

= Brooks Laich =

Evan Brooks Laich (/ ˈlaɪk / ; born June 23 , 1983) is a Canadian ice hockey player currently playing for the Toronto Maple Leafs of the National Hockey League (NHL) .

Laich was originally drafted by the Ottawa Senators in the 2001 NHL Entry Draft , and was later traded to the Washington Capitals as part of the package for Peter Bondra . Before playing professionally , Laich spent time in the Western Hockey League (WHL) playing with the Moose Jaw Warriors and Seattle Thunderbirds . He has represented Canada internationally , capturing a silver medal at the 2003 World Junior Championships , and playing for Canada again at the 2010 World Hockey Championships .

= = Hockey career = =

= = = Minor = = =

Laich started playing minor hockey in his hometown of Wawota , Saskatchewan . During the 1999 ? 2000 season , he was the top scorer and most valuable player for the midget AAA Tisdale Trojans . He was the runner up for league MVP .

= = = Junior = = =

Laich started his junior hockey career with the Moose Jaw Warriors of the Western Hockey League (WHL) during the 2000 ? 01 season . He played in 71 games with the Warriors , scoring nine goals and adding 21 assists . Laich was a dedicated student in Moose Jaw , being awarded the club 's Scholastic Player of the Year for the 2000 ? 01 season . After the season , he was drafted by the Ottawa Senators in the sixth round , 193rd overall , of the 2001 NHL Entry Draft . He started the 2001 ? 02 season with the Warriors , but was traded to the Seattle Thunderbirds along with Tomáš Mojžíš for Craig Olynick and Stas Avksentiev . The deal was unpopular with Warriors fans , as Olynick left the club and Avksentiev never reported .

Laich spent the rest of his junior career with the Thunderbirds . He started to develop more of an offensive game , finishing off the 2001 ? 02 season with 58 points in the 47 games he played in Seattle . Laich has said that getting traded to Seattle was a good move for him , with coach Dean Chynoweth providing ample opportunities for him to display his skills . He was named the team 's Most Dedicated Player after the 2001 ? 02 season . His offensive game flourished further in his first full season with the Thunderbirds (2002 ? 03) , as he finished the season with 41 goals and 53 assists , leading the team . These stats placed him sixth overall in the WHL points race . He was named the WHL 's Western Conference MVP . He was also named to the WHL 's Western Conference First All @-@ Star Team , and the Canadian Hockey League 's Third All @-@ Star Team .

= = = Professional = = =

Laich attended the Ottawa Senators training camp before the 2002 ? 03 season . He played his first professional game in the American Hockey League (AHL) for the Binghamton Senators in 2003 . He made his National Hockey League (NHL) debut with the Senators on February 3 , 2003 , against the New Jersey Devils . Later in the season , Laich was traded to the Washington Capitals , along with a second round draft pick , for Peter Bondra , a deal which ended Bondra 's 14 @-@ year career with the Capitals . After the trade , he reported to the Capitals ' AHL affiliate , the Portland Pirates , making his debut with the Capitals on March 12 , 2003 , against the Chicago Blackhawks . He finished the season playing with the Pirates , appearing in six playoff games . The NHL lockout saw Laich spend the entire 2004 ? 05 season with the Pirates , playing in 68 games , finishing eighth on the team in scoring with 16 goals and 10 assists .

During the 2005 ? 06 season , Laich played in 104 regular season and playoff games between the Capitals and their new AHL affiliate , the Hershey Bears ; this tied him for the most games played in the organization with Boyd Gordon . After training camp , he started the season in the AHL , but was optimistic about his chances to play in the NHL , saying , " You 've just got to work hard . There 's spots up there , guys could go down with an injury , you want to be the first guy called up . " He spent most of the season at the NHL level , playing in 73 games and recording 21 points . After the Capitals ' season was over , Laich rejoined the Bears for their playoff run and scored eight goals in 21 games while helping the team capture the Calder Cup . Laich played the entire 2006 ? 07 season with the Capitals , scoring eight goals and adding ten assists . After the season , Laich and the Capitals went to salary arbitration , where he was awarded a one @-@ year contract worth \$ 725 @,@ 000 .

Laich played in all 82 games for the Capitals during the 2007 ? 08 season , and set career highs in goals , assists and points . His 21 goals ranked third overall on the team . He led the Capitals with two short handed goals , and played in his 200th career regular season game . After a two @-@ goal game against the Atlanta Thrashers , Laich summed up his philosophy towards scoring : " If you want money , go to the bank . If you want bread , go to the bakery . If you want goals , go to the net . " During the playoffs , Laich had a five @-@ game point streak in the Eastern Conference quarter @-@ finals against the Philadelphia Flyers . This tied him for the longest point streak during the first round of the playoffs . As a restricted free agent after the season , Laich signed a three @-@ year deal with the team on July 9 , 2008 .

The 2008 ? 09 season saw Laich play in all 82 games for the Capitals again , where he set new career highs in goals , assists and points ; he scored 23 goals and added 30 assists , breaking the 50 @-@ point plateau for the first time in his career . During the Capitals ' playoff run , Laich played in 14 games and added seven points . He assisted on the overtime winning goal in Game 6 of the Eastern Conference Semi @-@ Final against the eventual Stanley Cup champions Pittsburgh Penguins .

Laich 's streak of consecutive games played was broken in the 2009 ? 10 season , when he missed four games with a cheekbone injury in February 2010 . He still managed to set new career highs in both goals (25) and assists (34) . On February 10 , shortly after returning from injury , Laich recorded his first career NHL hat trick , against the Montreal Canadiens . During the playoffs , Laich scored the last goal of the Capitals season during Game 7 against the Montreal Canadiens .

During the 2010 ? 11 season , the Capitals participated in the 2011 NHL Winter Classic against the Pittsburgh Penguins at Heinz Field , Pittsburgh . Leading up to the game , both teams were featured on HBO 's 24 / 7 , which offered a behind @-@ the @-@ scenes look at both teams as they prepared . Laich refused to blame the presence of the cameras for the team 's losing streak , saying , " There 's no using the HBO cameras as a crutch or an annoyance or anything like that . There 's no excuse . I don 't think HBO has played any bit of an ounce in how things have gone the last two weeks . " Laich was appreciative of the opportunities afforded by the outdoor game , and was happy to be able to share time with his family and friends on the outdoor rink set up at Heinz Field .

On June 28 , 2011 , Laich signed a six @-@ year , \$ 27 million contract extension worth \$ 4 @.@ 5 million per season .

As the player representative for the Washington Capitals during the 2012 NHL @-@ NHLPA CBA negotiations , Laich stated in support of the National Hockey League Players ' Association (NHLPA) that , " At some point you have to dig your heels in and fight . If we don 't this time , then what happens next ? Appeasement only makes the aggressor more aggressive , and the players really understand that . We believe in our cause and our leadership and I believe we 're more unified this time and ready for a fight . "

Prior to the start of the lockout @-@ shortened 2012 @-@ 2013 playing season , Laich played for the Kloten Flyers of Switzerland 's National League . In 35 games for the Flyers , Laich posted 17 goals and a total of 38 points . He also reportedly suffered a groin injury , which limited his play upon his return stateside with the NHL . When play resumed for the 2012 ? 13 season , Laich was limited to nine games .

On March 17 , 2014 , the Capitals announced via Twitter that Laich " underwent a successful

procedure to release a tight adductor , " a part of the groin muscle . He is expected to miss the rest of the season with a recovery time of four @-@ to @-@ six weeks .

Except for a minor shoulder injury resulting in him missing 16 games , Laich returned to full health in 2014 @-@ 15 . He finished with seven goals and 20 points in 66 games played .

In the 2015 ? 16 season , Laich 's offensive production rapidly declined , while his \$ 4 @. @ 5 million cap hit stuck out as one of the only adverse aspects of a league @-@ leading Capitals squad . On February 27 , 2016 , the Capitals placed Laich on waivers for the purpose of sending him to the Hershey Bears of the AHL . The following day , on the eve of the trade deadline , Laich , along with Connor Carrick and a second round selection in the 2016 draft , were traded to the Toronto Maple Leafs in exchange for Daniel Winnik and a fifth round pick in the 2016 draft . The purpose of the trade was to give the Capitals salary cap relief to use toward younger core player contracts that needed re @-@ signing the following off @-@ season . Capitals GM Brian Maclellan called the trade , when asked , the hardest thing he had done as General Manager of the team . Laich had been the longest tenured active professional Washington @-@ area athlete at the time of the trade , concluding his service of 12 years with the franchise . In what easily stands as the most emotional trade in Capitals history since Laich was dealt to Washington in a package for Peter Bondra , one journalist wrote " It 's ironic that money is what ultimately forced the Caps to move Laich . This is a guy who loves the game so much , he 'd probably play for free . "

Laich 's play improved significantly in Toronto , recording identical numbers to what he scored in Washington while playing in a third of the games .

= = International play = =

Laich debuted with Team Canada at the 2003 World Junior Championships , which were held in Halifax , Nova Scotia . In a game against Sweden , Laich scored Canada 's first goal of the tournament . He scored two goals and added four assists in six games at the tournament , where Canada won a silver medal . According to his father , Harold , his son had always dreamed of playing for Canada . Laich 's next experience with Team Canada came at the 2010 World Championships . He scored one goal in seven games as Canada finished seventh . During the tournament in a game against Russia , Laich raised the ire of his Capitals ' teammate Semyon Varlamov for slashing and cross @-@ checking Alexander Ovechkin . Varlamov said of Laich 's play , " ... Brooks Laich was constantly trying to slash and cross @-@ check him (Ovechkin) as painful [sic] as possible . After the game he certainly wished me luck and victory at the world championship , but the unpleasant impression still remains . "

= = Playing style = =

In 2009 , Capitals ' Head Coach Bruce Boudreau believed that Laich had not yet reached his full potential , saying , " ... I still don 't think we 've seen the best of Brooks . I think he 's going to be a 25- , 30 @-@ goal scorer in this league and become a staple for a while . " Boudreau also said Laich is considered one of the hardest working players on the Capitals ' roster by his coaches and teammates . Part of Laich 's inspiration comes from his father , who , during a 34 @-@ year tenure as a high school principal , only missed three days of work . Laich plays on the Capitals power play and kills penalties in addition to his ice time at even strength . Superstar Alexander Ovechkin is the Capitals current captain , but Laich has been lauded for his leadership and was considered for a more formal role in the team 's leadership structure in 2009 .

Laich is a hard worker , and dedicated to his team , saying , " If I asked you about your family , you would talk about them forever because it 's something you love . That 's the way I feel about this team . This team is my life , and I love playing here and I 'm passionate about playing hockey . So it 's easy for me to talk about it . " Boudreau has said , " You are never going to find a guy that cares more than Brooks Laich . " Laich spends time in the off @-@ season with a power skating instructor , which he feels is key to a long career .

= = Personal life = =

Laich has two siblings , an older sister and younger brother . His father worked as a high school teacher and principal . In his free time , he plays guitar and golfs . Colorado Avalanche star Joe Sakic was Laich 's favorite player growing up . He is actively involved in charity work , supporting charities related to multiple sclerosis and Athletes Against Autism . While still playing junior hockey , Laich helped his hometown of Wawota raise money to purchase a Zamboni for the local arena .

Laich received national media attention when he stopped to help two stranded Capitals fans change their flat tire after a Game 7 loss in the 2010 playoffs . When he came across the woman and her teenaged daughter stranded on the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge , Laich stopped to install their spare and apologized for the club 's early loss in the playoffs . For his efforts , Laich was hockey analyst Michael Farber 's nominee for the 2010 Sports Illustrated Sportsman of the Year . When asked about the incident , Laich responded , " It 's not a big deal . It was just a tire . The lady was stranded on the side of the road , I saw that it was just a lady and her daughter , and I figured my tire expertise outweighed hers . "

In February 2014 , it was revealed that he started dating professional dancer and actress Julianne Hough . On August 18 , 2015 Laich officially announced via Instagram that he and Hough were engaged .

= = Career statistics = =

= = = Regular season and playoffs = = =

Statistics source

= = = International = = =

Statistics source