

NHL, NHLPA and For Bare Feet Celebrate World Down Syndrome Day with Player-Designed Sock Collection

Carcone, Gaudreau, Larkin and McAvoy Create Unique Designs in 'Mismatched' Pairs; NHL and NHLPA Contribute \$15,000 to American Special Hockey Association

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NEW YORK/TORONTO (March 18, 2026) – The National Hockey League (NHL), National Hockey League Players' Association and [For Bare Feet](#) today unveiled a special sock collection in honor of World Down Syndrome Day. Created by NHL players **Michael Carcone** (Utah Mammoth), **Frederick Gaudreau** (Seattle Kraken), **Dylan Larkin** (Detroit Red Wings), and **Charlie McAvoy** (Boston Bruins), each design was inspired by the players' personal ties to the cause.

World Down Syndrome Day occurs each year on March 21 and on this day of awareness, it is customary to wear mismatched socks to celebrate acceptance of differences.

Players were invited to participate in a design process with For Bare Feet, resulting in two sock pairs that are available for purchase at shop.nhl.com and ForBareFeet.com.

The first mismatched pair features concepts from McAvoy and Larkin. McAvoy's sock has a nature-inspired pattern that incorporates the "three arrows" symbol, which represents the three copies of the twenty-first chromosome in the Down syndrome community. Larkin's sock has a line-based pattern that mixes Red Wings colors with blue and yellow, which are commonly associated with Down syndrome awareness and also Larkin's alma mater.

"I'm honored to be part of this project and to help amplify the message of supporting and empowering individuals with Down syndrome," said McAvoy. "World Down Syndrome Day is an important opportunity to celebrate the incredible impact this community has. I'm so proud to support this cause alongside the Boston Bruins Foundation and my good friend Johnny Dunleavy."

"World Down Syndrome Day -- and every day -- reminds us of the power of being a good teammate," said Larkin. "Creating a supportive, positive environment for our friends with Down syndrome is something we can all do, and I'm proud to be part of a project that reflects those values."

The second mismatched pair features concepts from Gaudreau and Carcone. Gaudreau's sock has symbols that celebrate outdoor activities with his nephew, Noah, as well as the "three arrows" symbol. Carcone's sock has a series of lines in varied colors that represent his friendship with his neighbor, Welles.

"Throughout the design process, I was inspired by my nephew Noah, who has been a role model for me," said Gaudreau. "Mismatched socks are a fun way to raise awareness and spark conversations that help create welcoming spaces for people with Down syndrome. I'm really excited about this project because it reflects the ongoing mission of opening more and more hearts to the beauty found in everyone's uniqueness."

“This project is deeply meaningful because it celebrates the idea that uniqueness should be embraced,” said Carcone. “World Down Syndrome Day reminds us that we are better together, and that message reflects how I think about my friend Welles and the broader Down syndrome community.”

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As part of the mismatched sock project, the NHL and the NHLPA will provide donations of \$10,000 and \$5,000, respectively, to the **American Special Hockey Association (ASHA)**, supporting the organization’s mission to grow special hockey. The grants will benefit ASHA athletes, coaches and parents by helping create new opportunities and improving access to ice time and equipment.

All participants in the upcoming Willie O’Ree Skills Weekend will each receive a pair of mismatched socks, celebrating fun, friendship, and the idea that everyone belongs in the game.

“This project brings together the influence of our players and an NHL licensee that truly believes in this cause, resulting in a meaningful product that supports the Down syndrome community,” said **Brian Jennings**, NHL chief brand officer and senior executive vice president. “Shared values are at the heart of this collaboration, and we’re excited to see fans join us in celebrating World Down Syndrome Day through the mismatched socks tradition.”

“We are always driven by the belief that the socks you choose to wear are a form of self-expression – which is why we’re delighted to help NHL fans express their support for World Down Syndrome Day,” said **Justin Fredericks**, For Bare Feet chief executive officer. “The concepts shared by Charlie, Dylan, Frederick, and Michael are extensions of our commitment to pursue creative possibilities and have led to heartfelt sock pairs that encourage inclusion for all.”

Fans are invited to join the NHL, the NHLPA and the entire hockey community by wearing mismatched socks on and around March 21 to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day.

The NHL and NHLPA are committed to making hockey accessible to players of all abilities and to supporting adaptive hockey programs in communities across North America. Fans can take part by learning more about local adaptive and special hockey initiatives, attending community events, and amplifying stories that celebrate inclusion in the game. Through partnerships with Clubs and community organizations, the League continues to invest in opportunities that help individuals of all ages and abilities experience the joy of hockey, on and off the ice.

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