

= John Tavares (ice hockey) =

John Tavares (born September 20 , 1990) is a Canadian professional ice hockey Centre who currently serves as the captain of the New York Islanders of the National Hockey League (NHL) . He was selected first overall by the Islanders in the 2009 NHL Entry Draft .

Previously , Tavares competed at the major junior level as a member of the Oshawa Generals of the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) before being traded to the London Knights at the 2009 OHL trading deadline along with Michael Del Zotto . Tavares broke into the OHL after gaining " exceptional player " status at the age of 14 , allowing the Generals to select him in the OHL Priority Draft as an underage player in 2005 . Tavares was named the Canadian Hockey League (CHL) Rookie of the Year in 2006 and CHL Player of the Year in 2007 . In 2009 , he finished the season with a career total of 215 goals , breaking Peter Lee 's OHL record by two .

Tavares was the focus of an unsuccessful push to have the NHL 's draft rules changed to allow him to participate in the 2008 Entry Draft , as well as an attempt to allow him to play in the American Hockey League (AHL) as a 17 @-@ year @-@ old in 2007 . Tavares was ranked as the top prospect for the 2009 Draft by both the NHL Central Scouting Bureau and International Scouting Services .

Tavares has represented Canada at five International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) -sanctioned events , including the 2010 and 2011 World Championships . At the under @-@ 20 level , he won gold medals at the 2008 and 2009 World Junior Ice Hockey Championships . He was named the most valuable player of the 2009 tournament after scoring eight goals and 15 points in six games . He also participated in the 2006 IIHF World U18 Championships , but failed to medal . Additionally , Tavares represented Team Ontario at the 2006 World U @-@ 17 Hockey Challenge and 2007 Super Series . On January 7 , 2014 , he was named to the 2014 Canadian Olympic Hockey Team , winning a gold medal at the 2014 Winter Olympics despite an injury preventing him from participating in the nation 's final two games .

= = Personal life = =

Tavares was born on September 20 , 1990 in Mississauga , Ontario , to Barbara and Joe Tavares , who are of Polish and Portuguese descent , respectively . His maternal grandparents Bolesław and Josephine Kowal immigrated from Poland to Sudbury , Ontario , and his paternal grandparents Manuel and Dorotea Tavares immigrated from Portugal to Toronto . At a young age , Tavares moved to Oakville , Ontario . This is where he was first exposed to minor hockey via the Minor Oaks Hockey Association . Tavares also played soccer and lacrosse , and his highly competitive nature often led him to fight with other players . Tavares excelled at lacrosse , following in the footsteps of his uncle John Tavares , the all @-@ time scoring leader in the National Lacrosse League (NLL) , and was a ball boy for his uncle 's NLL team , the Buffalo Bandits . The younger Tavares credits his uncle with teaching him the importance of remaining unselfish , stating that what he learned by following his uncle with the Bandits has made him better both as a person and a hockey player . Many skills he learned in lacrosse ? such as spinning off checks and battling in traffic ? transferred to ice hockey and improved Tavares ' abilities as a goal scorer .

In Oakville , Tavares attended St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School . He lived five minutes from Sam Gagner , who later signed a contract with the Edmonton Oilers , and the two quickly established a friendship . Gagner 's father , former National Hockey League (NHL) player Dave Gagner , built a backyard ice rink on which Tavares spent much of his time honing ice hockey skills . In the OHL , Tavares placed an emphasis on his education , earning honours as well as the Oshawa Generals ' Scholastic Player of the Year in 2007 ? 08 . Tavares also spends some of his time working with the Special Olympics .

He showed such promise as a hockey player that when he was seven , his parents moved him up one age group and he began playing with older children . From there , he moved on to the Mississauga Braves of the Greater Toronto Hockey League (GTHL) . After playing the 1998 ? 99 season with the Braves ' novice team , Tavares moved to the Mississauga Senators of the GTHL

the following season . With the Senators ' AAA minor atom team , Tavares won the GTHL minor atom championship in the 1999 ? 2000 season . Tavares eventually moved to the Toronto Marlboros of the GTHL . During the 2003 ? 04 season Tavares was teammates with Sam Gagner of the Edmonton Oilers . That season , Tavares scored 95 goals and 187 points in ninety games and led the Marlboros ' bantam team to the 2004 Bantam AAA Provincial Hockey Championships , where the Marlboros defeated Drew Doughty and the London Jr . Knights 5 ? 0 in the championship game . Tavares scored one goal in the game and was named the tournament 's top forward . The following season , Tavares joined the Marlboros ' minor midget team , where he recorded 91 goals and 158 points in 72 games . For his achievements , Tavares shared the Buck Houle Award with Bryan Cameron , " in recognition of outstanding on ice performance , leadership and loyalty " . During this season , he also played 16 games with the Milton Icehawks of the Ontario Provincial Junior A Hockey League (OPJHL) , during which he recorded 11 goals and 23 points . Tavares ' debut with the Icehawks came while he was only thirteen , making him one of the youngest players to ever play junior hockey .

= = = Ontario Hockey League = = =

Tavares petitioned to gain eligibility to play major junior in the OHL in the spring of 2005 . As OHL rules did not allow for players under the age of 15 to be drafted , the league introduced an " exceptional player " clause , allowing the 14 @-@ year @-@ old Tavares to be drafted one year sooner than he would otherwise have been eligible . Consequently , Tavares is the youngest player to ever be drafted in the OHL , although Bobby Orr was signed and had played at a younger age . The Canadian Hockey League (CHL) , the umbrella organization which governs major junior hockey in Canada , sent a proposal to Hockey Canada , recommending that the rule be expanded across junior hockey , which eventually was granted . To date , only four other players , Aaron Ekblad , Connor McDavid , Sean Day and Joseph Veleno , have been granted the same status .

The Oshawa Generals held the first pick in the 2005 draft , and they selected Tavares , earning him the Jack Ferguson Award , which is given to the player picked first overall in the OHL Priority Selection . Tavares played his first OHL game on September 23 , 2005 , scoring his first OHL goal in a game held just three days after his 15th birthday . He showed he could play in the OHL immediately , scoring ten goals in his first nine games with the Generals , and finished the 2005 ? 06 season with 77 points , including 45 goals . Tavares was named to the OHL 's all @-@ rookie team , and won both the Emms Family Award and CHL Rookie of the Year awards as the top first @-@ year player in both the OHL and CHL respectively .

As a 16 @-@ year @-@ old in 2006 ? 07 , Tavares was selected to represent the OHL for two games in January for the annual ADT Canada @-@ Russia Challenge , including one game in Oshawa . Later that month , on January 25 , 2007 , Tavares registered a 7 @-@ point night in a 9 @-@ 6 win versus the Windsor Spitfires . He scored four goals and three assists , including his 50th goal of the season in his 44th game . Towards the end of the season , on March 16 , 2007 , Tavares recorded his 70th and 71st goals of the season , breaking Wayne Gretzky 's OHL record for most goals by a 16 @-@ year @-@ old . He was awarded the Red Tilson Trophy as the most outstanding player in the league , and named the CHL Player of the Year .

Tavares scored 40 goals in 59 games for the Generals during the 2007 ? 08 season , while his 118 points was placed him third in OHL scoring . Tavares led the OHL in scoring until he missed several games to participate with Team Canada at the 2008 World Junior Ice Hockey Championships . As Tavares was participating in the 2009 World Junior Ice Hockey Championships , it was speculated that the Generals were ready to trade him to the London Knights . Tavares ' future with the Generals had been questioned since the beginning of the season as the Generals were not expected to seriously contend for the championship , while the Knights were among the league leaders . The deal was made official on January 8 , 2009 , as Oshawa sent Tavares , Michael Del Zotto and Darryl Borden to the Knights , in exchange for Scott Valentine , Christian Thomas , Michael Zador and six draft picks .

Tavares made his debut with the Knights on January 11 against the Mississauga St. Michael 's

Majors . Making his return to Oshawa at the 2009 CHL Top Prospects Game as captain of Team Orr , he recorded an assist in a 6 ? 1 win over Team Cherry , but injured his shoulder after Zack Kassian of the Peterborough Petes checked him behind the net . On March 8 , 2009 , Tavares set the OHL goal @-@ scoring record with his 214th goal , passing the previous record held by Peter Lee . The next day , he received his third OHL Player of the Week recognition of the season .

= = National Hockey League = =

Although he was born five days after the September 15 cutoff date for eligibility in the 2008 NHL Entry Draft , there was a significant effort made to allow Tavares into the Draft . Following his 72 @-@ goal campaign in 2006 ? 07 , Tavares ' agents asked the NHL and NHL Players ' Association (NHLPA) to make an exception for Tavares similar to the one the OHL had made in 2005 . The attempt was unsuccessful , however , and Tavares was forced to wait until 2009 to participate in the League Entry Draft . In October 2007 , however , it was reported that then @-@ Toronto Maple Leafs General Manager John Ferguson , Jr . , had offered the 17 @-@ year @-@ old Tavares a spot with the team 's American Hockey League (AHL) affiliate , the Toronto Marlies . Like the NHL , however , the AHL declined to amend its by @-@ laws , and Tavares subsequently returned to the OHL .

The NHL International Scouting Services ranked Tavares as the top draft prospect in the world , ahead of defenceman Victor Hedman , forward Magnus Pääjärvi @-@ Svensson and forward Matt Duchene in its March 2009 update . The 2009 draft class was led by Tavares , who was taken first overall by the New York Islanders .

= = = New York Islanders = = =

On July 15 , 2009 , Tavares signed a three @-@ year , entry @-@ level contract with the Islanders . His first NHL game was in the pre @-@ season in a game against the Edmonton Oilers . He spent 22 minutes and 50 seconds on the ice alongside linemates Doug Weight and Sean Bergenheim during the Islanders ' 3 ? 2 loss . Weight , a veteran NHLer , said that , " John 's going to be a big piece of [an Islander rebuilding effort] . " Tavares scored his first career NHL goal and assist in his first ever professional game , scoring on a backhand against Marc @-@ André Fleury of the Pittsburgh Penguins on October 3 , 2009 .

Tavares led NHL rookies in scoring throughout much of his first season . In December 2009 , Tavares scored five consecutive Islanders goals over a four @-@ game span to tie the club record for most consecutive goals by one player . He scored an empty @-@ net goal against the Atlanta Thrashers on December 3 , and both Islanders goals on both December 9 against the Philadelphia Flyers and December 10 against Toronto . The record was originally set by Bryan Trottier , when he scored five consecutive goals in a 1982 game against Philadelphia . At the end of the season , Tavares finished second in rookie scoring , behind Matt Duchene , with a total of 54 points .

As New York opened up their season at home against the Dallas Stars on October 9 , 2010 , Tavares suffered a mild concussion late during the first period . The Stars ' Adam Burish bumped into Tavares , and the latter was unable to return to the game . He scored his first career hat @-@ trick on October 23 , 2010 , in a loss to the Florida Panthers . He then scored his second career hat @-@ trick , as well as his first career natural hat @-@ trick , on January 15 , 2011 , in a win against the Buffalo Sabres .

On September 14 , 2011 , Tavares signed a six @-@ year , \$ 33 million extension with the Islanders . He is scheduled to become an unrestricted free agent in July 2018 . After being held pointless in the first two games of the 2011 ? 12 season , Tavares had back @-@ to @-@ back four @-@ point games against the Tampa Bay Lightning and New York Rangers . From December 29 , 2011 , to January 21 , 2012 , Tavares had 21 points in a 12 @-@ game point streak , seven of which were multi @-@ point games . He was selected to play in the 2012 NHL All @-@ Star Game . In his first career All @-@ Star Game , he recorded one goal and one assist . Additionally , during the 2011 ? 12 season , Tavares was named as an alternate captain for New York .

Tavares played with Mark Streit in Switzerland for SC Bern while the 2012 ? 13 NHL lockout took place . During the shortened 2012 ? 13 season , Tavares was third in the NHL with 28 goals . He helped the Islanders reach the playoffs for the first time since 2007 , scoring 47 points in 48 games . Tavares was also named a finalist for the 2013 Hart Memorial Trophy , awarded to the NHL 's most valuable player , on May 10 , 2013 . Tavares scored his first career NHL playoff goal against Pittsburgh goaltender Marc @-@ André Fleury in Game 3 of the 2013 Stanley Cup playoffs . He would finish with three goals and five points in six games as the Islanders were ultimately eliminated by the Penguins .

On September 10 , 2013 , Tavares was introduced as the 14th captain in New York Islanders history , replacing former Islander Mark Streit of the Philadelphia Flyers , who served as team captain since 2011 . On February 19 , 2014 , during the 2014 Winter Olympics , he suffered a torn medial collateral ligament (MCL) and a torn meniscus in his knee during the quarterfinal game against Latvia , forcing him to miss the remainder of the Olympics as well as the remainder of the Islanders ' season . At the time of his injury , Tavares was third in the NHL with 66 points in 59 games . The following season , he was selected for the 2015 NHL All @-@ Star Game , along with teammate Jaroslav Halák . Tavares finished the 2014 ? 15 NHL season as runner up for the Art Ross Trophy with 86 points , one point behind Dallas Stars forward Jamie Benn .

On April 19 , 2015 , Tavares scored 15 seconds into overtime against Washington Capitals goaltender Braden Holtby in Game 3 of the Eastern Conference Quarterfinals of the 2015 playoffs . The goal , which gave the Islanders a 2 ? 1 victory , was the first game @-@ winning overtime goal in the playoffs for the Islanders since 1993 . Despite this , however , the Capitals won the series in seven games .

Tavares scored the first regular season goal for the Islanders at Barclays Center in a 3 @-@ 2 overtime loss to the Chicago Blackhawks during the first game of the 2015 @-@ 16 NHL season .

On April 24 , 2016 , Game 6 of the Eastern Conference Quarterfinals against the Florida Panthers , trailing 1 @-@ 0 in the final minute of play , assisted by Nikolay Kulemin and Nick Leddy , Tavares scored the game tying goal off a loose puck in the crease with 53 @. @ 2 seconds left in regulation . He finished the job by scoring the series @-@ clinching goal in double overtime , winning a playoff series for the Islanders for the first time since 1993 .

= = International play = =

= = = Junior = = =

During his rookie season in the OHL , Tavares competed for Team Ontario in the 2006 World U @-@ 17 Hockey Challenge in Saskatchewan as a 15 @-@ year @-@ old , but failed to medal . Later that year , at the end of the 2005 ? 06 season , he was selected to join Canada 's under @-@ 18 team for the 2006 IIHF World U18 Championships in Sweden , but failed to medal once more , falling to the Czech Republic in the bronze medal game . Later in the off @-@ season , he was invited to the under @-@ 18 team 's summer training camp to prepare for the 2006 Ivan Hlinka Memorial Tournament in the Czech Republic and Slovakia , though an injury ultimately prevented him from participating .

During the following season , Tavares was invited to Canada 's national junior selection camp in preparation for the 2007 World Junior Championships , but was not named to the final roster . After completing his second OHL season , however , Tavares was named to the Canada 's junior team for the 2007 Super Series against Russian junior players . He scored four goals and one assist as Canada won the series 7 ? 0 ? 1 .

Tavares earned another invite to the selection camp for the 2008 World Junior Championships and made the final roster for the tournament on his second attempt . He scored four goals to help Canada to its fourth @-@ straight gold medal in the competition . Returning the next year , along with Zach Boychuk , P. K. Subban and Thomas Hickey from the previous year 's gold medal @-@ winning team , Tavares was selected to compete in the 2009 World Junior Championships in Ottawa

. He scored three points in the first round @-@ robin game against the Czech Republic , an 8 ? 1 win , and was named Player of the Game . In the final round @-@ robin game against the United States , Tavares scored a hat @-@ trick for his 12th career goal of the tournament to tie Eric Lindros and Jeff Carter for the all @-@ time Canadian junior record . In doing so , Taveres helped propel Canada to a 7 ? 4 win that gave them the top spot in their pool and a subsequent bye to the tournament semifinal . He was also named Player of the Game for the second time in the tournament for his performance on the night . Meeting Russia in the semifinal and down 5 ? 4 with less than ten seconds left in regulation , Tavares fought off two Russian players along the boards and backhanded a shot towards the goal . The shot was blocked by defenceman Dmitri Kulikov a few feet in front of the net , but after the puck came loose , teammate Jordan Eberle retrieved it and sent it into the right side of the net to dramatically tie the game with 5 @.@ 4 seconds left . Then , as the game was forced into a shootout , Tavares scored to put Canada up 2 ? 0 in the tie @-@ breaker and into the gold medal game against Sweden . Recording an assist in the final , he helped Canada defeat the Swedes 5 ? 1 to capture their fifth @-@ straight gold medal . Tavares finished the tournament with eight goals and seven assists for 15 points in six games , second only to teammate Cody Hodgson in tournament scoring . Tavares was also named one of the top three players on the Canadian team by its coaching staff , as well as a tournament All @-@ Star , Top Forward and MVP .

= = = Senior = = =

As the New York Islanders failed to qualify for the playoffs in Tavares ' rookie season in the NHL , he was selected to the Canadian men 's team for the 2010 IIHF World Championship in Germany . Canada General Manager Mark Messier made a specific effort to assemble a young team ; as a result , Tavares was one of five teenagers on the final roster . With seven goals in seven games , Tavares led all tournament players in goal @-@ scoring . Despite recording no assists , he ranked fifth in points . He helped Canada to the quarterfinal against Russia , where they were defeated 5 ? 2 .

The following year , Tavares returned to the national team for the 2011 IIHF World Championship in Slovakia . He improved to nine points over seven games with five goals and four assists to lead Canada in scoring ; he ranked fifth among all tournament players for the second consecutive year . As Canada again reached the quarterfinal , they were eliminated once more by Russia , losing 2 ? 1 . Tavares was chosen by coaches as one of the three best players on Team Canada , along with defenceman Alex Pietrangelo and forward Andrew Ladd .

Tavares played for SC Bern in Switzerland during the 2012 ? 13 NHL lockout and quickly became the PostFinance Top Scorer , tallying 42 points ? including 17 goals ? in just 28 games . He also played for Team Canada at the 2012 Spengler Cup , which the nation ultimately won after defeating HC Davos in the final .

At the 2014 Winter Olympics , Tavares injured his knee in Canada 's quarterfinal match , rendering him unable to play for the remainder of the tournament as well as the 2013 ? 14 NHL season .

= = Playing style = =

Tavares has been praised by his coaches for his ability to anticipate the play since he joined the OHL . A lack of speed had been the most common criticism of Tavares ' play , something he spent his junior career attempting to improve . Tavares ' skating speed is something he greatly improved since turning professional , and his speed is no longer considered an issue on the ice .

The media hype he has encountered has led Tavares to remain guarded when speaking to the media , while his teammates and family attempt to shield him from the spotlight where they can . However , Tavares is regarded as a natural leader on the ice , and a player who puts his team first . The Oshawa Generals named Tavares their team captain in 2008 , while he also served as the alternate captain with the Canadian junior team in 2009 .

= = Career statistics = =

= = = Regular season and playoffs = = =

= = = International = = =

= = Awards & Honors = =