

ISSUE 1 | VOL. 1 | JUNE 2024

# PUCK PIONEERS

UTAH'S ROAD TO NHL SUCCESS



By: Tate Stringam

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

## **3** Section 1: This Year's Branding

**4** Letter From the Editor

**5** It's Official: Hockey  
in Utah

**6-7** Current Brand

2

## **8** Section 2: Situational Analysis

**9-10** Background Information

**11** Internal Audit

**12** Public Opinion

**13** External Audit

**14** S.W.O.T Analysis

3

## **15** Section 3: Hockey Culture in Utah

**16-17** Branding Utah's  
NHL Future

**18** The Squad

**19** Fresh ICE

**20** Players to Watch

4

## **21** Section 4: Hockey Culture in Utah

**22** The Wrap-Up

**23** Thanks, LinkedIn

SECTION #1

# THIS YEAR'S BRANDING

**4** Letter From the Editor

**5** It's Official: Hockey  
in Utah

**6-7** Current Brand





# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to "Puck Pioneers: Utah's Road to NHL Success," a comprehensive look at the exciting journey of bringing a new NHL team to Utah. This magazine is the culmination of my experiences and learnings as a communications major with an emphasis in advertising at Brigham Young University-Idaho. Through in-depth analysis, exclusive interviews, and behind-the-scenes insights, this publication explores the dynamic process of establishing a new hockey franchise in the heart of the mountain region.

From unveiling the team's new branding to understanding the economic and community impact, "Puck Pioneers" captures the essence of this monumental event. As a passionate hockey fan and aspiring professional in the field, I've dedicated this project to showcasing not only the team's story but also my skills in marketing, storytelling, and strategic communication.

Join me as we dive into the fascinating world of Utah's NHL expansion, celebrating the spirit, resilience, and excitement that come with this new chapter in sports history.

*Jate Stringam*

Editor-in-Chief



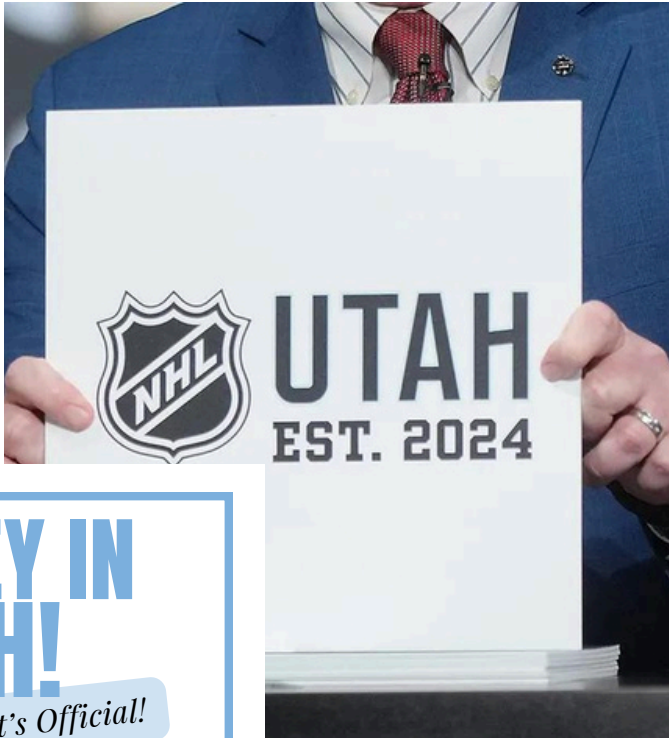
*"THE ONE THING I  
KNOW ABOUT  
UTAH IS, PEOPLE  
WILL SHOW UP!"*

Owner, Ryan Smith

Via:Spittin Chickles (Instagram)



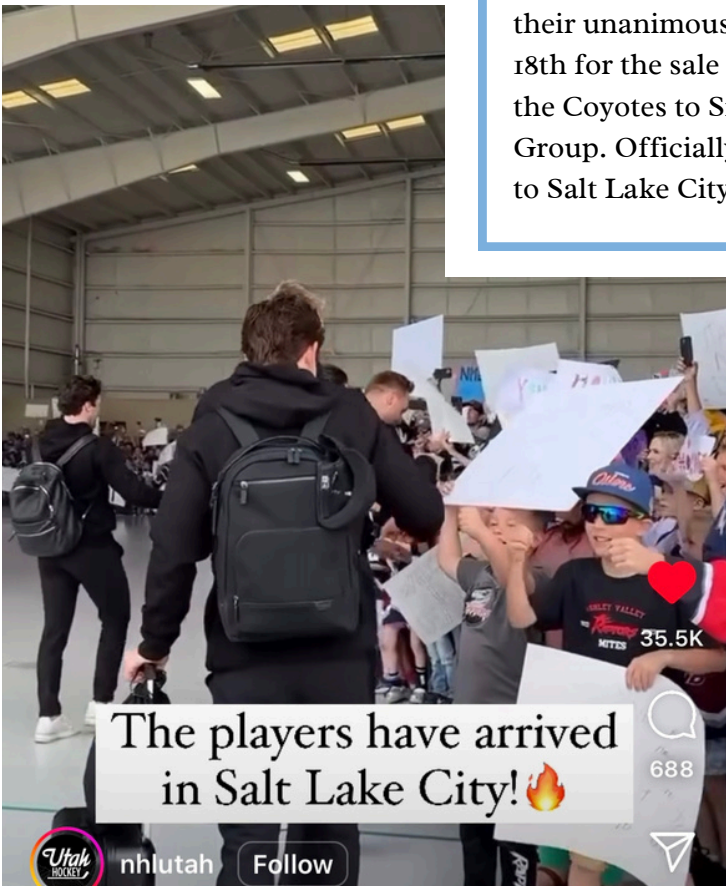
**UTAH HAD OVER 6,000 SEASON TICKETS DEPOSITS IN JUST 2 HOURS**



# HOCKEY IN UTAH!

*It's Official!*

The NHL Board of Governors gave their unanimous approval on April 18th for the sale and relocation of the Coyotes to Smith Entertainment Group. Officially bringing the NHL to Salt Lake City, Utah.

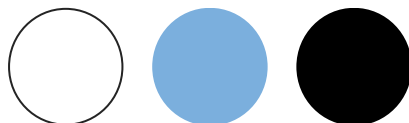


Via:Icehetics (X)

# OFFICIAL YEAR #1 BRANDING

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## COLOR PALETTE





# FRESH THREADS

Until next year's official unveiling of a team name and logo,  
the NHL team in Salt Lake City will be known as the  
"UTAH HOCKEY CLUB"



# SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

**9-10** Background Information

**11** Internal Audit

**12** Public Opinion

**13** External Audit

**14** S.W.O.T Analysis



## SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

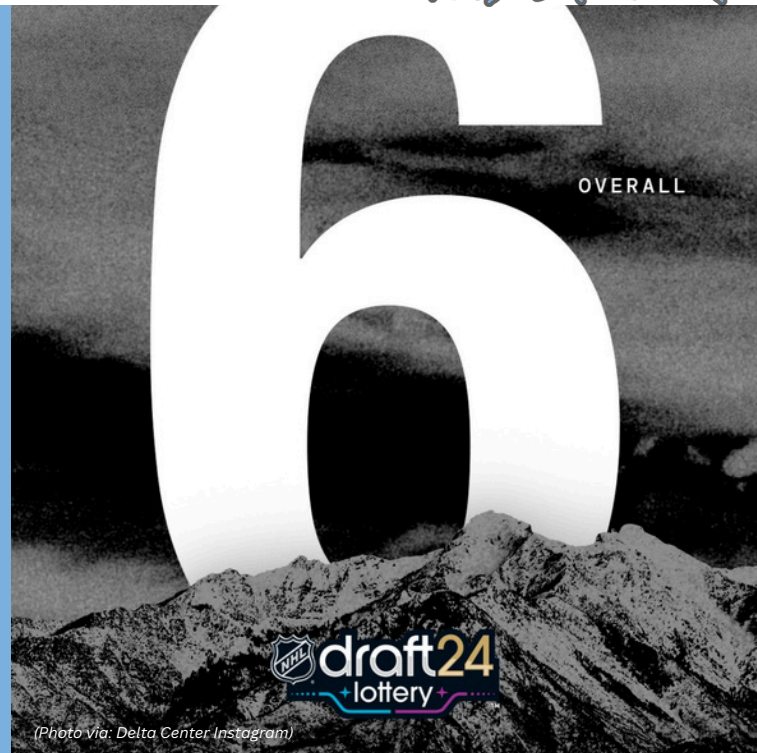
The Utah Hockey Club has an amazing opportunity to showcase hockey to an already established fan base. This article represents the unique position that owner Ryan Smith & company currently host.



1

### THE LAUNCH: PROPELLING FORWARD

Fall 2024 marks a significant milestone by introducing a new NHL team in Salt Lake City, Utah. This exciting launch will bring professional hockey to a region with a growing interest in the sport, providing fans with a team to support and rally behind. The Utah Hockey Club also controls the sixth overall selection in this year's NHL draft, sparking an opportunity to start strong.



Opening Welcome Party (Photo via: Chris Gardner)

2

### THE SIGNIFICANCE

Adding an NHL team to Salt Lake City enhances one of the fastest-growing areas in the U.S. This move not only elevates the city's profile but also stimulates the local economy. The team is expected to draw significant attention, attract tourism, and create numerous job opportunities, further fueling the city's dynamic growth.

# ICE COLD FACTS!

The NHL has added two new expansion franchises in the last five seasons in Las Vegas, and Seattle. However, the Utah Hockey Club is the first franchise to be relocated not “expanded” since Atlanta sold their franchise back to Winnipeg in 2011.

## SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Owner, Ryan Smith (Photo via: AP)

3

### *NOT STARTING FROM SCRATCH*

Unlike the recent NHL expansions in Las Vegas and Seattle, Utah's team is not being built from the ground up. The relocation of an existing team provides a strong foundation, ensuring a smoother transition and immediate impact. This established team brings with it a history, a fan base, and a level of experience that new expansions typically lack.

4

### *COMPETITIVE EDGE*

The team comes with a full roster of talented players and is already on the brink of playoff contention. This competitive edge means fans can expect high-level performances and the excitement of potentially witnessing a successful season right from the start. The immediate competitiveness of the team will attract even more fan support and engagement.



4X All Star-Clayton Keller (Photo via: NHLUtahPod, Instagram)

# Internal AUDIT

## Utah? A Big Market Team?

Unlike the NBA, where Utah is sometimes seen as a less desirable destination compared to cities like Miami or L.A., NHL players generally hold a positive view of Salt Lake City. The city is considered welcoming and attractive, offering an excellent quality of life. This sentiment is encapsulated by current Utah NHL team goalie, Connor Ingram, who said, *"I'm not going to lie to you, I'm excited for Salt Lake City. I will miss Arizona, but I think if you're going to move, it's a good place to go."* This positive outlook indicates that players are enthusiastic about the new opportunities and lifestyle that Salt Lake City provides.



NHL Commissioner, Gary Bettman with Owner, Ryan Smith  
(Photo via: KUTV-Utah)

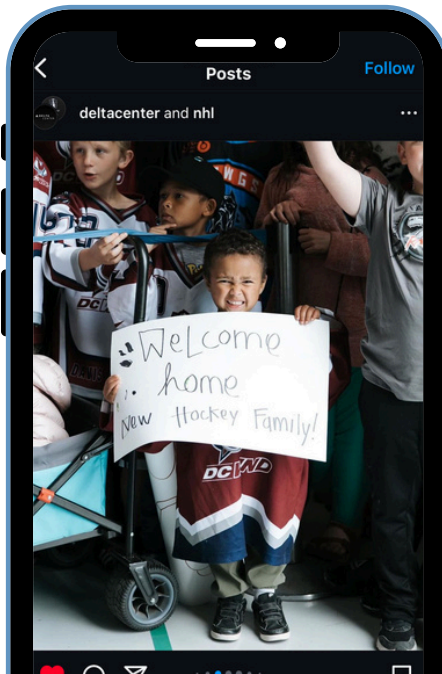
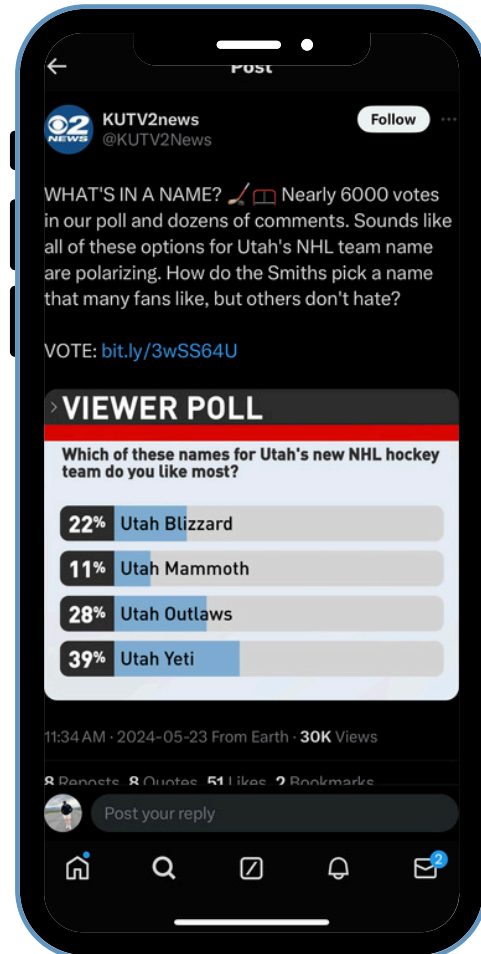
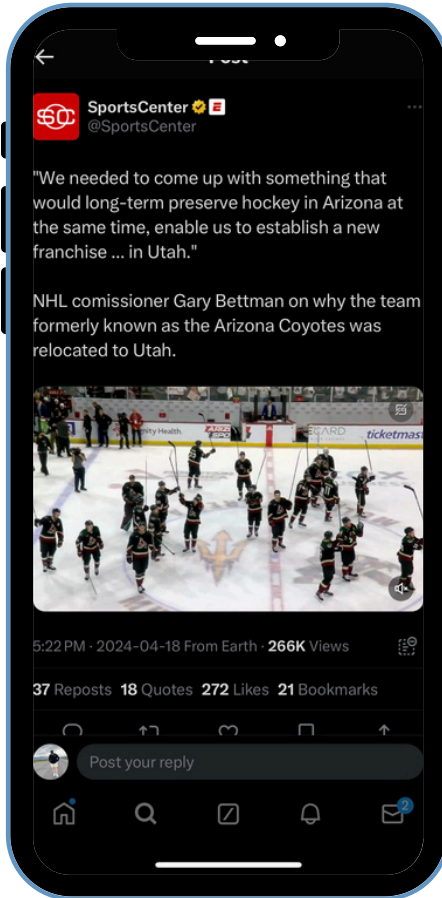
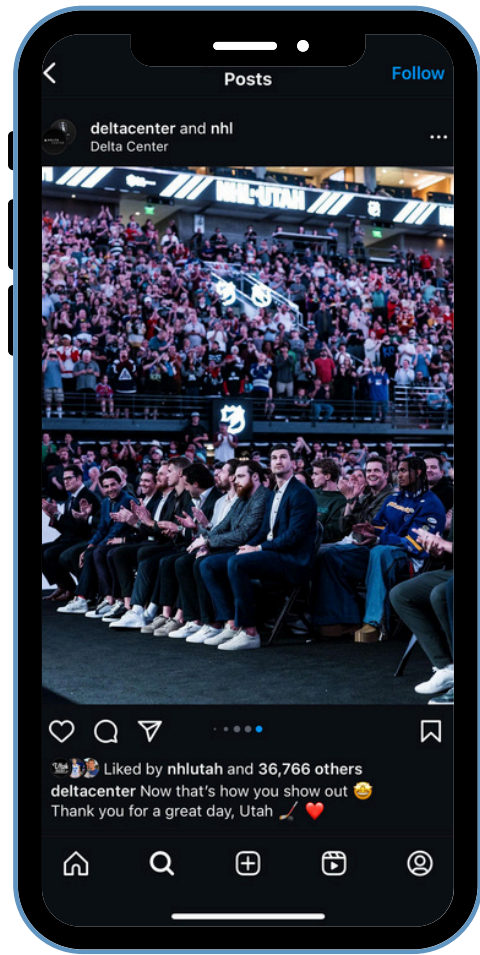
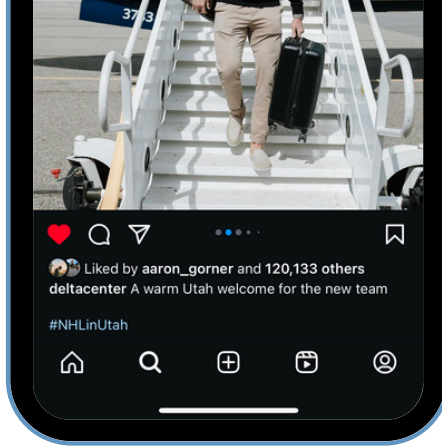
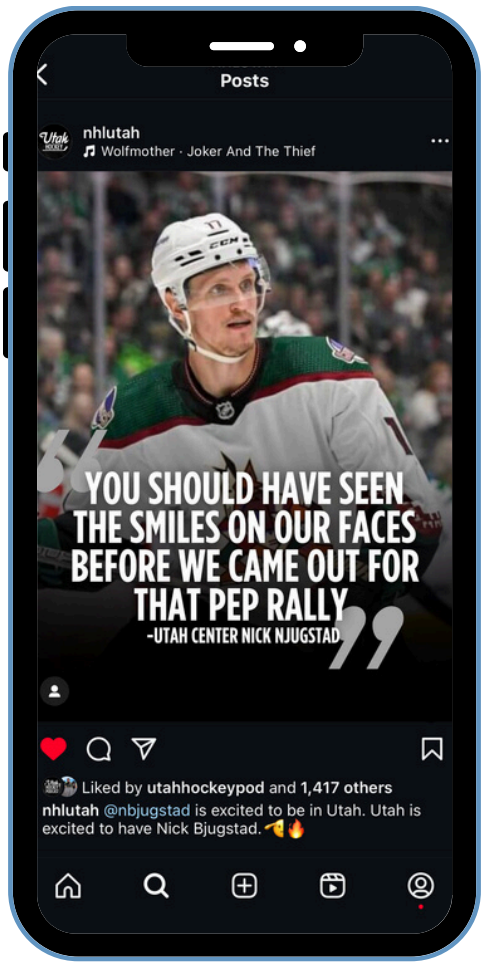
### 01.

Owner, Ryan Smith, despite his relatively short tenure as an owner, has already made a significant impact in the world of sports. With ownership stakes in the Utah Jazz (NBA) and Real Salt Lake (MLS), Smith has quickly established himself as a dynamic and influential figure. His innovative approaches and commitment to excellence have earned him high praise from notable peers, including Mark Cuban.

### 02.

On June 4th, Aixel Cabrera, of the Utah News Dispatch reported that over 34,000 deposits have been made for season tickets for the 2024-2025 season. Marking a very promising start for hockey in Utah

Smith's leadership is characterized by a fresh vision and a proactive stance in team management, setting a new standard for success in the sports industry.



# Public Perception

“That place is going to be packed out there! The NHL has to be incredibly Pumped”  
Pat McAfee

# EXTERNAL AUDIT

2024/2025



Utah Hockey Club GM, Bill Armstrong  
(Photo via: KSL)

## UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Bill Armstrong, the General Manager of the Utah Hockey Club, also moving from Arizona, faces the daunting task of guiding the franchise through an uncertain future. Things such as contract negotiations, and player's willingness to stay loyal to the organization present ongoing challenges. Especially with many external factors at play. Armstrong knows that no win is guaranteed, but his strategic leadership will be vital in overcoming these hurdles and driving the team towards success.

## NO LOVE LOST

Fans in Arizona feel deeply betrayed by the NHL's decision to relocate their team, viewing it as a rejection of their years of loyalty and support. Many blame the NHL and the former owner for prioritizing financial gains over their commitment, and some may feel somewhat indifferent to the team's success in Utah.



## A NEW WAVE OF FANS

“Of the first 6000 season ticket deposits to be purchased (of the total 34,000 so far), only 400 of them are (Utah) Jazz season ticket holders.”

Owner Ryan Smith on the Pat McAfee Show (April 22)

# SWOT ANALYSIS

## S

### Strengths

- Eager, young ownership
- Market growth opportunities
- Existing sports culture with devout fans

## W

### Weaknesses

- Ownership inexperience with hockey
- Unfarmiliar fanbase to hockey
- Renovations for the arena needed to accommodate NBA/NHL regulations

## O

### Opportunities

- Develop a brand the fans can get behind. Including the team name, logo, colors, and jerseys
- Ability to cater to a new audience of fans that are not Utah Jazz fans

## T

### Threats

- Logistics of maintaining two professional sports teams in one building
- High expectations to perform quickly
- Botching the brand development

# HOCKEY CULTURE IN UTAH

**16-17** Branding Utah's NHL Future

**18** The Squad

**19** Fresh Ice

**20** Players to Watch



# BRANDING UTAH'S NHL FUTURE

The NHL's arrival in Utah has sparked significant community growth and economic excitement, boosting local businesses, tourism, and job opportunities. Amid this surge, I spoke with Michael, a local hockey enthusiast, about the impact on the community and the response to the new NHL team in Salt Lake City.

The arrival of the NHL in Utah has sparked significant growth and enthusiasm within the community. Among the notable developments is the creation of "The Utah Hockey Podcast" by Michael and his friend Eric. This podcast delves into all aspects of the NHL in Utah, covering player highlights, draft prospects, and trade rumors. Their Instagram page has quickly gained traction, amassing over 35,000 followers in just two months.

I had the opportunity to sit down with Michael to discuss these exciting recent changes and the community's response to having an NHL team in Salt Lake City.

ME: You are in a little bit of a unique situation obviously with the podcast and the social pages running. But what do you think the new team will mean to the locals?

Michael: I think it will mean more and more to-



locals as they fall in love with the sport. It'll take a few seasons but as this team progresses it's going to be awesome.

*This is concept art of one of the (Mammoth) one of the remaining mascot names in contention for next seasons official branding. This comes courtesy of Colby, of Colonel Designs on Instagram.*



**Me:** know the first year brand just dropped and I think this is the first step in that direction you mentioned. How important do you think the brand launch next year will be towards growing the game in Utah? A big difference? Or do you think it will make much a difference?

I have no problem with the colors, and I'm looking forward to when they ultimately come up with a name...If I was putting money down, it would be on "Yeti"

Elliott Freidman on SportsNet

**Michael:** The brand is much more important than some give it credit for. You want people and players to want to wear the brand. Jersey design and overall vibe actually matters a lot.

**ME:** From your perspective, of the remaining team names still in contention, which do you think is one that presents the best opportunity for a solid brand moving forward?

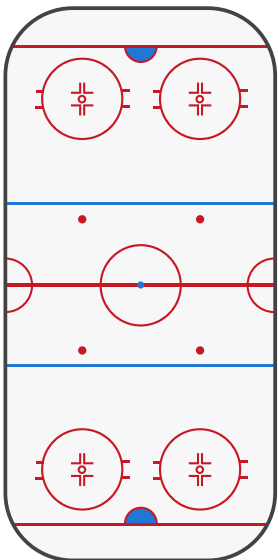
**Michael:** I think they'll make it work either way but Mammoth and Yeti present some cool options for branding.

You can listen to Michael and Eric talk hockey on their podcast "Utah Hockey Pod" or follow thier Instagram @nhlutah

With the recent drop of the first-year branding, the community is already rallying behind the new identity. As Michael highlighted, a strong brand will be crucial in growing the game in Utah.

The anticipation is high, and the fans are eager to embrace this new chapter in Utah's sports history. Overall, the future looks bright as Utah gears up to support its new NHL team and make its mark in the hockey world.

# THE SQUAD



# FRESH ICEH

As the Hockey Club transitions to Utah, the team brings a mix of promising prospects and recent successes. With a bright future ahead, the team looks to build a new legacy in Salt Lake City.



As the Coyotes transition from Arizona to a new home with a new name in Utah, the team brings a mix of promising prospects and recent successes that offer a glimpse into a potentially bright future. Conor Geekie and Artu Raty are among the top prospects, both eager to secure center positions.

## Bright Future

The Utah Hockey Club have seven picks in the top three rounds over the next two years, including the sixth overall pick this year. Providing a significant opportunity for talent infusion and future growth.

Reflecting on the past season, several aspects went right for the group. Clayton Keller developed into a dangerous point-per-game player, showcasing his unique offensive ability. Nick Schmaltz had a quietly fantastic season, significantly contributing to the team's offense. Acquired from the Kings, Sean Durzi impressed with 41 points from the defensive zone. Matias Maccelli emerged as a fantastic playmaker, while veterans Nick Bjugstad and Alexander Kerfoot provided solid contributions. Goalie Connor Ingram was among the top five goalies in the NHL for the first half of the season before his injury. Logan Cooley, after a slow start, finished strong and showed immense promise. Dylan Guenther appeared to be a future star, and both Lawson Crouse and Michael Carcone had impressive 20-goal seasons.

The outlook for the 2024-25 season remains uncertain. The move from a college facility to a new arena will undoubtedly benefit the team. Owner, Ryan Smith faces a few critical decisions, including whether to invest heavily in the roster immediately, or to allow the young talent to develop under the existing plan.

As newest face in the NHL Utah's new team enters this new chapter with a blend of optimism and uncertainty. With a promising roster, new ownership, and a fresh start in Salt Lake City, the team has the potential to build something special and finally stabilize its place in the NHL. Their goal being to establish this team as a playoff contender.

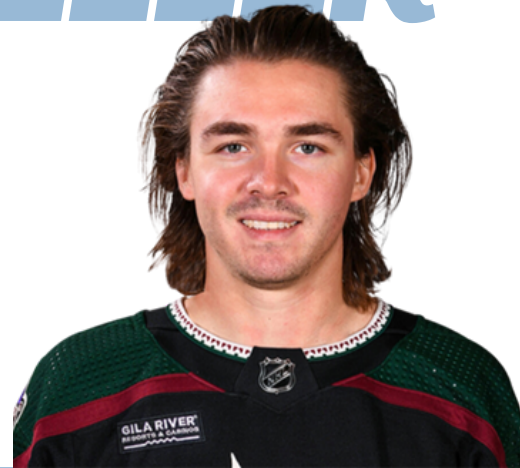
Statistics Gathered Via: NHL.Com

# Players to Watch

## CLAYTON KELLER

### FORWARD

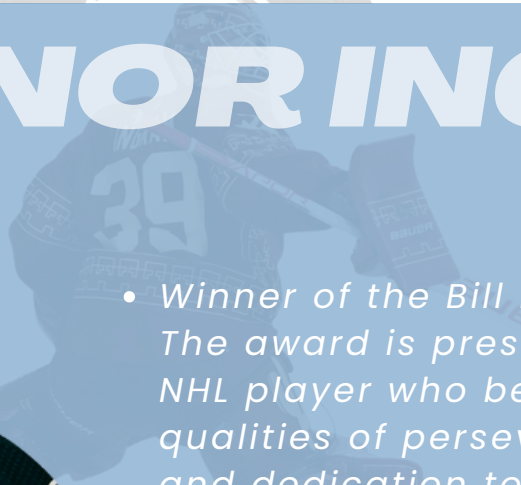
- 4 Time All-Star
- 166 Career Goals
- Signed an 8 Year Contract in 2020



## CONNOR INGRAM

### GOALTENDER

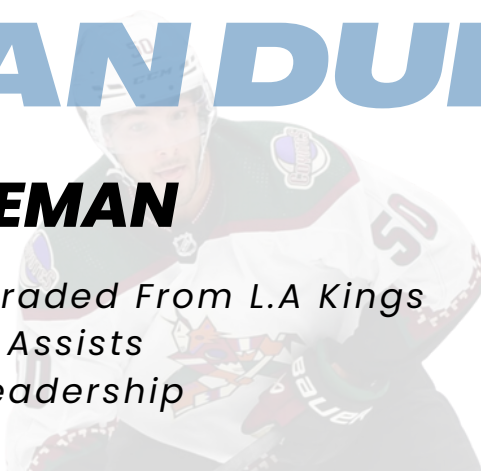
- Winner of the Bill Masterson Trophy. The award is presented annually to the NHL player who best exemplifies the qualities of perseverance, sportsmanship, and dedication to hockey



## SEAN DURZI

### DEFENSEMAN

- Recently Traded From L.A Kings
- 85 Career Assists
- Veteran Leadership



# THE WRAP-UP

**22** Conclusion

**23** Thanks, LinkedIn



# THATS A WRAP!



The NHL relocation into Utah marks a significant milestone not only for the sport of hockey but also for the community and economy of Salt Lake City. Through the creation of "Puck Pioneers: Utah's Road to NHL Success," we have explored the multifaceted impacts of this monumental move.

From the initial announcement to the detailed breakdown of the team's branding, the situational analysis, and the outlook for the future, this magazine has delved into every aspect of Utah's new NHL team. We have highlighted the journey, the challenges, and the triumphs of bringing professional hockey to the heart of the mountain region.

The economic implications of the NHL's arrival cannot be overstated. The boost to local businesses, and the creation of jobs are all testaments to the positive influence that this team will have on Salt Lake City, and the State of Utah. The community's response has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic, with fans eagerly embracing the team grow eager to its official identity next year.

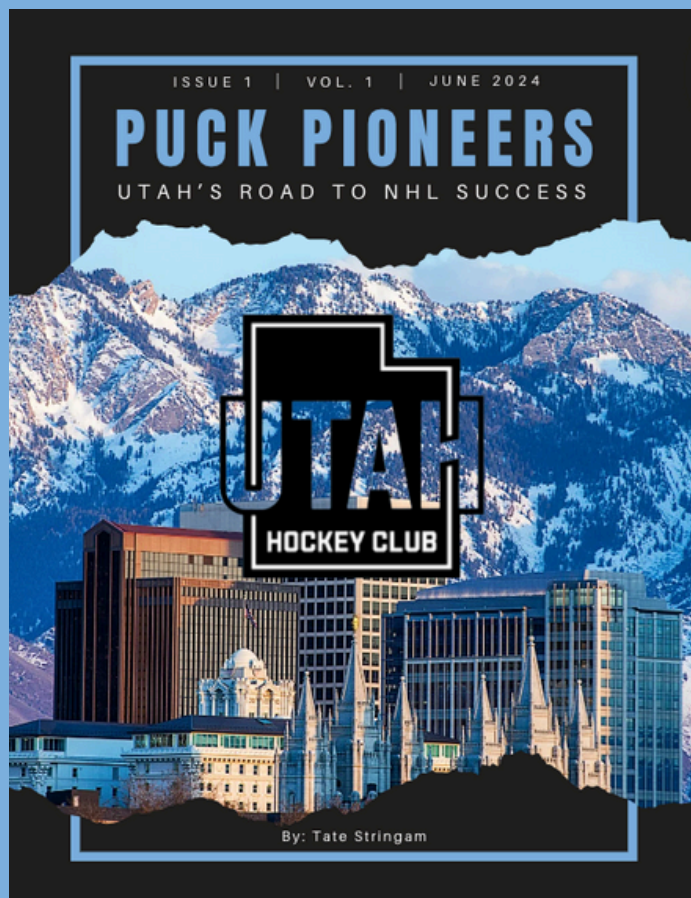
Through interviews with key figures like Michael from "The Utah Hockey Podcast," to research done behind the scenes, we've gained insights into the local hockey scene and the excitement that permeates the community. The team's promising roster, bolstered by top prospects and solid veterans, sets the stage for an exciting future

As we look ahead to the 2024-25 season and beyond, the potential for growth and success is evident. The strategic decisions made by the new ownership and management will shape the trajectory of the team, but the foundation is strong. A new home, the influx of talent, and the unwavering support of the fans all point to a bright future for Utah's NHL team.

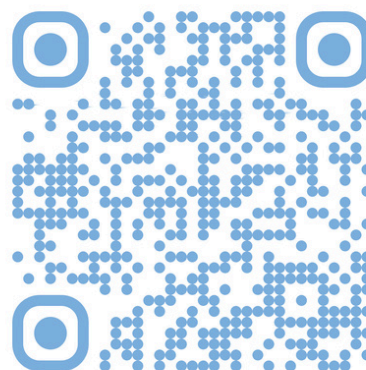
This project has been a journey of discovery and celebration. It has showcased not only the birth of a new hockey team but also the vibrant community and the economic vitality of Salt Lake City. "Puck Pioneers: Utah's Road to NHL Success" is a testament to the power of sports to unite, inspire, and transform. As the puck drops on this new chapter, the excitement and potential are evident. Utah is ready to embrace its place on the NHL map, and the future looks incredibly promising in the Wasatch Front.



**KEEP A  
DIGITAL  
COPY!**



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*PUCK PIONEERS:  
UTAH'S ROAD TO NHL SUCCESS*

