

Women's Hockey Heroes Captured Behind the Lens of Andrea Mead Cross

As a world-class athlete, Andrea Mead Cross is reaching those same heights as a photographer. Named after Andrea Mead Lawrence, the first American-born competitor to claim two Olympic gold medals in Alpine Skiing, current clients include ESPN: The Magazine, Oprah's OWN Network and Random House.

Engaging in an exciting sports photography project, it has evolved into a labor of love. Capturing the spirit of a group of inspiring and empowering athletes, the former University of Florida swimmer and professional triathlete has also included three heroes from women's hockey as part of her subjects.

Captured behind the lens are Jocelyne and Monique Lamoureux, along with ice sledge competitor Christy Gardner. They join a pantheon of notable female athletes that Cross has photographed including Misty May-Treanor, Diana Nyad and Dara Torres. With the photographs culminating in a book to be released titled "Sports Souls", it is an extension of her love of sport. Discussing her motivation to do the book, the passion for sport flows from her soul,

"I have been an athlete the majority of my life. First it was swimming, I competed at a world level since I was born basically! (laughs). As a sprinter I was on many USA Teams racing world-wide. After swimming I was lured to the sport of triathlons, racing the Olympic + sprint distances professionally for many years with the best. And now as a photographer, I find I am continually drawn to working with the top athletes in the world.

We share an understanding; an unspoken bond that seems to enhance our brief working relationship together. "Sports Souls" the book is a project I have wanted to do for quite some time now and finally found the time to do it! During this project I've been without restrictions or guidelines, which has allowed me the freedom to showcase these athletes in a very different light. Hopefully the end result reveals a fresh new perspective of each athlete that has not really been seen before."



In looking to establish a unique aspect in the selection of her athletic subjects, Cross shares some insights. Beginning with the Lamoureux sisters, Cross was just as intrigued by their off-ice accomplishments, which includes entrepreneurship and inspiration.

"This book has been a very personal journey and I really took time to research each athlete. There had to be that extra "something" besides being an athlete that would somehow enhance this project. The Lamoureux sisters are super interesting for obvious reasons - they are twins, two-time Olympians, and two-time Silver Medalists! Yet, both also have a very interesting and busy life outside of the sport as well!

Christy Gardner was actually brought to my attention by a very enthusiastic individual we've never had the privilege of meeting. He asked if I would consider including her in "Sports Souls." Once I did my homework, I was so impressed by her story that I was compelled to find a way to make it work!"

As the first pair of twin sisters to compete in women's ice hockey at the Olympics, the Lamoureux sisters, Jocelyne and Monique have established themselves as a pair of once-in-a-lifetime players. From capturing the imagination of fans, to providing the US national team with a new generation of hockey superstars, they are truly worthy of the moniker of legend.

Having also played together at the NCAA level, the two would help transform the North Dakota Fighting Sioux into a national power. The all-time leading scorers among sisters that have played NCAA hockey with an astounding 550 points combined (285 points for Jocelyne and 265 for Monique), the opportunity to work with Cross also had philanthropic efforts associated with it.

With proceeds going to animal charities, the Lamoureux sisters were photographed with dogs, showing a softer side that makes them such an admirable pair of individuals. Of note, Cross reflects on what she enjoyed most about working with them,

"Working with Monique and Jocelyne Lamoureux was truly a refreshing experience! Not only are they amazing athletes and Olympic hockey players, but they are super fantastic people! They're both very family oriented, both are highly educated(with master degrees), and both are very involved in supporting the future of women in hockey. Monique and Jocelyne have a true passion for helping girls interested in competitive hockey and guiding those already participating in the sport.

Monique runs hockey clinics for young girls and Jocelyn is a conditioning coach for the University of North Dakota women's team. Both girls have had great success in the sport and are devoted to continue the great North Dakota hockey tradition onto the next generation! And they were just fun to work with!"

Having served in the United States Armed Forces, Christy Gardner embodied heroism long before she was involved in hockey. Of note, her grandfather was a member of the United States Marine Corps, while two of her uncles served in the first Gulf War back in 1990-91. Sadly, an injury sustained in Korea brought an abrupt end to her military career. Despite the

setback, Gardner followed in the footsteps of many other wounded members of the military, and attempted to engage in sport.

Akin to Rico Roman, a veteran of military duty in the Middle East for the United States military, whose career-ending injury led him towards ice sledge hockey, Gardner has been able to channel her ambitions and desire to succeed in the rink. Complementing Roman's gold medal at the 2014 Sochi Paralympic Games, Gardner would have gold adorning her neck this year as well. Most recently, Gardner would help the United States capture the gold medal in the inaugural IPC Ice Sledge Hockey International Women's Cup.



The only member of the US national women's ice sledge hockey team that requires a guide dog (when off the ice), it was only natural that her dog Moxie would be included in the photo shoot. Moxie is also trained to recognize seizures, an unfortunate side effect of Gardner's military injury. Of note, Gardner had already experienced athletic glories while a student at C.W. Post, excelling in field hockey and lacrosse.

In getting the opportunity to photograph Gardner and Moxie, Cross would find tremendous inspiration in a special individual who is helping to add a new dimension to women's hockey. Named USA Hockey's Disabled Athlete of the Year in 2013, Gardner Taking into account that women's ice sledge hockey shall be a demonstration sport at the 2018 Pyeongchang Paralympic Games, it is likely that Gardner, along with Kelsey DiClaudio and Erica Mitchell will become household names like the amazing Lamoureux sisters.

"Christy Gardner was definitely an inspiring person and I most definitely was not prepared for how it overwhelmed me emotionally. Christy is the face of courage, strength, and perseverance. She's an athlete that has been challenged on many fronts since retiring from the army and has earned the respect of her peers. She is humble, she is kind, and has the level of will and determination that we all should aspire to reach in a lifetime.

She and her dog Moxie are an incredible partnership that has come together through necessity, but has become an invincible bond. Before leaving, I also had the opportunity to meet her teammates and was so touched by the level of respect and admiration they all had for each other. (A trait not always seen with every team) Christy is a person that definitely has set the bar high. Her attitude and graciousness is not only incredible, she's the example of personal triumph! This shoot was definitely a soul altering experience-one I'll never forget."

"All other quotes obtained first hand unless otherwise indicated"

To stay posted with the latest on "Sports Souls Book" project, you can follow on Twitter [@SportsSoulsBook](#) or on [AndreaMeadCross.com](#)