



For Brenda Hewitt, of Massena, NY, what started out as a casual conversation at her local Ford dealership turned into her personal miracle on ice. Just before Christmas, during a routine service visit to Frenchie's Ford, Mrs. Hewitt was admiring the new Ford trucks and happened to mention to Joe Jock, the service manager "I sure wish I could afford a new truck." Half jokingly Jock replied, "Well, you can afford to win one."

The service manager then helped set the wheels in motion for what can only be called a holiday miracle. Frenchie's Ford was sponsoring a goal-in-one contest in conjunction with the local Federal League Hockey team, the Akwesasne Warriors, in hopes of increasing game attendance. The prize? A 2012 Ford F-150 4x4 truck valued at more than \$32,000. Frenchie's Ford was going to draw five contestant's names to try and win the truck – two names at the dealership and the remaining three during the game.

There was just one small hitch. The game was that night. And the drawing was in just a few hours.

On Jock's recommendation, Hewitt, 59 an employee of a local diner, put her name in the drawing. She was a little hesitant, but luck was on Mrs. Hewitt's side. Her name was the first one drawn as a finalist; the next thing she knew she was being escorted out on to the ice by the service manager. "You got me into this. If I'm going down, you are too," she teased him as he steadied her on the slippery surface.

Mrs. Hewitt, the only woman in the contest, had never held a hockey stick before making the winning 114 foot shot from behind the far blue line. As a child Mrs. Hewitt played hockey in snow boots with her mother's cut down broom. But she'd never been on the ice in a professional rink before. And she'd never played in a helmet and never without her glasses.

While she had been concerned about going first and looking foolish, Scott Coupal, the general manager of Frenchie's Ford, gave her some words of encouragement: "Let it go and believe."

Mrs. Hewitt believed. She told herself "just follow through." After she shot the puck, she closed her eyes too afraid to watch. You could almost hear the crowd collectively hold their breath. And then go wild as the puck seemed to gain momentum. Incredibly, the puck slid across the ice into an opening barely wide enough for it to pass through, an opening so narrow it had to be highlighted with arrows. More remarkably, the event took place at the end of the second period on ice that was rough and uneven from hard play. Amazingly, the puck never left the ice, never once veered off course.

The crowd, the other contestants, the announcers, the dealership staff and even members of the Akwesasne Warriors hockey team took to the ice to congratulate Mrs. Hewitt on her once-in-a-lifetime shot. Real “Frenchie” Coupal, the dealership owner, commented that the energy and excitement in the Massena Area that night reminded him of the 1980 USA v. Soviet Union “Miracle on Ice” game. “I was there and this felt the same.”

“I didn’t believe in miracles before” said Joe Jock, the service manager who helped that started the ball rolling “but I do now.” Even Mrs. Hewitt’s own husband and daughter couldn’t believe she’d made the shot. “It was if my Mom and Dad were watching over me” Mrs. Hewitt remarked.

This modern “Miracle on Ice” turned Hewitt into a local celebrity and global media sensation. The video of her one-in-a-gazillion shot has gone viral on the internet, with over 1.5 million hits from all over the world, according to Scott Coupal. When people stop by the diner to meet Mrs. Hewitt “they should bow or shake my hand” she laughs.

As Mrs. Hewitt wrote to her husband of 41 years in his Christmas card “there may not be much under the tree, but there’s a lot in the driveway.” That’s right, she still drives her Ford Focus, and her husband drives the new truck. She’s keeping her lucky hockey stick, autographed by the Akwesasne Warriors. Hewitt brought them luck that night too; they won their game against the 1000 Islands Privateers 7 – 6.

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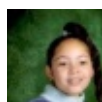
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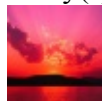
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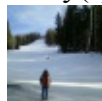
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