



WHL Bantam Draft May Have Implications for Kent Valley's Damon Hansen

Kent, WA – KVHA News for 28 April, 2010 – Thursday morning's Western Hockey League (WHL) Bantam Draft in Edmonton, Alberta, (7:00am Kent time) is being followed locally with more than a passing interest by some Kent Valley members. Kent Valley's Damon Hansen, Kent Valley Bantam Tier-I Elite, is being mentioned as a possible draft choice in this week's draft. Hansen performed exceptionally well at last weekend's Pacific District Select Camp for players of birth years 1995 and 1996 (14 & 15 year olds.) According to sources at Kent Valley Ice Centre, Hansen has been contacted by several WHL teams in recent days.

So, what is the Bantam Draft? The WHL provides this explanation:

*The bantam draft allows for the orderly transfer of players to **WHL Protected Player Lists (PPL)** from the bantam ranks (13-14 year-olds).*

The WHL Bantam Draft is an annual outing, in which the Club's of the Western Hockey League select players who have graduated from bantam. The draft's order of selection depends on where the team finishes in the League standings. The Club's that miss the playoffs are placed into a lottery for the 1st round only. After the 1st round, the Club's select in order from fewest to most regular season points.

A number of years ago, WHL Clubs were allowed to list first-year bantam players as of a set date in September. However, first-year bantams had been playing at the peewee level the previous year, and in order to list first-year bantams, WHL Clubs needed to scout the peewee ranks. This had many drawbacks including the need for extensive scouting systems along with the related expense, as well the added pressure on peewee-aged players (12-13 year-olds).

In order to get away from scouting peewees, the WHL instituted a bantam draft. WHL Clubs send scouts to watch first-year bantams from the start of the minor hockey season. After the season, the WHL holds a draft specifically to allow teams to add bantam players in an orderly manner to their protected lists. While this draft is the first opportunity for teams to select bantam players, it is not the last chance for a player to be listed. After the draft is completed, all the remaining bantams become eligible to be listed by teams, and many will be added as spots become available on Club's PPLs, or as a player's talents improve or are more noticeable at a later date or at a higher level of hockey.

During the bantam draft (typically held in early May), players from the four Western Provinces and the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming are eligible to be selected. For the 2010 bantam draft, players born in 1995 may be selected.

Players from non-North American countries are allowed to be added in the CHL Import Draft which is held in June.

The Seattle Thunderbirds are also following the draft closely. In fact, they have a big stake in the draft. According to the Seattle Thunderbird's Ian Henry, Director of Public & Media Relations, "The T-Birds have the fourth overall pick in the first round. They have one second round pick, two third round picks and no fourth round pick. The T-Birds have two selections in the fifth and seventh rounds, but no selections in the sixth round. They then have a single pick from the eighth round through the 13th round." Seattle Thunderbirds fans can follow the picks made by the T-Birds on the team's Facebook and Twitter pages. The T-Birds Facebook page is <http://www.facebook.com/SeattleThunderbirds> and the Twitter page is <http://twitter.com/seattletbirds>.

Best wishes to all involved!

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