



## “LEAF HIGHLIGHTS”



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by, Ross Vennare

### Leafs Just Need to Build Team Chemistry

It's the best of times; it's the worst of times. The NHL schedule is already a month into action, yet, where are the Toronto Maple Leafs? After witnessing a 3-3 tie game against the Atlanta Thrashers at the Air Canada Centre last night, I am convinced the Leafs must focus on building team chemistry.



The Toronto Maple Leafs have the right people in the organization to build a championship team, so, where did all the focus go? Pat Quinn, Leafs coach/GM, began planning for chemistry the moment he selected his team for the 2002-2003 season. However, is team cohesion really there? With threats from Wade Belak demanding a trade for more ice time, players taking selfish penalties, and lack of all around team playing, cohesion is long lost. The last thing the Leafs need, is an individual who puts their needs ahead of the teams'. The Leafs need to develop better habits in order to produce better results in the “W” column.

The Toronto Maple Leafs have been a team of tremendous development during the past four seasons that Pat Quinn has been in charge. They're a team that is constantly learning and developing, especially when great leaders like Gary Roberts are in the mix. The addition of Gary Roberts has been a big bonus to the Leaf line-up for the seasons he has been present. First of all, he always puts the needs of the team ahead of his own. This is evident by the amount of punishment he is willing to take in front of the net. He came back from a career threatening neck injury while a member of the Calgary Flames, because of his love of the game. Roberts sacrifices his body on every shift that he plays and plays every shift as if it were his last. He is a great leader to the rest of his team members; this was evident when Sundin was sidelined for a portion of last years' playoffs with an injury. Further, Roberts brought the best out of Alyn McCauley in the post-season, as well as kept his team in the groove when push came to shove. He is a self-motivated player who understands team cohesion, group process, is well known for his character, and is respected for it.



Where does all of this lead? The Toronto Maple Leafs should reflect upon last season's playoffs and incorporate the style of play that Roberts brought to the team in order to find the motivation to move forward. It's just an attitude thing that the Leafs need to regain. This Leaf team has the talent, character, and potential to be a threat to any of their opponents. All they need now is a strategy to ensure that the behaviours and attitudes present on the team, will maximize the team's opportunity to succeed and to eliminate any possibility of losing focus. Team building should be the focus. In team building, team cohesion is the key. The coach must create an understanding of the group process, allow every individual to become known and respected, have fun, and keep motivated.

I believe that Mr. Quinn is familiar with the, 'Team Building Process,' and will enable his group of players to get out of their slump and reach their goals. Mr. Quinn is aware that team building is needed and unquestionably has the experience to develop it and get the job done. [ross@celebrityextras.com](mailto:ross@celebrityextras.com)



**GO LEAFS GO!**

#### **SPECIAL CREDITS AND RECONGNITIONS**

SPECIAL THANKS GO OUT TO THE TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS ORGANIZATION. SPECIAL SOLUTE ALSO GOES OUT TO THE AIR CANADA CENTRE STAFF AND THE SECURITY PEOPLE FOR DOING A FABULOUS JOB ON CROWD CONTROL. ADDITIONAL CLOSING CREDITS ARE ALSO EXTENDED TO JP'S OWN PUBLICITY AND MEDIA TEAM FOR DOING A FABULOUS JOB COVERING THE LEAFS. WRITTEN BY ROSS VENNARE. EDITOR, JP PAMPENA. EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, KENT FROM SKYNET. CO-EDTED BY SPIDER JONES AND LEIGH WOOD. CAMERA TECHNICIAN, TONY ROMA.



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