

New Vegas Affiliate Brings Rich History

By Dave Lukow

The Fort Wayne Komets have been around a bit.

The ECHL affiliate of the Vegas Golden Knights, the Komets began play - as members of the International Hockey League (IHL) - in 1952-53. More than six decades later, the hockey team is part of the landscape in the Indiana city it calls home.

On August 21, Fort Wayne announced the one-year affiliation with the Golden Knights. The Chicago Wolves of the AHL are the top farm club for Vegas.

“We are proud to add the ECHL’s Fort Wayne Komets as an affiliate,” George McPhee, the Vegas general manager, said. “ECHL clubs play an important role in player development. Our young players and prospects will have the opportunity to grow and improve in both Fort Wayne at the ECHL level and then in Chicago at the American Hockey League level.”

Members of the ECHL since 2012, the Komets, in addition to the IHL, have played in the United Hockey League (UHL) and the Central Hockey League (CHL). Fort Wayne has won 12 regular season titles, has captured 12 division crowns, and has claimed nine championships, including seven in the IHL.

Last season, the Komets were 46-20-5-1, good for 98 points and second place in the Central Division. They were eliminated in the third round of the playoffs.

Fort Wayne’s average attendance was 7,784 per game, best in the ECHL.

Gary Graham has been the club’s head coach since the 2013-14 season. He led the Pensacola Ice Flyers to an SPHL championship the previous year. Graham was a member of the Pittsburgh Jr. Penguins in 1997-98.

Only the six original NHL teams - Montreal, Toronto, Boston, the New York Rangers, Detroit and Chicago - and the AHL’s Hershey Bears have played pro hockey continuously in the same city with the same name longer than the Komets.

Fort Wayne plays home games at Allen County War Memorial Coliseum.