



Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Firebirds Acquire Overage Goaltender Vella from Mississauga

Flint, Mich. – The Flint Firebirds announced today that the club has completed a trade with the Mississauga Steelheads.

In the trade, Flint receives overage goaltender Emanuel Vella (pronounced vel-uh) from Mississauga. In return, the Firebirds trade a fifth-round pick in the 2019 OHL Priority Selection to the Steelheads.

Vella, 20, comes to Flint with championship experience at every level he has played at. He was a member of the 2016 CHL Memorial Cup champions London Knights after being selected in the third round (47th overall) of the 2014 OHL Priority Selection. Additionally, Vella played an integral role in leading the Toronto Patriots to the Ontario Junior Hockey League (OJHL) championship in 2015 where he recorded a 2.37 goals-against-average (GAA) and a .917 save percentage (SAV%). Prior to his junior career, Vella bolstered the Toronto Jr. Canadiens Minor Midget AAA Hockey Club to the Kraft Cup Championship as the best regular season record in the Greater Toronto Hockey League (GTHL), en-route to becoming the GTHL Scotiabank Playoff champions.

“We are very happy and excited to announce the addition of Emanuel to our hockey club,” said Flint Firebirds Vice President of Hockey Operations & General Manager Barclay Branch. “Emanuel is a high character person that brings an abundance of experience and leadership to our group.”

Last season, the 6-foot-4, 190-pound netminder posted a 3.28 GAA and a .896 SAV% in 32 games with Mississauga. He was named the Vaughn CHL Goaltender of the Week for the week ending February 25 after posting a 4-0-0-0 record including two shutout victories with a goals-against-average of 1.50 and save percentage of .954. Additionally, Vella was Mississauga’s nominee for the Dan Snyder Memorial Trophy during the 2017-18 season, which is awarded annually to the OHL’s Humanitarian of the Year.

“The first thing that strikes me is how good the atmosphere is in Flint and how loud and exciting the fans are,” said Vella. “I’m looking forward to learning the area and being a productive member of the community.”

Prior to Mississauga, the Toronto, Ont. native recorded a 3.21 GAA and a .863 SAV% with the Owen Sound Attack where he helped earn the Dave Pinkney Trophy, which is awarded annually to the goaltending tandem from the team that allows the fewest goals against during the regular season. Vella also posted a 2.28 GAA and a .938 SAV% in playoffs with the Attack.

“It’s very exciting. The team is on the upswing and there’s a lot of high-end young talent in Flint,” added Vella. “It’s a big hockey opportunity. I’m just looking forward to developing a winning culture in Flint.”

Vella recently attended the New York Islanders NHL Development Camp. He will arrive in Flint for training camp in late August and will wear number 30 for the Firebirds.



Flint Firebirds Hockey Club, Member of the Ontario Hockey League and Canadian Hockey League
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