

Leafs' Sundin Named Recipient Of Messier Leadership Award

28th May, 2008



Press Release - The National Hockey League announced Wednesday that Mats Sundin is the 2007-08 recipient of the Mark Messier Leadership Award. Sundin was recognized for his outstanding performance as a player, his leadership skills, and his dedicated humanitarian efforts. The Maple Leafs' captain was on hand at a special awards luncheon in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to receive the award.

"I am honoured and humbled to receive this prestigious award," said Sundin. "I thank Mark for this honour as well as my current and former teammates for their tremendous support. I strongly believe that an important part of being an athlete is to be a great teammate, leader and philanthropist."

Mats Sundin's 17th NHL season further established his status as one of the greatest players to ever wear the Maple Leafs uniform. Once again, he led the Maple Leafs in goals (32), assists (46) and points (78). He completed this past season as the franchise's all-time leading goal scorer (420) and point producer (987). Sundin also ranks second in all-time assists and sixth in games played for the Maple Leafs.

Away from the rink, Mats is a steadfast supporter of the Leafs Fund which is committed to improving the lives of children by providing access to sports and recreation opportunities that encourage health and wellness in our community. Always in attendance at fundraising events, Mats is an enthusiastic ambassador of the Leafs @ School program and he regularly speaks to children in the program about the importance of physical exercise.

His dedication to keeping youngsters active can be seen through his support of the Street Buds ball hockey program for the past 13 seasons as honorary captain. The program helps make the sport accessible and motivates youth to become more active in physical activity. Mats has a lead role in the team's relationship with the Hospital for Sick Children and he is an ambassador for Canada's foremost fundraising organization for landmine action, the Canadian Landmine Foundation. Landmine survivors were guests of Mats Sundin at Air Canada Centre this past year.

Every season, Mats also donates his private suite to the 'Captain's Corner' program for all Leafs and Raptors home games. It is used to recognize and reward children in the community who have overcome daily physical, mental, emotional, and social challenges.

The Maple Leafs captain since 1997-98 was also previously recognized for his impact in the community at the 2001 All-Star Weekend when he was chosen as the NHL winner of the MAC Award (Most Assists for Children).

The Mark Messier Leadership Award recognizes players for their athletic performance; ability to motivate and influence teammates; a commitment to the community and charitable causes; and a dedication to a professional attitude as a representative of their sport and as a positive role model within society.