

Spruce Kings reveal Indigenous jerseys ahead of home opener

September 27, 2022



PRINCE GEORGE – The Prince George Spruce Kings revealed their Indigenous jerseys on Tuesday morning (Sept. 27th) ahead of their home opener in conjunction with National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Local Indigenous artist Clayton Gauthier designed the jerseys.



“I created a circle design; the circle of life doesn’t end. It just keeps going. Even after we leave here, it just keeps going. I ended up putting the logo of the Spruce Kings within the sun. I feel the men on the ice are bringing the light; putting them in there is like their own power.”

“The spruce tree, of course, the Spruce Kings, incorporating what is now and how we can expand it as an art.”

Gauthier, a member of the Dakelh First Nation, included a salmon in the design. According to Gauthier, Dakelh translates to the “people who travelled by water”. He explained the waterways were what took care of his people and salmon took care of all that his ancestors needed. In art, a salmon represents wealth and prosperity.

Gauthier was contacted by Spruce Kings’ General Manager Mike Hawes at the conclusion of the 2021-22 season.

“There are many things in life that are bigger than the game of hockey. The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is a day to reflect on the negative impacts of residential school in Canada and to honour survivors, their families, and their communities,” stated Hawes during the jersey reveal at Kopar Memorial Arena. “It is also important to remember the many children that never returned home. This creates a learning opportunity for us all and reinforces the need for reconciliation.”

Hawes added there was much deliberation between the organization and Gauthier on the design.

“Clayton knocked it out of the park,” said Hawes.

“I’m honoured to see them wear these jerseys. Just seeing their faces, I know they’re proud of them. I know they are, I can feel it,” said Gauthier.

“We’re not all the same, but it shows a lot when we can all be united and take time to reflect on the past, and make the future an accepting place for everyone,” said Spruce Kings captain Colton Cameron who also has Metis heritage.

“I’m so blessed that this art is actually bringing more people together. It’s creating new relationships behind the scenes. It’s just an honour to be a part of. Everybody has a purpose and I feel like this is really why I’m here,” said Gauthier.

There will be many special events planned during the game including Indigenous dancers and drummers. Many dignitaries will be in attendance and will participate in pre-game and intermission ceremonies.

The Spruce Kings are honoured to partner with Lheidli T’enneh to spread awareness of and reflect on the tragedies experienced by Indigenous people as a result of the country’s former residential school system.

“We are very pleased the Prince George Spruce Kings are recognizing the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation during its home game on September 30th,” said Lheidli T’enneh Chief Dolleen Logan. “We are honoured to be asked to participate and represent our Elders, Members, Council and Administration. The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is a very tough day for all Indigenous Canadians.”

“It is a day to remember the thousands of kids who died while attending residential schools between the mid-1800s and the 1990s. It is also a day to support Survivors, Inter-Generational Survivors and their families. We thank the Spruce Kings for taking time to help our community better understand why this day is so important for Indigenous people.”

A sold-out building is anticipated for this game, with tickets available at www.sprucekings.bc.ca/pgsktickets