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Big Bears lace 'em up against Habs' alumni in fundraising effort

By Mark Lidbetter

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Dave Morissette works the puck with a Big Bear in his path.

Rob Taussig photo

Last Sunday afternoon was a special one for the members of the Solomon Schechter Academy family as the school held SSA On Ice 2 at the Samuel Moskovitch arena. Following the great success of the inaugural event last year, plans were made to have the second edition surpass year one's efforts. This fundraising event for the Solomon Schechter Academy Children's Foundation will donate a portion of the proceeds to the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation. "We are so proud to be partnering with the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation for this event," Steven Erdelyi, Head of School at Solomon Schechter Academy said.

The packed stands of fans were treated to a great contest featuring the SSA Big Bears, comprised of parents and school alumni against the Montreal Canadiens Alumni squad.

Some of the former Habs taking part in SSA On Ice 2 included Chris Nilan, Stephane Richer, Rick Green and Gilbert Delorme with Hall of Famer Guy Lafleur behind the bench as coach.

"It's always great to be part of these games," Gilbert Delorme said "We play 30 or so games a year, we were in Saskatchewan and in Alberta twice. We were just in Fort McMurray in March, it is hard to believe what they are going through now."

The alumni team draws from a pool of some 25 former Habs and are always pleased to lace up for community events like SSA On Ice 2. "It is important to be in the community," Lafleur said. "Last year we raised over 1.5 million in the games the team participated in."

With game time fast approaching Big Bears' goalie Mitchell White could hardly wait to get between the pipes. "This is a childhood dream, to be at the rink with Guy Lafleur and face Hab players," White said, who was wearing number 29 in honour of his goaltending hero Ken Dryden. "The event is so important too, as an SSA alumnus (class of '84) to be able to support the school's foundation for the students and the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation it is an honour to be a part of this."

White and his teammates were also impressed by the sense of community the Canadiens' Alumni shows. "I have followed the NHL closely for a long time," White said. "And there is no classier an organization than the Montreal Canadiens."

Rounding out the afternoon were special performances, delicious food, special surprises and giveaways to the fans in attendance.

