

MATT COOKE

Inductee

Belleville Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2022

Athlete, Hockey

Practically every Canadian kid who laces up the skates dreams of one day hoisting the Stanley Cup. Stirling's own Matt Cooke, a 16-season NHL veteran, is among an elite group of players to reach this pinnacle, winning the coveted trophy with the 2008-2009 NHL Champion Pittsburgh Penguins. Matt came up through the Quinte Red Devils system and broke into junior hockey with the Wellington Dukes in 1994-1995, winning the team's Rookie of the Year title, an award that now bears his name. The next season, Matt made the jump to the OHL after being picked in the 10th round, 155th overall, by the Windsor Spitfires. During his three-year stint in the OHL, the strong center would notch a 95-point season, earn 2 league all-star nods, and represent his country as part of the 1997-98 Canadian World Junior team. Selected by the Vancouver Canucks in the sixth round of the 1997 NHL draft, Matt divided his first professional season between the parent club and their AHL affiliate in Syracuse before winning a full time spot in 1999-2000 after his December call up with the Canucks. Matt went on to represent the Washington Capitals, the Pittsburgh Penguins, and the Minnesota Wild before retiring in 2015. In another international appearance, Matt's four points in nine games helped Team Canada bring home the Gold Medal at the 2004 World Championship. Matt's tenacious two-way style of play made him a favourite of his teammates and drew fear and loathing from his on-ice opponents. Cooke's collective NHL scoresheet boasts 167 goals and 231 assists for 398 points over 1046 games, during which he collected 1135 penalty minutes and finished with plus/minus of plus 61. Matt tacked on 13 goals, 25 assists and 141 minutes in penalties in 110 playoff games. For the career high 42 points he posted in the 2002-03 season with Vancouver, Matt was named the recipient of the Fred J. Hume Award, the Canucks Unsung Hero as voted by the fans. The Belleville Sports Hall of Fame is proud to induct Stanley Cup champion Matt Cooke for his enduring career, perseverance and dedication to his sport.