The Puck Drop:

Ovi announces his retirement from the NHL

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Known for his signature yellow laces on his ice skates, Alexander Ovechkin has been a household name in the NHL for the past 22 years.

With over 1,500 games played under his belt and the most goals scored (929) by an NHLer, Ovechkin has made waves in his time as a Washington Capital. Now, as the sun has officially risen for the 2026-27 season, Ovechkin announced officially that this will be his last season.

Ovechkin, a native of Moscow, Russia, was drafted No. 1 overall to the Washington Capitals in the 2004 NHL Entry draft. In his rookie year in the 2005-06 season, he won the Calder Trophy and ranked third in the league in scoring.

Due to his immense success, even from the start of his career, fans have deemed him "The Great 8," after his jersey number and prosperity in professional hockey. Since being drafted by the Capitals in 2004, Ovechkin is the first athlete to spend 22 years of their career in Washington.

By starting his 22nd NHL season with the same team, Ovechkin joins greats like Pittsburgh Penguins center Sidney Crosby, Gordie Howe and more. While already having the most goals scored in NHL history, he also holds the records for most game-winning, powerplay and overtime goals.

Ovechkin is also just 11 goals away from breaking Wayne Gretsky's record of 1,016 for most combined goals in a career, including regular season and playoffs.

According to an article from NHL.com, Ovechkin made this decision to retire over the summer with his family.

"I love this game so much, but I know in my heart it's the right decision," Ovechkin said in the article. "It was important for me to make this announcement before our first home game, so I have the chance to thank all the people around the game, everyone who has been so important to me and my family and helped me through good times and tough losses. I wouldn't have been able to achieve everything I have in my life without them."

While Ovechkin has changed the game on the ice, he's also made an impact off the ice, whether that be with his teammates or the charity work he participates in for his community.

"The feelings that you get inside of hearing the finality of him saying this is going to be my last year, there's like a lot of mixed emotions of you're almost like there's sadness to it," Capital's Head Coach Spencer Carbery said on his relationship with Ovechkin in an article from the NHL. "And then I'll turn into being super grateful of our relationship and me having the opportunity to come to the Caps organization and be the head coach and him being the captain and him welcoming me in with open arms and our relationship growing."

In addition to his relationship with his team, he also has had long-time relationships working with charities like the American Special Hockey Association as well as his own philanthropic campaign THE GR8 CHASE for Victory Over Cancer, which helps fund pediatric cancer research.

Even after Ovechkin ties his yellow laces for the very last time, there is no doubt among fans that he will still be remembered as "Alexander the Gr8."

"For young guys who (are in) first year or experienced guys, remember that moment and enjoy it because, how I said, time flies," Ovechkin said to his teammates, according to the article from NHL.com. "It seems like yesterday I was here my first year and right now this is my 22nd year and it goes like this."



NHL player Alexander Ovechkin waves to his family from the rink. Ovechkin has announced his retirement after 22 seasons.

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Colette's Commentary:

Depth and drama define the WNBA playoffs

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The WNBA playoffs have officially entered their next stage, but one thing is already clear: Regular-season success does not guarantee postseason success. Just one week after the Minnesota Lynx entered the postseason as the league's top seed, they were eliminated by the No. 8 New York Liberty. Soon after, the Indiana Fever pushed the Las Vegas Aces, one of the league's top contenders, to a decisive Game 3. Now, with the semifinals underway, the question is no longer which teams were best during the regular season. It is which teams can handle the pressure when it matters most.

While the Liberty's upset was the biggest shock of the first round, the Fever provided another reminder that the postseason was about more than seeding. Led by guard Caitlin Clark, the Fever pushed their first-round matchup against the No. 3 Aces to a decisive Game 3. With the Aces-Fever matchup serving as a win-or-go-home game, the stakes created even more drama throughout the game. Tensions boiled over when Clark and Aces forward Brianna Turner exchanged a shove that resulted in technical fouls for both players.

The physicality continued throughout the game, culminating when Clark was left bleeding from the mouth after taking an elbow from Jewell Loyd with just over three minutes remaining, with no foul called on the play. Despite the Fever's impressive fight, forward A'ja Wilson proved formidable and lived up to her Player of the Year honor, recording 36 points and leading the Aces to a 94-83 win and a trip to the semifinals.

While the Fever's playoff run came to an end, the Golden State Valkyries continued their postseason run with a win over the Dallas Wings. The No. 2 seed Valkyries defeated the No. 7 Wings 90-85 in Game 2, completing the series and advancing to the semifinals. Despite the loss, the Wings put up an impressive performance led by guard Arike Ogunbowale, who continued to have a strong postseason with 30 points after a 45-point performance in the previous game. Golden State's victory marked another milestone for the expansion franchise, which is now just one series away from reaching the WNBA Finals in its second season.

The Valkyries now face their biggest challenge yet against the No. 3 seed Las Vegas Aces, but Golden State has already shown that it has something that could give it an advantage: depth. The Valkyries' bench proved to be a major advantage, outscoring the Aces' reserves 27-7 in Game 1.

Husky alumna and guard Kaitlyn Chen led the reserves with 11 points, stepping up after starter Veronica Burton struggled offensively and was pulled in the third quarter. Center Aminata Gueye added nine points off the bench, giving Golden State the depth it needed to pull away from the defending champions and win 71-60.

With Game 2 of the semifinal series set for Wednesday night, it remains to be seen whether the Valkyries' bench can continue to power the team. For the Aces, they will need to find more consistent scoring beyond Wilson, who once again led the team with 24 points. With their bench producing just seven points in Game 1, the Aces cannot rely on Wilson to carry the offense against a deep Valkyries team.

With the Liberty now down 1-0 to the Phoenix Mercury, New York faces a test of whether it can maintain the momentum that carried it past Minnesota. Meanwhile, the Valkyries will look to carry their depth into Game 2 against the Aces, and Las Vegas will look for a response from its supporting players. As the semifinal series unfolds, the next few games could quickly reshape the playoff picture and determine which teams are truly ready to make a run at the WNBA Finals.



The Indiana Fever graphic after their season-ending loss. They lost to the Las Vegas Aces with a score of 94-83.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @INDIANAFEVER ON INSTAGRAM



Golden State Valkyrie guard Kaitlyn Chen shoots the ball. The UConn alum led the reserves with 11 points in their game against the Las Vegas Aces.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @KAITLYN.CHEN ON INSTAGRAM