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Orr likes new NHL

No. 4 raves about offences

By STEVE MACFARLANE -- Calgary Sun

Bobby Orr knows a thing or two about offensive hockey.

The Boston Bruins legend scored 270 goals and 915 points in 657 NHL games ... as a defenceman.

So, it's only natural to ask No. 4 what he thinks about the 'new' NHL focus on eliminating obstruction and creating more scoring and more room to skate.

"I wouldn't mind playing in this game today. It would have been fun. The way I played, I didn't really play like a real defenceman," said Orr with a laugh yesterday at Father David Bauer Arena, after unveiling a 400-sq.-ft. patchwork quilt made up of individual pledges of respect and responsibility in the game by 1,000 members of Canada's minor hockey community.



"The defencemen today, it's difficult for them because there's not much you can do -- those guys get in front of the net, there's not much you can do. Everything's going to the point and you've got to hope (a shot) hits you."

Knee injuries cut Orr's career short in the late 1970s but the Parry Sound, Ont., product has become an ambassador for the game of hockey, primarily as a founder of the Chevrolet Safe & Fun Hockey program that teaches youngsters to enjoy the game.

He took time out from promoting today's Hockey Canada Week kickoff to talk about the radically tweaked game he played professionally for almost 12 seasons.

"I like it. I've seen a lot of good games," said Orr. "I think the fans like the offence, I'm sure you guys like the offence. There's lots of talk about it. Our skill players are showing their skill."

And Orr's sports agency represents a couple of this season's finest.

"Jason Spezza's one of our kids, Eric Staal is one of our kids," said Orr with a growing grin. "They're doing all right."

One of the best aspects of the repackaged game, said Orr, is the parity. While Ottawa, Detroit and Vancouver look like upper-echelon teams, most franchises have a legitimate shot at the Stanley Cup.

"There are a lot of teams that can win it," said Orr. "I think there are a lot of good teams, I think the league's in good shape."