

TEACHABLE BOOKS

# Student Well-Being: Self-Image and Identity

By Rabia Khokhar

**GRADE LEVEL:** Junior (4-6)

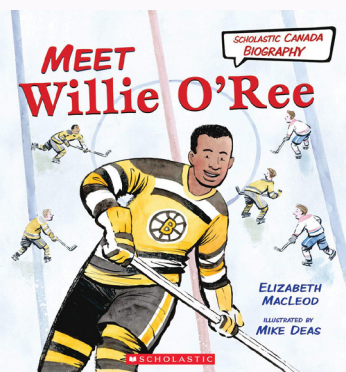
**THEME:** Student Well-Being

**SUB-THEMES:** Self-Image, Identity

## LEARNING FOCUS

Hockey is a popular sport and has become associated with the Canadian identity and culture. Oftentimes, white male hockey players are centered in this sport while players of other identities (like race and gender) are rarely represented. In this lesson, students will learn about the experiences of racialized hockey players like Willie O'Ree and explore the initiatives being created to ensure this sport is inclusive for all Canadians.

## FEATURED BOOK



*Scholastic Canada Biography: Meet Willie O'Ree* by Elizabeth MacLeod, illustrated by Mike Deas (Scholastic Canada, 2020)



## LEARNING EXPERIENCE

### MINDS ON PROVOCATION

Start the lesson by having a conversation with students. Ask the following questions:

- What is a sport you love playing or watching?
- Are there players in the sport that you look up to as role models?
- Which sport do you think is the most popular in Canada?
- Why do you think this is Canada's most popular sport?

Tell students that one of the sports Canada is most known for is hockey. Show students the cover of the book, *Scholastic Canada Biography: Meet Willie O'Ree*. Prompt them to look carefully at the cover by asking the following scaffolded questions:

- What and who do you notice and see?
- What are some of the identities of the main character? Identity is all of the things that make us who we are. (Focus on race and gender.)
- Do you think someone's identity can impact their experiences in a sport? How?
- What do you think the book will teach us?

Tell students that although hockey is a sport that is played by people of all identities, Indigenous and racialized people have and continue to face discrimination, racism and unfairness.

### READ, PLAN, AND PRACTICE

After the initial introduction, read the story aloud. Stop reading at appropriate points to draw the student's attention to key ideas by posing probing questions and encouraging discussion. Reinforce how Willie O'Ree's racial identity was the reason he experienced racism.

#### During Reading:

Page 6-7: How does young Willie O'Ree challenge the discriminatory, racist and unfair laws and rules in his community? How do the people around him react?

Page 12-13: What does the following mean?

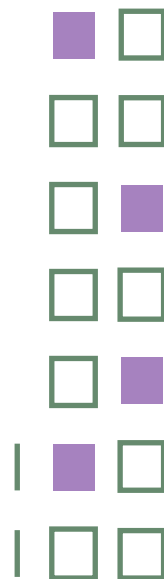
"Hockey was a sport played by white players for mostly white audiences. Some white people did not feel that Black people should play hockey."

Why do you think people have these views? Do you think these views are of the past or still said by people in the present?

Page 20-21: What are some examples of the discriminatory, racist and unfair treatment Willie O'Ree experienced from fans, coaches and other players?

#### After Reading:

Willie O'Ree went through a lot of discrimination as a Black hockey player. How do you think this affected him? Why is it important to challenge discriminatory, racist and unfair laws and work to create inclusive spaces?



Why is it important to have people of all identities in sports? Is it important to have a hero/role model that may share an identity with you?

Do you think it is important that the NHL has a diversity task force? What role do you think it plays in creating inclusive hockey communities?

## MAKE, TINKER, AND MODIFY

Students can be provided with the following choices to deepen their understanding of the key ideas. They can choose an activity based on their interests and abilities.

**Letter Writing:** What do you think?

Willie O’Ree is the Director of Youth Development for the National Hockey League’s (NHL) diversity task force. They have an initiative called “[Hockey is for Everyone](#)” which is focused on creating opportunities, spaces and role models for young people of all identities. Words are powerful and can have a big impact on young people interested in hockey. Write a letter to either the NHL or Willie O’Ree or a local hockey association with your ideas on how to create an inclusive hockey community.

**Research and Create:** Hockey Banner

Research hockey players of diverse identities such as P.K. Subban, Carey Price and Hayley Wickenheiser. Create a banner to share with your school community that includes visuals and interesting information related to their hockey careers, challenges and accomplishments. Inquiry Focus Question: How has this hockey player contributed to building a more inclusive hockey community?

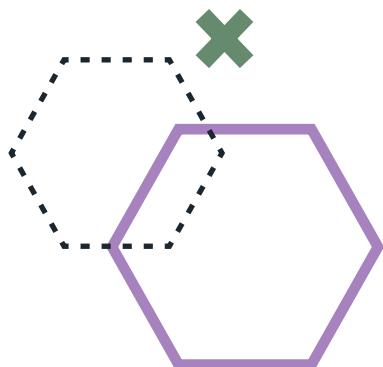
**Research and Innovate**

Harnarayan Singh is the co-host of an innovative program that seeks to unite and make hockey accessible for all Canadians. *Hockey Night in Canada: Punjabi Edition* is a program that broadcasts hockey games in the Punjabi language. How does this initiative show that hockey is really for all Canadians? Research some other initiatives and programs that are creating accessibility for all Canadians. Suggest your own innovative idea that will contribute to building an inclusive hockey society.

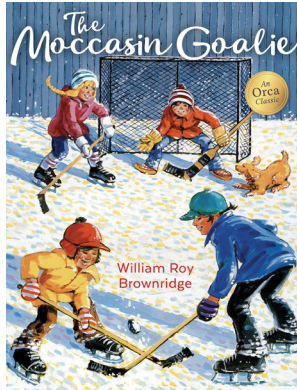
## REFLECT AND CONNECT

First in small groups and then as a whole class discuss these questions: What obstacles and challenges have racialized and/or female hockey players had to go through? How can we build a more inclusive hockey community?

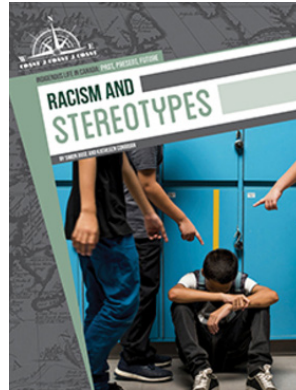
Individually have students brainstorm questions they still have about discrimination in hockey and other sports.



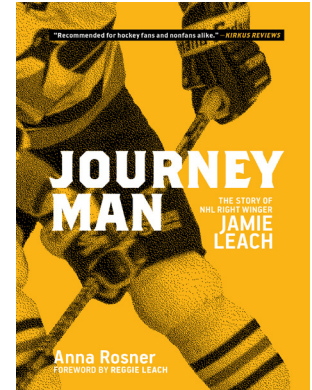
## ADDITIONAL CANADIAN BOOKS AND BOOK LISTS TO SUPPORT THESE SUB-THEMES



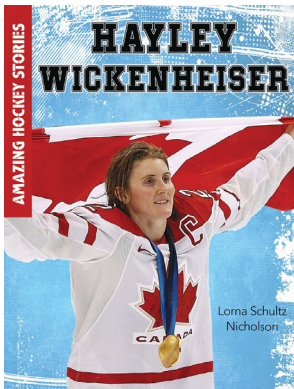
*The Moccasin Goalie* by William Roy Brownridge (Orca Book Publishers, 2016)



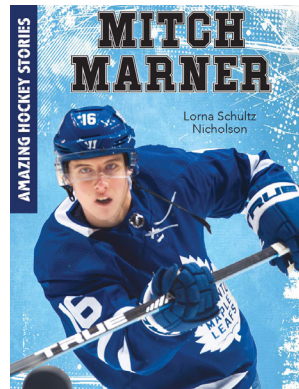
*Indigenous Life in Canada: Past, Present, Future: Racism and Stereotypes* by Simon Rose and Kathleen Corrigan (Beech Street Books, 2021)



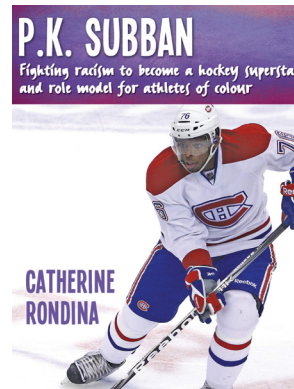
*Journeyman: The Story of NHL Right-Winger Jamie Leach* by Anna Rosner (Yellow Dog, 2020)



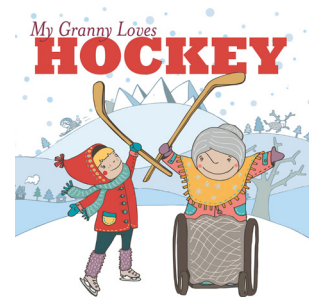
*Amazing Hockey Stories: Hayley Wickenheiser* by Lorna Schultz Nicholson, illustrated by D.A. Bishop (Scholastic Canada, 2018)



*Amazing Hockey Stories: Mitch Marner* by Lorna Schultz Nicholson, illustrated by D.A. Bishop (Scholastic Canada, 2020)



*P.K. Subban: Fighting Racism to Become a Hockey Superstar and Role Model for Athletes of Colour* by Catherine Rondina (Lorimer, 2020)



*My Granny Loves Hockey* by Lori Weber, illustrated by Eliska Liska (Simply Read Books, 2014)

## BOOK LIST

- [Winter Sports Books](#) (Canadian Children's Book Centre) – The book list is divided into primary and junior fiction and non-fiction categories

## ADAPTATIONS FOR THIS LESSON

This lesson could lead into a school-wide focus on student health and well-being.

The junior class could partner with a primary class and share their learning from this lesson in an age-appropriate way.

## MORE RESOURCES

- *Breaking the Ice: The True Story of the First Woman to Play in the National Hockey League* by Angie Bullaro, illustrated by C.F. Payne (Simon and Schuster, 2020)
- *Willie: The Game-Changing Story of the NHL's First Black Player* by Willie O'Ree and Michael McKinley (Viking, 2020)
- *Carey Price: How a First Nations kid became a superstar goaltender* by Catherine Rondina (James Lorimer and Company, 2020)
- [Twin Indigenous hockey players look to inspire others with NCAA Division 1 scholarship opportunity](#) (650 CKOM)
- [History on ice: How Michael Nicholson became a hockey trailblazer](#) (The Brock News) – An interesting article about the first Black captain of a Canadian university hockey team

