

Washington's Orpik Still A Force On Blue Line

By Dave Lukow

Brooks Orpik has been at this a long time.

A 37-year-old defenseman with the Washington Capitals, Orpik played his first NHL game for the Pittsburgh Penguins during the 2002-03 season. With Pittsburgh through 2013-14, he joined the Caps the next year.

Known as a force in his team's end, the 6-foot-3 Boston College product has 16 goals, 185 points and 940 penalty minutes in 982 NHL games. For the postseason, he has three goals, 23 points and 130 penalty minutes in 146 games.

In this year's playoffs, he's appeared in 21 games, registering a goal, three assists and 13 penalty minutes. During Washington's 3-2 win over the Vegas Golden Knights May 30, which knotted the 2018 Stanley Cup Final at one game apiece, Orpik skated more than 19 minutes. He finished with a goal, three shots, six hits and two blocked shots. When the Caps were shorthanded, he was on the ice for 3:59.

Only one Washington defenseman, Matt Niskanen, another former Penguin, had more ice time (5:25) while Vegas had a power play.

The Caps are fortunate having a vet like Orpik, who won a Stanley Cup with the Penguins in 2009, patrolling the defensive zone. When composure is at a premium - when mental miscues can deny the dream - experience goes a long way.

Game 3 of the Stanley Cup Final takes place in Washington June 2.