

# Knighthawks Suitor relishes return

by Anna Taylor

The curse of the Air Canada Centre is finally broken for Andrew Suitor.

The Rochester Knighthawks defender made his 2017 season debut on January 28 versus the Rock. It was his first time making it through a game at the ACC in his seven-year career, having either been injured playing in games at the arena or already injured when he got there.

"You try not to think about stuff like that but of course it's in the back of your head," said Suitor, who was happy to be on the floor with his new teammates. "My legs were a little tired late in the game. I think that comes with the territory. The great thing about this defense is that we pick each other up. Those 11, 12 guys back there and the offense picked me up and it was just fun to battle with a team that I've been chomping at the bit to get out there with."

Suitor was acquired by the Knighthawks from the New England Black Wolves in August, who acquired the former Minnesota Swarm captain in 2015. He was named captain for the 2016 Wolves season, but only suited up for ten games over two years as he battled the injury bug.

Knees have been an issue for Suitor, as they are for other lacrosse players at every level. He missed significant time in both 2013 and 2016 as he went through the rehab process.

"It's been tough," Suitor admitted. "I worked so hard to get back for five games and then all of a sudden I was back on the IR again with what I thought wasn't as bad of an injury but the process of getting back was about the same length. Mentally it's tough."

The Knighthawks knew Suitor was injured when they traded Derek Searle and two draft picks for him.



*Andrew Suitor plays at the Air Canada Centre on January 28, 2017.*

They believed in his ability to fight back and get back to being the dominant player he is when he's healthy.

"I have the best supporting cast of all time," he praised. "I have an absolute rock of a family, my girlfriend was huge in keeping me positive and then this training staff – Stephen Lobsinger, Dave Sowden, and Dan Noble – if it wasn't for those three I wouldn't be where I am right now. I owe everything that I've just accomplished today playing in this game to them."

Assistant coach Paul Day was happy with Suitor's play in his initial game.

"He came in to get his feet wet and be comfortable. He didn't have to do too much out there," Day said.

Suitor fits into the Knighthawks new-look team very well, according to the coach, also the GM of Suitor's summer team in Peterborough.

"He's such a character guy with lots of energy and even sometimes just in the room a guy like him is very important," Day recognized. "His energy, toughness, leadership,

character, you can't have enough of that."

In 74 regular season NLL games Suitor has shown both his tenaciousness on defence as well as a knack for transition, scoring 44 goals and 38 assists for 82 points. 2012 was his best season with 15 goals and 11 assists, but he's proven he's an effective player every time he's on the floor with hard hits and the willingness to stand up for anyone.

"The guys that I play with are the best. I've never been part of a group of guys like this. There are so many great leaders on this team," Suitor said. "I'm just here to try to fit in with the guys and try to do what is asked of me from our coaching staff down and do whatever is asked of me to the best of my ability. Moving forward I just want to be the kind of guy that the coaches can rely on."

Suitor remains pointless through two games but has scooped six loose balls as he returns to form. He and his Rochester teammates take on the Saskatchewan Rush at Blue Cross Arena 7:30 p.m. Saturday. The Rush previously defeated the Knighthawks 16-8 in Saskatchewan on January 21.