

Stick With-it

LITERACY TOUR

BACKGROUNDER

BRADY BRADY: FROM GUMFACE TO HOCKEY HERO

Mary Shaw developed Brady Brady after an incident with her hockey-obsessed four-year-old son, Brady. She found it difficult to get her son's attention and noticed she called his name twice each time she needed him to listen, constantly calling him "Brady Brady."

There was a limited supply of sports-themed books aimed at early readers, so to encourage Brady to read, Shaw wrote books that interested her son. Shaw wrote her first book, *Brady Brady Gumface*, a football story, after Brady stuck gum to his face during a road trip. After putting her ideas on paper, she sent copies to a few publishers in Canada and the United States, but only received rejection letters.

Eventually, Shaw sought guidance from a friend, Dave Chilton, author of the bestselling book, *The Wealthy Barber*, who then introduced her to Chuck Temple, an illustrator. Temple immediately drew the *Gumface* manuscript. Chilton recognized the potential of the script, and arranged a meeting with Stoddart, Canada's largest publisher at the time.

In 2001, Stoddart signed Shaw and Temple to a four book deal, featuring the loveable *Brady Brady* characters from *Gumface*. Rather than launch with a football theme, the publisher took advantage of the mass appeal of hockey in the Canadian market. It was a natural fit considering Shaw's close association with the sport, as husband, Brad Shaw, is a former National Hockey League player.

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Within weeks, a then-pregnant Shaw, wrote *Brady Brady and the Great Rink* followed soon after by *Brady Brady and the Runaway Goalie*. After a highly successful series launch, Stoddart decided to develop the series beyond the initial four books. Those plans changed however, when Stoddart filed for bankruptcy protection.

Following Chilton's personal advice and his successful marketing model used with the *Wealthy Barber Calendar* which sold 2.5 million copies, Temple and Shaw acquired their rights back. In 2004, and despite overwhelming odds, the two set up an independent publishing company, Brady Brady Inc., and assumed complete control over the production, distribution and marketing of the brand. Since 2004, the independently owned company has carved a niche in the competitive publishing industry.

Signed contracts with Scholastic Canada in both the English and French divisions, and an inked deal with a production company for future animation along with international distribution make *Brady Brady* a true Canadian success story. The series grew from a simple idea to a published list of 13 titles with scheduled new releases in several new sports including football, baseball, basketball and soccer.



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