



NEWS RELEASE



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NHL ANNOUNCES 'STARS,' FRONTLINE HEALTHCARE HEROES FOR MARCH

NEW YORK (April 1, 2021) – Florida Panthers center **Aleksander Barkov** and registered nurse **Crystal Wimmer** (Discover NHL Central Division), Colorado Avalanche goaltender **Philipp Grubauer** and registered nurse **Gina Minert** (Honda NHL West Division), Pittsburgh Penguins center **Sidney Crosby** and registered respiratory therapist **Darby Scarantine** (MassMutual NHL East Division), and Edmonton Oilers center **Connor McDavid** and healthcare aide **Fathima Aranha** (Scotia NHL North Division) have been named the NHL's "Stars of the Month" for March.

Throughout the 2020-21 season the NHL is celebrating the remarkable efforts of the off-ice stars who make it possible for us to play our games amid a pandemic by honoring frontline healthcare heroes from the regions represented by the League's weekly and monthly "Stars."

More on each frontline healthcare hero and NHL player can be found below:

DISCOVER NHL CENTRAL DIVISION – CRYSTAL WIMMER AND ALEKSANDER BARKOV

Wimmer works as a nurse on the COVID-19 unit at Broward Health Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. She stepped into a leadership role on the unit at the start of the pandemic and continues to be a key player in sharing information and holding the team accountable. Going above and beyond, Wimmer has precepted about 25 percent of the new nurses on the unit and has become a clinical resource for the nursing team. "I always knew I wanted to do something that would help others," she says. "Growing up, there were several times I spent in the hospital dealing with my own health issues and having a good, caring nurse truly made all the difference and really helped me get through difficult times in my life."

Barkov ranked third in the NHL (minimum: 5 GP) with 1.45 points per game, compiling 5-11—16 in 11 contests to spark the Panthers (23-9-4, 50 points) to a 10-5-1 March and a tie – *in terms of points* – for first place in the overall League standings. He collected points in all but two of his 11 outings, highlighted by a trio of three-point performances: March 4 at NSH (0-3—3), March 13 vs. CHI (2-1—3) and March 15 vs. CHI (1-2—3). Barkov also scored a pair of game-winning goals: March 15 vs. CHI and March 20 vs. NSH. The 25-year-old Tampere, Finland, native and 2018-19 Lady Byng Memorial Trophy winner has appeared in 31 total games this season, placing 13th in the NHL with 13-24—37.

HONDA NHL WEST DIVISION – GINA MINERT AND PHILIPP GRUBAUER

Minert, a nurse, serves as the director of the mom/baby unit at Denver's Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children (RMHC), where she has worked for more than 21 years. Known around the hospital for her incredible acts of kindness and commitment to staff, patients and the community, Minert has created gift baskets for nurses and purchased toys for children who have tested positive for COVID-19. She also has been instrumental in leading RMHC's vaccination clinic during the pandemic, even traveling to someone's home when they couldn't get to the hospital for their needed dose. In addition to her regular duties, Minert has filled in as the hospital's incident commander over the past year to help coordinate RMHC's response to coronavirus.

NHL COMMUNICATIONS

1185 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS, NEW YORK, NY 10036 T: 212-789-2000
50 BAY STREET, 11TH FLOOR, TORONTO, ON M5J 2X8 T: 416-359-7900
MEDIA.NHL.COM • NHL.COM • @PR_NHL

Grubauer became [the fifth goaltender in NHL history to earn 12 wins in a calendar month](#), compiling a 12-2-1 record, 1.56 goals-against average, .933 save percentage and three shutouts in 15 appearances to guide the Avalanche (23-8-4, 50 points) to a League-best 27 March points (12-2-3) and the top of the Honda NHL West Division standings. He allowed two or fewer goals in 11 of his 15 outings, highlighted by a League-leading three shutouts: March 3 at SJS (26 SV), March 12 vs. LAK (18 SV) and March 20 vs. MIN (31 SV). The 29-year-old Rosenheim, Germany, native has played in 30 total games this season, ranking among the top five netminders in wins (1st; 22), shutouts (1st; 5), goals-against average (3rd; 1.78) and save percentage (5th; .928).

MASSMUTUAL NHL EAST DIVISION – DARBY SCARANTINE AND SIDNEY CROSBY

Scarantine, who has more than 20 years of experience, serves as a respiratory therapist (RRT) at UPMC Mercy in Pittsburgh. COVID-19, a respiratory disease, has placed a higher burden on RRTs like Scarantine – but he and others have stepped up to the challenge. “If a patient wanted to talk for 20 minutes, I still would do it,” he says. “It doesn’t matter. I’m exposing myself more, but the patient ultimately needs me.” In addition to caring for patients with breathing problems, Scarantine – who was promoted to a supervisor position in early 2020 – has taken on another important role in the management of PPE for hospital personnel. That has included helping more than 500 physicians, nurses and staff get the correct fit for their N95 respirators.

Crosby registered 7-14—21 in 15 contests to lift the Penguins (23-11-2, 48 points) to a 12-3-1 month and into third place in the MassMutual NHL East Division. He found the scoresheet in 12 of his 15 March appearances, highlighted by seven multi-point performances. That included a pair of three-point outings: March 15 vs. BOS (1-2—3, including GWG) and March 25 vs. BUF (0-3—3). The latter featured his 1,300th career point, making Crosby [the eighth-fastest player in NHL history to reach the milestone](#) (1,017 GP). The 33-year-old Cole Harbour, N.S., native – who ranked 42nd in League scoring through February (7-11—18 in 20 GP) – currently places 11th in the NHL with 14-25—39 through 35 total games this season.

SCOTIA NHL NORTH DIVISION – FATHIMA ARANHA AND CONNOR McDAVID

Aranha, who has been a healthcare aide (HCA) since 2014, works in the emergency department at the University of Alberta Hospital and Stollery Children’s Hospital in Edmonton. Her role, which typically includes assisting nurses with feeding, turning and bathing patients, has evolved during the pandemic. Because visitors have been limited over the past year, HCAs such as Aranha have been called upon to sit with patients to provide comfort and support. They also have taken on the job of stocking PPE, including N95 masks, gloves, isolation signs and face shields. In addition, Aranha and other HCAs have stepped up to provide more assistance to triage nurses and patients in the waiting room, helping to expedite those in need of care.

McDavid placed fourth in the NHL with 7-16—23 in 14 appearances to power the Oilers (22-14-1, 45 points) to an 8-5-1 March. All of his points came during an 11-game streak from March 6-29, [his second double-digit run of the campaign](#) (also Jan. 20 – Feb. 8: 6-16—22 in 10 GP). McDavid, who factored on 23 of Edmonton’s 43 total goals during the month (53.5%), also scored a trio of game-winning goals: March 6 vs. CGY, March 17 at CGY and March 18 vs. WPG. The 24-year-old Richmond Hill, Ont., native and two-time Art Ross Trophy winner leads the League with 21-42—63 in 37 total contests this season, nine more points than the next-closest player (teammate **Leon Draisaitl**: 19-35—54 in 37 GP).