



Northern Alberta Xtreme Newsletter

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NAX Alumni Spotlight

This month's NAX alumni spotlight players are Dylan Geunther and Zack Ostapchuk.

Dylan and Zack both represented Team Canada at the 2023 World Juniors winning gold, thanks to a Guenther overtime winning goal against Czechia.

As an assistant captain, Dylan recorded 7 goals and 3 assists while Zack tallied 2 goals and 1 assist while playing a key role on the team's penalty kill.

This was each of their second time representing Team Canada at this event. Dylan played at the 2022 WJC in December before the event was ultimately canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Zack would join the team for the re-boot this past summer, recording 3 points in 7 games while winning a gold medal.

Dylan has played 21 NHL games this season with the Arizona Coyotes, scoring 3 times and assisting on another 8 goals in his rookie season. Zack has 29 points in 21 WHL games at the captain of the Vancouver Giants this season.



Around the Rink

This season 117 male and 30 female former NAX student-athletes find themselves on a pro, junior, college, or university roster. 37 former NAX players played at these levels, but have since pursued ventures outside of hockey.

NAX News (September 1 - December 31, 2022)

09/06/22: U17 Prep netminder Jordan Switzer signed a WHL SPA with the Medicine Hat Tigers. The Tigers selected Switzer in the 6th round, 111th overall at the 2022 WHL Draft

09/07/22: U18 Prep skaters Parker Alcos, Landon Hanson, and Rhys Pederson all signed WHL SPA with the Edmonton Oil Kings. Alcos and Hanson were both undrafted, while Pederson was a fourth round pick in 2021.

09/08/22: Former U15 Prep forward Ryan Miller signed a WHL SPA with the Portland Winterhawks. Portland selected Miller in the third round of the 2022 WHL Draft.

09/09/22: U18 Prep goalie Spencer Michnik signed his WHL SPA with the Seattle Thunderbirds after they selected him in the fifth round in 2021

09/17/22: Three year NAX student-athlete Eastyn Mannix scored his first career WHL goal for the Brandon Wheat Kings

09/21/22: The Wheat Kings named former U18 Prep forward Nate Danielson as a co-captain for the 2022/23 WHL season

09/23/22: U18 Prep forward Owen Berge made his WHL debut with the Moose Jaw Warriors against the Regina Pats and his older brother, Parker Berge

09/27/22: Alex Scheiwiller picked up his first career AJHL win with the Okotoks Oilers, stopping 23 of 25 shots

10/02/22: Brock Souch scored his first career AJHL goal with the Sherwood Park Crusaders. Erik Roest made 27 saves to earn his first shutout as the Crusaders defeated the Calgary Canucks 13-0

10/03/22: Two year NAX forward Layne Loomer scored his first career AJHL goal for the Blackfalds Bulldogs

10/07/22: Pederson made his WHL debut with the Oil Kings against the Spokane Chiefs

10/15/22: Dylan Guenther made his NHL debut with the Arizona Coyotes, becoming the first NAX player in program history to play in an NHL game. Guenther would record his first NHL point with an assist in the game against the Boston Bruins. Reid Varkonyi scores his first BCHL goal with the Salmon Arm Silverbacks

10/22/22: Guenther scores his first NHL goal with a powerplay marker against the Ottawa Senators

10/23/22: Riley Fiddler-Schultz ties the Calgary Hitmen record with five goals in a single WHL game

10/26/22: Former U15 Prep forward Cole Reschny makes his WHL debut with the Victoria Royals after being selected third overall in the 2022 WHL Draft

10/30/22: Lucas Ciona, who spent two seasons at NAX, signed his NHL Entry Level Contract with the Calgary Flames. The Flames selected the Thunderbirds forward in the sixth round of the 2021 NHL Draft

11/02/22: Aiden Fink was named the AJHL Player of the Month for October. Fink spent two seasons at NAX with the U16 Prep and U18 Prep team

11/9/22: Mason Hartley scores his first MJHL goal with the Neepawa Titans

11/11/22: Hyde Davidson scored his first WHL goal with the Thunderbirds in his 16 year old rookie season

11/16/22: Female Prep netminder Erika Lind commits to Mercyhurst University, becoming the first NAX female skater to commit to an NCAA Division I program.

11/19/22: Reschny scores his first WHL goal against the Prince George Cougars

11/22/22: Morgan Brady, now with the Spruce Grove Saints, commits to Arizona State University Sun Devils

11/26/22: Lukas Kaplan signs his WHL SPA with the Everett Silvertips. Everett selected Kaplan in the sixth round of the 2022 WHL Draft

11/30/22: U17 Prep student-athletes Ryan Grout, Kaplan and Swizter are all named to Team Alberta U16 for the Canada Winter Games

12/02/22: Ryan Miller makes his WHL debut with the Portland Winterhawks while Hayden Harsanyi makes his with the Medicine Hat Tigers

12/08/22: Brady, Fink, Roest and Nicholas Wolfenberg are all named to Team Canada West for the 2022 World Junior A Challenge

12/17/22: Loomer commits to NCAA Division I program Augustana University Vikings. Teydon Trembecky scores his first WHL goal with the Victoria Royals

12/19/22: An undrafted prospect, U17 Prep forward Clarke Schaefer signs a WHL SPA with the Everett Silvertips

U15

The first half of the season for this group has been very successful. The U15 team currently sit in first place in the league (11-2-2-2) and have grown and become a very close group. The boys have learned a lot this first half about positional play, supporting each other in all areas of the ice, and learning to play fast paced AAA hockey.

They have attended two AAA tournaments; one in Regina, SK in October and one in November in Medicine Hat, AB. In Regina they had a very good showing not losing one game in regulation and making it to the quarterfinals. They beat some of the top Saskatchewan teams including Prince Albert 6-0. The team was also able to meet Connor Bedard in Regina and he surprised the boys in the intermission. He talked about playing in the CSHL and how he developed as a player and person. Medicine Hat was another successful tournament finishing with a 2-3 record and taking some of the best AAA and Prep teams right to the very end in close games. Beating CAC and Spruce Grove AAA were highlights of that tournament for the team and showed the team how strong of a team they can be when they are focused on a common goal as a team.

The U15 team is currently on a seven game winning streak and have finished as the top team in both CSHL Ranked Showcases after going undefeated in both. Coach Stuart added "it's be a ton of fun coaching this group, and every day they come to the arena wanting to get better both individually and as a team. Their work ethic is what separates them from the average, and pushing each other in practice. The sky is the limit for this group and I look forward to a strong second half and winning a league championship."



The NAX U15 team had the opportunity to meet Regina Pats superstar Connor Bedard at the Medicine Hat U15 AAA tournament.

U15 Prep

The NAX U15 Prep team got off to a hot start this season and kept it rolling through regular season, hitting the holiday break with a 20-0-0 record in CSSHL league play. The team came up a game short in the Rocky Mountain Classic, losing in overtime in the semi-finals, ultimately settling for bronze. Although unable to defend their championship from last season as this tournament, the group took away a lot of learning experiences that will have bettered them already for the future.

The team took a couple cold trips down to Winnipeg, MB in the first half of the season, which were made more enjoyable with trips to the Rec Room, bowling alley, taking in a Winnipeg Ice WHL game, and being hosted by the Liske family for a team meal and games night.

The team is looking forward to getting started again in January, including looking to defend their Canadian Crown Championship, a tournament the NAX U15 Prep team has won the last two seasons.

U17 Prep

The U17 Prep team endured a busy, successful and fun season up until the current halfway point of the season. After two exhibition games and hosting a CSSHL league regional showcase, the team took part in the Canadian Crown U17 Tournament in Edmonton, AB. Here they took home the tournament championship after winning all 6 games in 4 days. In November, the team, which consists of only 16 year old players, moved up a level to compete in a U18 tournament in Kelowna, BC. Many of the top teams, with players 16-18 years old, from the CSSHL, Alberta and BC took part. The team went 2-2-0-1 with every game being really close. It was a great learning experience for everyone involved to see the next level. In CSSHL league play, the team has hosted two showcases, and also competed in showcases in Vernon, BC and Abbotsford, BC, with road trips to Calgary and Saskatchewan for flex games. Up this point the team has composed a record of 20-1-0 in league play.

With team weekly practices, Kane Lafranchise and the other development coaches have worked on all skill aspects with an extra emphasis on body mechanics for deception (weight transfers, top and lower body separation, etc) and scanning of the ice with the puck, and on pre-touches. With their team play, one of the major emphasizes has been on play away from the puck. Not just defensively, but in anticipating the play, supporting the puck to get more possession time, being an option for teammates and being more of a connected unit of five players. Habits, details, reads and work ethic is the foundation of the U17 Prep team identity.

In the final stretch run, they will continue to look to improve their team play as well as try to find ways to improve individual players. They are extremely excited to see how this group of hard working young men continue to improve over the remainder of the season.



U17 Travel

The Inaugural edition of the NAX U17 Travel team has come a long way in the first year! A group that started off as a bunch of individuals from all over Alberta has quickly become a tight knit team that gets along great and are developing at a rapid pace on the ice as well.

After just three practices, the team started their season off in Vernon in a mini series where they managed a 1-1-1 record. The boys also had a great time attending a Kelowna Rockets WHL game. After a few exhibition games at home, they were in tough at the Canadian Crown Tournament at the River Cree, where they managed a 2-3 record against some of the top teams in Western Canada. From there they headed to Lethbridge, AB for the Logan Boulet Memorial, highlighted by a 5-2 victory over the Calgary Flames, the eventual tournament champs.

In December the Travel squad entered a U18 AA tournament in Calgary, which was a good test for them. They finished with a 2-2 record after beating SSAC in a long shootout win! The boys had a great time together in downtown Calgary, walking down Stephen Ave together for team dinners.

They saved their best for last in 2022, heading to Kelowna for the Rockets Classic on December 27 after a few well needed days off at Christmas. After going undefeated (2-0-1) in the Round Robin, they lost a heart breaker 4-1 to Fraser Valley in their first semi-final of the year. The tournament was highlighted by goaltender Sam Saskiw making the All-Star Team, as well as Ayden Probe's hat trick versus Kelowna in only his second game of the year! William Roddick also scored a beautiful breakaway overtime goal versus KC in the round robin. They capped off the trip by going axe throwing together on New Years Eve.

With the help of our IDP's (Individualized Development Plans) from skills coach Kane Lafranchise, players have identified personal areas of improvement in all zones on the ice. This has been integral for personal growth to go along with team growth and success. He has also provided some great video clips to go along with the skills and tactics the coaching staff has been teaching. The team has received extra skill work every Monday and Tuesday with Rob Brown, Paul Manning, skating coach Brian Shackel, and Goaltending Coach Allen York. Off ice workouts are with Barry Butt every Monday through Thursday post practice, before school.

The Travel Team is encouraged by their last event of 2022, and excited for continued development and success both on and off the ice in 2023!

U18 Prep

The U18 Prep team currently sits third place in the CSSHL with a record of 12-7-0-0-2. The team made it to the quarterfinals of the Circle K Classic, finishing in top 8 of the 32 best teams from across North America.

At practice the team has been focusing a lot of their time on goalscoring and offensive attack, specifically where to shoot and when to attack. In the defensive zone the focus has been on angling, stick on puck, and when to pressure. A lot of game play in practice while working on competing and battling hard.

The team has not had a full roster for one game since the start of the season. As the goal for everyone on the U18 Prep team is to be playing junior hockey within the next season or two, Coach Tassone ensures players will be able to affiliate at the junior level at all opportunities throughout the season. The team has often been missing players as several players have been called up to junior this season for a total of 61 games before Christmas. Coach Tassone added it is great to see the boys rally around each other and always play hard despite the shortened lineups each game.

On January 3rd the Edmonton Oil Kings announced NAX U18 Prep defenseman Ryhs Pederson will remain with the Oil Kings for the remainder of the 2022/23 season.

Female U18 Prep

The first half of the year has been busy for the Female U18 Prep team having played the most league games (19) with an 11-7-1-1 record.

The team made a trip down to Minnesota in November which included, two games against Minnesota Elite at Amsoil Arena followed by a locker room tour. The team toured Northland College and did a combine practice. The team was able to do locker room and campus tours of University of Minnesota Duluth and University of Wisconsin-Superior. This was a great experience for the girls to see what the US college experience would be.

In December the team played in the 2 Nations College Prep Tourney in Toronto, ON which was great exposure for the girls. This tournament is a heavily scouted event by both US and Canadian schools, resulting in some players getting offers. Of course a tour of the Hockey Hall of Fame was a must while there.

Training the first half of the year has been fantastic. The main focus has been skill development, skating, stick-handling, shooting, playing with speed, and offensive and defensive concepts. A typical week for the team would be:

Monday - Skills Coaches Brian Shackel (skating) and Paul Manning (offence/defence work)

Tuesday - Skills Coach Jason Strudwick (overall defensive work, breakouts, re-groups, shooting)

Wednesday- Skills Coach Kane Lafranchise (Movement, skill & skating work)

Thursday & Friday - Team Practices

Dryland follows on ice four days a week and goalie coaches Allen Yorke & Dave Rathjen come out and work with the goalies once or twice a week each.

Overall the girls has shown a ton of growth individually and as team over the first half. As a staff Coach Dingman and Coach March are excited to see where the girls will be at the end of the year.

