



# AKIM ALIU

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Akim Aliu is a professional ice hockey player, producer and philanthropist.

Born in Okene, Nigeria to a Nigerian father and Ukrainian mother, Akim moved to Kiev, Ukraine at two years of age. After spending seven years in Ukraine, Akim and his family immigrated to Toronto, Canada.

Akim was ten years old when he first was introduced to the game of hockey, starting with a pair of garage sale skates, four sizes too big. Within three years, Akim was playing for the prestigious Toronto Marlboros Hockey Club. At the age of sixteen, Akim was drafted in the first round, 6th overall, by the Windsor Spitfires in the Ontario Hockey League Draft. Two years after being drafted into the OHL, the Chicago Blackhawks made Akim their second pick in the second round of the National Hockey League Draft. After a successful four-year OHL career, splitting time between Sudbury Wolves and London Knights, Akim officially turned pro at 19 years old with the Rockford Ice Hogs of the American Hockey League.

Akim made his NHL debut with the Calgary Flames in 2012, notching 2 points in his first appearance. Over his 11-year professional career, Akim has spent time at every top level of hockey across North America and Europe.

Outside of his life on the ice, Akim sits on the Board of Directors of McCormick Arena in Toronto, which is where he stepped on the ice for the first time. Akim is also the Founder and Chairman of the Hockey Diversity Alliance, which consists of nine former and current NHL players who are dedicated to making hockey more affordable and accessible to underprivileged communities. Akim has also founded his own personal Time to Dream Foundation, which aims to help underprivileged youth succeed in life through sport.

Akim has been a leader in the drive for change within the Hockey community and society as a whole for racial equality, diversity and for increased accessibility for BIPOC youth into sports, particularly the game of hockey.

Akim has been recognized by Maclean's magazine as being one of the Top 50 most influential Canadians in 2020 and has also appeared on the cover of Sports Illustrated magazine.

In partnership with Budweiser Canada and the Hockey Diversity Alliance, Akim helped create and launch #TapeOutHate, an impactful campaign in support of the HDA's ongoing mission to eradicate racism in hockey, which garnered many awards.

Akim starred in the film "*Black Ice*", a documentary which examines the role of Black players in Canadian hockey, from pre-NHL contributions to the game to the struggles against racism that continue to this day. Akim was also an Associate Producer on the film, alongside Executive Producers LeBron James, Drake, and Maverick Carter. *Black Ice* is a sobering survey of systemic marginalization within one of the world's most beloved team sports. *Black Ice* made its world premiere at TIFF 2022.