

AMAZING HOCKEY STORIES

CONNOR McDAVID

Lorna Schultz Nicholson

Illustrations by D. A. Bishop



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THE LITTLE WHITE LIE

Although he wasn't old enough, Connor's parents gave in. He was driving them crazy! Connor's mother filled out the registration form for minor hockey, putting Connor's birth year as 1996 instead of 1997. She told him that if the association asked for his birth certificate, like they had with Cameron, he wouldn't be able to play. But luckily for Connor, no one asked! So, that September, when he was only four years old, Connor started playing house league hockey for Newmarket.

Connor quickly became the best player on his team and spent two years playing with Newmarket. He loved the challenge of playing with older players, he was ready for that. But it wasn't always easy being the youngest *and* one of the best, and sometimes he worried he didn't fit in.

PLAYING UP . . . AND UP

When it was time for Connor to move up to the next level, his parents felt so guilty for lying about his age that his father confessed. He told the association Connor's real birthday. But then they said Connor would have to play house league for *another* year

with kids his *own* age. His father argued. He said that if kids were good at school they were allowed to move up a grade. Why not in hockey? It became apparent that Connor would have to change associations to play up a division.



CONNOR PLAYING FOR THE YORK SIMCOE EXPRESS. EVEN AT AN EARLY AGE, HE HAD EXCELLENT EDGE CONTROL AT FAST SPEEDS.

So Connor moved organizations and played for Aurora, and again he was the youngest player on the team. Sometimes it was hard for Connor because his teammates counted on him to score, and although he got a lot of goals, he didn't get one every single time!

When Connor was feeling stressed or sad about anything, he didn't lash out or have temper tantrums. He just didn't talk very much. Sometimes on the way home in the car after a hard game, he didn't say a single word. His parents kept asking him if he liked playing with older boys and he said he did. All he ever wanted to do was play hockey and play it well, even though there was a lot of pressure and he didn't always fit in.

When it came time for AAA hockey, Connor had to move again, to an association that had the advanced hockey he needed. He went to play with the York Simcoe Express AAA in the Ontario Minor Hockey Association. Again, he was the youngest on the team — but this time his dad was his coach! Connor still says that his dad is his favourite coach from his days in minor hockey.

Connor went on to play for York Simcoe for four years, leading his peewee AAA team to a gold medal