Hockey Star Oskar Lindblom Is Cancer-Free After Treatment for Ewing's Sarcoma

The Philadelphia Flyers forward Oskar Lindblom has been battling Ewing's sarcoma for most of 2020.

December 22, 2020 By Caroline Tien

One year and four days after he was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma, Philadelphia Flyers forward Oskar Lindblom is officially cancer-free, according to a December 15 Instagram post by his girlfriend, Alma Lindqvist.

View this post on Instagram

A post shared by ALMA LINDQVIST (@almalindqvist)

The "scans are clear after his second checkup," she wrote, followed by a heart emoji.

Lindblom, a 24-year-old native of Gävle, Sweden, began playing for the Flyers full-time during the 2018–2019 season. But his initial run with the accomplished hockey team was to be short-lived. That November, he found a strange welt on his ribcage that eventually tested positive for Ewing's sarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer.

The diagnosis rattled the professional hockey community, especially because Lindblom was a rising star. In the months prior to his diagnosis, he had distinguished himself by scoring 11 goals in 30 games and averaging nearly 18 minutes of ice time per game.

"My first thought was, Can I play hockey anymore? I don't know if I can do anything else. That's my thing,'" Lindblom told Sports Illustrated of his reaction to the diagnosis. "But then I realized, This is probably not about hockey anymore. I'll just be happy if I can live like a normal person afterwards."

On the advice of his oncologists at the Abramson Cancer Center of the University of Pennsylvania, Lindblom sat out the rest of the season to undergo treatment. His Flyers teammates showed their support by hanging his No. 23 jersey in their locker room and wearing shirts emblazoned with the hashtag #OskarStrong prior to games.

"It's been everything. They talked to me like I'm still with the team even if I'm not there," Lindblom told the National Hockey League (NHL) at the time. "Those tough weeks, when I felt so bad and trying to think about life and they'd call me, text me, help me get more energy. It helped me through the whole process."

The road to recovery was long and hard and paved with surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. But on July 2, more than half a year after his diagnosis, Lindblom rang a bell in the hallway of the Abramson Cancer Center to signal that he had completed treatment.

The Flyers had a surprise waiting for him: a three-year contract worth $9 million, which he accepted. (The previous month, the team had nominated Lindblom for the prestigious Bill Masterton Memorial Trophy, for which he was eventually named a finalist. Given annually to the player who "best embodies the qualities of perseverance, sportsmanship and dedication to the game of hockey," according to the NHL, the award memorializes Bill Masterton, the only NHL player ever to die of injuries sustained during a game.)

But Lindblom knows that he has far more to be grateful for than a contract renewal and an award nomination this year.

"I'm just happy that I'm alive and I caught it early," he told ESPN.

To read about another NHL player who was diagnosed with cancer, click here. And to read about how the NHL is supporting people with cancer and their families, click here.

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