



**Memories of Sport**  
**- T. Kent Morgan**  
**(Courtesy Canstar Community News)**

The next time you are in a hockey arena, a curling club or a community centre, see if you can spot the automated external defibrillator (AED) machine that should be in plain sight.

The importance of AED machines was in the news after NHL defenseman Jay Bouwmeester of the St. Louis Blues collapsed on the bench during a game with the Anaheim Ducks on Feb. 11. An AED machine that is kept close to the bench during NHL games was used to save his life. He later was placed on long-term injured reserve.



A couple of days later, the *Winnipeg Free Press* ran a story about Rick St. Croix, the Manitoba Moose developmental goaltending coach, going into full cardiac arrest in the Winnipeg International Airport on Dec. 10. As part of the effort to save his life, an AED machine was employed.

A Manitoba Government Defibrillator Public Access Act had legislated that AEDs must be installed in designated public premises by Jan. 31, 2014. Several years earlier, the Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame, headed at the time by President Gary Cribbs took a leadership role in getting AEDs into Manitoba rinks. While the HOF is best known for its bi-annual induction of individuals and teams into its shrine that is located in the MTS Iceplex, the organization takes on a number of other projects in support of the community such as scholarships, awards and grants.

In the spring of 2008, the HOF directors approved a program to increase awareness for the need to have AEDs in rinks. The HOF purchased machines for the Billy Mosienko and Terry Sawchuk rinks in Winnipeg as both players were in the first group of HOF inductees in 1985. Recognizing the importance of the public seeing the project as stretching beyond the Perimeter Hwy, a third unit was donated to the Whitney Forum in Flin Flon where many HOF inducted individuals or team members had played.

The HOF committee met with the City of Winnipeg and lobbied for AEDs to be placed in city rinks. At the beginning there was reluctance from city officials, but hockey won the battle and machines were installed in all city-operated rinks. Next up were discussions with the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres to get them into facilities



falling under its umbrella. Funding support was received from the Pan-Am Clinic Foundation to pay half the cost, which was about \$1250 per unit. That led to an AED being installed in the Gateway, Notre Dame, River Heights and Transcona East End arenas.

The committee also worked with recreation groups across the province to encourage them to purchase AEDS for their local facilities. In November and December, 2008, an AED Challenge initiative developed by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Manitoba (HSFM) that offered a special purchase price and training resulted in more than two dozen rural communities obtaining units.

Players also recognized the need. Current HOF president Don Kuryk, a retired referee, spearheaded a project by his Winnipeg Clubs oldtimers team to fund one for the Pioneer Arena where they played. At the Keith Bodley Arena that was home to several 55-plus groups, former Red River Rebels coach and retired college instructor Barry Smith and retired City cop Bob Essery headed the initiative there. Players also took training on the use of the defibrillator from the HSFM.

Another story illustrates the value of having an AED machine nearby. In November 2009, Perry Batchelor was refereeing a game in Altona when he collapsed on the ice. An AED helped save his life. Key to the story is that Batchelor had lobbied to get a machine in the rink and had led the fund-raising project to make it happen about a year earlier.