



Buffalo Bandits Get Over the Hump, Win First NLL Cup Since 2008 and Fifth In Franchise History

After appearing in the last two NLL Finals, Buffalo secures the two games to one victory over Colorado, Dhane Smith named Finals MVP

BUFFALO, N.Y., June 3, 2023 – Holding the Colorado Mammoth to an NLL Finals record low four goals, the Buffalo Bandits win the 2023 NLL Cup, winning 13-4 on the night and winning the series two games to one in a rematch of the 2022 NLL Finals.

Dhane Smith (Kitchener, Ont.) was named Finals MVP, after recording two goals and seven assists in Game 3 to lead the Bandits. For the series, Smith totaled nine goals and 14 assists for 23 points. His 49 points during the postseason is a new league record. The Finals MVP was voted upon by the players from across the NLL's 13 other franchises and took into account all three games of the series. Dhane Smith becomes the 12th player in NLL history to win a regular season MVP and Finals MVP in their career.

With the victory, the Bandits claim their fifth NLL title, good for a tie for third by any NLL franchise (Halifax, trailing the Albany FireWolves and Toronto Rock franchises with six), and their first since 2008. Their other championships came in 1992, 1993, and 1996. Head Coach, John Tavares was a player on that 2008 team when they defeated the Portland LumberJax as well as all three titles in the 1990's, earning Finals MVP in 1992 and 1993.

Buffalo finished the regular season as the overall No. 1 seed at 14-4 for the third completed season in a row. After advancing to the NLL Finals the previous two seasons, they finally emerge as champions. Along the way to the Finals, they defeated the Rochester Knighthawks, 20-8, in the single game elimination Quarterfinals and the Toronto Rock, two games to none in the East Conference Final, never trailing at any point during the first two rounds.

Colorado finished 9-9 in the regular season and qualified as the lowest seed of the eight team format, sitting in the No. 4 seed in the West. They upset the No. 1 West seed in San Diego, 13-12 in the Quarterfinal, and the No. 2 seed Calgary Roughnecks two games to one in the West Conference Finals, to set up the NLL Finals rematch. **Eli McLaughlin** (Surrey, B.C.) and **Connor Robinson** (New Westminster,

B.C.) each had a team high three points while **Dillon Ward** (Orangeville, Ont.) saved 47 of 60 shots in net in the Game 3 loss.

After taking Game 1 in Buffalo in thrilling fashion by a score of 13-12 on May 24, the Bandits fell to the Mammoth 16-10 in Colorado on May 26. They returned home for their Game 3 victory in front of their faithful fans, 18,296 in attendance at KeyBank Center, after averaging a league high 14,731 fans during the regular season. After missing Games 1 and 2, the Bandits welcomed back forward **Josh Byrne** (New Westminster, B.C.) to the lineup, who contributed four goals and three assists in the victory. Goaltender, **Matt Vinc** (St. Catharines, Ont.) saved 46 of 50 shots.

The decisive third game marked the fourth time since 2014 that the NLL Finals have needed all three games to determine a winner. It was also the first time since the 2011 Final where we had the same two teams competing as the year prior and fifth time overall.

To review the 2023 NLL Playoffs bracket, visit <https://www.nll.com/standings/>.

About the National Lacrosse League

The National Lacrosse League (NLL) is North America's premier professional lacrosse league. Founded in 1986, the NLL is comprised of 15 franchises across the United States and Canada: Albany FireWolves, Buffalo Bandits, Calgary Roughnecks, Colorado Mammoth, Georgia Swarm, Halifax Thunderbirds, Las Vegas Desert Dogs, New York Riptide, Panther City Lacrosse Club (TX), Philadelphia Wings, Rochester Knighthawks, San Diego Seals, Saskatchewan Rush, Toronto Rock, and Vancouver Warriors.

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