

= Brian McGrattan =

Brian McGrattan (born September 2 , 1981) is a Canadian professional ice hockey player . He is currently an unrestricted free agent who most recently was a member within the Anaheim Ducks organization of the National Hockey League (NHL) . McGrattan was a fourth round selection of the Los Angeles Kings (104th overall) at the 1999 NHL Entry Draft but never signed with the team . He signed with the Ottawa Senators organization in 2002 and made his NHL debut with the team three years later . McGrattan has also played in the NHL with the Phoenix Coyotes , Nashville Predators and Calgary Flames , and as a career journeyman , with five American Hockey League (AHL) teams .

An enforcer , he holds the AHL record for most penalty minutes in one season with 551 , set in 2004 ? 05 with the Binghamton Senators . McGrattan overcame an alcohol abuse problem that plagued him early in his career and has become a partner with the NHL 's substance abuse program and mentor to fellow players .

= = Playing career = =

= = = Junior = = =

A native of Hamilton , Ontario , McGrattan played minor hockey in the city where he was one of his teams ' best scorers before moving to Toronto to play bantam and junior hockey . He played five seasons in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) between 1997 and 2002 . He appeared in 25 games with the Guelph Storm in 1997 ? 98 , and although he did not appear in any playoff games , he was a member of the Storm 's J. Ross Robertson Cup winning team as OHL champions . After only six games with Guelph the following season , McGrattan was sent to the Sudbury Wolves where he recorded 153 penalties in minutes (PIM) in 53 games to go along with 17 points . He followed that season up by scoring 32 points and recording 245 PIM in 1999 ? 2000 in a season split between Sudbury and the Mississauga IceDogs .

Playing the entire 2000 ? 01 season with Mississauga , McGrattan led the IceDogs with 20 goals despite playing only 31 games . He missed the majority of the season after suffering a knee injury in a January 1 , 2001 , game against the Kingston Frontenacs . He began the 2001 ? 02 OHL season as Mississauga 's captain , but was traded to the Owen Sound Attack in October 2001 , then to the Oshawa Generals a few days later . He was traded again , to the Sault Ste . Marie Greyhounds in January 2002 . Split between the four teams , McGrattan appeared in 60 games , scored 20 goals and 35 points , and had 159 PIM .

= = = Ottawa Senators = = =

McGrattan was selected by the Los Angeles Kings in the fourth round , 104th overall , of the 1999 NHL Entry Draft , but the Kings opted not to sign him to a contract following his knee injury . He attended the Detroit Red Wings ' development camp prior to the 2001 ? 02 season , before signing a contract with the Ottawa Senators on June 2 , 2002 . He spent three seasons in the American Hockey League (AHL) with Ottawa 's affiliate , the Binghamton Senators . McGrattan scored his first professional point on October 11 , 2002 , against the Bridgeport Sound Tigers ; an assist on a Jeff Ulmer goal that also stood as the first goal in Binghamton 's history .

Due to his size , McGrattan believed his best chance of making it to the NHL was as an enforcer . Dennis Bonvie , the all @-@ time penalty leader in professional hockey , taught him to be a better fighter while the two were teammates in Binghamton . After posting 173 PIM in 2002 ? 03 , McGrattan finished second in the AHL with 327 in 2003 ? 04 . He then set an AHL single @-@ season record for penalties with 551 in 2004 ? 05 .

Having established himself as an enforcer , and with the Senators seeking to add physical toughness to their lineup , McGrattan earned a spot on Ottawa 's roster for the 2005 ? 06 season .

He appeared in 60 games with Ottawa where he recorded five points and 141 PIM . McGrattan scored his first NHL goal on November 19 , 2005 , against goaltender Martin Brodeur of the New Jersey Devils , and led the league with 19 fights . His most famous battle came against Tie Domi of the Toronto Maple Leafs . McGrattan knocked his opponent down with one punch , which the Toronto Star called Domi 's " most decisive loss in 10 years " .

His role with the team diminished over the following two seasons , as McGrattan appeared in only 45 games in 2006 ? 07 and 38 in 2007 ? 08 . He had only five points and 146 PIM combined between the two seasons . McGrattan made headlines midway through the 2007 ? 08 campaign when he fought teammate and goaltender Ray Emery ? himself a noted fighter ? in practice . McGrattan 's on @-@ ice performance had suffered over time in Ottawa as a result of a worsening drinking problem he had developed beginning early in his career with Binghamton .

= = = Phoenix , Calgary and Nashville = = =

The Senators struggled late in the 2007 ? 08 season , leading general manager Bryan Murray to make changes to the team . Both Emery and McGrattan were sent from Ottawa in separate transactions . McGrattan , a pending free agent , was traded to the Phoenix Coyotes on June 25 , 2008 , in exchange for a fifth round draft pick in the 2009 NHL Entry Draft . The Coyotes subsequently signed him to a one @-@ year contract for the 2008 ? 09 season . However , he played only three games with Phoenix before he voluntarily entered the league 's substance abuse program . McGrattan 's struggles with alcohol abuse reached its lowest point and he spent over two months at an Arizona rehab centre as he worked toward changing his life . He returned to the Coyotes late in the season but played only two additional games before he suffered a shoulder injury that required surgery to repair .

McGrattan was six months sober when he signed with the Calgary Flames for the 2009 ? 10 season . He recorded his first career " Gordie Howe hat trick " ? a goal , assist and fight ? on October 16 , 2009 , in a 5 ? 3 victory over the Vancouver Canucks . The goal was his first NHL marker in three years . He added only two assists to finish with four points in 34 games . McGrattan also fought 14 times and was allowed to go to free agency following the season .

McGrattan attended the Boston Bruins camp on a try @-@ out basis , and earned a one @-@ year contract with the team . He was assigned to the Providence Bruins to begin the 2010 ? 11 season and spent the entire campaign in the AHL . The Bruins traded him to the Anaheim Ducks , along with Sean Zimmerman , in exchange for David Laliberte and Stefan Chaput on February 27 , 2011 . He was assigned to the Syracuse Crunch , where he set a franchise record for shots in one game with 13 in a March 12 game against the Rochester Americans . McGrattan scored 10 goals combined between Providence and Syracuse , the highest single @-@ season total of his AHL career .

After beginning the 2011 ? 12 NHL season in the Ducks ' organization , McGrattan was claimed off waivers by the Nashville Predators on October 11 , 2011 . The transaction resurrected his NHL career and earned praise from his former teammates who praised him as being a " great guy " and a hard worker . McGrattan appeared in 30 games for Nashville , including his 200th career game on December 8 against the Columbus Blue Jackets . After two games with the Predators in the lockout @-@ shortened 2012 ? 13 season , McGrattan was assigned to the AHL 's Milwaukee Admirals .

After only six games in Milwaukee , McGrattan was traded back to the Flames , in exchange for Joe Piskula , on February 28 , 2013 . McGrattan 's positive influence in the locker room as a player always prepared to play was cited as a reason why Calgary re @-@ acquired him . The Flames also expected he would add a physical presence to the team , which he did in his re @-@ debut with the Flames , a 4 ? 2 victory over Vancouver that included several hits and a fight with Tom Sestito ? his first NHL fight in over a year . He gave the crowd a salute following the fight , sending the fans into a frenzy and earning a ten @-@ minute misconduct . He finished the season with three goals and 49 PIM in 19 games with the Flames , and earned a two @-@ year contract extension from the team .

McGrattan was a regular in the Flames lineup throughout 2013 ? 14 . He set career highs in games played (76) , goals (4) and points (8) in a season . He appeared in his 300th NHL game late in

the campaign . Though best known for his fighting skills , McGrattan played a prominent role as a peacekeeper during a January 18 , 2014 , incident between the Flames and Canucks . Vancouver coach John Tortorella , upset over a line brawl between the two teams at the start of the game , attempted to accost Calgary 's coach Bob Hartley in the hallway between the two team 's locker rooms during the first intermission . McGrattan stepped between Tortorella and members of the Flames to ensure that the dispute did not develop into a violent altercation .

A league @-@ wide change in philosophy prior to the 2014 ? 15 NHL season favouring speed over strength for a team 's role players resulted in the near elimination of the enforcer role . As a consequence , McGrattan appeared in only 8 of Calgary 's first 42 games . The team ultimately placed him on waivers , and upon clearing , demoted him to the AHL 's Adirondack Flames in mid @-@ January . With Adirondack , McGrattan abandoned fighting and tried to play an all @-@ round game in the hopes of returning to the NHL .

Leaving the Flames organization , McGrattan signed a one year contract with the Anaheim Ducks , and was subsequently assigned to the AHL 's San Diego Gulls for the 2015 ? 16 season . During a January 19 , 2016 , game against the San Antonio Rampage , McGrattan was knocked unconscious in a fight with Daniel Maggio . The incident , in which he fell face @-@ first to the ice and had to be stretchered off the ice , renewed the debate over the place of fighting in hockey .

= = Personal life = =

McGrattan married his wife Michelle in 2012 . His nickname is " Big Ern " , after the Bill Murray character " Big Ern McCracken " in the movie Kingpin .

Sober for four years by the time he began his second tenure with the Flames in 2013 , McGrattan had also become a mentor and friend to former Nashville teammate Jordin Tootoo in his own efforts to overcome similar addictions . McGrattan 's experiences led to a desire to help others ; he partnered with the NHL substance abuse program to act as a mentor for others who wanted the advice of a fellow player , and plans to spend his off @-@ seasons earning a university degree in addiction counseling . McGrattan is also an advocate for anti @-@ bullying charities and volunteers with Be The Game , a camp that supports underprivileged kids .

= = Career statistics = =