

Kevin King

I was born and raised in Calgary, AB and I grew up playing in Lake Bonavista my whole minor hockey career, from the ages of 4-13. Growing up I always played summer hockey with some of the best kids in the city and had to balance it with high-level baseball. I loved baseball and was just as good at it as I was hockey, arguably better at that time. I was fortunate enough to go to Nationals two consecutive years in 2000 & 2001 to represent Team Alberta. However, I felt the need to choose what path I wanted to take, hockey or baseball, and hockey won out. I felt that I could not sustain both sports at a high level. This was by no means an easy decision and not one that I have not thought about many times since.

Growing up, top players across their respective provinces are invited to various camps as an ongoing tryout to eventually pick a team to represent their province. I was invited to and attended all the Team Alberta events; making every team I was trying out for and wore the "C" or "A" for each team. I was a member of every team from Calgary South to Team Alberta itself where I had the privilege to represent Team Alberta at the Canada Winter Games (2007), we placed 3rd.

My first year out of minor hockey was at the Edge School for Athletes. I played on the Bantam AAA team and was chosen to be the assistant captain. After having a strong year, I was lucky enough to be chosen in the 3rd round of the WHL draft, 60th overall to the Kootenay Ice. The following year I attended Notre Dame in Wilcox, Saskatchewan and played for the Midget AAA Hounds. I felt leaving home and joining a reputable school and hockey program was the best option to prepare me to make the WHL in the upcoming season.

With one Major Junior camp under my belt as a 15-year-old, my 16-year-old year was my first shot to crack the WHL with the Kootenay Ice. I worked extremely hard and made the team as a 16-year-old, the only one of my draft class that season. I ended up playing there for 5 years, being the assistant captain for the last 3 of those 5 years. I went out with a bang being league champions in my final season and birth to the Memorial Cup, unfortunately losing in the semi finals. These 5 years of my life remain some of my favourite so far. On top of my time in the Western League I was fortunate enough to have some other great experiences. After my first year in the WHL I was invited to try out for Team Canada (2008) and a shot to play in the U18 Ivan Hlinka tournament in the Czech Republic. As an underdog and not supposed to make the team I battled my way on it and represented Canada overseas. I was never drafted in the NHL draft, but I was fortunate enough to attend 2 rookie camps with the Minnesota Wild as well as a summer camp and a rookie camp with the Dallas Stars.

The summer after my WHL career was over I signed a 1-year AHL contract with the Syracuse Crunch (farm team for Anaheim at the time) where I played half a season with them and their ECHL affiliate team, the Elmira Jackals. The second half of that season, I made another life changing decision, and I chose to leave professional hockey and return home to attend school at the University of Calgary. I had the choice of sticking it out in professional hockey or come back and utilize my WHL scholarship, and I chose the latter. I played four and a half seasons with the Dino's having personal and team success all the while, working my way to a degree. My first full year (second year of eligibility) I was appointed the assistant captainship, which I wore for two seasons; my final two seasons I was promoted to be the captain. In 2015, I was blessed with another opportunity to wear a Team Canada jersey at the World Universiade in Granada, Spain. I was appointed assistant captain. After a heartbreaking loss to the Russians in the Semi's, we won the bronze medal to end the already amazing experience on a high note.

After my time at school, I went on to finish the season in the ECHL with a good friend of mine. I did that for a few reasons, one of which was to remind myself what the ECHL was all about, another was to see what I wanted to do in the following years of my career and lastly was to play in a cool spot with my good friend, something I valued at the time. When I got down there, I was shocked with a phone call from the Texas Stars of the AHL calling me up to play with them. They remembered me from the camps I had gone to with Dallas

and gave me a shot. It was short lived, however, reiterated where I was at in my career and life and showed me where my values lay.

After my experiences and self evaluation, I chose to head over to Europe to play professional hockey for the next four seasons to come. I played in France (Gap Rapaces), England (Milton Keynes and Guildford), and Italy (Cortina d'Ampezzo). These experiences were beyond words fantastic.

Sports have given the most valuable lessons and experiences in my life, hands down. That is why I am doing what I am now, helping others get the most of their experiences. I had a great ride but now it is time to turn the page and begin a new chapter in my life.

I have been blessed to play the game I love, and I have had many great experiences. I would be grateful to be given the opportunity to bring my heart, passion, skills, and experience to help every athlete get the most out of their own experience. Let us embark on this journey together.