

FROM THE MONTREAL CANADIENS LOCKER ROOM

Just another special assignment

As head equipment manager for the Montreal Canadiens, Pierre Gervais has one plum assignment. If that isn't special enough during this, the Habs' 100th anniversary season, he's about to work his second NHL All-Star Game, and he's been on Team Canada five times.

THN: That's quite the resume. How did you get here?

Gervais: I started out on a junior team in Trois-Rivieres, Que. in 1972 when I was 16, and then worked with the Sherbrooke Canadiens of the American Hockey League in 1982. In 1986, I got a chance to work with the Canadiens in Montreal – we won the Stanley Cup that year and I never went back.

THN: What does the Canadiens' 100th anniversary season mean to you?

Gervais: It's a great thrill. We're using vintage jerseys a few times this season, and the All-Star Game is here. On top of that, we just opened a brand new practice facility in Brassard, Que. – the first time in history Montreal has had a separate practice rink.

THN: What special arrangements does the All-Star Game mean for you?

Gervais: It's a lot of work, but it's really a lot of fun. We get to work with a lot of different players, not just their skate sharpening but also their needs for gloves, pant shells and everything else.

THN: The NHL recently staged the second Winter Classic. You have some experience



**PIERRE
GERVAIS**
EQUIPMENT
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with outdoor games, since the Canadiens played in the Heritage Classic a few years ago. What special needs does an event like that present?

Gervais: Outdoor games are different, and in Edmonton it was very cold. My friends at the

Green Bay Packers gave me some good advice on working in the cold. It's very different – from serving hot drinks at the bench to supplying long underwear to different sharpening because the ice is so hard. Come game time, though, the players forget about all that and just play.

THN: How has skate technology affected your job?

Gervais: The skates today are light and the players are very comfortable, but they don't last as long. Before, a player might go through two pairs a year. Now, they go through a pair a month.

THN: What skate sharpening machine are you using these days?

Gervais: I've always been a Blademaster guy, and we have new machines at the Bell Centre and at the practice rink. Team Canada also uses Blademaster, so it's great.

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