Finally, the Blues named a captain that we can all agree on.

The Blues have been without a captain since they traded Eric Brewer near the NHL trade deadline in February. He served as the Blues’ captain for three years.

The Blues franchise and their fans never truly saw eye-to-eye as Brewer being the choice for captain. He was booed on home ice and was berated by fans on any St. Louis Blues message board.

Things will be different this season. David Backes, a true fan-favorite, will wear the ‘C’ as the Blues’ 20th captain heading into their 44th season in the NHL.

Blues GM Doug Armstrong was not shy in talking up his new captain.

“It’s someone that we truly believe can lead this franchise, not only this year but in the future,” Armstrong said, “someone that has a great relationship with Davis [Payne], an excellent relationship with his teammates [and] has the qualities we want in a captain.”

Head Coach Davis Payne had a lot to say about Backes as well.

“When you walk into our locker room down at Scottrade, one of the first plaques you see is guys that have worn the ‘C’ for the St. Louis Blues,” said Payne. “We feel the guy we’re naming here today fits that mold. He’s a guy that plays important minutes, plays in quality situations, provides emotional leadership, provides stability, is a leader amongst his teammates, a leader in the community and committed to this city and this franchise long-term.
He’s a guy who bleeds blue.”

As someone who sits outside of the Blues’ locker room, I can even see why Backes got the captaincy.

Not only was Backes the Blues’ leading scorer in goals (31) and points (62), he was also the top forward in the NHL with a plus-32 last season. He was also reason #1 as to why the Blues finished just ten points out of a playoff spot (with the way they were heading in January, they would have finished a lot lower than that).

From February 1 to the end of the season, the Blues played in 33 games. In that time, Backes scored 15 goals, 10 assists and 25 points – easily his best point-production all season that came when it was truly needed; at the end during the playoff race.
He was also a plus-19 in that time.

Backes strapped the team to his back and carried them as far as he could.

“You definitely categorized him as a natural leader,” said teammate Andy McDonald, one of four alternate captains named. “Probably even before he had a letter on his shirt, you can see it. Th e things he does off the ice and obviously what he does on the ice, he was one of the best players last year.
He led every night by example on the ice.
He’s a perfect fit for us.”

McDonald, Alex Steen, Barret Jackman and newcomer Jamie Langenbrunner will all wear the ‘A’ this season. They will alternate in pairs at home and on the road.

“We’re going to lean on each other as a whole to lead this team and to make sure that we’re getting the job done and we’re back in the playoffs where the Blues were for 25-plus years in a row,” Backes said. “We need that tradition to come back and come back in a good way."

Quotes courtesy of Lou Korac of the Associated Press. Read his blog here.

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