



Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Firebirds Prepare for 2017 NHL Entry Draft This Weekend

Gordeev Ranked 104th Among North American Skaters to be Drafted

Flint, Mich. - At least one Firebird is expected to hear his name called this weekend at the 2017 NHL Entry Draft in Chicago, Ill. It will be the 55th NHL Entry Draft in the league's history and will be held Friday, June 23rd - Saturday, June 24th at the United Center.

119 of the organization's alums have been drafted in the NHL including 17 first-round picks. Most recently, last June, Will Bitten was selected in the third-round by the Montreal Canadiens and Nick Caamano was chosen in the fifth-round by the Dallas Stars. The organization had one of its strongest showings three seasons ago in the 2014 NHL Entry Draft when five Whalers' players were selected: Alex Nedeljkovic (Carolina, 2nd round, 37th overall), Connor Chatham (New Jersey, 3rd round, 71st overall), Alex Peters (Dallas, 3rd round, 75th overall), Josh Wesley (Carolina, 4th round, 96th overall) and Matt Mistele (Los Angeles, 6th round, 180th overall).

This season, the Firebirds have five players that are draft eligible for the first time including **C.J. Clarke, Samuel Duchesne, Jake Durham, Fedor Gordeev** and **Jack Phibbs**.

Gordeev is the highest rated Firebirds' player for the 2017 NHL Entry Draft. He is currently ranked as the 104th best skater in North America and is projected to be selected between the third and sixth round.

Of the 119 drafted players, 20 former skaters from the organization played in the NHL in the 2016-17 season: Jared Boll (Anaheim), Connor Carrick (Toronto), Ryan Hartman (Chicago), Sonny Milano (Columbus), J.T. Miller (New York Rangers), John Mitchell (Colorado), James Neal (Nashville), Alex Nedeljkovic (Carolina), Michal Neuvirth (Philadelphia), Stefan Noesen (New Jersey), Justin Peters (Arizona), Rickard Rakell (Anaheim), Tyler Seguin (Dallas), Tom Sestito (Pittsburgh), Jeremy Smith (Colorado), Chris Terry (Montreal), Chris Thorburn (Winnipeg), Vincent Trocheck (Florida), Justin Williams (Washington), and Tom Wilson (Washington).

The highest alum to be drafted in the NHL is Bryan Berard who was picked with the first overall selection by the Ottawa Senators in the 1995 NHL Entry Draft. The next highest alums to be drafted after Berard are Tyler Seguin (2nd overall in 2010 by Boston) and David Legwand (2nd overall in 1998 by Nashville). At least one player that has played for Plymouth or Flint has been drafted in all 26 years of the organization's past dating back to 1991. The most players ever picked in an NHL draft came in 2000 when six Whalers were selected: Justin Williams, Tomas Kurka, Libor Ustrnul, Kris Vernarsky, Jared Newman and Nate Kiser.

Since the Plymouth Whalers moved to Flint two seasons ago, the Firebirds have had 10 drafted or NHL signed players on the roster consisting of Will Bitten (Montreal), Nick Caamano (Dallas), Connor Chatham (New Jersey), Brent Moran (Dallas), Alex Nedeljkovic (Carolina), Alex Peters (Dallas), Vili Saarijarvi (Detroit), Kole Sherwood (Columbus), Jalen Smereck (Arizona) and Josh Wesley (Carolina).

The NBC Sports Network (NBCSN) will televise the first round of the 2017 NHL Entry Draft throughout the United States live on Friday, June 23rd from 7 p.m. – 10 p.m. (ET). The NHL Network will carry rounds two-through-seven on Saturday, June 24th from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (ET). Sportsnet will televise the 2017 NHL Entry Draft in its entirety throughout Canada.

Visit FlintFirebirds.com for live coverage of the Flint Firebirds in the 2017 NHL Entry Draft.

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