

# UKE

## The Untold Story of Hockey Legends

The *UKE* documentary tells the story of the profound contributions made by professional Ukrainian hockey players from immigrant families to the development and evolution of the National Hockey League (NHL).

*'My main message, my goal, is to show that former NHL players take pride in their Ukrainian heritage. I also want to highlight their contributions — to show that the traditions of 100 years ago live on in them and that their journey is not forgotten,'* said *UKE* director and producer Volodymyr Mula.

He continued: *'Many of these players' parents and grandparents fled to escape Bolshevism, yet they preserved the Ukrainian language and culture, passing them down to the next generations. Growing up, these players faced challenges assimilating into a new society, and hockey became a means of adaptation and recognition. Many of them came to be known simply as "Uke."*

The film's protagonists are renowned hockey players of Ukrainian descent, spanning different eras of the sport's evolution and facing diverse challenges. Yet, they share a common achievement — each of them has lifted the Stanley Cup:

- Bruce Driver, 1995
- Eddie Shack, 1962, 1963, 1964, and 1967
- Eric Nesterenko, 1961
- Jeff Chychrun, 1992
- Johnny Bucyk, 1970 and 1972
- Ken Daneyko, 1995, 2000, and 2003
- Orest Kindrachuk, 1974 and 1975
- Ruslan Fedotenko, 2004 and 2007
- Wayne Gretzky, 1984, 1985, 1987, and 1988

"Canadian Hockey Dad" Walter Gretzky, retired NHL goalie and CBC hockey analyst Kelly Hrudehy, and Jerry Sawchuk — the son of legendary goaltender Terry Sawchuk, a four-time Stanley Cup champion (1952, 1954, 1955, 1967) — also appear in the film.

*'Mike Bossy had the the quickest hand. It was a real shame that he had to retire so early. He was by far the best goal scorer at that time and it was a real treat to play against him like in practice and stuff and learn how to get... I had to get a lot better to make saves on him,'* said hockey analyst Kelly Hrudehy in the movie.

During production, the documentary team conducted extensive research and uncovered remarkable statistics that are not widely known — many of which are featured in the film.

*'Throughout the NHL's 100-year history, more than fifty players of Ukrainian descent have become Stanley Cup champions. This is the highest number of champions from any non-North American nationality,'* said *UKE* director Volodymyr Mula.

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He added: *'Even the greatest hockey player of all time, Wayne Gretzky, has Ukrainian roots. His grandparents, originally named Gretskeyy, lived in the Ternopil and Beresteysk regions before immigrating to North America.'*

*'I learned Ukrainian first because my mother didn't know how to speak English until later when the kids grew up. So Ukraine is the motherland of our family,'* Walter Gretzky said.

*'They called my dad UKE all the time. That just stuck on him and everywhere he went it was UKIE, UKE because of his Ukrainian heritage,'* Jerry Sawchuk said.

*'I was very proud of being Ukrainian and you know all through my career I played there were a lot of Ukrainian guys and I played a lot against them. But Bronco Horvath, Vic Stasiuk and myself were probably the first three here in Boston,'* said Johnny Bucyk about his legendary partners on the UKE-Line.

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**Directed by:** Volodymyr Mula

**Produced by:** Volodymyr Mula

**Written by:** Mykola Vasylykov

**Advisor:** Eugene Kolychev

**Cinematographers:** Oleg Shevshyshyn, Dmytro Shypovskyi, Oleksandr Ternovyi, Stanislav Tkachov

**Edited by:** Andrii Lunnik

**Production company:** TeleProstir Studio

**Distributed by:** TeleProstir Studio

**Running time:** 90 minutes

**Countries:** Canada/United States/Belarus/Ukraine

**Language:** English/Ukrainian

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