



NEWS RELEASE



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BROWN, KOVALEV, NASH NAMED NHL FOUNDATION PLAYER AWARD FINALISTS

NEW YORK (May 4, 2009) – Forwards **Dustin Brown** of the Los Angeles Kings, **Alex Kovalev** of the Montreal Canadiens and **Rick Nash** of the Columbus Blue Jackets are the three finalists for the 11th Annual NHL Foundation Player Award, which is presented to a player “in recognition of his commitment and service to charities in his community,” the National Hockey League announced today.

The winner will be announced Thursday, June 18, during the **2009 NHL Awards** that will be broadcast live from the Pearl Concert Theater inside the Palms Hotel Las Vegas on VERSUS in the United States and on CBC in Canada.

NHL Clubs submitted nominations for the NHL Foundation Player Award and the finalists were selected by a judging panel. The NHL Foundation will present \$25,000 to a charitable organization chosen by this year’s winner.

Following are the finalists for the NHL Foundation Player Award, in alphabetical order:

Dustin Brown, Los Angeles Kings

This season, Dustin Brown sought a program that would have a positive impact on the country’s childhood obesity epidemic and encourage children to be active and healthy. He partnered with KaBOOM!, a non-profit organization with the mission of providing a place to play within walking distance of every child in America. Brown donated \$50 for each of his hits this season, raising more than \$35,000 that will go toward building a playground in his home town of Ithaca, NY. This past March, he also worked with children from the LA area to build a playground at the Bellflower YMCA. Brown is a spokesperson for the *Children’s Cancer Research Fund* and encouraged fans to support the *Kings 4 Kids Night* that raised nearly \$25,000 for the organization. He is a supporter of the Childrens Hospital Los Angeles and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and participates in all Kings community initiatives -- including his personal favorite, the Adopt-a-Family program, through which players provide holiday gifts for underprivileged families. Brown was named the Los Angeles Kings’ “Hometown Hero” at the Southern California Sports Choice Awards and recognized as a 2009 Outstanding Young Californian by the California Jaycees Foundation and the California Junior Chamber for his “commitment to challenge and inspire California’s youth.”

Alex Kovalev, Montreal Canadiens

Alex Kovalev has devoted a significant part of his life to helping children in need, both locally and abroad. He created the *Kovalev and Friends Foundation for Children* which supports the transfer of medical knowledge by having doctors travel to Kovalev’s homeland – Russia – to perform surgeries and teach skills to local surgeons. The Foundation also benefits children in Quebec with heart conditions through summer camps and other initiatives. Each season he

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hosts more than 300 sick and underprivileged children at Canadiens home games in the “Kovy’s Kids Suite” at the Bell Centre, providing them with food, gifts, autographed tuques, games, arts and crafts and visits from alumni and the team mascot. This past season, he raised \$12,000 to support the Montreal Canadiens Children’s Foundation by autographing tuques which he helped design and that were sold at a Canadiens home game. In March 2008, he released his hockey tips and training methods DVD, donating 100% of the proceeds - \$120,000 to date – to the *Gift of Life Foundation*, an organization whose mission is providing life-saving, open-heart surgeries to children. His first annual golf tournament held in the Montreal region in August 2008 raised \$160,000 for his newly created foundation. Kovalev was awarded the 2008 Jean Beliveau Trophy as the Canadiens player who best exemplifies leadership qualities in the community and remitted the \$25,000 donation to the *Kovalev and Friends for Foundation for Children*. He continually lends his support to the charitable efforts of the Montreal Canadiens -- including the annual golf tournament, hospital visits, blood drives, festivities with children and meet and greets.

Rick Nash, Columbus Blue Jackets

Rick Nash has become one of the most active Blue Jackets in the community, giving his time, money and support to improve the lives of people throughout Central Ohio. He established the *#61 Club* to encourage students to make healthy choices and rewards those who do. Through the *#61 Club Good Health Challenge*, Nash provides more than 30 tickets to every Blue Jackets home game to students who make 61 healthy choices in a month. He donated \$100,000 to the Ohio State University Athletics Department to endow a scholarship for a student-athlete and gave \$25,000 as a founding donor of the *John H. McConnell Scholarship Fund* in memory of the Blue Jackets founder and majority owner. He made a \$5,000 contribution to the 2009 Quebec Pee Wee Major team that represented Columbus, to pay for travel expenses so families would be able to attend with their children. For the past four years, Nash has donated \$15,000 annually to *Santa’s Silent Helpers*, which helps families with children, single mothers and the elderly in Central Ohio who are experiencing financial hardships. He developed the “Rick Bands” program to promote leadership and character among local youths and has allocated the sales of the wristbands to benefit the Columbus Blue Jackets Foundation in support of fighting pediatric cancer and promoting education and children’s health and safety. Nash serves as the spokesperson for several Blue Jackets charitable initiatives -- including the *Columbus Dispatch Newspapers in Education* program, which educates students in history, sportsmanship and health; the *Jackets For Jackets* program, which collected more than 1,200 coats during the holiday season; and the *Time Warner Cable Adult Literacy Campaign*, which educates the public about the importance of adult literacy.

History

In its 11th year, the NHL Foundation Player Award recognizes an NHL player who applies the core values of hockey – commitment, perseverance and teamwork – to enrich the lives of people in his community. Past recipients honored for their charitable work were: Trevor Linden and Vincent Lecavalier (2008), Joe Sakic (2007), Marty Turco (2006), Jarome Iginla (2004), Darren McCarty (2003), Ron Francis (2002), Olaf Kolzig (2001), Adam Graves (2000), Rob Ray (1999), and Kelly Chase (1998).