how the position was defined. Orr made defence a position that had an impact at both ends of the rink.*

*"What can I say? Bobby was the greatest player who ever lived or ever will live," said his former Boston Bruins coach, Don Cherry. "Bobby Clarke said it best one time when he said it's a shame there's not a higher league he could have gone to."*

*Indeed, also a shame that injuries prevented the incomparable Orr from dominating the NHL for more years than he did. Orr was a master at controlling play in his own end and his opponent's. He was a tremendous skater, powerful and sturdy on his blades. He at times looked like he was accelerating even when he was gliding on the ice.*

*Orr could take the puck in his end, rush it up the ice, and do laps with it in the opposition's zone if necessary. A superb puckhandler, he would either make the perfect pass or score himself. He could control and dominate a game with his skating and puckhandling skills.*

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