Ten Buckeyes Taken In Inaugural Professional Women's Hockey League Draft

The new Professional Women's Hockey League had its first-ever draft Sept. 18, and there were 10 former Buckeyes drafted by the league's six franchises.

Ohio State's draftees were Sophi Jaques, Emma Maltais, Jincy Dunne, Natalie Spooner, Clair DeGeorge, Madison Bizal, Paetyn Levis, Liz Schepers, Tatum Skaggs and Minttu Tuominen.

Jaques, who won Western College Hockey Association defensive player of the year as a Buckeye last season, was the first to go, taken in the second round with the 10th overall pick by Boston.

Maltais, who also was on the runner-up team last season, adds to her Olympic gold medal resume by being drafted right after Jaques with the 11th pick to Toronto, her hometown team. She was the fourth forward to go in the draft. She will play with Spooner there, who was also on Team Canada with her on the 2022 Olympic team that won it all.

There is at least one Buckeye on each of the six teams in the league after the draft. That should be no surprise after what head coach Nadine Muzerall has been able to accomplish with the program, taking them from a team that had 10 losing seasons in a row to a threat to win the title every single season. Eight of the players drafted played under Muzerall in her six seasons in Columbus.

Five of the 10 draftees were part of the 2021-22 national championship team. Those were Jaques, Bizal, DeGeorge, Levis and Schepers. Montreal took Bizal with the 43rd pick, Minnesota chose DeGeorge at 36th and Schepers with the 73rd pick, and Levis went 57th to New York.

The details of what arenas they will all play in, their team names and logos are still not decided on, but they will be on rosters of the first PWHL teams. The schedule has also not been announced yet, but play is supposed to begin in January of 2024.

Women's hockey is growing quickly, and it has intersected with Muzerall building a powerhouse at Ohio State where there will likely be many more players drafted out of in the coming years.