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CAPITALS' OVECHKIN WINS MARK MESSIER NHL LEADERSHIP AWARD

League to Reveal Winners of 2025 NHL Awards via Special Announcements Through June 12

NEW YORK (May 23, 2025) – Washington Capitals captain **Alex Ovechkin** is the 2024-25 recipient of the **Mark Messier NHL Leadership Award**, presented “to the player who exemplifies great leadership qualities to his team, on and off the ice, during the regular season and who plays a leading role in his community growing the game of hockey.”

Messier solicits suggestions from team and League personnel to compile a list of potential candidates for the award. However, the selection of the winner is Messier's alone.

Ovechkin, playing in his 20th NHL season and 16th as Washington's captain (tied for the third-longest tenure in League history), completed [“THE GR8 CHASE”](#) on April 6 to surpass **Wayne Gretzky** for [the most goals in NHL history](#) – a record “The Great One” held for more than 31 years. Ovechkin finished the campaign with 897 goals, three more than Gretzky totaled during his legendary career, to propel the Capitals (51-22-9, 111 points) to the No. 2 overall record in the League and the top seed in the Eastern Conference for the first time since 2016-17.

The 39-year-old Ovechkin, despite fracturing his fibula and missing nearly six weeks, shared third place in the NHL with 44 goals in 2024-25 alone (65 GP). Only one other player in League history has scored as many goals in a season at age 39 or older: **Gordie Howe**, who registered 44 at age 40 in 1968-69 (76 GP w/ DET).

Ovechkin's record-setting campaign additionally saw him surpass **Jaromir Jagr** for [the most game-winning goals in NHL history](#); extend his own marks for career [40-goal seasons](#), [30-goal seasons](#), [power-play goals](#) and [overtime goals](#); tie **Phil Esposito** for [the fifth-most hat tricks in League history](#); and move into 11th place in NHL history for [career points](#).

The No. 1 overall pick from the 2004 NHL Draft also continued to build his legacy off the ice. Since 2005-06, Ovechkin's rookie season, there has been significant youth hockey growth in the Potomac Valley (Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia). Hockey is offered to children year-round in local arenas, ball hockey rinks and schools.

In the past 20 years, hockey players in the Potomac Valley have increased by 71 percent, totaling more than 20,000, while youth hockey players (18 and under) have increased by 43 percent, surpassing 12,000. More than 9,000 players also have been introduced to hockey since the Capitals launched their Future Caps “Learn to Play” program in 2016, supported by the NHL/NHLPA Industry Growth Fund.

An additional 1 million students in Washington, D.C.-area elementary and middle schools participate in the Capitals' “Hockey School” program annually. Available to students in Grades 1-8 at more than 1,600 schools, the initiative includes street hockey equipment, a custom written curriculum and staff training. This program also is supported by the NHL/NHLPA Industry Growth Fund.

Fourteen outdoor inline/ball hockey rinks also have been built, or refurbished, by the Capitals in the past two decades in response to increased demand for access to youth hockey.

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As part of his quest to become the League's all-time goals leader, Ovechkin, the Capitals, Hockey Fights Cancer and The V Foundation For Cancer Research partnered on ["THE GR8 CHASE for Victory Over Cancer,"](#) an initiative to raise awareness and funds for pediatric cancer research. Ovechkin, starting with his 885th career goal, is donating money for every goal he scores during the remainder of his NHL career, with Monumental Sports & Entertainment matching his contributions.

Ovechkin's philanthropic efforts also have included a longstanding relationship with the American Special Hockey Association (ASHA), with "The Great 8" hosting multiple ASHA skating sessions as well as a street hockey event since 2014. Ovechkin additionally launched "Ovi's 8s" in 2006 to provide underserved children with tickets to Capitals games, a program that has given more than 6,000 individuals the chance to see the team free of charge.

The Mark Messier NHL Leadership Award adds to a trophy case for Ovechkin that also includes nine Maurice "Rocket" Richard Trophies (most recently 2019-20), three Hart Memorial Trophies (2007-08, 2008-09, 2012-13), three Ted Lindsay Awards (2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10), the Calder Memorial Trophy (2005-06), the Art Ross Trophy (2007-08), the Conn Smythe Trophy (2017-18) and the Stanley Cup (2017-18).

[Click here](#) for more information on the Mark Messier NHL Leadership Award, including a list of past winners.

Announcement Schedule

The winners of 2025 NHL Awards will be revealed via special announcements across all League platforms through June 12.

(5/23/25)