

Orpik retires after 15 NHL seasons, 2 Stanley Cup titles

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
AP Hockey Writer

Brooks Orpik called it a career Tuesday after 15 bruising NHL seasons in which he established himself as a big-hitting, shut-down defenseman and won the Stanley Cup twice.

The 38-year-old played 1,171 regular-season and playoff games for the Pittsburgh Penguins and Washington Capitals. He won the Cup with Pittsburgh in 2009 and Washington in 2018.

"I've been extremely lucky to have the best job in the world for many years, but my body is telling me it is time to move on to something new," Orpik said. "I'm excited for more family time and to experience a lot of the things that being a professional athlete forces you to miss out on."

Orpik was more known for his physicality and defense than his offense. He put up 194 regular-season and 26 playoff points but also scored the Game 2-winning goal for Washington in the 2018 final on the way to the franchise's first title.

"We wouldn't have a Stanley Cup if it wasn't for him," Capitals goaltender Braden Holtby said at the end of this season. "The impact he's had on our team is probably second to none, the way he's changed the culture and pushed guys to make them better. One of the true leaders in our game."

Orpik became a respected alternate captain and leader during his five seasons in Washington. Teammates nicknamed him "Batya" — Russian for "Dad."

"Batya was a great leader in our locker room and was so important for us to win our first Stanley Cup," captain Alex Ovechkin said in a statement Wednesday. "We will miss his presence



In this Jan. 18, 2019, file photo, Washington Capitals defenseman Brooks Orpik, center, poses with Dick Patrick, left, team president, and Bill Daly, deputy NHL commissioner, after he was given a silver stick during a ceremony to honor Orpik for playing 1,000 NHL hockey games, before the team's matchup against the New York Islanders in Washington.

AP Photo/Nick Wass, File

in the room and on the ice. Not only was he a great leader and a player, but he was a better person. I'm so happy I had a chance to play with him and for our young guys to have had the chance to learn from him."

Orpik implied throughout this season it could be his last in the NHL. He had surgery in November to repair a torn meniscus in his right knee.

"Trying to maintain that level, efficiency was tough," Orpik said. "So I think there were times of the year, I was frustrated just that I couldn't do what I wanted to do."

Orpik was back to his vintage self in the playoffs, emptying the tank for 18 minutes a night during the Capitals' seven-game series against Carolina. After



In this April 13, 2019, file photo, Washington Capitals defenseman Brooks Orpik (44) celebrates his game-winning goal in overtime of Game 2 of an NHL hockey first-round playoff series against the Carolina Hurricanes in Washington.

AP Photo/Nick Wass, File

the first-round exit in late April, the San Francisco native conceded he thought he may have played his final

NHL game but didn't want to make a rash decision.

"You got to be 100% committed to it," Orpik

said of potentially playing another season. "If you're not, then it's unfair to your teammates and other peo-

ple that are trying to help you out. In terms of like wanting to play or being committed to play, I think that's something that, I think when stuff doesn't go your way after the season you got to take a lot of time off to let things settle down."

Orpik came to that decision and will now turn his attention to finishing his communications degree at Boston College. He said he wished he had a better post-playing career plan in place but will see where the degree takes him.

He will be remembered for being the muscle behind two Cup champions — Sidney Crosby's first and Ovechkin's first. He often toed the line on hits and was suspended three games during the 2016 playoffs for a late, high hit that injured Pittsburgh's Olli Maatta.

"He's a little bit of a dinosaur because he hits and there's not a lot of hitting in this game," said Columbus coach John Tortorella, who knows Orpik well from U.S. teams in international play. "A lot of people think he might hit hard. I think he plays the game hard. I think he plays the game the right way."

Orpik's ability to play on the edge and defend other players made him beloved in Washington. The Capitals prepared for his departure by trading for big-hitting defenseman Radko Gudas, but teammates know there's no replacing Orpik and what he meant on and off the ice.

"He's been a force for all of us to gain knowledge from — how to better understand certain parts of the game, what it takes, the mental side of it," Capitals defenseman John Carlson said. "He's just a really aware person that can help anybody at any part of their career at any level of play. He's just been so important to us."

YOU'RE INVITED TO AN EXCLUSIVE SPECIAL EVENT! Miracle-Ear® RISK FREE FOR 30 DAYS*

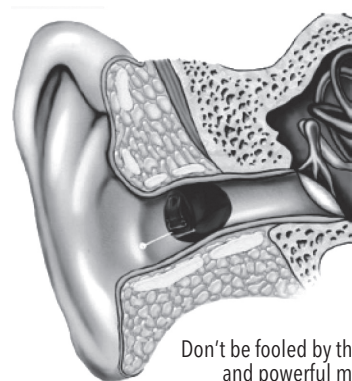
Now through June 28th, 2019

WHY CHOOSE MIRACLE EAR?

Benefit	Miracle-Ear	Other Hearing Aid Companies
3-Year Warranty on ALL TECHNOLOGIES**	Yes	?
FREE Lifetime Aftercare Nationwide	Yes	?
Over 1,400 Locations Nationwide to Service Your Hearing Aid	Yes	?
Over 68 Years in Business	Yes	?
100% Satisfaction Guarantee	Yes	?
Change or Remake Your Device up to 1 Year	Yes	?
Most Sophisticated Technology Available "Genius Technology"	Yes	?
MIRACLE-EAR FOUNDATION for Under Privileged Patients	Yes	?

**CALL TODAY!
LIMITED
APPOINTMENTS
AVAILABLE!**

MIRACLE-EAR HEARING AID CENTER MAY BE OFFERING HEARING AIDS AT NO COST TO FEDERAL WORKERS AND RETIREES WHO QUALIFY
That's Right! No Co-Pay! No Exam Fee! No Adjustment Fee!



NEW! Miracle-Ear® Introduces Our **SMALLEST** Hearing Aid **EVER!**
100% INVISIBLE

Don't be fooled by the small size. The Miracle-Ear Mirage™ I features amazingly advanced and powerful micro-technology, all wrapped up in our tiniest hearing aid ever!



**2 HEARING AIDS
\$595*
EA**

*AudioTone™ Pro Model 2B Fits up to 35db loss. Expires June 28, 2019.

To Receive the Offer Mention Code: **19JunInvited**

LIMITED TIME ONLY?

visit us online at: www.miracle-ear.com
SPECIAL NOTICE STATE EMPLOYEES
You may qualify for a hearing aid benefit up to \$4,000 every 4 years. Call for eligibility status.



The Miracle Ear Foundation

Since 1990 the Miracle-Ear Foundation™ has been providing hearing aids, follow-up care, and educational resources to people with hearing loss who demonstrate personal inability to financially provide for their hearing health needs. We do this because we believe everyone in our community deserves quality hearing instruments.



Miracle-Ear®

HERMISTON: 955 SE 4th St Suite B, Hermiston, OR 97838 • 541-716-5092
PENDLETON: 125 SE Court Ave Suite 6, Pendleton, OR 97801 • 541-224-8661

Risk Free Offer: The aids must be returned within 30 days of delivery pursuant to terms of your purchase agreement and 100% of the purchase price will be refunded. **Hearing test is an audiometric test to determine proper amplification needs only. These are not medical exams or diagnoses. Blue Cross Shield, the Blue Cross, the Blue Shield, BCBS, and Federal Employee Program are a registered trademark of Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. Blue Cross Blue Shield Association and its independent licensees are not affiliated with, nor do they endorse or sponsor, the contents of this advertisement. Trademarks referring to specific providers are used by Miracle ear for nominative purposes only: to truthfully identify the source of the services about which information is provided. Such trademarks are solely the property of their respective owners.