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The Seattle Kraken: Fostering a Hockey Culture for All

McKenna White, Volunteer Reporter

The 2021-2022 NHL season marks the inaugural year for the Seattle Kraken. Under Head Coach Dave Hakstok, the Kraken are currently eighth in the Pacific Division with 16 wins, 33 losses and five losses in overtime.

While the team is new, the relationship between Seattle and hockey goes back over a century. In 1917, the Seattle Metropolitans won the Stanley Cup, making them the first American-based hockey team to win the Cup. After the Metropolitans folded, Seattle hosted a number of hockey teams including the Eskimos, the Sea Hawks, the Olympics, the Ironmen, the Bombers, the Totems, the Breakers and the Thunderbirds. The Kraken are the most recent in the rich history of hockey in Seattle.

The Kraken, in partnership with Climate Pledge Arena, respects the arena's historic value, maintaining the original roof that was built for the 1962 Seattle World's Fair. The roof and the side windows have been saved from the original structure. The new arena opened in Oct. 2020, adding much-needed expanded space.



Jake Nelson

Larry West, a privately contracted employee for Allied Universal, has been working events at Climate Pledge Arena since before the remodel.

“It’s been an adjustment. I’m used to working football games, but hockey isn’t bad. [The arena] was pretty tight before, but they dug down and expanded seating,” West said. “The new facility is great. This is a lot better.”

The name Climate Pledge Arena references the pledge to net-zero carbon emissions by 2040 taken by 217 businesses including Amazon in partnership with Global Optimism. The arena has a continued relationship with Amazon, providing Just Walk Out technology which enables a customer to purchase food without physically paying by linking their Amazon One ID. While the new technology is exciting to some, others are unsure about the influence Amazon has over the Climate Pledge Arena experience.



Jake Nelson

“[The arena] is nice. It’s great, I like it more than Key Arena, but also, you need to have an Amazon pass to buy anything,” Jared Nakata, a University of Washington graduate, said. “You have to have Amazon Go. It’s a privilege.”

The Kraken’s first season has been trying. There is already speculation that Hakstok will be fired as the Kraken are currently last in the Pacific Division. Last Thursday, the Kraken lost once again to the Boston Bruins 2-3 in overtime. After an early lead with Mark Giordano scoring at the beginning of the first period, the Bruins tied the game and took the lead in the second period. The Kraken tied it back up in the third period, but couldn’t hold on as the Bruin’s Jake DeBrusk scored his second goal of the night 33 seconds into overtime.

Win or lose, fans on both sides were brought together through a shared love for the game.

Mary Thompson, a teacher in Vancouver, Wash., grew up in New England and has been a lifelong Bruins fan. The game marked her first time in Seattle and in Climate Pledge Arena as well as her daughter’s first time at an NHL game.

“I grew up around hockey. I never played, but it was a big part of my childhood,” Thompson said. “Now, I get to bring my kids to the games.”

Even though this is the Kraken’s first year, they have already developed a loyal and diverse fanbase. In honor of Black History Month, the Kraken used the Bruins game as an opportunity to highlight Black voices both on and off the ice. They partnered with RC Johnson, a local artist, to redesign the team’s logo for limited-edition Black History Month merchandise. The new logo pays homage to the Metropolitans, but the green, red, yellow and black color scheme draws on the Pan-African flag. The Kraken also boasts the first all-Black broadcasting team to call an NHL game with J.T. Brown and Everett Fitzhugh.



“Hockey should represent the world that we live in,” Corporate Communications Manager De’Aira Anderson said. “It is so diverse and colorful.”

The remodel has expanded Climate Pledge Arena’s potential as a venue while continuing to respect the arena’s historic past. This is a common theme as the Kraken shapes the bond between Seattle and hockey while paying tribute to the sport’s rich history. Both the arena and the team are appreciating the past while looking to the future.