

= Roman Lyashenko =

Roman Yurievich Lyashenko ( May 1 , 1979 ? July 7 , 2003 ) was a Russian ice hockey player . He played professionally in North America for the Dallas Stars and New York Rangers of the National Hockey League ( NHL ) , and also spent time with affiliate teams in the American Hockey League ( Utah Grizzlies and Hartford Wolfpack ) and the now @-@ defunct International Hockey League ( Michigan K @-@ Wings ) . Lyashenko also played professionally in Russia for Yaroslavl Torpedo before joining the Stars . He was drafted by the Stars in the second round ( 52nd overall ) of the 1997 NHL Entry Draft .

Lyashenko represented Russia internationally at both the junior and senior levels , capturing three medals ( gold , silver and bronze ) at the World Junior Championships and a silver medal at the World Championships . Lyashenko committed suicide while on vacation with his family on July 7 , 2003 .

= = Playing career = =

Lyashenko spent three seasons playing with Yaroslavl Torpedo in his home country of Russia . In 130 games , he recorded 22 goals and 22 assists for 44 points . While playing with Yaroslavl , he was selected in the second round ( 52nd overall ) of the 1997 NHL Entry Draft by the Dallas Stars . Leading up to the draft , scouts described him as a defensive forward with good character and leadership skills . He was considered an atypical Russian prospect due to his attention to defensive play . One source had him ranked as a first round prospect . He signed with the Stars in July 1999 .

Lyashenko made his NHL debut with the Dallas Stars during the 1999 ? 2000 season , seeing action in 58 games , while recording six goals and six assists . He also spent time with the Stars ' International Hockey League ( IHL ) affiliate Michigan K @-@ Wings , notching five points in nine games . During his rookie season in the NHL , Lyashenko played center on the Stars second line , earning praise from coach Ken Hitchcock , " His game has risen beyond his years . He 's 20 years old in age only . He looks like a real good fit for us . " The Stars went to the Stanley Cup Finals that season , but lost to the New Jersey Devils . In the Stars ' first round playoff series against the Edmonton Oilers , Lyashenko scored the winning goal in the first game of the series . During the 2000 Western Conference final against the Colorado Avalanche , Lyashenko scored the series clinching goal in game seven . Lyashenko played in 16 playoff games for the Stars . During the playoffs in his rookie season , Hitchcock was happy with Lyashenko 's play , saying , " He 's an exceptional defensive player -- his offensive skills have improved as the season 's gone on . "

During the 2000 ? 2001 season , Lyashenko again split time between the Stars and the Utah Grizzlies , who were the Stars ' new IHL affiliate . At the end of the season , Lyashenko had played 60 games with the Stars and recorded nine points . At the IHL level , he played in six games and had one assist . Lyashenko was popular with his teammates in Dallas , at one point his teammates lobbied Hitchcock to get him more playing time .

On March 12 , 2002 , Lyashenko and Martin Rucinsky were traded to the New York Rangers for Manny Malhotra and Barrett Heisten . During the 2001 ? 2002 season , Lyashenko played for four different teams , the Stars and Rangers at the NHL level as well as the IHL 's Grizzlies , and the Hartford Wolfpack of the American Hockey League ( AHL ) . In his last season of professional hockey , Lyashenko played two games with the Rangers , and 71 with the Wolfpack . He put up the best numbers of his career in North America , with 23 goals and 35 assists . He played in the 2003 AHL All @-@ Star Game , despite having asked for a release midway through the season to return to Russia . The request was denied by the Rangers , but his agent , Todd Diamond , said there were other teams interested in the forward 's services ; " Several teams were interested in him because they knew he wasn 't a fourth @-@ line guy . "

= = International play = =

Lyashenko represented Russia internationally at both the junior and senior levels . His first

experience with Russia 's junior team was at the 1997 World Junior Championships , recording three points in six games as Russia defeated the Czech Republic for the bronze medal . At the 1998 World Junior championships , Lyashenko again represented Russia , as the team captured a silver medal . In seven games at the tournament , he recorded three assists . Lyashenko captained Russia 's team at the 1999 World Junior Championships , which were held in Winnipeg . The Russian team captured the gold medal , defeating Canada in overtime . Lyashenko scored three goals and added two assists in seven games . With the gold medal , Lyashenko and teammate Mikhail Donika became the only two players to win a medal of each colour ( gold , silver and bronze ) at the World Junior Ice Hockey Championships .

Lyashenko played in a single tournament at the senior international level , representing Russia at the 2002 World Championships . He left his AHL team , the Hartford Wolf Pack , during their playoff run to join Russia at the tournament . Wolf Pack general manager Al Coates was disappointed to lose Lyashenko from his club , but understood the decision : " Everyone wants to play for his country , and he shouldn 't be portrayed as a bad guy . He 's a good guy and a good player . " In nine games , he recorded two assists and 14 penalty minutes . Russia captured a silver medal at the tournament .

= = Death = =

While on vacation in Antalya , Turkey with his mother and sister , Lyashenko was found dead in his hotel room on July 7 , 2003 . His death was initially reported to be a suicide . Reports by Turkish police confirmed this , stating that Lyashenko had left a suicide note and attempted to cut his arms and wrists before hanging himself . A Turkish police officer , speaking anonymously , said that Lyashenko apologized for killing himself in the note . New York Rangers general manager Glen Sather said of Lyashenko , " Roman was a quality individual who had a positive impact on everyone he touched , both on and off the ice . " Dallas Stars general manager Doug Armstrong expressed similar sentiments : " Roman was a quality young man who we were privileged to have in our organization for three years . " Lyashenko was buried in Yaroslavl on July 12 , 2003 .

= = Career statistics = =

= = = Regular season and playoffs = = =

= = = International play = = =