

St. Andrew's College officially introduces Prep Hockey Conference

When the NHL introduced six original teams to their professional hockey league, we fans still laud this initiative today.

There are international leagues around the world because of it. There are plenty of youth leagues and affiliate clubs to NHL teams that provide an essential gateway into the pros.

This past week, St. Andrew's College (SAC) can say they too have introduced an original six, so to speak. SAC formally announced it has joined forces with five other private high schools in the United States to create the Prep Hockey Conference.

St. Andrew's College, Culver Academies (Culver, Indiana), South Kent School (Kent, Connecticut), Rhode Island Shattuck-St. Mary's School (Faribault, Minnesota), Northwood School (Lake Placid, New York) and Shattuck-St. Mary's School (Faribault, Minnesota) will make up the league.

?Four of us have been getting together to host some shared events for the last five or six years. It really grew out of that. We love those weekends and we love the competitions. We're all like-minded in what we want to offer our students and our athletes,? said David Manning, Head Coach of the St. Andrew's College Saints first hockey team.

Each school carries an ambition to offer an excellent academic program while ensuring they are in a competitive hockey environment in order to be successful. The goal was to keep as many options open for players and this route is the best fit.

?I'd say that our players are definitely interested in seeing that the NCAA can be a potential option for them. I think being in U.S. places in you know two or three of these weekends is important for our players to showcase themselves,? Manning said.

?When you get the six best teams around together it's going to put people in the building to watch those teams play.?

Manning confirmed NHL, NCAA and many other scouts will be attending these games. He said season preparations will begin at the end of August and the season will begin shortly after. As of now, they are doing what they can with all restrictions in place.

The way the schedule is designed, it will provide plenty of flexibility for the Saints to host their annual MacPherson Tournament and the Gary West tournament.

Manning says everything and anything will be done to ensure travelling is made easy for the team. They will do everything necessary.

The Saints are very excited to be a part of the PHC. Manning hopes this conference continues to grow years down the road.

By Robert Belardi