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Ovechkin Ties Gretzky's All-Time Record of 894 NHL Goals

By AFP

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Washington Capitals left wing Alex Ovechkin (8) celebrates his 893rd goal with his teammates during an NHL game against the Chicago Blackhawks on April 4. **AP / TASS**

Alex Ovechkin scored twice to tie Wayne Gretzky's record of 894 NHL career goals on Friday, matching a mark that once seemed unassailable.

With Gretzky in attendance, the 39-year-old Russian delivered No. 894 6:32 into the third quarter to give his Washington Capitals a 4-3 lead over the Chicago Blackhawks in a game they would go on to win 5-3.

Ovechkin tied Gretzky's monumental mark with a power-play goal, dropping to one knee and lifting his arms in celebration as the crowd at Capital One Arena roared.

"I'm sure everybody enjoyed this moment because it's something special," Ovechkin said in an in-arena interview immediately after the game. "[To] do it at home, in front of our fans,

family, friends, and obviously win here as well ... It's a huge honor."

Ovechkin also skated over and high-fived his son Sergei, with teammates coming onto the ice to congratulate him.

"It means a lot," Ovechkin said. "Right now it's so emotional. You never thought, like, you can reach that milestone.

"Without all my teammates, all my partners, you guys," he said with a nod to fans, "my family, my mom, my wife, you know? They support, they do everything what I need."

Needing three goals to break Gretzky's monumental mark coming into the contest, he had grabbed number 893 just 3:52 into the game.

Set up at the bottom of the right faceoff circle, Ovechkin one-timed a pass from Dylan Strome past Blackhawks goaltender Spencer Knight.

"It was a good flat pass [from Strome] and I got lucky," Ovechkin said in a brief television interview during the first intermission. "It hit the post and went in."

The goal gave Ovechkin his 14th 40-goal season, extending his own record.

Gretzky was in attendance, and Ovechkin said after the first period that the presence of the Canadian great added to an electric atmosphere at Washington's Capital One Arena.

"Everybody's buzzing right now," he said. "Wayne's here, so it's a special moment."

Fans were chanting for Ovechkin before the game started, and every time he was on the ice.

A groan went up in the first period when a pass intended for Ovechkin was intercepted by a Chicago defender.

Gretzky, sitting in a suite with NHL commissioner Gary Bettman, also drew cheers from the crowd.

The Blackhawks, trailing 4-3, pulled their goaltender, but after Ryan Leonard scored into the empty net to put the Caps up 5-3 Knight returned to his goal — and took Ovechkin on.

He stopped two attempts from the Russian for a record-breaking goal as the clock wound down, drawing boos from spectators for his trouble.

Ovechkin's next chance to break the mark will come Sunday, when the Capitals play at the New York Islanders.

But he did break another record Friday, his 136th game-winning goal breaking the record he shared with Jaromir Jagr.

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