



NEWS RELEASE

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SEATTLE PRIDE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION ELEVATES LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVITY WITH LAUNCH OF NEW LEAGUE AND TRAINING SERIES

SEATTLE | Friday, April 5, 2024 – Seattle Pride Hockey Association (SPHA) continues to pioneer inclusivity and community engagement within the LGBTQ+ ice hockey community in the Seattle region. Supported by the National Hockey League (NHL) and the Seattle Kraken, SPHA's initiatives are set to reach a broader audience in 2024.

The latest milestone in SPHA's journey is the creation of the **Seattle Pride Hockey League**, launching on Saturday, April 6, at Sno-King Ice Arena in Kirkland. This groundbreaking league aims to foster an inclusive environment for all hockey players, with nearly 80% of participants representing the LGBTQ+ community. The new league includes four (4) teams and 70 players spanning an 18-game season. Generous support from the NHL's *Community Growth Initiative* helped fuel the league's inception.

"Our friends at the National Hockey League were a key driver for the launch of the Seattle Pride Hockey League," said Joey Gale, Vice President and Co-Founder of Seattle Pride Hockey Association. "Without the sizeable donation from the NHL, we wouldn't have been able to launch our pride league so fast."

In addition to the league launch, SPHA is in preparation for the fourth annual **Seattle Pride Classic**, scheduled for June 7 through 9 at the Kraken Community Iceplex. This year's tournament marks a significant milestone as the largest LGBTQ+ pride ice hockey tournament worldwide, drawing nearly 300 athletes from diverse backgrounds. Renowned NHL talents such as Stanley Cup champion Andrew Ference and trailblazers like transgender athlete Jessica Platt will grace the event. Notable personalities, including Seattle Kraken's radio announcer JT Brown, and Luke Prokop, the NHL's first openly gay contracted player, will also be in attendance.

Furthermore, SPHA expands its commitment to community development with the introduction of the **Seattle Pride Hockey Training Series**. Commencing on April 6 at Olympicview Arena, this initiative offers coached training sessions conducted by staff

from the University of Washington's Women's Ice Hockey Club team, alongside Justin Rogers, assistant athletic trainer for the Seattle Kraken.

SPHA's dedication extends beyond the ice rink, including a collaboration with Rough & Tumble Pub in Ballard to host Pride Current watch parties during the Seattle Kraken season. These gatherings aim to unite the LGBTQ+ and ally community in fervent support of the hometown team, fostering camaraderie and inclusivity.

The journey of SPHA transcends sports, embodying the spirit of unity, acceptance, and progress within the LGBTQ+ community. As the organization continues to break barriers and pave the way for inclusivity in ice hockey, its impact resonates far beyond the rink.

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