



# Stickhandling through the Margins: First Nations Hockey in Canada

*Michael A. Robidoux*

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Some of hockey's fiercest and most passionate players and fans can be found among Canada's First Nations populations, including NHL greats Jordin Tootoo, Jonathan Cheechoo, and Gino Odjick. At first glance the importance of hockey to the country's Aboriginal peoples may seem to indicate assimilation into mainstream society, but Michael A. Robidoux reveals that the game is played and understood very differently in this cultural context. Rather than capitulating to the Euro-Canadian construct of sport, First Nations hockey has become an important site for expressing rich local knowledge and culture.

With stories and observations gleaned from three years of ethnographic research, *Stickhandling through the Margins* richly illustrates how hockey is played and experienced by First Nations peoples across Canada, both in isolated reserve communities and at tournaments that bring together participants from across the country. Robidoux's vivid description transports readers into the world of First Nations hockey, revealing it to be a highly social and at times even spiritual activity ripe with hidden layers of meaning that are often surprising to the outside observer.

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