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Non-Fiction essay  
My Favorite Athlete

## JAKE THE SNAKE

“How would you like a job where when you made a mistake, a big red light goes on and 18,000 people boo?” Jacques Plante

If I was to write about the athlete I admire the most, it would have to be Jacques Plante. One reason for my choice is because he was always trying to do something that helped contribute to the most brutal position in hockey, the goalie. His skill and passion of never giving up and becoming one of the greatest goalies showed exactly why he is in the Hall of Fame. Finally, his talent showed how he could get the most prized possession in sports, Lord Stanley’s Cup.

Jacques Plante used his knowledge to help make the goalie world better and safer for goalies. One of his greatest achievements was the goalie mask. He wasn’t the first person to make this famous equipment, but he was the one who used it as a prized possession, and urged goalies around the world to use it. “Playing goal is like being shot at,” This quote shows that he wanted to help improve the game. But that’s not all he did. He also would skate out to the puck and pass it to the defense to get the puck away from the opponents. This trick helped start the breakout, which is an important hockey play that helps move the puck down the ice. One last influential thing he did is raising of the hand during an icing call. This was helpful to his teammates because they could know if the whistle would be blown or not. This really contributed to the hockey world. Jacques Plante's innovations helped make the hockey world a little bit easier.

Jacques Plante’s style of play and love of the game showed why he is beloved by almost everyone in Canada and the United States. The stand up position he introduced to hockey helped him play the angles and stop the puck easier than another goalie. He always tried to use this advantage in the gameplay. Also, he showed he had the stuff, and came out of retirement three times; no wonder why people always say “the goalie is a different breed.” A third way he showed the world his stuff was that game on November 1, 1959, he received a shot to the face from New York Rangers player Andy Bathgate and needed stitches. This is the famous day he used the goalie mask. It showed the other goalies that this guy would stop at nothing for the game he loved.

In hockey, the prized possession is known as the Stanley Cup, after a man who purchased the cup at a Canadian auction and used it with fellow gentlemen to give it to the best team hockey team. Jacques won this mighty trophy more than 5 times, mainly in the glory days with the Montreal Canadiens. Many other NHL awards he won were the Vezina trophy in 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1962, and 1969. This trophy goes to the best goaltender in the NHL that season. Another great trophy he won is the Hart trophy in 1962, which is

given to the player who is the most productive to his team, as voted by the Professional Hockey Writers' association. Another great honor is that the best goaltender in the Quebec major Junior Hockey League wins the Jacques Plante trophy, which is named in his honor. Finally, it all paid off for him when he was one of the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1978. For the great players there are awards, and among those great players, Jacques Plante really stood out.

“Jake the Snake” was one of the most influential and successful hockey players to ever play the game, and the following reasons show why. His contributions to the game let us know how much he cared, and how much he wanted to do to help the game. His style of play and flow of the game showed us his success as a goalie and an idol. As it is for almost everyone, this all paid off, as hard work and determination gave him pride and immortality. I believe my decision to use him is the right decision because I am a goalie. In conclusion, the athlete I admire the most would have to be the great Jacques “Jake the Snake” Plante.