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## NHL OPENING NIGHT ROSTERS FEATURE 12 ALUMNI FROM CURRENT WCHA MEMBER SCHOOLS

*Eight current WCHA institutions represented, spanning nine NHL clubs*

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. – Oct. 3, 2018 – As the puck drops tonight on the 2018-19 National Hockey League (NHL) season, 12 alumni from current Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA) member schools are on opening night rosters. These former student-athletes, representing eight WCHA institutions, are playing on nine different NHL clubs.

“While we anxiously await the start of the NCAA season in three days, it is a thrill to pause and cheer on those who have advanced from the college game to the NHL,” said WCHA President and Men’s League Commissioner **Bill Robertson**. “We are incredibly proud of anyone over the last 66 seasons that has advanced from the WCHA to represent the league, his school and college hockey at the sport’s highest professional level. And, we cannot wait to see who might be next, as the next generation skates in WCHA rinks each weekend this season.”

Former Alaska Anchorage forward **Jay Beagle** (2005-07), a key contributor to the Stanley Cup champion Washington Capitals a year ago, begins his first season with the Vancouver Canucks. **Brad Hunt**, a Bemidji State blueliner from 2008-12, and former Bowling Green forward **Ryan Carpenter** (2011-14) open with the reigning Western Conference champion Vegas Golden Knights. The Capitals enter the campaign with one-time Michigan Tech goaltender **Pheonix Copley** (2012-14), while **Chris Kunitz**, the only active NHL player with four Stanley Cup titles and a Ferris State legend (1999-2003), dons the Chicago Blackhawks jersey for the first time.

A pair of former WCHA Defensive Players of the Year, Alaska’s **Colton Parayko** (winner in 2014 and 2015, and a Nanook from 2012-15), and Minnesota State’s **Casey Nelson** (2016 honoree at the end of his three-year Mavericks career), are set to continue their NHL careers with the St. Louis Blues and Buffalo Sabres, respectively. Nelson is one of three former Mavericks on NHL Opening Night rosters, along with veteran forward **David Backes** (2003-06) of the Boston Bruins and forward **Tyler Pitlick** (2009-10) of the Dallas Stars. Parayko, meanwhile is joined in St. Louis by former UAF goaltender **Chad Johnson** (2005-09).

Alabama Huntsville alumnus **Cam Talbot** (2007-10), who has won 80 games (including playoffs) for Edmonton the last two seasons, is back in an Oilers sweater. He is joined in Edmonton by forward **Jujhar Khaira**, who played with Michigan Tech during the 2012-13 season.

A full list of the 12 current WCHA member institution alumni on 2018-19 NHL opening night rosters follows on the next page.

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### WCHA-affiliated players on 2018-19 NHL Opening Night Rosters

Player, Pos.	NHL Team	School (Years)
Cam Talbot, G	Edmonton Oilers	Alabama Huntsville (2007-10)
Jay Beagle, F	Vancouver Canucks	Alaska Anchorage (2005-07)
Chad Johnson, G	St. Louis Blues	Alaska (2005-09)
Colton Parayko, D	St. Louis Blues	Alaska (2012-15)
Brad Hunt, D	Vegas Golden Knights	Bemidji State (2008-12)
Ryan Carpenter, F	Vegas Golden Knights	Bowling Green (2011-14)
Chris Kunitz, F	Chicago Blackhawks	Ferris State (1999-2003)
Pheonix Copley, G	Washington Capitals	Michigan Tech (2012-14)
Jujhar Khaira, F	Edmonton Oilers	Michigan Tech (2012-13)
David Backes, F	Boston Bruins	Minnesota State (2003-06)
Casey Nelson, D	Buffalo Sabres	Minnesota State (2013-16)
Tyler Pitlick, F	Dallas Stars	Minnesota State (2009-10)

### *About the Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA) Men's League*

The Western Collegiate Hockey Association, among the most historic, tradition-rich and successful conferences in all of collegiate athletics, will proudly mark its 67<sup>th</sup> season of men's competition in 2018-19. The 10-team Division 1 conference consists of the University of Alabama in Huntsville (Chargers), the University of Alaska Anchorage (Seawolves), the University of Alaska (Nanooks), Bemidji State University (Beavers), Bowling Green State University (Falcons), Ferris State University (Bulldogs), Lake Superior State University (Lakers), Michigan Technological University (Huskies), Minnesota State University (Mavericks) and Northern Michigan University (Wildcats). For more information, visit [wcha.com](http://wcha.com).

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### **MORE INFORMATION**

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