The Professional Women's Hockey League announces branding for newest teams

By EMILY MARQUIS
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The Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL) announced the names and logos of its four newest expansion teams Nov. 10 ahead of the league's opening game Dec. 5.

The release comes in light of the May 2026 announcement of four additional expansion teams ahead of the 2026-27 season, the fourth season of the PWHL. The recipient cities were Detroit, Michigan; Hamiliton, Ontario; Las Vegas, Nevada and San Jose, California.

Shortly after the announcement of these expansion franchises, the PWHL announced team colors for each of women's hockey's newest professional teams, with newest signed superstars wearing "city-branded jerseys" in all promotional material. Like each of the eight existing previous PWHL teams — the original six franchises and the two additional added franchises — the four expansion franchises will wear those original "city-branded jerseys" for its inaugural season, before transitioning to using the new monikers during the teams' second season.

Despite maintaining those old jerseys for the upcoming season, the new branding — which includes logos and nicknames for each of the four franchises — have hit the professional women's ice hockey community.

The Detroit Clutch, Hamilton Havoc, San Jose Sea Lions and Vegas Vanguards each hold a distinct branding identity that aims to pull together the women's hockey community in their respective cities. Let's take a look at the branding — and its reception — team by team.

DETROIT CLUTCH

The Motor City's newest professional sports franchise draws attention from the unique connection between Detroit's automotive industry that the city's professional hockey teams have embraced. The name Clutch sits in loopy ombre letters, encircled by a black gear, further tying together the hard-working Detroit attitude derived from its Motor City boom.

Other small logo details bring the branding together. The 24 notches on the gear represent each of the 24 players on Detroit's team, with the three lines on the gear representing Detroit's "Motown" history in the shape of a vinyl record.

Promotional material surrounding the brand release highlights how "Hockeytown" has been at the cusp of PWHL expansion — the city has set multiple attendance records during exhibition games, and Clutch represents that gritty, hard-working mentality that Detroit's women's hockey fandom represents.

However, among those fans, the name and branding is a bit more polarizing.

"This is a terrible team name on so many levels," one X user wrote.

Others were on board with the name, citing the uniqueness of the name and its relevance to the city as a point in its favor. Others were still frustrated with how the logo, despite depicting part of the clutch gear, did not look visually interesting in comparison with the other expansion team designs.

HAMILTON HAVOC

The faithful fans of Hamiliton, Ontario have been waiting for a professional hockey team for a long time, and have finally secured one in the Havoc. With the design of the logo centered around the official bird of the city, the peregrine falcon, the logo combines the natural world around the city with its history in the steel business. This includes lettering and the peregrine falcon itself being depicted as bolted together.

Besides the small bolts depicted throughout the design, the rust red of the logo further ties back to the steel mill beginnings of the city, with flame orange accents only furthering that connection.

Another brand identity in which the design team looked to capture the ever-fluid identity of the city, Hamiliton's fan base has embraced the new name and logo. Reception following the brand announcement on X regarding both the design and the name have been primarily positive.

"This is by far my favorite name and logo of the four new teams," another X user said.

SAN JOSE SEA LIONS

With the popularity of women's hockey on the West Coast evident in the success of the Seattle Torrent and the Vancouver Golden Eyes, a team in the highest populated U.S. state was imminent. Like the other professional hockey team in San Jose, the Sea Lions have continued the ocean theming.

With an orange and navy color scheme, the logo depicts a sea lion against the California coastline, as the Pacific Ocean laps against the head of the sea lion. Each of the colors represents a part of the coastal environment of San Jose: coastal blue, tidal navy, sea mist and sunset orange.

Although some fans expressed frustration that the name did not match the name of the defunct California Seals / Golden Seals, the majority of San Jose supporters also seemed to share excitement for the rebrand.

VEGAS VANGUARDS

Sticking with the theme of western U.S. hockey, the Vegas Vanguards round out the expansion, rounding out the illiterative names. The logo and colors match the Mojave desert that surrounds Sin City, as a kit fox with its ears in the shape of a V.

The nickname itself "vanguards" has some military connotation, relating to the leaders of military formation, but the team itself did not have any mention of the military in its branding, despite "cactus green" and "desert gold" sharing similarities with military service.

Although the design itself has been praised by fans, with the V formation of the kit foxes ear drawing comparisons to the V within the NHL's Golden Knights logo. The nickname has drawn confusion from some fans though. Under the release of the branding on X, fans expressed they were unsure of what a "vanguard" even was. Others expressed disinterest in the name altogether.

"I like everything, except the blue pants and the team name," an X user wrote.



ILLUSTRATION BY LILIANA MIRABELLA

How to decorate your dorm for the holidays on a budget

By EMILY ALLEN
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A Pinterest-worthy dorm room doesn't have to come with a Pinterest-worthy price tag. Between textbooks, tuition, everyday expenses and a daily Iced Sugar Cookie Latte from Starbucks, college students already have enough to worry about financially. However, transforming a small dorm room into a cozy winter wonderland doesn't have to cost a fortune.

As temperatures begin to drop and the holiday season approaches, college students are trading their spooky Halloween decorations for twinkling lights, festive blankets and winter-inspired decorations. While decorating for the holidays at home may involve years of collected decorations and family traditions, bringing that same festive spirit into a dorm room can be challenging, especially when working with limited space and an even smaller budget.

For many students, a dorm isn't just a place where they go to sleep. It's also a study spot, a place to hang out with friends, a place to relax after a day of classes and a home away from home. Creating an environment that feels comforting, welcoming and reflects a person's personality can help make college life just a little bit easier.

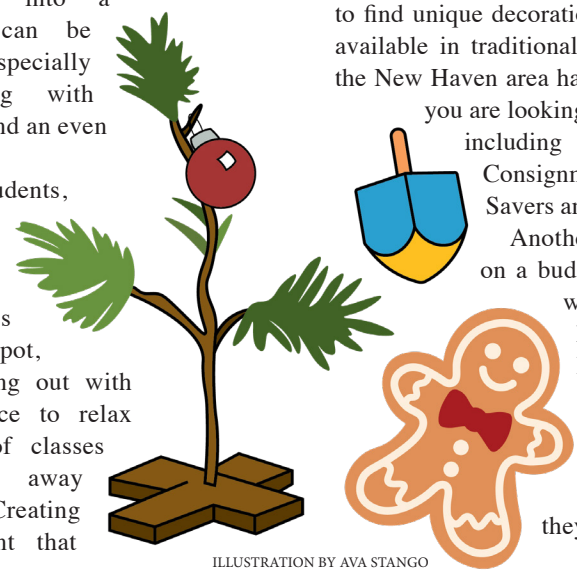

ILLUSTRATION BY AVA STANGO

One of the easiest ways to decorate a dorm room on a budget is to shop smart and take advantage of affordable stores. There are so many places that we have access to, whether it's in Hamden, a town close by or right on our phones. Stores like Five Below, Walmart, Target, Marshalls and even Amazon offer an incredibly affordable selection.

For students looking to save even more money, thrift stores can be a hidden holiday treasure. Secondhand shops often carry seasonal decorations, including ornaments, wreaths, decorative figurines and other festive accessories.

Not only does thrifting help students save money, but it also gives them the opportunity to find unique decorations that might not be available in traditional stores. Hamden and the New Haven area have a ton of options if you are looking to shop secondhand, including Goodwill, Uptown Consignment, The Barn Sale, Savers and Homemaker Thrift.

Another way to decorate on a budget is to get creative with some DIY holiday decorations. Instead of purchasing expensive seasonal wall art, students can create their own using supplies they already have. Paper snowflakes, handmade garlands, personalized ornaments and printed winter-themed pictures are simple ways to add holiday cheer to a dorm room.

For decor ideas, you can turn to Pinterest, Instagram, Tiktok or other social media platforms to inspire some creativity. For creative supplies, you can go to Dollar Tree, Five Below or Michaels.

Students can also use free design websites, like Canva, to create personalized holiday posters or print out their favorite seasonal quotes. Hanging these prints with dorm-approved adhesive can instantly make a room feel more festive without requiring a large investment.

When it comes to holiday decorating, sometimes the smallest details make the biggest difference. Adding a cozy throw blanket, switching out decorative pillows for winter-themed ones or placing a small seasonal centerpiece on a desk can completely transform the atmosphere of a dorm room.

Lighting can also play a major role in creating a cozy holiday environment. Many college dorm rooms have bright overhead lights that don't exactly create the warm atmosphere associated with the holiday season. Battery-operated candles, small lamps and dorm-approved string lights can help create a more comfortable and festive space.

For students with limited space, large decorations might not be realistic, but that doesn't mean they have to skip decorating altogether. Miniature tabletop decorations, small wreaths and window decorations are affordable alternatives that can fit on a desk, dresser or windowsill.

Choosing decorations that can be reused throughout the winter season can also help students get more value out of their purchases.

Students can also bring decorations from home instead of purchasing everything new. An extra strand of garland, a favorite ornament or a small seasonal decoration can add a personal touch while reminding students of their family traditions.

Although social media is filled with perfectly decorated dorm rooms, students shouldn't feel pressured to recreate every holiday trend they see online. Holiday decorating doesn't need to be expensive or elaborate to be meaningful.

For many college students, the holiday season arrives during one of the busiest times of the semester. Between final exams, projects and preparing to head home for winter break, having a festive and comfortable space can provide a little extra joy during a stressful time.

However, at the end of the day, decorating a dorm room for the holidays isn't about having the most expensive decorations or the most aesthetically pleasing setup. It's about creating a space that brings comfort, happiness and some seasonal magic to everyday college life. With a little creativity, smart shopping and some holiday spirit, students can deck the halls of their dorm rooms without decking out their bank accounts.