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# Attempted Hockey Puck Theft Foiled by Referees

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Last night, Alexander Ovechkin of the Washington Capitals scored his 900th NHL goal. He is the leading

goal scorer in NHL history — having broken the record last season — and is the only player ever to have reached the 900-goal plateau. Considering how accustomed we have become to Ovechkin scoring, what happened after his goal was far more surprising. St. Louis Blues goaltender Jordan Binnington — a decorated NHL veteran and Stanley Cup winner himself — took the puck and hid it in his pants. Binnington's intentions remain unclear. He has a history of angry outbursts on the ice; perhaps his frustration led him to take the puck. More likely, Binnington saw an opportunity to obtain possession of what will no doubt be one of the most treasured and valuable items of hockey memorabilia in recent memory.

Unfortunately for Binnington, the referees were immediately alerted to his attempted theft and demanded that Binnington hand over the puck, which he did. But this bizarre sequence of events is particularly interesting in terms of what it reveals about the current state of the sports memorabilia business.

In recent years, teams and leagues have tightened controls over game-worn and game-used memorabilia, implementing internal tracking, inventory systems, and licensing requirements. Indeed, the NBA has a partnership with MeiGray, a highly regarded sports memorabilia authentication and marketing company specializing in game-worn items. Similarly, the WNBA's Golden State Valkyries recently announced that MeiGray will be the team's exclusive game-worn partner, offering jerseys and other game-worn or game-used items from the team's inaugural season. Leagues now routinely have authentication specialists on hand at arenas, ready to label and tag items to verify authenticity and assure proper chain of custody. In today's environment, Binnington had a better chance at getting away with a heist at the Louvre than stealing Ovechkin's record-setting puck.

Washington Capitals star Alex Ovechkin made hockey history Wednesday night, becoming the first NHL player to score 900 career goals. Ovechkin was eventually given that record-setting puck -- once St. Louis Blues goalie Jordan Binnington stopped hiding it in his pants.

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