



NEWS RELEASE

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***Seattle Pride Classic presented by Symetra* brings inclusion and diversity to center ice for a weekend of hockey and LGBTQ+ pride**

Second annual event on June 18 & 19 aims to grow the game, create the most inclusive pride hockey tournament in the country

SEATTLE | Thursday, June 9, 2022 — Following a successful inaugural event in 2021, the Seattle Pride Hockey Association (SPHA) is hosting the *Seattle Pride Classic presented by Symetra* on June 18 and 19 at the Kraken Community Iceplex. The ten-team hockey tournament will showcase over 140 LGBTQ+ and allied hockey players participating over two days at the home of the NHL's 32nd franchise, the Seattle Kraken. Organizers hope to create a model for other sports events and organizations, create opportunities for LGBTQ+ athletes, and build a sense of community within the hockey world for participants and supporters. Spectators are welcome with free admission to attend the two-day event, and to be a part of the celebration of pride and hockey.

"We were blown away by the response from our inaugural event in 2021, and knew that we had to come out bigger and bolder in 2022," said Steven Thompson, SPHA president & co-founder. "Players told us that in their lifetime they never imagined skating in a LGBTQ+ hockey tournament with teams named after gay rights activists. We're proud to have created something special for the hockey community here, and have definitely amped things up for our second annual Seattle Pride Classic," added Thompson.

Around two-thirds of the participants registered for this year's event identify as LGBTQ+. 20% of players in the event identify as non-binary or trans and one-third identify as female, with the remaining 50% identifying as male. Continuing the tradition of the inaugural event, the tournament's ten teams are named for trailblazers and queer icons, including Harvey Milk, Marsha P. Johnson, Sue Bird, Billie Jean King, and Nashville Predators prospect Luke Prokop, the first player under contract with a NHL team to come out as gay. SPHA and the NHL have a shared vision that "Hockey Is For Everyone", and are working to build a community that welcomes and celebrates authenticity and the love of hockey.

"This event is a great example of everyone coming together to show their support for the LGBTQ+ community and mutual love for the game," said Jeff Scott, NHL VP of Community Development & Growth. "We're thrilled to be involved and look forward to a great weekend in Seattle."

Several special guests from around the hockey community are showing their support as part of the *Seattle Pride Classic presented by Symetra*. Both outspoken supporters of the LGBTQ+ community, former NHL defenseman Andrew Ference (2011 Stanley Cup Champion with the Boston Bruins) and current pro hockey player Kurtis Gabriel (Chicago Blackhawks, Rockford IceHogs) will participate throughout the weekend. Ference and Gabriel will both skate in the All Stars of Pride Game on Sunday, June 19 at 2:00PM, the final game of the weekend and a new addition to this year's event. The celebration game will feature players from across the ten tournament teams. Everett Fitzhugh (Seattle Kraken radio broadcaster) and Tom Helm (Seattle Thunderbirds public address announcer) will be on the mic announcing the tournament's championship games alongside Trinity Parker from Symetra. Symetra is the first founding partner of the Seattle Pride Hockey Association and was the presenting sponsor for the first-ever Seattle Pride Classic in 2021.

"Symetra is thrilled to be part of the Seattle Pride Classic once again and to support SPHA's vision to host the most inclusive pride hockey tournament in the country," said Trinity Parker, SVP, chief marketing officer. "Diversity, equity, and inclusion are deeply held core values at Symetra. We're committed to allyship and to promoting accessibility, which is why when we heard about the tournament last year, we knew we had to be part of it. Bringing people together and letting the community know that hockey is for everyone is so important. What an amazing opportunity to celebrate inclusivity, to celebrate diversity and to celebrate Pride!"

The tournament is divided into two conferences, and the championship trophies — the Symetra Cup and the Empowers Cup — will be presented to the winners of both conferences. The Seattle Kraken will be painting a rainbow on the Kraken Community Iceplex's Starbucks Rink, the practice ice for the NHL's 32nd franchise. This is among the first — if not the first-ever — professional rink in the country to paint their ice surface with rainbow colors to celebrate Pride.

"We're proud that the Seattle Pride Classic is being held not only in the community but on our home ice at Kraken Community Iceplex," said De'Aira Anderson, Seattle Kraken communications manager. "We are looking forward to the weekend and couldn't be more excited to support the SPHA again this year."

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About Seattle Pride Hockey Association

The Seattle Pride Hockey Association (SPHA) is a 501(c)(7) nonprofit organization on a mission to grow the sport of ice hockey through diversity and inclusion. SPHA welcomes players, fans, and anyone with an open mind and a love for hockey who wants to be part of it. SPHA hosts events and tournaments throughout the Greater Seattle area, and works with the National Hockey League and Seattle Kraken to ensure that hockey is for everyone. Learn more at seattlepridehockey.org.

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