



**10/29/22: PHANTOMS ANNOUNCE CAPTAINS FOR ALL STATE ARENA GAME**

**CAPTAINS ANNOUNCED FOR ALL STATE ARENA GAME; CHRIS LAUX & CJ JONES TO SERVE AS BENCH BOSSES FOR PHANTOMS IN TEAM'S FIRST EVER GAME IN STATE OF ILLINOIS**

The West Michigan Phantoms are set to embark on the team's first journey into the State of Illinois to play in a game since the team was founded back in 2002. Just over twenty years since the team debuted, the Black and Yellow will enter Cook County and the Village of Rosemont, Illinois to play in a Black vs. Gray scrimmage game at All State Arena, home to the Chicago Wolves. For over eight years, the players and friends that make up Phantom Hockey, have assembled outside of the normal men's league rinks to play in a series of scrimmage games in arenas that many players don't get the opportunity to play in. While rinks such as Joe Louis Arena, Yost Ice Arena, Van Andel Arena, Little Caesar's Arena and Wings Stadium are just some of the facilities that the Phantoms have ventured to in the past, Rosemont's All State Arena will be the team's ninth special arena to play in and the third largest at a hockey capacity.

For the Phantoms, it took just under three months to fill the player slots, however, in a couple of weeks 26 skaters and 2 goaltenders will enter as the Phantoms to play against each other on the same ice as the defending American Hockey League champion Chicago Wolves. For this upcoming battle near the Windy City, the Phantoms selected two members that have been apart of the group for several years to act as honorary captains for each side. Chris Laux and CJ Jones will serve as player bench-bosses for this upcoming 90-minute tilt under the wooden roof of All State Arena. For Laux, the former East Kentwood High School stand-out has been apart of the Phantoms since 2014 after Nate Skoboda introduced him to the group and has been apart of the group's other network teams (the Zombies and Lakeside Locomotives) in the past. Laux is currently an active member of the Phantoms in men's league hockey at Walker Ice & Fitness Center near

Grand Rapids, Michigan. In terms of Jones, the former Owosso, Michigan resident grew into the group as a substitute player of the Zombies back in 2014. Jones was asked to be a sub one game by former Zombie member Greg Marcusse and from that moment on, CJ has been a great fixture on the Zombies, as well as seeing action for the Phantoms and Locomotives. Both Laux and Jones have played in several Black vs. Gray games since the series started in 2014 and both have the knowledge, expectations and fundamentals to help both teams have fun and enjoy this experience of playing at All State Arena.

In previous Black vs. Gray games, players for each team are drafted by the dedicated captains. This All State Arena game will be slightly different due to the large amount of unfamiliar players to the West Michigan group. For Rosemont, a total hockey player group of 28 (26 skaters and 2 goaltenders) will be coming to this Black vs. Gray game. Grand Rapids/Muskegon will yield 18 players, Chicago will supply 9 players and 1 player will come from Kalamazoo. With so many unfamiliar faces and unknowns for this game, a skill level rating was used to rate the skill (1-5) of every known player to the group and a questionnaire was completed by all of the unfamiliar names to help develop an experience level, preferred playing position and ultimately a skill level rating (1-5) for themselves. From that point, teams were chosen in a round-by-round setting based on skill level ratings and team player position needs to come up with both rosters. In the end, of the combined 88.5 points that were calculated as skill level points of the skaters, the teams are separated by just 0.5 points. Goaltenders were not factored into the draft until all of the skater positions were determined. Every effort has and continues to be put into place to ensure these Black vs. Gray games are balanced and fun. This All State Arena game has been the most challenging due to the large number of unfamiliar players, however, the main goal is to have a fun skate, enjoy the atmosphere and if changes are needed during the game, changes will occur.

After the Phantom Black and Phantom Gray team's skate at All State Arena, the group will return a few hours later to watch as the Chicago Wolves take on the Iowa Wild during the team's 'Military Appreciation Night'. The Phantom group will be large, with 63 tickets requested by all the players and friends of the group that made this Black vs. Gray skate possible. More information on the West Michigan Phantoms can be found on the team's website at [www.WMPhantoms.com](http://www.WMPhantoms.com) or [www.WestMichiganPhantoms.com](http://www.WestMichiganPhantoms.com). Additionally, 'West Michigan Phantom Hockey' is the team's official Facebook page and 'Phantom Hockey: Chicago Wolves Skate' is the official Facebook event page for this November

12th event. Be sure to check all three out for the latest news and happenings of the West Michigan Phantoms.