

Seasons of Change

BROCK'S BANTER

By Brock Weir

Another season down.

Lord Stanley's cup has once again been claimed by Tampa Bay in the second year running, netting another consecutive win for Barclay Goodrow, a resident of York Region.

The Wimbledon Finals are now in the books after taking a year off due to the global pandemic.

The finals of the Euro Cup had sports fans glued to their screens on Sunday, leading to elation or bitter disappointment depending on whether you were backing Italy or England.

And now, what's next?

Well, let's not look too far ahead into our calendars, but let's all agree this was a busy, productive and exciting week for sports fans.

In the interests of full disclosure, no matter how thrilled I am that someone so close to home has achieved something so remarkable in their young career, sports has never really been in my wheelhouse. It's not that I'm not a fan, mind you; it's just that my own personal interests lie elsewhere ? well, aside from Wimbledon. That's usually the one time I can be found glued to the couch from beginning until the end, much to the chagrin of whomever I happen to be around at the time looking to do something far more productive with their time.

As someone with a very avid interest in what is termed ?Old Hollywood,? I'm only half joking when I say the Oscars are my equivalent of the Super Bowl, the Stanley Cup finals or the World Series. I suspect this is the case for many movie fans who were not blessed with what it takes to make any kind of showing on the ice or field.

Friendly wagers are made, scorecards are kept, statistics are charted. It's really not all that different. Really.

Every once in a while, however, those of us who follow politics more avidly than anything that takes place on grass or water ? frozen or otherwise ? there are other kinds of events that might be considered a ?sport? to follow, such as how a snap election call plays out (something that many of us are already placing friendly wagers on), the impact of a change of government, and even the process of appointing a new Governor General fits the bill.

Who are the contenders? What do they bring to the table? How will they shake things up from what was left behind by their predecessor?

I first got caught up in this speculation when then-GG Romeo LeBlanc resigned from the position in 1999 due to ill health.

By the time his successor, Adrienne Clarkson, was appointed by then-Prime Minister Jean Chretien around the time of my 14th birthday, I was excited by the possibilities. First of all, it was not an appointment from amongst former government officials or bureaucrats, it was the appointment of a woman, well-known across the country for her own trailblazing career, who was not only just the second female to hold the highest office in the land, but the first immigrant to represent the Monarch.

Her appointment renewed interest in the office across the country, as did her successor, fellow broadcaster Michaelle Jean. While Jean's successor, David Johnston, was less known from coast to coast, he didn't waste any time getting himself out there and,

supported by his wife, Sharon, they set, in my opinion, the gold standard for Rideau Hall.

Julie Payette, the ill-advised appointment made by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, turned out very differently, as we now know all too well, and since her resignation this past winter, it has been a guessing game as to who might ultimately fill the void.

Enter the Super Bowl analogy: political pundits, and even simply armchair pundits with a vested interest in the vice regal office, had no short shortage of suggestions on the best person for the job. They came equipped with their preferred options, the stats to back it, presumably set them down and sent them off to the powers-that-be. Then it was time to play the waiting game and hope for a victory if their preferred candidate ultimately got the call.

This turned out to be an exceptionally long waiting game, but word finally came this past Tuesday that a call had been made and answered.

When the Prime Minister and the appointee walked in front of the cameras, COVID masks hiding the face only amped up the anticipation of who might be behind it ? an added splash of drama for political geeks like myself to enjoy!

I doubt many people had former broadcaster, diplomat, and barrier-breaking Inuit woman Mary Simon on their score card, but as the Prime Minister listed off her innumerable accomplishments, it became clear that this was an appointment that was mercifully thought out, vetted and, essentially, perfect.

?I am honoured, humbled and ready to be Canada's first Indigenous Governor General. I would also like to thank Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth for placing her confidence in me to represent her in this wonderful country of ours. I can confidently say my appointment is a historic and inspirational moment for Canada and an important step forward on the long path towards reconciliation. This is a moment I hope all Canadians feel a part of because my appointment reflects our collective progress towards building a more inclusive, just and equitable society.?

Born to an Inuk mother and an English father, she said ?these experiences allowed me to be a bridge between the different lived realities that together make up the tapestry of Canada.?

?I can relate to all people no matter where they live, what they hope for or what they need to overcome. As time passed, my work often took me south. I spent my adult life fighting for Indigenous and human rights, pushing for increased access to health care and mental health services, and working hard to build better educational outcomes for our children. It is fair to say I have grown up twice: once in Northern Canada and once in Southern Canada. As GG, I am fully committed to setting and maintaining the highest possible standard of work and ethic in all aspects of my duties.

?My appointment comes at an especially reflective and dynamic time in our shared history. During my time as Governor General, I will work every day towards promoting healing and wellness across Canadian society.?

She concluded by saying that together ?we must thoughtfully work hard towards the promise of a better tomorrow.? I hope we all, and not just our lawmakers, heed these words to help make that vision reality.

?If we embrace our common humanity and shared responsibility for one another, Canada's brightest days are yet to come,? she said.

Let's all join her on this journey and work hard to make that vision a reality. A new, exciting ? and perhaps difficult ? season is ahead of us. Let's make it count.