

history of the seattle kraken

History of the Seattle Kraken

The Seattle Kraken are a professional ice hockey team based in Seattle, Washington, that competes in the National Hockey League (NHL). Established as the NHL's 32nd franchise, the Kraken have quickly become a significant part of the Seattle sports landscape, fostering a passionate fan base and bringing hockey back to a city that once had the Seattle Metropolitans in the early 20th century. This article delves into the history of the Seattle Kraken, from their inception to their current status in the NHL.

Origins and Formation

The journey to the establishment of the Seattle Kraken began long before the official announcement of the franchise. The city of Seattle has a rich hockey history, dating back to the early 1900s, but it had been devoid of a professional hockey team since the Metropolitans disbanded in 1924 after winning the Stanley Cup in 1917. The emergence of the Kraken can be traced back to several key factors:

1. **NHL Expansion:** In the early 2010s, the NHL began to explore options for expansion. Cities like Las Vegas and Seattle were considered prime candidates due to their growing populations and potential fan bases.

2. **Ownership Group:** In 2018, billionaire David

Bonderman, along with co-owner Jerry Bruckheimer and a group of investors, formed the Oak View Group, which aimed to renovate the Climate Pledge Arena and bring NHL hockey back to Seattle.

3. Successful Bid: In December 2018, the NHL awarded the franchise to Seattle, with plans to begin play in the 2021-2022 season. The Kraken became the first NHL team in the Pacific Northwest since the Metropolitans.

Team Name and Branding

Choosing a name and branding identity for a new franchise is crucial in capturing the spirit of the city and its fans. The name "Kraken" was announced in July 2020, inspired by the mythical sea creature from Scandinavian folklore. This name choice resonated with Seattle's maritime heritage and the city's connection to the Pacific Ocean.

Logo and Colors

The Kraken's logo and color scheme were also

significant in defining the team's identity.

- **Logo:** The primary logo features an "S" intertwined with a tentacle, symbolizing the mythical Kraken. This design pays homage to Seattle's history while also embracing its roots in the maritime culture.

- **Colors:** The team's colors are deep sea blue, ice blue, and red, which reflect the aquatic theme and the city's vibrant culture. These colors were carefully chosen to represent the Pacific Northwest and to stand out in the NHL.

Building the Team

With the franchise name and branding established, the next step was to build a competitive team. The expansion draft, held in July 2021, was a pivotal moment for the Kraken as they selected players from other NHL teams to form their roster.

Expansion Draft Strategy

- **Selection Process:** Each NHL team was allowed

to protect a certain number of players, while the Kraken could select from the unprotected players. This allowed Seattle to strategically build a diverse and talented roster.

- **Key Selections:** The Kraken made several notable selections, including:
- Jordan Eberle from the New York Islanders
- Mark Giordano from the Calgary Flames
- Vince Dunn from the St. Louis Blues

These players brought a mix of experience and skill, setting the foundation for the team's inaugural season.

Coaching Staff and Management

To lead the team, the Kraken appointed Ron Francis as the General Manager, a two-time Stanley Cup champion and former player. Francis's experience and vision were crucial in shaping the team's identity. Additionally, Dave Hakstol was named the head coach, bringing his own coaching experience from the NHL and college hockey.

Inaugural Season (2021-2022)

The Seattle Kraken officially began their first season on October 12, 2021, against the Las Vegas Golden Knights. The opening game was held at T-Mobile Arena, and the Kraken lost 4-3 in an exciting match. The team played its home opener at the newly renovated Climate Pledge Arena on October 23, 2021, against the Vancouver Canucks, which was a momentous occasion for the franchise.

Season Performance

Throughout their inaugural season, the Kraken faced challenges typical for an expansion team. Here are some highlights:

- Overall Record: The Kraken finished the season with a record of 27 wins, 49 losses, and 6 overtime losses, placing them at the bottom of the Pacific Division.
- Standout Players: Despite the struggles, several players stood out, including:
 - Jaden Schwartz: The forward contributed significantly to the team's scoring.
 - Philipp Grubauer: The goaltender was pivotal in many games, showcasing his skills despite the team's overall performance.

Fan Engagement and Community Impact

From the very beginning, the Kraken made it a priority to engage with the community and build a dedicated fan base. The franchise implemented several initiatives:

- Community Programs:** The Kraken launched programs aimed at increasing youth participation in hockey and supporting local charities.
- Fan Events:** The team hosted various fan events, including watch parties and meet-and-greets, to foster a sense of community and connection with the fans.
- Merchandising:** The Kraken quickly became a popular brand, with merchandise flying off the shelves and fans proudly wearing their team colors.

Looking Ahead: The Future of the Kraken

As the Seattle Kraken continue to grow and develop, the focus is shifting toward building a competitive team that can contend for the

Stanley Cup. With a solid foundation, there are several key areas to consider for the future:

Player Development

Investing in player development will be essential for the Kraken's success. This includes:

- Prospect Pool:** The team has focused on drafting talented prospects and developing them through their farm team, the Charlotte Checkers, in the American Hockey League (AHL).
- Scouting:** Enhancing the scouting department to identify potential talent will be crucial in building a strong roster.

Fan Experience and Engagement

To maintain and grow their fan base, the Kraken must continue to prioritize fan engagement:

- Game Day Experience:** Enhancing the in-arena experience at Climate Pledge Arena will keep fans excited and engaged.

- **Digital Engagement:** Utilizing social media and digital platforms to connect with fans will be vital for maintaining interest and building a loyal following.

Conclusion

The Seattle Kraken have embarked on an exciting journey in the NHL, revitalizing the hockey scene in Seattle and capturing the hearts of fans. From their inception and branding to their inaugural season and future aspirations, the Kraken are poised to become a competitive force in the league. As they continue to develop their roster and engage with the community, the Kraken will undoubtedly become an integral part of Seattle's sports culture for years to come.

Frequently Asked Questions

When was the Seattle Kraken officially announced as an NHL expansion team?

The Seattle Kraken were officially announced as the NHL's 32nd franchise on December 4, 2018.

What was the significance of the name 'Kraken' for the Seattle NHL team?

The name 'Kraken' was chosen to reflect the city's maritime heritage and the mythical sea creature from folklore, symbolizing strength and mystery.

When did the Seattle Kraken play their first NHL game?

The Seattle Kraken played their first NHL game on October 12, 2021, against the Vegas Golden Knights.

What is the home arena of the Seattle Kraken?

The Seattle Kraken play their home games at Climate Pledge Arena, which underwent significant renovations before their inaugural season.

How did the Seattle Kraken perform in their inaugural season?

In their inaugural season (2021-2022), the Seattle Kraken finished with a record of 27 wins, 49 losses, and 6 overtime losses, missing

the playoffs.

Who was the first head coach of the Seattle Kraken?

Dave Hakstol was named the first head coach of the Seattle Kraken, taking the helm before their inaugural season.

What unique features does Climate Pledge Arena have to promote sustainability?

Climate Pledge Arena is designed with sustainability in mind, featuring a zero-carbon footprint, renewable energy sources, and a commitment to reducing waste.

How did the Seattle Kraken's fanbase contribute to the team's identity?

The Seattle Kraken's fanbase, known for their passionate support, has played a crucial role in building the team's identity, with vibrant displays, community involvement, and a commitment to creating an electric atmosphere at games.

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