

Connor McDavid: Rising Star

| McDavid: Your 2017 NHL MVP

BECKETT

HOCKEY

2016 STANLEY CUP CHAMPS
PITTSBURGH PENGUINS

SIDNEY CROSBY
TROPHY HUNTER
2 X CHAMPION

CONNOR MCDAVID
AND THE OILERS PLAYOFF BERTH



NHL 17

AVAILABLE NOW
XBOX ONE - PS4 - PC

amazon.com

BEST BUY

TARGET

TABLE OF CONTENTS



TROPHY HUNTER

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

HISTORY OF HOCKEY

Various museums offer evidence that a form of the game was played by the Romans and Greeks as well as by the Aztecs several centuries before Columbus arrived in the New World. The modern game of hockey emerged in England in the mid-18th century and is largely attributed to the growth of public schools, such as Eton.

10

NHL PROSPECTS

The 2017 NHL draft is coming into view for scouts and fans who follow prospect progression. Several quality prospects increased their profile at the World Junior Championships over Christmas and then further helped their cause with outstanding performances at the recent Top Prospects Game in Quebec City.

12

NHL 2017

No matter how you play the game, NHL 17 delivers new modes to connect to your favorite teams and players. Feel the thrill of fantasy draft night with a star power team in Draft Champions, or play for national pride in the World Cup of Hockey.

3

MCDAVID

Connor McDavid, the Edmonton Oilers' young captain, has spent the season leading the NHL scoring race, and guiding his team to the playoffs for the first time in nearly 11 years.

6

PLAYOFFS

The Penguins will face the Blue Jack-ets in the first round of the 2017 NHL Playoffs. By virtue of the Capitals' 2-0 victory over the Rangers on Wednesday night, Pittsburgh and Columbus clinched a first round matchup against one another as the 2-3 seeds in the Eastern Conference.

8

NHL 17



All-new game modes, new and deeper experiences in fan favorite modes, and the best on-ice gameplay ever make NHL 17 the most exciting EA SPORTS NHL game to date.



[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

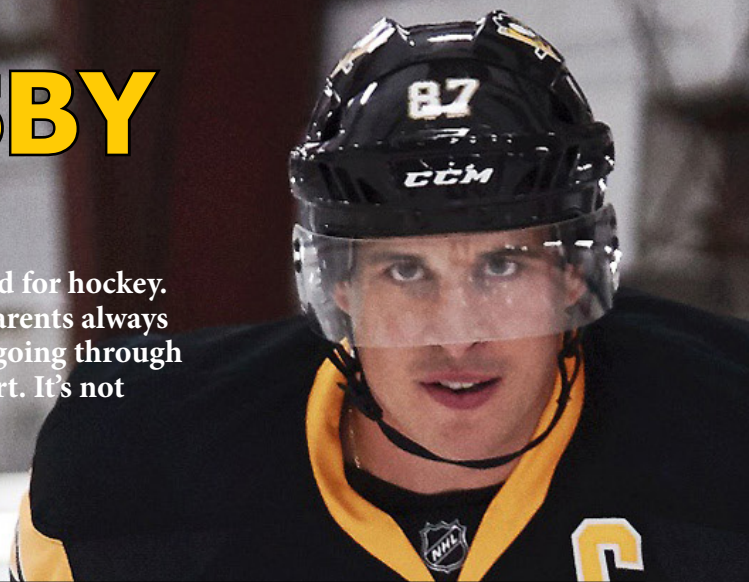
**BEST
BUY**

TARGET

SIDNEY CROSBY

NHL SUPERSTAR

"The biggest thing for me is the passion that I've always had for hockey. I remember growing up, no matter what I did in life, my parents always told me to try to do my best at it and be my best. I can say going through different things that that passion is the most important part. It's not skills or talent or any of that stuff."



TROPHY HUNTER

HIGHLIGHT GOAL, ROCKET RICHARD WITHIN REACH

Ever since his son was little, Troy Crosby tried to stress the importance of having a good backhand. Not only as a helpful hockey dad, but as a former goaltender, drafted by the Montreal Canadiens, who was keenly aware of what drives his kind crazy.

"I remember my dad telling me to try and be comfortable on your backhand," Sidney Crosby said. "It's an important skill. I think it was something that probably came easy to me. Some guys are more comfortable there. That was the case."

Crosby's backhand has always been better than that of his peers, and that has become even more obvious during his goal-scoring resurgence this season, the second 40-goal season of his career and his best total (41) since scoring 51 in 2009-10.

Five of Crosby's 41 goals this season (12.2 percent) have via backhand, including two of the past three. That's impressive, sure, but it actually falls short of his career numbers (54 of 379, 14.2 percent).

Nonetheless, Crosby's one-handed backhand against Buffalo on Tuesday was further proof that Crosby is beyond comfortable scoring that way. It was the best goal anyone in the NHL has scored this season, and it's not likely to lose its place, all because of what Crosby can do on his backhand.

"It was probably a bit of a faster learning curve," Crosby said of perfecting his backhand. "It can be frustrating when you're a kid and you're working on your backhand. It doesn't really feel great. But it's one of those things that can help."

One of the reasons Crosby is so good at shooting the puck backhanded becomes obvious by taking one look at the curve of his stick. Essentially, there isn't one. It enables him to generate significant power with his shot, not to mention pinpoint control.



"It's such a flat blade," Matt Murray said. "Most guys have a pretty big hook, so on their backhand they're at a significant disadvantage. His is pretty straight. That definitely gives him a huge advantage on the backhand."

Marc-Andre Fleury said Crosby's placement with his backhand shot stands out. Also the velocity he's able to generate because of his superior upper-body and forearm strength.

When a shooter checks all of those boxes, it translates into something that's really, really tough for a goalie to read, let alone stop. Troy Crosby knew that.

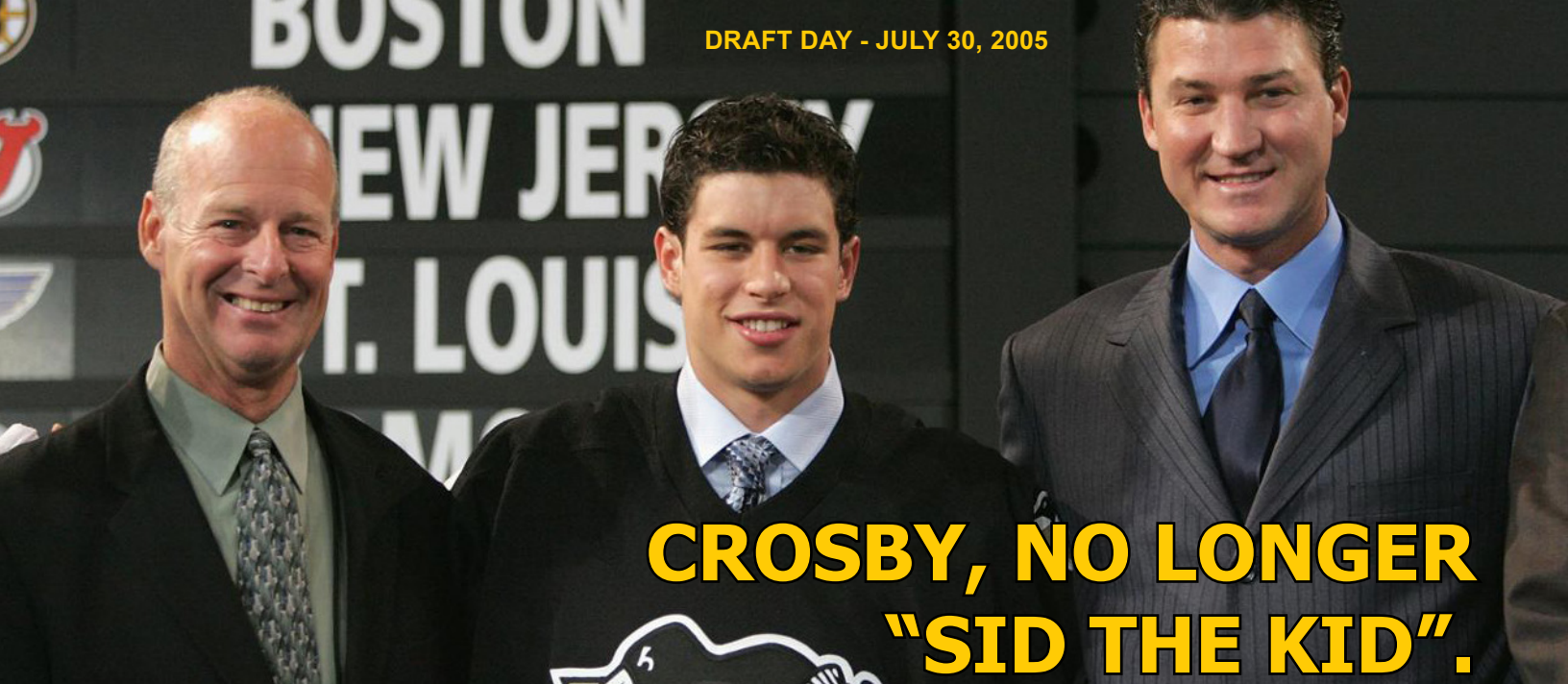
"He can shoot anywhere he wants to," Fleury said. "I think he has more control of it than most people. He's more accurate, and it's harder than a lot of other guys' shots." Playing on a line with Crosby has been an adjustment for Conor Sheary because of that backhand.

No matter where Crosby is on the ice, he's a threat to score or deliver a pinpoint pass, even if he doesn't necessarily indicate where he's going with the puck by where he's looking.

"You definitely marvel at it, but when you play on a line with him, you appreciate it," Sheary said. "You know when he's coming down on his off-wing, can still make a play. I think his vision on his backhand is one of his biggest assets."

For Crosby, the key is to not focus too much on his backhand. He knows the easiest way to score is still on your forehand, and the best goal-scorers can find a way to shoot the puck that way no matter what.

"It's kind of a balance of trying to be comfortable there and make plays, but if you can get to your forehand, you have a better chance of making plays most times," Crosby said. "With my curve and stuff, it's something that's a little easier for me, probably."



Sidney Crosby does not have an off switch. If there were one, Patric Hornqvist believes he would have found it by now.

Not once over the past two years while playing alongside one of the NHL's most popular players has Hornqvist seen an exasperated sigh, a roll of the eyes or so much as a smirk from the superstar who has dutifully served as one of the faces from the league from the moment the Pittsburgh Penguins drafted him No. 1 over all in 2005 and he became tasked with restoring the languishing franchise to glory.

"It's crazy how well prepared he is for everything," Hornqvist said. Of course it's easy to say now, with the Penguins holding a 1-0 lead over San Jose heading into Wednesday night's Game 2 of the Stanley Cup Final. Their captain and two-time MVP seems restored to his place among the game's elite after ending a seven-year drought between appearances in the NHL's marquee event.

It's a gap few saw coming when the 21-year-old Crosby held the Cup aloft in joy in Detroit back in 2009 after beating the Red Wings in seven taut games. "Everybody thought [we'd] win 5-6-7 in the next 10 years," recently retired Pittsburgh forward Pascal Dupuis said.

"Look, this is his third final in his short career to this point, and that's pretty good," said former Pittsburgh coach Ed Olczyk, who coached Crosby as a rookie in 2005-06. "Now, in saying that, there haven't been many teams that have underachieved more than the Pittsburgh Penguins over the course of the last five or six years."

A label Crosby took personally even as circumstances – some beyond his control, some not – made him struggle to shed it. There was the protracted recovery from concussion-like symptoms that robbed him of two seasons in his prime. A series of meek playoff flame-outs in which opponents found a way to stifle his brilliance.

"You just have to be able to put it all together at the right time," Crosby said. "I don't think we necessarily lacked those things in years we didn't win. I think you just have to be able to put it together and come up with those big plays at timely times."

And in some ways, Crosby had to grow up, too. For all his talent, – he's never finished outside the top 10 in points a game in any season in which he's played enough games to qualify – he can occasionally be too unselfish with the puck on his stick, sometimes trading wide-open shots for difficult passes in search of a teammate who may or may not be ready for them.



Sportsnet pre-records cliché soundbites with Crosby

It's a moniker Crosby held throughout his early 20s, right up until the moment the Washington centre David Steckel's stick smashed into Crosby's head during the 2011 Winter Classic, a collision that sent Crosby on a two-year odyssey for a return to normal and nearly made him a cautionary tale.

He only speaks about that period in only vague terms now, though Hornqvist is quick to point out Crosby is more judicious when it comes to deciding when to drive to the net and when to pull back than he was earlier in his career. Crosby would prefer to talk about the present and a future that once again looks promising. He turns 29 in August, hardly old but no longer "Sid the Kid."

That's a good thing. The captaincy thrust upon him as a teenager no longer feels symbolic but earned. He's made it a point to become a better teammate away from the rink, whether it's pulling aside younger players to talk about working with referees to keeping tabs on those recovering from injury, his comfort zone spreading far wider than his 200-by-85 foot office.

"I think he's always been more mature than his age," Dupuis said. "You take that and you take the stuff that he's gone through and you add to it while he's 28 right now, he's probably the most mature 28-year-old you'll see on the planet."