

2021 NHL Expansion Draft presented by Upper Deck

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Chris Fowler

Dominic Moore

GM Ron Francis

Coach Dave Hakstol

Jordan Eberle

Brandon Tanev

Jamie Oleksiak

Haydn Fleury

Mark Giordano

Chris Driedger

Seattle Kraken Media Conference



RON FRANCIS: There's so many things you're looking for. Teams get to protect their seven best forwards, their three best defense and their best goaltender. We get to look after that.

A little different environment this time around with COVID and the caps staying flat. Some different tweaks as it went along. But for us we're lucky; we want players with character and we want players who compete hard. You want guys who can skate and have skill in a hockey sense. We tried to build that kind of thing. And we're starting tonight with our first look at what our team is and we'll see what we end up when we get to October.

CHRIS FOWLER: Let's begin to fill in the draft board back here.

The podium is yours, Ron. This moment of Seattle Kraken history. The very first Expansion Draft pick. It's all yours.

We will announce these picks, by the way, by division beginning with the Atlantic in alphabetical order. First up will be the Boston Bruins.

RON FRANCIS: From the first Boston Bruins, the Seattle Kraken select Jeremy Lauzon.

DOMINIC MOORE: Jeremy Lauzon, you want a competitive player, that's what Lauzon is. He has size and reach and he's been a very effective player for Boston on the penalty kill. He has a rugged edge to his game, has played a key role defensively, blocking shots, making hits. And at just 24 he has a lot of potential still to grow into. So a great opening pick for the Kraken.

CHRIS FOWLER: You like to have guys who are unafraid to do the dirty work, blocking shots, hitting people.

Next up in alphabetical order, the Buffalo Sabres, who are on the clock, the only team picking ahead of the Kraken in Friday night's draft. A lot of turmoil there, a lot of new head coaches -- four in the last five years. Ten straight years, no playoffs. We'll see what the Sabres can offer here.

DOMINIC MOORE: You're rubbing it in here.

CHRIS FOWLER: Bringing out the man who is leading this Kraken braintrust and introducing these players, a Hall of Famer, No. 2 all time to Wayne Gretzky in assists, and the guy who has been extremely busy here, general manager Ron Francis.

RON FRANCIS: I talked to the mayor and the commissioner. The weather was perfect today. What a great event we have here.

CHRIS FOWLER: Tell us what's gone into the last few days of preparation, last few weeks, maybe. Have you slept? Is your phone battery charged down?

RON FRANCIS: I think we slept more than we thought going into it. But all our staff is sitting in the front row. Gotta give credit to them. They worked so hard the last year and a half. It wasn't the easiest situation with COVID but they did a tremendous job. We were well prepared going in and it went well for us.

CHRIS FOWLER: What's the challenge for this organization in putting together this first list of 30 original Seattle Kraken?



CHRIS FOWLER: Those are facts. To introduce the Sabres' pick, please welcome to the stage another absolute Seattle legend, a Hall of Famer as a player and a coach, led the superSonics to NBA title still calls Seattle home, Coach Lenny Wilkens.

What a scene here. I'm told that along your various stops coaching hoops you have become a passionate hockey fan as well.

LENNY WILKENS: See, you've got to know about Providence College. Providence College had great hockey teams and still do. And I used to bump with them once in a while on the ice. But just a little bit.

CHRIS FOWLER: I know you know about building a roster and building chemistry. So let's begin to unravel the pieces of this puzzle here. You have the announcement of the Buffalo Sabres' contribution to the Kraken.

LENNY WILKENS: I certainly do. And look at that crowd. I mean, isn't that unbelievable. You're going to do it. You're going to do it. But from the Buffalo Sabres, the Seattle Kraken select Will Borgen.

DOMINIC MOORE: I really like this pick. He's only played 14 NHL games, but he's a really gifted athlete and a strong skater. One of those guys who is a late bloomer, really developed quickly during his time at Saint Cloud State and we'll see what he can become. He's just 24 years old as well.

CHRIS FOWLER: So defense for the first two picks. Lenny, thank you.

Time to shift things to the Detroit Red Wings, Steve Yzerman, a very important summer, serious rebuilding job in Detroit a whole lot of holes to fill there. Bottom five in goal differential.

To help us reveal the pick from Detroit, a special guest from the Seattle aquarium why not bring out an octopus because Detroit fans made octopi famous by chucking them on the ice. This is Licorice. Licorice makes the aquarium home.

And Licorice will reveal the pick as it's never been done before. And the pick is -- Dennis Cholowski, who is a Vancouver-area native. He's coming much closer to home. That's three defensemen in three picks.

DOMINIC MOORE: The first three picks are all pretty similar. Another defenseman, where it's all about potential. Dennis has played only 16 NHL games last season, but

he's gifted offensively -- 27 points in 104 career NHL games, which is pretty respectable for a young "D" man.

Teams like Buffalo and Detroit, where there's no clear established player to take, I think you've got to go with guys like Cholowski and Borgen who have a lot of room to go.

CHRIS FOWLER: First-round pick five years ago. He's seen his opportunities decline. He'll have an opportunity here to contribute big time. And Kraken fans -- one of the yachts out there in the harbor -- you've got to love the spirit and the enthusiasm and the folks here. Nice sense of humor.

DOMINIC MOORE: You want those kind of tentacles on your decor, that's for sure.

CHRIS FOWLER: Speaking of folks who are in high spirits as they watch this whole thing unfold, the Angry Beaver, the hockey bar here -- we've got Avalanche fans, Maple Leafs fans, Flyers fans, Capital fans and we hope a lot of Kraken fans. Much more coming up with the 2021 Expansion Draft from Seattle.

Welcome back to Seattle and the sunshine. A celebratory party, as the folks here get look at the first 30 members of the 32nd NHL franchise, the Seattle Kraken, coming to you from Gas Works Park, just across the lake from downtown Seattle.

Three names on the draft board. A reminder, these are not the names in the order which Ron Francis and company selected them. They're put in the central register at the same time. We're revealing them now in alphabetical order by division here.

So next up, Florida. Trending the right way. Fourth most points. But the bad luck of running into Tampa in the playoffs. That spelled doom for them. And now we'll go back to Ron and see who the Panthers will contribute to the new franchise.

RON FRANCIS: From the Florida Panthers, the Seattle Kraken select Chris Driedger.

DOMINIC MOORE: Seattle Kraken, Chris Driedger.

CHRIS FOWLER: Chris, welcome. By the way, this is the big reveal, this is the brand new Kraken home jersey. How does that feel on and what do you think of this scene here, Chris?

CHRIS DRIEDGER

CHRIS DRIEDGER: A pretty incredible sight. Great to see everyone here. Tons of energy. I flew in this morning, and there was a buzz in the city. It's incredible. Really exciting time. I'm excited to get started.

CHRIS FOWLER: It's a long journey, Florida to Seattle, but welcome to your new home.

CHRIS DRIEDGER: Thanks for having me.

DOMINIC MOORE: It took a long time to kind of prove yourself and establish yourself as a proven NHL goalie. What does this moment mean to you to be part of this group?

CHRIS DRIEDGER: It's a life-changing moment for me for sure. It's been a long road. Spent a few years in the minors. And went from Florida for the last two seasons, but to have my start here with the expansion team in Seattle and be a part of the Kraken is pretty incredible. I'm really excited to get things started.

CHRIS FOWLER: Thanks for making the long journey in. Sit back and relax now; we'll watch the rest of the roster get filled out. Chris, wish you well.

Next up in the order, the Montreal Canadiens. Ron, the selection.

RON FRANCIS: From the Montreal Canadiens, the Seattle Kraken select Cale Fleury.

CHRIS FOWLER: Cale Fleury, a forward.

DOMINIC MOORE: Seems to be good luck to take a Fleury in the Expansion Draft. Fleury is a right-shot defenseman, showed some promise in juniors, in the AHL. And he actually played against his brother Haydn in his first NHL game in 2019. Seattle hoping he'll take the next step in his development here.

CHRIS FOWLER: Drafting a Fleury in the Expansion Draft, a very good move by Las Vegas four years ago. We'll see as Cale joins the team.

Ron, there are hockey fans around the world speculating that goaltender Carey Price might be a new member of the Kraken. He was out there available. What's going on behind the scenes in terms of the Price situation?

RON FRANCIS: I think anytime you see a name like Carey Price available you have to consider it. Certainly we did that. We had a lot of discussions, and at the end of the day we made a decision we did in going in a different direction.

CHRIS FOWLER: Well, we'll welcome Mr. Fleury to the roster. I think Habs fans are breathing a sigh of relief.

DOMINIC MOORE: You think about the salary-cap situation. It's really important to a new team to keep that flexibility. There are so many factors in building a team -- salary cap, the age of a player. This is a long-term thing. Obviously there's a lot of moving parts for Ron and his staff.

JORDAN EBERLE

CHRIS FOWLER: To announce or at least set up the pick, a Long Island native and a legend here, Sue Bird from the Seattle WNBA franchise, she's about to represent Team USA in Tokyo, her fifth Olympics. And she's going to be one of the flag bearers. She could not be with us in person, but, Sue, take it away.

SUE BIRD: Hi, everyone, I'm Sue Bird, the point guard for the Seattle Storm. I'm so sorry I couldn't be there for the Expansion Draft today, but you're definitely in good hands.

First of all, let's go Kraken. Second of all, Ron, tell us who your pick is from my hometown team, the New York Islanders.

RON FRANCIS: From the New York Islanders, the Seattle Kraken select Jordan Eberle. Please welcome the newest member of the Seattle Kraken, Jordan Eberle.

CHRIS FOWLER: Jordan, welcome. This is the debut of the new Kraken road jerseys, pretty sweet.

JORDAN EBERLE: Looks good.

CHRIS FOWLER: How does it feel to walk into this energy? It's got to be a unique experience for a player. You find you're on Long Island, now you're in the Pacific Northwest and seeing all your new fans.

JORDAN EBERLE: Yeah, it's an amazing turnout, everyone here in the boats. This is really the first time for me in Seattle other than junior. But to see the passion here, the fans, obviously very, very excited.

DOMINIC MOORE: Jordan, just wanted to ask you, too, you've been so close to that Stanley Cup the last two years. What excites you about this new challenge of the birth of a franchise here in Seattle?

JORDAN EBERLE: It's a new challenge, like you said. You don't get many opportunities to be part of a new franchise. And anytime you get an opportunity to bring a

cup to a city that's never had it before, it's pretty special.

CHRIS FOWLER: Jordan, you look sharp. Appreciate you being here. Get settled in and we'll continue to fill out the board and see who your teammates are. By the way, there's an Upper Deck draft card. Not a bad look. We'll need to get that uniform changed.

JORDAN EBERLE: Thank you.

BRANDON TANEV

CHRIS FOWLER: Next up, the Pittsburgh Penguins, We have to introduce an absolute legend to the stage to help us make this pick, a Hockey Hall of Famer, an Olympic gold medalist, a gold medalist in the World Championships, part of the esteemed Granato hockey clan and a scout for the Seattle Kraken, Cammi Granato. Cammi, welcome.

We appreciate you taking the time. This has to be an incredibly busy last couple of weeks. The Kraken, the number two pick on Friday night, so the whole scouting staff hard at work still.

CAMMI GRANATO: It was pretty great the last couple of weeks because we knew it was so close and we worked a couple of years on this. This day has come. It's pretty amazing to look out at the crowd and really proud to be part of it.

CHRIS FOWLER: You're also a pioneer, there are no other female full-time scouts in professional sports. So, congratulations to the Kraken organization and to you for earning that right.

CAMMI GRANATO: Thank you very much. I hope there's more to come after this.

CHRIS FOWLER: I think it's symbolic what Ron and the brain trust has done is assemble a really interesting core group of people to evaluate players. There's a lot of diverse backgrounds, a lot of young people who crunch those numbers you've been talking about. It's an interesting group.

CAMMI GRANATO: It is. And I think that's the thing ownership and Ron and all our staff has done to keep diversity and inclusion in mind from the beginning. It's laid such a strong foundation for our team. I feel privileged to be a part of such a strong organization already.

CHRIS FOWLER: Announce the contribution from the Pittsburgh Penguins.

CAMMI GRANATO: From the Pittsburgh Penguins, the

Seattle Kraken select Brandon Tanev. Brandon is here with us today. Brandon?

CHRIS FOWLER: Welcome, say hello to Cammi.

BRANDON TANEV: Cammi, how are you? What's going on, Kraken fans?

[Cheers]

CHRIS FOWLER: Knows how to play to the crowd. Not afraid to do the dirty work in hockey. What is it about throwing your body in front of a flying puck that you like?

BRANDON TANEV: It's not a glamorous job, but anything that the team asks is what you want to go out there and do. The guys appreciate it in the locker room. It's not the best thing in the world, but it's fun to get something done for the fans and for the boys out there.

DOMINIC MOORE: Brandon, I promise you, this guy will be one of your fan favorites. He hits everything that moves.

CHRIS FOWLER: You're going to have, speaking of that, potential run-ins with your older brother, Christopher, in this division. He plays for Calgary. Did you talk already with him? Did you share the secret with him?

BRANDON TANEV: I didn't share the secret with him. I was going to wait for him to see it on the air. But it's going to be fun. It's going to be exciting for our family and a special thing to play against him.

[Laughter]

I see you're all laughing at my headshot from last year. I appreciate that.

CHRIS FOWLER: What happened just before the picture was taken?

BRANDON TANEV: To be honest with you, I saw a ghost. That's the story I'm going with, and I'm sticking with that one all the way.

CHRIS FOWLER: Was that your reaction when you heard about the Kraken selection? (Laughter).

All right, you're a good sport. We appreciate that. And have a great career here. Enjoy yourself. We appreciate it.

BRANDON TANEV: Thanks, guys. Let's go, Kraken!

CHRIS FOWLER: Brandon, Cammi, thank you.

JAMIE OLEKSIK

CHRIS FOWLER: From 10,000 feet, the highest altitude pick ever announced, let's go to Andrew Hughes.

ANDREW HUGHES: From the Dallas Stars, in the 2021 NHL Expansion Draft, the Seattle Kraken pick Jamie Oleksiak.

CHRIS FOWLER: Let's welcome Jamie Oleksiak, wearing his Kraken home jersey. Jamie, welcome.

JAMIE OLEKSIK: Thank you.

CHRIS FOWLER: How does it feel to wear a brand new jersey and walk out and see new fans who are giving you a standing ovation? I think it's a holdover from Gary and Shawn. They're on their feet for you.

JAMIE OLEKSIK: First off, how are we doing, Seattle? I'm loving the energy. I'm excited to get the season going. I'm sure the building is going to be rocking. And it's great to be here. Beautiful day here. And just taking in the whole atmosphere. So, I'm happy to be here.

DOMINIC MOORE: Jamie, you signed a new contract with the Kraken. What made you decide to want to choose to be here for the next few years?

JAMIE OLEKSIK: You know, I think it was just too good of an opportunity to pass up on. Talking to Ron and everyone in the front office -- the city's fantastic, the facilities and the direction of the team. And obviously the fans. I mean, it's a lot of support here and I'm just excited to get it going, like I said. It was really a no-brainer for me. And I'm excited.

CHRIS FOWLER: You're joining a defensive corps up here. Do players' wheels begin to turn immediately? Do you look at some of the guys up there and begin to think about defensive tandems or are you just here and so far enjoying the party and the scene?

JAMIE OLEKSIK: Right now I'm just soaking it all in. A great list of guys here. I can't wait to meet them all. I think it's a new team that offers a lot of opportunities for guys. And I think it's going to be a lot of fun getting to know these guys and being in training camp and whatnot. And, like I said, it's exciting time to be a Kraken fan, I think.

DOMINIC MOORE: We just saw some big guys leave the stage. Jamie is actually officially the heaviest player in the entire National Hockey League. Welcome to the Kraken.

CHRIS FOWLER: But it's not fat, right?

DOMINIC MOORE: It's pure muscle.

JAMIE OLEKSIK: I'll take that.

CHRIS FOWLER: Jamie, thank you very much. We appreciate that. Good luck to you. Folks, Jamie Oleksiak.

DAVE HAKSTOL

CHRIS FOWLER: Let's bring in the coach, Dave Hakstol. Dave, what's your reaction to all this?

DAVE HAKSTOL: Unbelievable, isn't it? Awesome. Let's go, Kraken.

CHRIS FOWLER: You're obviously not caught by surprise. You're well aware of the picks that are made. So, what is your initial message to this group of guys when you get them together about the opportunity for them and the expectations for them?

DAVE HAKSTOL: I think we all know and understand real quickly, as soon as you enter the city of Seattle and get a feel for everything that's going on here, you understand the outstanding opportunity that's here. The message is this: Let's come together; let's play hard for one another; and let's play hard for the city of Seattle.

DOMINIC MOORE: And, Coach, you've got a blank slate, a really unique opportunity here. And there's a lot of talk about culture and identity. What are some of the key messages that cultures things that you'll preach to the players early on?

DAVE HAKSTOL: It's one of the things I just talked about. We want to have a group of guys that know what it is to be a great teammate, know what it is to be a competitive teammate and push one another to be at their very best. We want to have a bunch of selfless guys in our locker room that know how to go out, play hard together and win together.

DOMINIC MOORE: It's certainly unmistakable the character and quality that's on that board already. Good luck.

DAVE HAKSTOL: No question. Thank you.

CHRIS FOWLER: A unique challenge and opportunity for a player and also for a coach. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.



DAVE HAKSTOL: It is. We talked about the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of starting from the ground up and to be a small part of that, to have an opportunity to join everybody that has done so much work over the past couple of years, it's just an awesome opportunity and today to see this board fill up really brings it into focus for all of us. Can't wait to get going.

CHRIS FOWLER: Opener August 12th in Vegas. And then these folks will have the building rocking when the Canucks come down from north on October 23rd.

DAVE HAKSTOL: It's going to be special.

CHRIS FOWLER: Dave Hakstol coach of the Seattle Kraken, likes what he sees so far.

HAYDN FLEURY

CHRIS FOWLER: Time now for the pick from the Anaheim Mighty Ducks. Off a very rough season, last in the West, second worst in the league. And the third straight year they've missed the playoffs. Fewest goals per game.

They've got young talent to develop. They're in a rebuilding phase, but maybe not a whole bunch of guys to choose from. So we will find out.

We're going to bring in the special guest from the Anchorage Alaska Hockey Academy. The Kraken are openly courting fans from all over the place, and folks up in Alaska are invited to become fans of this new franchise. Let's hear from some of these folks.

RON FRANCIS: From the Anaheim Ducks, the Seattle Kraken select Haydn Fleury.

CHRIS FOWLER: Another Fleury. You'll notice, folks, there are now two Fleurys up there. They happen to be brothers. What was your reaction, realize you were going to be playing with him? When was the last time you guys played together on the same team?

HAYDN FLEURY: I think we were probably five and three years old. So, hometown back in Saskatchewan. Really exciting day for my family, my mom and dad and my brother.

DOMINIC MOORE: You have some familiarity with Ron. And what does that mean to you coming to this franchise, knowing you have someone that drafted you back in Carolina?

HAYDN FLEURY: It means a lot. He believed in me back when I was 18. And he continues to do that to this day.

So I'm really thankful for everything he's done for me in my hockey career. And just prove him right.

CHRIS FOWLER: Talk about opportunity. It's not always easy to find. You're going to have a massive opportunity and expectations here as well to contribute right away.

HAYDN FLEURY: Yes, I think the trade to Anaheim helped me a lot. I think I got to play the way I think I can play. And just continue that here in Seattle in front of the best fans of the NHL.

CHRIS FOWLER: What's the first thing you tell Cale when you guys get on the phone about being brand new teammates?

HAYDN FLEURY: He Facetimed me this morning. He said (indiscernible) called him and said he's a Kraken. And he instantly called my parents and brought them into the call. And it was a really special day.

My mom, I think, was crying. I don't know; I couldn't see her. But it was a really exciting day. And I just couldn't be more proud of him. And just ready for him to be my teammate.

CHRIS FOWLER: If you haven't played together since you were five and three, I'd say it's about time. Wish you the best. Good luck to both Fleury brothers here with the Seattle Kraken. It's a cool story. I don't know if there's two other set of brothers on a team. We'll have to look it up.

MARK GIORDANO

>> The Seattle Kraken select Mark Giordano.

CHRIS FOWLER: Fans just got to their feet with that announcement.

DOMINIC MOORE: A standing ovation, well deserved.

Mark Giordano, you want to talk about adding character and leadership for the birth of a franchise, who better to add than one of the best leaders in the league, Mark Giordano, former winner of the Norris Trophy for the best defenseman in the league. Folks, a really exciting addition here today.

CHRIS FOWLER: Let's bring him out. Mark Giordano, new member of the Seattle Kraken.

You've had an incredible tenure in Calgary, one of the longest tenures at a single franchise in the league. Is it a bit of a surreal experience to walk out here and see folks in blue jerseys and not red and think of Seattle as your new

home?

MARK GIORDANO: I'm not going to lie. It feels a little bit different today. But it's been a crazy last day or so. But, hey, this is the first time in my career I've ever been drafted. So thank you to the Kraken, and I'm happy to be here.

DOMINIC MOORE: Mark's referring to the fact that he was never drafted. He earned his way as a free agent into this league and had to earn everything he got. And that chip on his shoulder has carried you along way.

I know how well you take care of yourself. Now at the age you're at in your career, is this an invigorating time to be part of a new franchise like this?

MARK GIORDANO: Yeah, like I said, it was a little bit weird yesterday knowing that I wasn't going to go back to Calgary. But coming into this city, driving in, this is my first time here. It's a beautiful city. And you could feel the buzz. So I'm ready to go. And, yeah, I feel great.

CHRIS FOWLER: We talked about the newness of the experience for all the players. They're going to be looking to a guy like you. You've been a captain seven or eight years up there. So leadership is at a premium and building that kind of chemistry. What do you think your message will be to younger teammates who come seek you out sort of for that role here in Seattle?

MARK GIORDANO: Just offer them any advice I can really give them as an older guy who has been around for a long time. I think, as you guys see, we have a fairly young team. A lot of young talent. But that's the NHL now. So many guys who are superstars in our league are under the age of 25. So looking forward to helping out as much as I can.

CHRIS FOWLER: Amazing. Take care of yourself. 37 with a whole lot more years to go and a brand new home after a 15-year run at Calgary. Mark Giordano, welcome to Seattle.

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