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## In My Own Words: Anthony Lapointe

**One of the country's top up-and-coming linespersons talks about his unique journey in the game as a player and official, juggling school and hockey, and working with young officials**

Anthony Lapointe

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As a player and an official, I haven't had what you would call a 'traditional' path in hockey.

My playing days didn't begin until I was almost a teenager, and my time wearing the stripes stopped and started before I got onto the journey I find myself on today.

I guess I'll start there. I work as a linesperson in a number of leagues in and around Quebec. This season, I've done games in the American Hockey League (AHL), ECHL, [Professional Women's Hockey League \(PWHL\)](#), Quebec Maritimes Junior Hockey League (QMJHL) and Ligue de hockey junior AAA du Québec (LHJAAAQ), with U SPORTS and with Hockey Lac St-Louis, my local region.

Oh, and I serve as referee-in-chief of the AHM de Mont-Royal/Outremont, working with young officials.

And did I mention I'm a full-time student, finishing my degree in physical education at McGill University?

It's a lot, but I love the game.



As I said earlier, I got into the game late. Growing up in Montreal, I watched PK Subban on TV and wanted to be just like him. I knew I wasn't going to actually make it to the NHL, but I wanted to get on the ice and see where the game would take me. More than anything, I just wanted to have fun.

I was already an active kid. I was always outside, always playing games, but never anything too organized, outside of a couple years of soccer. In school, I lived for sports. I'd make sure I was on every single extracurricular team there was. And I'd be at school all day; from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., I'd be in class. And then from 3:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., I'd be playing sports.

Finally, when I was 12, my mom agreed to sign me up for minor hockey.

I'm pretty sure I was late for my first tryouts, so I just ended up on a random team, but I loved it. I never played too competitive, never got to AAA or anything like that, but I was just happy to be playing.

Shortly after I started playing, my dad left. So, it was just the five of us – my mom, myself and my three siblings. Money was tight. But my mom kept me in hockey. She kept all of us in the things we loved. She always put her children first, and made sure we had what we wanted.

If it wasn't for her, I wouldn't be where I am today. Heck, I'm pretty sure I wouldn't even know how to skate!

So... Mom, if you're reading this, thank you. You are the reason I am here today. I love you.



I played minor hockey through to U18, and I thought my playing career was done at that point. Until I got a phone call from the coach at Cégep André-Laurendeau, asking if I wanted to join the college team. I was surprised, because I had never considered collegiate hockey, but I had a buddy on the team who recommended me.

It was already December, and the season was two months old, but I was on the ice the next day and quickly found myself a member of the Boomerang. That was my home for the next two years.

When that chapter was complete, I knew I wanted to stay involved in the game. I wanted to be active, wanted to be on the ice.

My coach told me he knew a guy if I ever wanted to be an official, so I thought... why not?

I did say earlier that my officiating career stopped and started. I actually got my start as an official when I was 16. But at that point, I didn't want to work the two-man system and do U11 and U13 games. It wasn't for me.

Fast forward four or five years, and it was a different story. The guy my coach knew was Doug Hayward, who has spent decades involved in officiating in Quebec. He's has earned provincial and national recognition working with young officials, so when he spoke, I listened.

I decided to give it a real go this time.

It didn't take long to realize officiating was something I was good at, and something that could be more than – as I considered it – a great way to serve the game and stay physically active. I was working AAA games my first year, and after that first year I got the call to go to the NHL Officiating Exposure Combine. Then I got hired in the QMJHL. Then I got hired in the AHL. Then I got hired in the ECHL. I was like, “Okay, this happening.”

Last season, I started to get more attention nationally and internationally. I attended the provincial Member camp in Quebec, and got an invite to the [National High Performance Officiating Camp in Calgary](#), just about a year ago.

I've worked the [TELUS Cup](#), [Junior A World Challenge](#), [Centennial Cup](#) and [Hlinka Gretzky Cup](#), working with some of the best officials from across the country. That kind of experience only makes me better on and off the ice.

Hockey Canada helped me get my B license with the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF), and that led to my first-ever international assignment – the 2024 IIHF World Junior Championship, Division 2A in Dumfries, Scotland.

That was a crazy experience. I spent the first three days just watching, because my luggage didn't show up. I flew Montreal-Paris-Amsterdam-Edinburgh, and my connection in Paris was only 45 minutes. It's a huge airport, so I had a feeling my luggage wasn't making it.

But it was a really nice event. When you work IIHF events, you get to meet new people and you create friendships. We were 11 officials over there, and there are three or four that I still talk to on a regular basis. I'm excited to do more events like that in the future.



The question I get a lot is: How? How do I juggle officiating and school, along with everyday life?

I'd say it's easier now than it was a few years ago. When I started officiating, I didn't really know what was going on, so I'd bring my laptop to the rink. I'd show up half an hour early just to finish my work. And then when I got back home after hockey, I'd hop back on the computer and finish my assignments.

I just always have my computer when I travel. If I take a plane, which I do usually once a month, I'll show up an hour earlier and just do some work to make sure it's done.

Most of my teachers are understanding. There has definitely been some hockey that I have had to miss out on because I had to be in class, but for most of the part there has been a good balance.

Sleep has taken a bit of a hit, because I'll either stay up really late or get up really early to finish some work because I know I'm travelling four or five hours for a game. The last thing I want to do when I get home at two in the morning is homework. So, I'll sleep four or five hours, wake up early, finish my work and then submit it. I've made it work, and I'm almost done!



As exciting as being on the ice in some of the best leagues in the world is, there's something special about working with the young officials with the AHM de Mont-Royal/Outremont.

There are two things I tell young officials:

Number one, you have to make sure you're having fun. If you're not having fun, this is not for you, and I won't take it personally if you don't want to officiate anymore.

Number two, everybody is human. It's normal to make mistakes. I'm officiating at the professional level, but that doesn't mean I don't make a mistake. But you need to acknowledge your mistakes and learn from your mistakes to get better.

When I go to rinks to supervise, the officials get so stressed whenever they see me walk in the building. So, the first thing I do is tell them, "Let's relax here. I'm not here to judge you. I'm here to help you."

Before I wrap up, I just wanted to reiterate that I'm extremely lucky to be in the position I'm in, and I don't take it for granted. It's hard to believe I've only been an official for four years.

But it's all about the love of the game, as I've mentioned a couple times.

The official may be the "law and order" on the ice, but I really do go out there with a smile on my face and try to make friends. I don't want to make enemies. Whenever I have an

opportunity to shoot a joke, I'll take it. I'll see a player, I'll make a joke and we'll build off of that.

The next time we're on the ice together, I'm happy to see them and hopefully they're happy to see me too.

Just like I tell my officials ... if you're not having fun, this probably isn't for you!