

Tigers defenceman the latest to commit to D1 hockey



By Jake Courtepatte

Add another name to the list of Aurora Tigers taking the next step to the top college hockey level in the world.

Defenceman Liam Ham announced his commitment Friday to join the NCAA's Clarkson University hockey squad for the 2017-18 season, a member of the Division 1 league.

The first Tiger of his class to commit to Clarkson, Ham follows in the footsteps of Auroran ? and Newmarket Hurricanes graduate ? Jeff DiNallo, who signed with the ECHL's Adirondack Thunder this season after four years with the Golden Knights.

Cheel Arena, home of the Golden Knights, was recently named the fourth best arena in D1 hockey for atmosphere by [stadiumjourney.com](#).

The Newmarket native had a successful rookie year as a 17-year old with the Tigers in the 2015-16 season, playing top minutes on the blue line while establishing himself as an elite scoring defenceman. Ham recorded three goals and 18 assists, and was second among Aurora blueliners in points throughout the season, adding five assists in six games in the playoffs.

He was one of only two players to compete in all 54 games for the Tigers this season.

A product of the York Simcoe Express AAA system, Ham's skills have always put him high in his class. He captained the YSE Minor Midget AAAs in the 2014-15 season, leading them to a berth in the prestigious OHL Cup tournament.

Following the season, Ham was drafted by the Niagara IceDogs in the sixth round of the 2015 OHL Priority Selection Draft.

?He's a tough player,? said Golden Knights head coach Casey Jones, who just finished his fifth season behind the Clarkson bench. ?He should provide us with some steady production on the blue line for years to come.?

Five other players on the 2015-16 roster have also already made D1 commitments for the future: Matthew Bernard, Drake Board, and Noah Delmas will be joining the Niagara University Purple Eagles, captain Daniel Mantenuto is joining the Robert Morris Colonials, and part-timer Brody Brunet is joining the Lake Superior Lakers.

Kyle Locke, a steady force on the Tigers' blue line for the past two seasons, will be playing CIS hockey at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology in September.