

# 2023 NHL Draft

Wednesday, June 28, 2023

Nashville, Tennessee

## William Smith

Press Conference



### Q. How does it feel?

WILLIAM SMITH: It's unbelievable. Trying to kind of soak it in right now. Just can't wait to see my family and celebrate with them.

### Q. Does it feel like -- with all your connections, did you feel like this was right, or fate, or whatever you want to call it?

WILLIAM SMITH: A little bit. People kind of started to catch on as the draft here went on the connection I had, so it's a little bit of a Boston reunion here, so it's nice.

### Q. When did you get a feel you'd be in the top five of this draft?

WILLIAM SMITH: I mean, probably after worlds when the season was over. You can't really do any more. After that you probably get a feel.

### Q. Do you have any thoughts on the Sharks, the team that they have right now?

WILLIAM SMITH: Yeah, I mean, I can't wait just to go to development camp. I already met a legend, Patrick Marlowe, so it was pretty cool to meet him.

### Q. (Indiscernible).

WILLIAM SMITH: Yeah, it was pretty good. Definitely saw him at the combine, and then they took me out to dinner. It was one of my favorites. Probably was my favorite. They're great guys, lots of laughs and good stories.

### Q. Where did they take you?

WILLIAM SMITH: Buffalo Chop House.

### Q. What did you get?

WILLIAM SMITH: A steak. I had to. Everyone ordered steak.

### Q. What attributes of your game are you looking forward to showcasing most with this organization?

WILLIAM SMITH: I think my play making. I think that's what kind of makes my game is my vision and my hockey sense. I think that's really when I'm at my best.

### Q. How nerve-racking were those first picks?

WILLIAM SMITH: Yeah, probably when Anaheim got up there, everyone started to get a little tense, but on the walk up I tried to just soak it all in and enjoy it.

### Q. What's it feel like to be drafted by a bunch of BU alum?

WILLIAM SMITH: They mentioned it on stage, but no, I think they know Coach Brown, so it's all fun.

### Q. How much are you looking forward -- all this stuff in the NHL, and then you've got to go to BC in the fall. Do you even think about that yet or is that in the distant future?

WILLIAM SMITH: Right now it's distant. I'm just trying to enjoy this, and once I get out to San Jose and enjoy it there, probably school will come into the near future.

### Q. What did your dad say when you embraced him?

WILLIAM SMITH: I think honestly, I'm pretty sure he said, I'm so proud of you and I love you, and it was pretty special.

### Q. (On his grandfather).

WILLIAM SMITH: Definitely. I had one of his last business cards in my jacket, so he can't be here, but I know he's watching.

### Q. What do you think he would say?

WILLIAM SMITH: I mean, he'd just be so proud. He loved hockey. He loved come watching me, and special man.

**Q. One of the things that Mike Grier said about you yesterday was he talked about your competitive fire to be the best at practice and on the ice.**

WILLIAM SMITH: Yeah, 100 percent. I hate to lose, and I don't really care if it's practice or especially the games. I think I don't really forget things. I love to compete, and yeah, I just love to win.

**Q. What did you have in your suit tonight?**

WILLIAM SMITH: I had my San Sebastian's logo and the U.S. logo, Celtic cross for my grandfather, and then my Lexington logo where I grew up was also in there, and Boston College.

**Q. Pretty cool Ryan Leonard going eighth overall. Are you guys pretty close?**

WILLIAM SMITH: Did he?

**Q. Yeah. How fun of a night is that for you?**

WILLIAM SMITH: I didn't know that. Wow, that's unbelievable. I wanted to see him get picked live. He's one of my best friends. I lived with him for two years. Known him for so long. That's unbelievable, and I just can't wait to see him.

**Q. Sharks were perennial playoff team for a decade and a half. William Eklund is a high-end prospect that they have recently gotten and now yourself. How exciting is the prospect of turning around this franchise?**

WILLIAM SMITH: I mean, you said it yourself, it is exciting. I can't wait to just get to be with the staff and kind of talk about the future. I can't wait to get there.

**Q. I assume you grew up watching Bruins?**

WILLIAM SMITH: 100 percent, yeah.

**Q. What do you recall from that?**

WILLIAM SMITH: Obviously Thornton started in Boston, he went there, and he obviously had a legacy in San Jose, so I remember their Cup run and everything like that. It was pretty cool meeting him.

**Q. (Indiscernible).**

WILLIAM SMITH: Yeah, I went to school with Jaden. I played with him. Also Mr. Grier coached there, too, so I missed them by a couple years, but obviously I see them

around the rinks all the time.

**Q. What do you want to show off at development camp that maybe guys haven't seen?**

WILLIAM SMITH: Yeah, my play making, my 200-foot play is what I want to hone in on and show the most.

**Q. (Indiscernible).**

WILLIAM SMITH: I mean, my favorite player on the Bruins was Bergeron. I grew up watching him and all those guys. He's a center and I'm a center, so I try to take tips from him and watch him.

**Q. The Sharks have two great centers, Tomas Hertl and Logan Couture. Have you watched them through the years, and what do you think you can learn from two great centers like that?**

WILLIAM SMITH: Yeah, I mean, getting to meet them will be pretty cool, and getting to learn from them will be unbelievable, too. I remember his four-goal game against the Rangers, and obviously Couture is unbelievable, too, so I can't wait to just meet them.

**Q. Who do you model your game after?**

WILLIAM SMITH: I try to model my game after Jack Hughes. I really like his playing. Ever since he was at the U.S. program, I've love to watch him.

**Q. Do you remember the first time someone approached you and said this was going to be a reality?**

WILLIAM SMITH: I'd say around the peewee Quebec tournament when I was 12 or 13 is when it really kind of set in that this was going to be my life.

**Q. Did someone mention it to you?**

WILLIAM SMITH: Maybe my dad's buddy or something like that said something. I don't know, some funny comment or something like that, but now that it's actually happened, it's pretty crazy.

**Q. Outside of the front office management, Grier, Fitzgerald, who do you have the longest relationship with?**

WILLIAM SMITH: Longest relationship? I would have to say Grier. I know Mr. Pastrale (phonetic), too. I can't wait to meet Coach Quinn more, but yeah, Mr. Grier.

**Q. You mentioned the business card --**

WILLIAM SMITH: It was my grandfather's.

**Q. What was his name?**

WILLIAM SMITH: Bill Smith II.

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