

= Joe Sakic =

Joseph Steven Sakic (/ ?sæk?k / ; born July 7 , 1969) is a Canadian professional ice hockey executive and former player . He played his entire 21 @-@ year National Hockey League (NHL) career with the Quebec Nordiques / Colorado Avalanche franchise . Named captain of the team in 1992 (after serving as a co @-@ captain in 1990 ? 91) , Sakic is regarded as one of the most capable team leaders in league history and was able to motivate his team to play at a winning level . Sakic led the Avalanche to Stanley Cup titles in 1996 and 2001 , being named the most valuable player of the 1996 playoffs , and honored as the MVP of the NHL in 2001 by the hockey writers and his fellow players . As such , he is one of six Avalanche players in franchise history to participate in both of the team 's Stanley Cup victories . Sakic was also named to play in 13 NHL All @-@ Star Games and selected to the NHL First All @-@ Star Team at centre three times .

Over the course of his career , Sakic was one of the most productive forwards in the game , having twice scored 50 goals and earning at least 100 points in six different seasons . His wrist shot , considered one of the best in the NHL , was the source of much of his production as goalies around the league feared this shot . At the conclusion of the 2008 ? 09 NHL season , he was the eighth all @-@ time points leader in the NHL , as well as 14th in all @-@ time goals and 11th in all @-@ time assists . During the 2002 Winter Olympics , Sakic helped lead Team Canada to its first ice hockey gold medal in 50 years , and was voted as the tournament 's most valuable player . He represented the team in six other international competitions , including the 1998 and 2006 Winter Olympics .

Sakic retired from the NHL on July 9 , 2009 , and had his jersey number retired prior to the Avalanche 's 2009 ? 10 season opener on October 1 , 2009 , at Pepsi Center . On November 12 , 2012 , Sakic was inducted in the Hockey Hall of Fame , along with Adam Oates , Pavel Bure and Mats Sundin . On April 11 , 2013 , Sakic and 11 others were inducted into the Canada Sports Hall of Fame . He served as executive advisor and alternate governor for the Avalanche , effective at the end of the 2010 ? 11 season , and promoted to Executive Vice President of hockey operations on May 10 , 2013 .

= = Early life = =

Sakic was born in Burnaby , British Columbia , to Marijan and Slavica Sakic (originally ?aki? , Croatian pronunciation : [?akit?]) , immigrants from Croatia in what was then Yugoslavia . Growing up in Burnaby , he did not learn to speak English well until kindergarten , having been raised with Croatian as his mother tongue . At the age of four , Sakic attended his first NHL game , a match between the Vancouver Canucks and Atlanta Flames ; after watching the game , Sakic decided that he wanted to become a hockey player . As a smaller player , he was forced to use skill rather than size to excel , and modeled himself after his idol , Wayne Gretzky . After showing exceptional promise as a young hockey player in Burnaby , Sakic was referenced as a new Wayne Gretzky in the making . He scored 83 goals and 156 points in only 80 games for Burnaby , while attending school at Burnaby North Secondary . Soon after , he was added to the Lethbridge Broncos of the Western Hockey League (WHL) for the last part of the 1985 ? 86 season .

During the 1986 ? 87 season , the Broncos relocated to Swift Current , Saskatchewan , becoming the Swift Current Broncos . Sakic , playing in his first full season , was named Rookie of the Year of the WHL . He notched 60 goals and 73 assists for 133 points . But while Sakic enjoyed success on the ice , he and his team faced a tragedy on the night of December 30 , 1986 . The Broncos were driving to a game against the Regina Pats , and due to bad weather conditions , the bus crashed after the driver lost control on a patch of black ice outside of Swift Current . While Sakic was unharmed , four of his teammates (Trent Kresse , Scott Kruger , Chris Mantyka and Brent Ruff) were killed . This incident had a lasting impact on the young Sakic , who declined to talk about the crash throughout his career . The next year , in 1987 ? 88 , Sakic was named the WHL Most Valuable Player and Canadian Major Junior Player of the Year . He scored 160 points (78 goals , 82 assists) , tying him with Theoren Fleury of the Moose Jaw Warriors for the WHL scoring title .

= = NHL career = =

= = = Quebec Nordiques = = =

Sakic was drafted 15th overall by the Quebec Nordiques in the 1987 NHL Entry Draft . Rather than make the immediate jump , he told the Nordiques management he would prefer to spend the 1987 ? 88 season in Swift Current to prepare for the NHL . He made his NHL debut on October 6 , 1988 , against the Hartford Whalers and registered an assist . His first NHL goal came two days later against goaltender Sean Burke of the New Jersey Devils . During the season , he wore # 88 because his preferred number , # 19 was already taken by a teammate , Alain Côté . While considered a front @-@ runner for the Calder Memorial Trophy as rookie of the year due to his rapid scoring pace , an ankle injury that forced him to miss 10 games in December and the resulting scoring slump helped quash any hopes of winning the award . He would finish his rookie season with 62 points in 70 games .

In 1989 ? 90 , his second NHL season , Sakic was able to switch his number back to his familiar # 19 (Alain Côté had retired over the summer) , and scored 102 points , which was ninth overall in the league . At the start of the next season , 1990 ? 91 , he was named co @-@ captain along with Steven Finn (Sakic was captain for home games , Finn for away games) and again passed the 100 point mark , improving to 109 points and sixth overall in the league , but would slip during 1991 ? 92 to 94 points , partly as a result of missing 11 games . Early on in the season , Sakic showed some of his leadership qualities , even while Mike Hough was serving as captain , as he stood firm in the Eric Lindros holdout issue . With Lindros holding out against the Nordiques , who were one of the worst teams in league , Sakic commented , " We only want players here who have the passion to play the game . I 'm tired of hearing that name . He 's not here and there are a lot of others in this locker room who really care about the game . " Lindros was traded a year later , ending the situation and bringing in a number of quality players , which vastly improved the Nordiques . During their first four seasons with Joe Sakic , the Nordiques finished last place in the Adams Division and last in the entire league for three straight years , from 1989 to 1991 .

Starting with the 1992 ? 93 season , Sakic became the sole captain of the franchise . Under his leadership , the Nordiques made the playoffs for the first time in six years and set a franchise record for wins and points in the process (since broken by the 2000 ? 01 Colorado Avalanche team) . Sakic reached the 100 @-@ point plateau , the third time he did so in five years , by scoring 48 goals and 105 points in the regular season , and added another six points in the playoffs . In the shortened 1994 ? 95 , after the 1994 ? 95 NHL lockout , Sakic was eight points behind Jaromír Jágr for the scoring title with a fourth @-@ place finish , and helped the Nordiques win the division title , their first since the 1985 ? 86 season .

= = = Colorado Avalanche = = =

In May 1995 , the Nordiques announced that the team had been sold and were relocating from Quebec . Before the start of the 1995 ? 96 season , the franchise moved to Denver , Colorado , and was renamed the Colorado Avalanche . Sakic led the team to its first Stanley Cup championship , scoring 120 points in 82 regular season games and 34 points in 22 playoff games . He was awarded the Conn Smythe Trophy as the most valuable player of the 1996 NHL playoffs . During the run for the Cup , Sakic again proved himself to be an effective team leader . Although his Nordiques had missed the playoffs in five of his first seven years in the NHL , he scored 18 goals , including six game @-@ winners , and 34 points . He was one goal off from the record for goals in a playoff year , and his game @-@ winning goals established a new record .

In the 1996 ? 97 season , Sakic only played in 65 games due to a lacerated calf , yet still managed to score 74 points as the Avalanche earned their first Presidents ' Trophy and third straight division title . He had another great playoff season with eight goals and 17 assists , and took the Avalanche all the way to the conference finals , where they eventually lost to the Detroit Red Wings in six

games . As a free agent during the summer of 1997 , Sakic signed a three @-@ year , \$ 21 million offer sheet with the New York Rangers as a restricted free agent . Under the collective bargaining agreement at the time , the Avalanche had one week to match the Rangers ' offer or let go of Sakic . Colorado would match the offer , which instigated a salary raise for many NHL players .

Injuries would again limit Sakic 's playing time in the 1997 ? 98 season . While playing in his first Olympics with Team Canada , Sakic hurt his knee and was forced to miss 18 games with the Avalanche . In the 64 games he did play in , he still scored 63 points , enough to earn him his seventh All @-@ Star appearance . He finally rebounded from his injury problems in the 1998 ? 99 season , finishing fifth in the league in scoring with 41 goals and 96 points in only 73 games . He led the Avalanche all the way to within one game of the Stanley Cup Finals , where they lost to the eventual champion Dallas Stars . After the season ended , Sakic was ranked number 94 on The Hockey News ' list of the 100 Greatest Hockey Players .

During the 1999 ? 2000 season , Sakic reached several career milestones . Injuries limited him to only 60 games , but he still managed to lead the team in scoring with 81 points . On December 27 , 1999 , against the St. Louis Blues , Sakic earned an assist to become the 56th player in NHL history to reach 1 @,@ 000 career points . Later in the season , on March 23 , 2000 , he scored a hat trick against the Phoenix Coyotes , and became the 59th player to score 400 career goals . It also gave him 1 @,@ 049 points with the Quebec / Colorado franchise , passing Peter ??astný as the all @-@ time leader on the team .

Sakic eclipsed the 100 point mark again in 2000 ? 01 , finishing with 118 along with a career best 54 goals , both being second @-@ best in the league . He won the Hart Memorial Trophy , the Lady Byng Memorial Trophy and the Lester B. Pearson Award (the latter presented to him by former Nordiques mentor Peter ??astný [1]) , while also being a finalist for the Frank J. Selke Trophy . He led the Avalanche to their second Stanley Cup championship , defeating the defending title holders New Jersey Devils in seven games . Memorably , after receiving the Cup from the NHL commissioner , Sakic broke with tradition by not hoisting it first as most captains do , instead passing the Cup straight to Ray Bourque , a player who had waited a record @-@ breaking 22 seasons to win the Stanley Cup .

Sakic led the Avalanche in scoring again in the 2001 ? 02 season , finishing sixth in the league with 79 points . On March 9 , 2002 , he played in his 1,000th career game . The Avalanche once again reached the Western Conference Finals , but lost to the eventual Cup @-@ winning Detroit Red Wings . The following year , Sakic appeared in only 58 games and finished with just 58 points . He rebounded the following year , finishing third in the league with 87 points . It also marked the first time since the 1993 ? 94 season that his team did not win the division title , which was won by the Vancouver Canucks .

Following the 2004 ? 05 NHL lockout , the Avalanche were forced to lose many of their key players in order to stay below the salary cap . Even with the loss of teammates Peter Forsberg and Adam Foote , Sakic still helped the Avalanche get into the playoffs , where they eventually lost to the Anaheim Ducks in the conference semi @-@ finals . In June 2006 , Sakic signed a one @-@ year , \$ 5 @.@ 75 million deal to keep him with the Avalanche for the 2006 ? 07 season . Upon the retirement of Steve Yzerman a month later , on July 3 , 2006 , Sakic became the League leader for most NHL career points scored among active players .

Sakic had another strong season in the 2006 ? 07 . He scored his 600th career goal on February 15 , 2007 , against the Calgary Flames , becoming the 17th player in history to reach the milestone and third that year . On the final day of the regular season , he scored his 100th point , reaching the milestone for the sixth time in his career . At the same time , Sakic became the second @-@ oldest NHL player to score 100 points in a season at age 37 , alongside hockey legend Gordie Howe . Despite his efforts as well as a late @-@ season charge , Sakic and the Avalanche missed the playoffs for the first time in 11 years , finishing one point behind the eighth placed Calgary Flames . On May 1 , the NHL announced that Sakic was named as one of the three finalists of the Lady Byng Trophy , but it was eventually awarded to Pavel Datsyuk of the Detroit Red Wings .

In April 2007 , Sakic signed on for a 19th NHL season with the Colorado Avalanche , signing a one @-@ year deal for 2007 ? 08 . Sakic commented on the deal , saying " at this stage in my career , I

prefer to do one @-@ year deals as I evaluate my play year @-@ to @-@ year . " Upon signing Sakic to the deal , Avalanche General Manager François Giguère said , " Joe is the heart of this organization and his leadership and value to this team and especially our young players is unquestioned . " On October 7 , 2007 , he scored a goal and had an assist against the San Jose Sharks , moving past Phil Esposito into eighth place on the NHL career points list with 1 @,@ 591 . Nineteen days later , Sakic scored a goal and assisted Ryan Smyth for an overtime game @-@ winning goal against the Calgary Flames , reaching his 1,600th point in the NHL . On December 27 , 2007 , it was announced that Sakic underwent hernia surgery to accelerate the recovery of an injury that had forced him to miss the previous 12 games after a 232 consecutive games played streak . The operation caused him to miss a career @-@ high 38 games . He was activated off of the injured reserve on February 24 and played that night , scoring an assist . On March 22 , 2008 , Sakic recorded his 1,000th career assist against the Edmonton Oilers , becoming the 11th player in NHL history to reach this milestone .

On June 21 , 2008 , Sakic had a talk with Colorado General Manager François Giguère and said that he is uncertain with his future with the Avalanche . However , it was announced on August 27 , 2008 , that Sakic decided to sign a one @-@ year contract with the team . Injuries limited Sakic 's playing time in 2008 ? 09 . A herniated disk in his back forced him to stop playing in early November , after playing in 15 games , in which Sakic scored 12 points . While at home letting his back heal , Sakic broke three fingers in a snow @-@ blower accident . He announced his retirement on July 9 , 2009 The Avalanche retired his jersey , # 19 , prior to their 2009 ? 10 season opener on October 1 , 2009 , with a " C " on the banner to represent his lengthy service as team captain (having been the only captain of the Avalanche until he retired) . Sakic was also named the inaugural member of the Avalanche Alumni Association .

= = = All @-@ Star Games = = =

Sakic was voted into the NHL All @-@ Star Game 13 times and played in 12 of them , serving as a captain for two of them , the last in 2007 . He had at least one point in 11 of them . The only one that he missed entirely was the 1997 All @-@ Star Game , due to an injury . Sakic won the Most Valuable Player award in the 2004 All @-@ Star Game after scoring a hat trick , despite the Western Conference losing the game . He is the all @-@ time assist leader in All @-@ Star Games with 16 assists and is third place in all @-@ time all @-@ star scoring with 22 points , behind Mario Lemieux (23 points) and Wayne Gretzky (25 points) . His best record in an All @-@ Star Game was in 2007 , when he scored four assists for the winning team ; however the MVP award was given to Daniel Brière , who had a goal and four assists .

= = International play = =

Sakic had an extensive international hockey career , representing Canada at seven international competitions . After being drafted by the Nordiques in 1987 , he went on and helped Canada win the 1988 World Junior Championship . His next tournament was the 1991 World Championships , where Canada won the silver medal and Sakic contributed eleven points in ten games . He tried out for the 1991 Canadian Canada Cup team , but was the first player to be cut , being cited for his weak leg strength . Sakic was bitter about the experience , feeling he was not given a good enough chance to prove himself , and called the whole experience " a complete waste of time . "

Sakic 's first successful professional tournament was the 1994 World Championships , where Canada won its first gold medal in the tournament since 1961 . Sakic 's seven points in eight games were a crucial part of the team 's success . During the 1996 World Cup of Hockey , he played only a minor role in Canada 's second @-@ place finish as he scored one goal and two assists in six games . However , the tournament allowed him to showcase that he was indeed a dominant player who had simply been overlooked .

Sakic 's first Olympic appearance came in 1998 at Nagano , Japan , after the event allowed NHL players to compete for the first time . Bothered by a knee injury , he only scored three points in four

games , as the Canadian squad failed to meet expectations and finished in fourth . Sakic 's second Olympic appearance came in the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City . Led by his strong play , the Canadian team played their way to the gold medal match against Team USA , where Sakic had four points and helped the team win its first gold medal in 50 years . He was later named MVP of the tournament with a cumulative tally of four goals and six assists and became one of the first Canadian members of the Triple Gold Club . Sakic also played a part in Canada 's triumph in the 2004 World Cup of Hockey , where he scored six points in six games .

On December 21 , 2005 , Sakic was named captain of Team Canada for the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin , Italy . Once again , Team Canada was heavily favored and given high expectations , but they failed to medal , finishing seventh overall . Sakic finished the tournament with three points .

= = Post @-@ playing career = =

After he retired , Sakic decided to take time off from hockey and spent time with his family . In 2011 , two years after his retirement , Sakic returned to the Avalanche to work in their front office . He was named an executive advisor and alternate governor for the team , effective at the end of the 2010 ? 11 season . In his role as an advisor , Sakic would advise the team in hockey @-@ related matters , and as an alternate governor , would represent the team at Board of Governors meetings .

On June 26 , 2012 , Sakic was selected to the Hockey Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility . He was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame on November 12 , 2012 , along with Mats Sundin , Pavel Bure and Adam Oates . Sakic was the only member of his class who won the Stanley Cup during his career .

On May 10 , 2013 , the Avalanche promoted Sakic Executive Vice President of Hockey Operations . In this expanded role , Sakic has the final say on all matters regarding hockey personnel . He now shares most of the duties normally held by a general manager with head coach Patrick Roy , who also doubles as vice president of hockey operations . General Manager Greg Sherman remained in his post , but now serves mainly in an advisory role to Roy and Sakic .

= = Personal life = =

Sakic and his wife Debbie have three children : son Mitchell , born in 1996 , and fraternal twins ; son Chase and daughter Kamryn , born in October 2000 . They met at a local high school while he was playing in Swift Current , and they frequently return to the town during the off @-@ season . Sakic is an avid golfer , and competed in the celebrity Pro Am golf tournament in Lake Tahoe in the summer of 2006 . Each summer , he also hosts his own charity golf tournament which benefits the Food Bank of the Rockies . His charity work , which is estimated to have provided more than seven million meals to poor children and families , has earned an NHL Foundation Player Award in 2007 .

Sakic was a fan favourite in his hometown of Burnaby , where a street has been named Joe Sakic Way in his honour . Throughout British Columbia , he is affectionately known as " Burnaby Joe " ; in Colorado , he is known simply as " Super Joe . " His younger brother Brian joined the Swift Current Broncos during Joe 's final season with the team , and later played for the Flint Generals of the United Hockey League . Sakic also has an uncredited role in the movie Happy Gilmore as a " player at hockey tryouts " .

= = Career statistics = =

= = Regular season and playoffs = = =

Boldface denotes career high in each statistics .

= = International = = =

== All @-@ Star games ==

== Legacy ==

== Milestones ==

Sakic recorded his 1,000th career point on December 27 , 1999 , against the St. Louis Blues . He became the 11th player to reach 1 @,@ 500 points , doing so on October 25 , 2006 , with an assist against the Washington Capitals , and the sixth to do so with one franchise . Gordie Howe , Wayne Gretzky , Mario Lemieux , Raymond Bourque and Steve Yzerman are the others who have achieved this feat . On March 22 , 2008 , Sakic notched his 1,000th career assist against the Edmonton Oilers on a second period goal scored by Tyler Arnason .

Sakic played his 1,000th career game on March 9 , 2002 , against the Los Angeles Kings . His 500th career goal came against the Vancouver Canucks on December 11 , 2002 . In a February 15 , 2007 , game against the Calgary Flames , Sakic scored his 600th career goal . He also earned his 900th assist , the 16th player to do so , against the Flames in a game on March 12 , 2006 .

During the final game of the 2006 ? 07 season , Sakic scored his 100th point of the year . This made him , at age 37 , the second oldest player in NHL history , after Gordie Howe , to record 100 points in a regular season . He became the longest active tenured captain in the league , with fifteen seasons leading the Nordiques / Avalanche franchise , after the retirement of Steve Yzerman at the conclusion of the 2005 ? 06 regular season . On March 22 , 2008 , against the Edmonton Oilers , Sakic recorded the 1,000th assist of his career , the 11th player to do so . The gloves he wore in the game were later sent to the Hockey Hall of Fame .

Alongside Bobby Clarke , Wayne Gretzky and Mark Messier , Sakic is one of four players to captain his team to a Stanley Cup championship and win the Hart Memorial Trophy in the same year . Sakic is also a member of the Triple Gold Club , a term used in ice hockey to describe players who have won an Olympic Gold medal , a World Championship Gold medal and the Stanley Cup .

== Records ==

In his 20 @-@ year career with the Nordiques and Avalanche , Sakic has obtained nearly all of the franchise scoring records , including most all @-@ time goals (625) , assists (1 @,@ 016) and points (1 @,@ 641) . He also holds the franchise record for most games played (1 @,@ 363) , and is on several notable NHL records which are most All @-@ Star game assists (16) and most playoff overtime goals (8) .

== Leadership ==

Throughout his career , Sakic was one of the top scorers in the league , but in his early years , he was criticized for not leading his team to playoff success . While in Quebec , the Nordiques were one of the worst teams in the league , finishing last in their division five out of the seven years Sakic was with the team , including three straight years of being last overall in the league . After leading the Avalanche to the Stanley Cup in 1996 with his 34 playoff points , Sakic began to be seen as a leader capable of winning , and he was seen as one of the league 's premier players .

Though Sakic was a quiet individual , he was able to motivate his team to play at higher levels , which earned him the respect of his peers and executives . The first signs of Sakic 's leadership began to show while still a member of the Swift Current Broncos of the WHL . After the bus crash that killed four of his teammates , Sakic was seen as the leader of the team , acknowledging that the experience changed his outlook on life . Early in his career with the Nordiques (when Mike Hough was still captain) , with the team hoping to rebuild around their top draft pick Eric Lindros , and

holding onto Lindros ' rights for the season when he refused to sign , Sakic suggested that the team could progress without Lindros saying " We only want players here who have the passion to play the game . I 'm tired of hearing that name . He 's not here and there are a lot of others in this locker room who really care about the game . " Lindros was traded a year later , bringing in a number of quality players , which vastly improved the Nordiques . Sakic 's leadership qualities led him to be courted by other teams , such as in the summer of 1997 , when the New York Rangers offered him a large contract in order to replace departed captain Mark Messier , though the Avalanche ultimately matched the offer and retained Sakic .

One of the most defining actions of Sakic 's career was at the conclusion of the 2001 playoffs . Defying the NHL tradition of the captain being the first to skate around with the Stanley Cup , Sakic passed it off to teammate Ray Bourque . Bourque , one of the best defensemen to ever play , had been traded to the Avalanche the year before after spending 21 years with the Boston Bruins and setting the record for most games played without winning the Cup . Sakic 's handing of the Stanley Cup exemplifies his classiness and how he performs through actions rather than words .

When an eye injury forced Steve Yzerman (who normally wore number 19 for Canada) to miss the 2004 World Cup of Hockey , Sakic and Joe Thornton both refused the number out of respect for their injured countryman , even though both players each wore the number 19 for their respective NHL clubs and who were now eligible to wear it for Team Canada in Yzerman 's absence .

Sakic 's leadership qualities and abilities helped carry the Avalanche in the years since their 2001 Stanley Cup , which saw the team lose key players to retirement and free agency , especially after the 2004 - 05 lockout .

= = Awards = =

= = = WHL and CHL = = =

= = = NHL = = =

= = = International = = =

All awards taken from NHL.com