

NWHL Founder Dani Rylan Kearney Named Lead Operations Consultant of Long Island's Only Female USA Hockey Tier 1 Organization

Former NWHL Commissioner Appointed to Elevate the Island's Premier Female Hockey Program – the Lady Islanders

Dix Hills, N.Y., March 4, 2022 – The Long Island Lady Islanders today proudly announced the hiring of National Women's Hockey League founder and former commissioner Dani Rylan Kearney as Lead Consultant of Operations of the Lady Islanders – the only USA Hockey Tier 1 female organization on Long Island.

In this role, Rylan Kearney – who played NCAA Division I hockey at Northeastern and served as team captain – will lead the development and implementation of a unified girls' hockey program. Among her other responsibilities will be overseeing the advisory committee, creating a curriculum for every age level, recruiting the best coaches and staff to enhance player development, and devising a strategic and progressive business plan to further elevate the Lady Islanders as a flagship hockey program.

“The addition of Dani Rylan Kearney to a leadership position is a game-changer for the Lady Islanders organization, our players and community, and everyone on Long Island who is passionate about the future of girls' and women's hockey,” said Rich Righi, President of the Lady Islanders. “Our program in Dix Hills is the only USA Hockey Tier 1 female organization on Long Island, and we believe it is the premier program in this community. During this period of explosive growth for the game, we will create a high-level, respectful, and inspirational environment that will enable our athletes to reach their ultimate potential. The girls program at Dix Hills will be expanded to include the Rebels. Starting this season, we will complement the Lady Islanders by also fielding Tier 2 girls teams. By offering both Tier 1 and Tier 2 Dani's program will be able to meet the needs of every girl who wishes to participate in the great sport of hockey.”

In 2015, Rylan Kearney founded the NWHL – the first women's pro hockey league based in the U.S. As the league's first commissioner (2015–2020), Rylan Kearney raised capital, chaired the board of directors, started a Player Safety Committee, and negotiated contracts with league and team staff, players, venues, and partners. With the NWHLPA, Rylan Kearney co-authored the Standard Player Contract, including a landmark 50/50 partnership revenue-sharing deal – the first in women's sports history. With her colleagues, she created the league brand and identity, and team names, brands, and uniforms. Rylan Kearney expanded the NWHL's geographical footprint with expansion to Minnesota (2018) and Toronto (2020), and with All-Star Games in Pittsburgh and Nashville in partnership with those city's NHL teams. She also expanded the NWHL's digital footprint with innovative streaming deals, including a first-of-its-kind rights agreement with Twitch in 2019, which featured a commitment by Twitch to harness its influence and contacts to bring meaningful corporate partnerships to the NWHL.

“Long Island has become my home, so to be offered this leadership role and have the opportunity to make an impact in the community makes me proud and fired up to get to work,” said Rylan Kearney, who was raised in Tampa and moved to New York after Northeastern to launch the NWHL. “I have witnessed the passion for hockey on the Island, and I'm eager to

help build an organization to make this area proud. As a new parent, I'm further inspired by my daughter Shae to continue to give my best for the advancement of the game I love.”

Rylan Kearney's work advancing women's hockey has earned several honors. These include being the recipient of the “Game Changers” Award from Sports Business Journal, and recognition as one of ESPN's Impact 25 and Fast Company's Most Creative People. In 2017, she was invited to sign the NHL's Declaration of Principles as a representative of the NWHL.

Homegrown Series

With support from the Long Island Lady Islanders and the Long Island Rebels, the Dix Hills Ice Rink is proud to host this initiative for Dani Rylan Kearney. Dani has developed a program the “Homegrown” series which consists of clinics open to all female hockey players looking to raise their game by learning from local role models. The clinics will be led by Division 1 and professional hockey players from Long Island.

“Our goal is to build a culture at the Dix Hills Ice Rink that positively promotes player development on Long Island,” said Rylan Kearney. “Having many of Long Island's best women's hockey players headline ‘Homegrown’ is just one of many important aspects of our plan.”

The first clinic is this Monday, March 7. Coaches will include Cailey Hutchison (Hicksville), University of Maine and NWHL's Connecticut Whale; Taylor Holze (Lynbrook), Boston University and NWHL's New York Riveters; Nicole Giannino (Bay Shore) Holy Cross, CWHL's Boston Blades, and Professional Women's Hockey Players Association (PWHPA); Siena Falino (Centerport) Northeastern University; Nicole Guidi (Melville), Sacred Heart University; and Grace Dima (Huntington Bay) and Jeannie Wallner (Kings Park), Long Island University.

Additional professional and former collegiate players are planning to participate. Check for schedule updates and more information is available on ladyislanders.org.