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ESPN, DISNEY CHANNEL AND THE NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE TEAM UP FOR FIRST-EVER 'NHL BIG CITY GREENS CLASSIC'

NHL Skates Into Disney's #1 Animated Comedy¹ 'Big City Greens' With Live Animated Presentation of Washington Capitals at New York Rangers on March 14

ESPN+, Disney Channel, Disney XD and Disney+ To Present First-of-Its-Kind Live Volumetric Animation Presentation



View "NHL Big City Greens Classic" [Teaser](#)

ESPN, Disney Channel and the NHL are teaming up to bring fans the **"NHL Big City Greens Classic,"** the first-ever live, animated NHL game telecast, featuring the Washington Capitals vs. New York Rangers, on March 14 at 7 p.m. EDT.

The alternate presentation of the Capitals-Rangers game will feature live, real-time volumetric animation of players and teams modeled after characters on Disney Branded Television's Emmy[®] Award-winning animated comedy "Big City Greens." ESPN+, Disney

¹ Source: NMR, 2022 (12/27/21-12/25/22), L+7, #1 Disney series among Kids 6-11 ranked on hours watched; based on linear viewing

Channel, Disney XD and Disney+ will present the live, animated telecast, while the main telecast will be available on ESPN and ESPN+.

"Working with Disney Channel and the NHL, we are producing a telecast that will reach a new and different audience and help to grow hockey fandom even more," said Ilan Ben-Hanan, senior vice president of Programming and Acquisitions, ESPN. "'Big City Greens' has a huge following in a younger audience that we are excited to tap into, offering a fun and creative way to enjoy the game across Disney platforms."

"We've said from day one that our partnership with The Walt Disney Company is a big win for our fans and our League," said Dave Lehanski, NHL's executive vice president of Business Development and Innovation. "We've spent years investing in a fast and accurate puck and player tracking system to help us grow the game. The 'NHL Big City Greens Classic' will demonstrate how we can leverage data from NHL EDGE — our puck and player tracking system — to create entirely new fan experiences for a younger audience in collaboration with incredible partners like The Walt Disney Company, ESPN and Beyond Sports. What a testament — to have the greatest animation company of all time leverage its incomparable creativity and IP to promote and grow our game."

"Hockey is an incredibly exciting and animated sport, but we felt it wasn't animated *enough*. We're thrilled to be partnering with the NHL and ESPN to see the Greens lace up their skates and add a generous dash of 'Big City Greens' comedy to what is sure to be an entertaining game," said "Big City Greens" creators and executive producers Shane and Chris Houghton at the exact same time.

The first-of-its-kind alternate presentation will leverage NHL Edge positioning data (puck and player tracking) to recreate the action on the ice as it is happening while featuring "Big City Greens" characters skating alongside animated versions of the NHL players. The real-time animation will be produced in association with ESPN Edge Innovation Center and NHL EDGE Innovation partners Verizon, Beyond Sports and Silver Spoon.

ESPN commentators will call the action for the "NHL Big City Greens Classic," and "Big City Greens" talent, including the Houghton brothers and Marieve Herington (the voice of Tilly), will also be featured in the presentation. More details regarding the first-of-its-kind production will be announced closer to the game.

About Disney Branded Television's "Big City Greens"

Created and executive produced by brothers Chris and Shane Houghton, Disney Branded Television's animated comedy "Big City Greens" follows mischievous and optimistic 10-year-old Cricket Green, who moves from the country to the big city with his wildly out-of-place family — older sister Tilly, father Bill and Gramma Alice. The series is influenced by the Houghton's childhood in the small rural town of St. Johns, Michigan, with locations and characters inspired by their real-life family members and townsfolk and their experiences upon departing rural farmland for college in big cities.

Press materials are available at www.dgepress.com. Follow Instagram and Twitter for up-to-date news on #BigCityGreens.

About the NHL

The National Hockey League (NHL®), founded in 1917, consists of 32 Member Clubs. Each team roster reflects the League's international makeup with players from more than 20 countries represented, all vying for the most cherished and historic trophy in professional sports – the Stanley Cup®. Every year, the NHL entertains more than 670 million fans in-arena and through its partners on national television and radio; more than 191 million followers - league, team and player accounts combined - across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and YouTube; and more than 100 million fans online at NHL.com. The League broadcasts games in more than 160 countries and territories through its rightsholders including ESPN, WBD Sports and NHL Network in the U.S.; Sportsnet and TVA Sports in Canada; Viaplay in the Nordics, Baltics, and Poland; YLE in Finland; Nova in Czech Republic and Slovakia; Sky Sports and ProSieben in Germany; MySports in Switzerland; and CCTV5+ in China; and reaches fans worldwide with games available to stream in every country. Fans are engaged across the League's digital assets on mobile devices via the free NHL® App; across nine social media platforms; on SiriusXM NHL Network Radio™; and on NHL.com, available in eight languages and featuring unprecedented access to player and team statistics as well as every regular-season and playoff game box score dating back to the League's inception, powered by SAP. NHL Original Productions and NHL Studios produce compelling original programming featuring unprecedented access to players, coaches and League and team personnel for distribution across the NHL's social and digital platforms.

The NHL is committed to building healthy and vibrant communities using the sport of hockey to celebrate fans of every race, color, religion, national origin, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. The NHL's Hockey Is For Everyone™ initiative reinforces that the official policy of the sport is one of inclusion on the ice, in locker rooms, boardrooms and stands. The NHL is expanding access and opportunity for people of all backgrounds and abilities to play hockey, fostering more inclusive environments and growing the game through a greater diversity of participants. To date, the NHL has invested more than \$100 million in youth hockey and grassroots programs, with a commitment to invest an additional \$5 million for diversity and inclusion programs over the next year.

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