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Seattle Kraken Rise From the Sea

Ben Wiley, Author

The Seattle Kraken are set to take the ice for the first time during the 2021-22 season after their owners recently submitted the team's final expansion payment to the National Hockey League (NHL).

The Kraken ownership group, Seattle Hockey Partners, consists of majority owner David Bonderman, group CEO Tod Leiweke and famous film producer Jerry Bruckheimer. On April 30, they paid \$650 million to the NHL to officially become the league's 32nd team, making them the newest franchise within the NHL.

This marks the final step in the team's three year formation journey, which began in 2018 when the NHL accepted Seattle Hockey Partners' proposal to bring a hockey team to Seattle.

Then, in July 2020, after an extensive process that involved many potential team names submitted by fans, the expansion team's owners revealed "Kraken" as the new team's name, along with the corresponding logo/branding. The team will play at the newly renovated Climate Pledge Arena, formerly known as Key Arena, when it reopens for hockey season in the fall.

After the payment became official, Bonderman tweeted a celebratory statement.

"Today is another momentous day on the journey to puck drop. I would like to thank Gary Bettman and the NHL for welcoming us to the league. I also want to thank my partners in the ownership group for their support and our incredible fans...We have an incredible few months ahead of us as we prepare to welcome our inaugural players and finally take to the ice at Climate Pledge Arena," Bonderman said.

The Kraken will be entering an untapped market as the first professional hockey team in Seattle this century. The Seattle Metropolitans competed for the Stanley Cup three times between 1916-17 and 1919-20, winning it in 1917 and tying for the Cup in 1919. They became the first American team to ever win the Stanley Cup. Currently, the Seattle Thunderbirds, based in Kent, Wash., play in the amateur Western Hockey League (WHL). With the WHL being a step below the NHL, many of its players have gone on to be drafted by teams in the NHL.

Mazvita Maraire, a Seattle University alum and sportswriter, noted that the Kraken will bring revenue to the city, bolstered by concerts and other events at the new arena. He also expressed his excitement about the Kraken officially becoming an NHL team.

"I think it's great as the Kraken adds another professional franchise to the city of Seattle and gives fans another entertainment option. Hockey is a different type of game as the flow is exciting. Fans love its speed and pace. All the [Kraken] tickets are sold out already. It's an exciting time to be a fan in Seattle," Maraire said.



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